CONTENT

CEECOM 2021.................................................................5
PROGRAM OF THE CONFERENCE..............................9
ABSTRACTS.....................................................................26
MEDIA IN THE CEE........................................................86
ABOUT CEECOM..........................................................121
# Detailed Content

## CEECOM 2021

- Scientific Committee
- Organizing Committee
- Honorary Patronage
- Media Patronage

## Program of the Conference

- Opening of the Conference
- Keynote Speakers
- Special Panels
- Session I
- Session II
- Session III
- Session IV

## Abstracts

1. Keynote Speakers
   - **Global Narratives, Local Adaptations. The Case of Pandemic Conspiracy Narratives Crossing the Public Spaces in Central and Eastern Europe.**
   - **Discursive Polarization in the Debate on Climate Change.**
   - **Media Systems in Central and Eastern Europe. Three Decades After the Communism: Closer or Further to Democracy?**
   - **The Communication Critical Juncture: The Shape of “Hybrid” Media Systems in CEE.**
2. Special Panels
   - Academic Emancipation in Media Studies in CEE: Mission Completed?
   - Does ECREA Still Need a CEE Network? Taking Stock and Moving On?
2.1.3. Professional identity of young communication scholars from CEE – obstacles and opportunities ........................................32

2.2. Polish Communication Association (PTKS) Panel. Social communication and media studies in Poland – heritage and future ..........33

2.3. Central European Journal of Communication (CEJC) Panel. Scholarly Journals in Central and Eastern Europe: Collaborative Practices to Support Knowledge Exchange .....................34


3. Thematic Sessions .................................................................36

3.1. Session I ........................................................................36

3.1.1. Broad–, narrow– and egocasting. How does mediamorphosis affect the work of journalists? .................................................................36

3.1.2. Researching public spheres ...........................................37

3.1.3. Media regulation – Poland, CEE countries and the EU ........39

3.1.4. Regional experiences during COVID-19 pandemic ...........41

3.2. Session II ........................................................................45

3.2.1. International relations and media .....................................45

3.2.2. Old and new ways of political expression .........................48

3.2.3. Media and culture ..........................................................51

3.2.4. Risks and threats of contemporary communication ...........53

3.3. Session III ......................................................................58

3.3.1. The communication revolution .........................................58

3.3.2. Central and Eastern Europe – regional challenges and current context .................................................................62

3.3.3. Communication Inequalities and Contradictions of Journalism in Socialist Yugoslavia .........................................................65

3.3.4. Communication in the pandemic .......................................68

3.4. Session IV ......................................................................72

3.4.1. Media transformations and political communication ........72

3.4.2. Misinformation and disinformation ..................................77

3.4.3. Social aspects of communication in the 21st century ..........80

3.4.4. Communication technologies .........................................83
The CEECOM 2021 Conference was organized by the Institute of Journalism, Media & Social Communication at the Jagiellonian University and the Polish Communication Association in cooperation with the ECREA's Central and East European Network on 22nd-23rd of October 2021.

The theme of the conference is the new communication revolution – a timely and rich topic due to many ongoing changes in the field of media and communication. The conference will address a diverse set of issues and will cover a wide spectrum of ideas related to the concept of communication revolution and ongoing communication and social changes. The new communication revolution may refer to various aspects of people’s social, political, economic or technological activities. We are inviting conceptual, empirical, and methodological proposals reflecting on changes related to communication itself, but also on relations between the media and mediatized communication, and the new ways of thinking, working and spending leisure time. The contributions considering the advantages and drawbacks of current trends in communication will be of special value.

The new communication revolution can be pondered at different levels. It can be explored at the macro-level, where the changes in the modes of communication impact the relationships between media institutions and political institutions. The comparative studies within the CEE region are particularly valuable in this respect. The latest works comparing media systems in Central, East and Southeast Europe may serve as a reference point here. The relations between media and politics in this region have been widely analyzed to date, and many attempts have been made to map the most characteristic features of CEE media systems, journalist autonomy, and the state of media freedom. Still, the conference contributions may be a good opportunity to revisit these questions with regard to the issue of hybridization, digitalization, automation, algorithmisation, of the information ecosystems where the tech giants play a particular role, and contemporary trends such as dis- and misinformation, leading to the audiences’ exposure to contradictory, ideologically-charged,
emotion-influenced, manipulative or highly polarizing messages, or dissemination of various kinds of deception.

The new communication revolution can be also observed at the institutional level. In the past, we used to deal mainly with public and mass communication featuring organized actors. Today's mediasphere is characterized by a mix of broadcast and narrowcast, interactive media, and established and non-established communicators, which results in the co-existence of public and personalized messages therein. This situation, in many ways, challenges the traditional institutional approach. Last but not least, the micro-level can be considered. Constant use of social networking sites and instant messaging platforms changed our lives in an unprecedented manner. The particularly relevant aspect of the new communication revolution seems to be the rise of participatory culture, enabling citizens to actively co-create media content in ways that have not been seen before. It is, therefore, important to assess and analyze the individual user experience.

Małgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska
Chair of the ECREA CEE Network
and CEECOM 2021 Organizing Committee
SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
Prof. Michał Drożdż (Polish Communication Association)
Prof. Iwona Hofman (Polish Communication Association)
Prof. Teresa Sasińska-Klas (Jagiellonian University)
Prof. Agnieszka Hess (Jagiellonian University, Polish Communication Association)
Prof. Ralitsa Kovacheva (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")
Prof. Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz (Jagiellonian University)
Prof. Norbert Merkovity (University of Szeged, ECREA's CEE Network)
Prof. Maria Nowina-Konopka (Jagiellonian University)
Prof. Weronika Świerczyńska-Głownia (Jagiellonian University)
Prof. Agnieszka Walecka-Rynduch (Polish Communication Association)
Prof. Katarzyna Kopecka-Piech (Polish Communication Association)
Prof. Andrej Školkay (School of Communication and Media, Slovakia (SKAMBA))
Prof. Lenka Vochocová (Charles University in Prague, ECREA's CEE Network)
Prof. Dina Vozab (University of Zagreb, ECREA's CEE Network)
Chair of the CEECOM 2021 Organizing Committee Malgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska (Jagiellonian University, ECREA's CEE Network)

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
Malgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska PhD (Chair)
Katarzyna Drąg PhD
Małgorzata Majewska PhD
Julia Trzcińska PhD
Aleksandra Urzędowska PhD
Edyta Żyrek-Horodyńska PhD
Stławomir Dołęga MA
Anna Harnik MA
Partycja Cheba MA
Dominika Furtak MA
Joanna Grzechnik MA
Agata Paszek MA
Katarzyna Radwańska MA
Anna Słupek MA  
Barbara Sitko MA  
Roksana Zdunek MA  
Agata Pyka BA  
Weronika Saran BA  
Anna Kulma  
Alan Rzepa  
Marta Tarnowska  
Agnieszka Tkacz  
Jakub Wachowicz

HONORARY PATRONAGE

His Magnificence Rector of the Jagiellonian University  
Austrian Consulate General in Krakow  
Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Kraków  
Consulate General of the Slovak Republic in Kraków

MEDIA PATRONAGE

UJOT TV  
UJOT FM  
COM.PRESS
PROGRAM OF THE CEECOM 2021 CONFERENCE

FRIDAY 22.10.2021

12.30-12.45 OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

- Chair of the ECREA’s CEE Network
- Representatives of the Jagiellonian University
- President of the Polish Communication Association (PTKS)
- Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps in Krakow

12.45-13.00 ABOUT CEECOM – A MOVIE

13.00-15.00 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Convenor: Małgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska (Jagiellonian University, Poland)

Speakers in Alphabetical order:

13.00-13.30 KEYNOTE ADDRESS
ALINA BĂRGĂOANU
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF POLITICAL STUDIES AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, ROMANIA

Global narratives, local adaptations. The case of pandemic conspiracy narratives crossing the public spaces in Central and Eastern Europe

13.30-14.00 KEYNOTE ADDRESS
MICHAEL BRÜGGMANN
UNIVERSITY OF HAMBURG, GERMANY

Discursive Polarization in the Debate on Climate Change
14.00-14.30 KEYNOTE ADDRESS
BOGUSŁAWA DOBEK-OSTROWSKA
UNIVERSITY OF WROCLAW, POLAND

Media Systems in Central and Eastern Europe. Three Decades After the Communism: Closer or Further to Democracy?

14.30-15.00 KEYNOTE ADDRESS
ZRINJKA PERUŠKO
UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA

The Communication Critical Juncture: The Shape of “Hybrid” Media Systems in CEE

15.00-15.15 BREAK

15.15-19.00 SPECIAL PANELS

15.15-16.45 ECREA’S CEE NETWORK
CEE Network – its origin, development and future

Panel Chair: Lenka Vochcová (Charles University, Czech Republic)

Speakers:
Irena Reifová (Charles University, Czech Republic)
  ● Academic emancipation in media studies in CEE: mission completed?

John Downey (Loughborough University, UK)
  ● Does ECREA still need a CEE Network? Taking stock and moving on
Dina Vozab (University of Zagreb, Croatia)

- Professional identity of young communication scholars from CEE – obstacles and opportunities

16.45-17.00 BREAK

17.00-18.00
POLISH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION (PTKS)
Social communication and media studies in Poland – heritage and future

Panel Chair: Iwona Hofman (President of the Polish Communication Association)

Speakers:

Iwona Hofman (President of the Polish Communication Association)

- The discipline of social communication and media studies – genesis and achievements

Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska (University of Wrocław, Poland)

- The establishment of Polish Communication Association and the role of the society in consolidating the community of Polish journalism and media researchers

Teresa Sasińska-Klas (Jagiellonian University, Poland)

- Journalism and social communication as a field of study – history and present

Jadwiga Woźniak-Kasperek (University of Warsaw, Poland)

- Information science and book studies in the discipline of social communication and media studies – genesis and achievements

Stanisław Jędrzejewski (Kozminski University, Poland)
The development of media and new communication technologies as a research challenge

Katarzyna Kopecka-Piech (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland)

- Development of young academics and international cooperation in media research

**18.00-19.00**

**CENTRAL EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION (CEJC)**

*Scholarly Journals in Central and Eastern Europe: Collaborative Practices to Support Knowledge Exchange*

**Panel Chair:** Michał Glowacki (Central European Journal of Communication, Poland)

**Guests:**

- Viktoria Car (Medijske Studije, Croatia)
- Marton Demeter (KOME – An International Journal of Pure Communication Inquiry, Hungary)
- Anna Gladkova (The World of Media, Russia)
- Rafał Kuś (Zeszyty Prasoznawcze, Poland)
- Elena Negrea-Busuioc (The Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations, Romania)
- Sergei Samolenko (Communication Association of Eurasian Researchers, CAER)
- Agnieszka Stępińska (Central European Journal of Communication, Poland)

**19.00-19.30**

**COM.PRESS – SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL**

*Scientific journals for young scholars in Central and Eastern Europe: experience and challenges*

**Panel Chair:** Dominika Popielec (Com.press, Poland), Com.press editors

**Guest:**

- Yordan Karapenchev (Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria)
SESSION I (9.00-11.00)

**Broad-, narrow- and egocasting. How does mediamorphosis affect the work of journalists?**
Roundtable discussion with representatives of Polish media

**Chair:** Sławomir Dołęgo

**Guests:**
- Beata Biel, TVN24, News Digital Premium Development Unit Director
- Adam Czerwiński, RMF FM, Music Director
- Daniel Rząsa, 300Gospodarka.pl, Editor in Chief
- Patryk Stanik, Tygodnik Powszechny, Communications Manager
- Kamil Turecki, Onet.pl, International Affairs Journalist

---

**Researching public spheres**

**Chair:** Svetlana Bodrunova

**Speakers:**

**Svetlana Bodrunova**
- Cumulative deliberation: A closer-to-life way of assessing networked discussions

**Svetlana Bodrunova, Anna Litvinenko**
- Aggressive Commenting on the Russian YouTube: Deliberative Potential of Opinion Cumulation
Anna Smoliarova, Yuliya Taranova
● Media and (or) networked public: Russian-speaking Instagram blogs in Czech Republic, Poland, and Serbia

Kamilla Nigmatullina, Nikolay Rodossky
● Complaining audiences and hyperlocal journalism on VK.com

Discussant: Teresa Sasinska-Klas

Media regulation – Poland, CEE countries and the EU

Chair: Alicja Jaskiernia / Jędrzej Skrzypczak

Speakers:

Alicja Jaskiernia
● The technological approach in the European Union’s audiovisual media policy

Jędrzej Skrzypczak
● The future and prospects of press publishers in the Digital Single Market

Beata Klimkiewicz
● Media, state and transparency: Gateways and limits of media transparency regulation in Poland

Dagmara Sidyk-Furman
● The approach of audiovisual regulators to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Case of Ofcom and KRRiT

Katarzyna Konarska
● Ex ante tests in the media policy of Central and Eastern countries

Michał Kuś, Paulina Barczyszyn-Madziarz
● Disinformation as a challenge to media policy

Discussant: Beata Klimkiewicz
Regional experiences during COVID-19 pandemic

**Chair:** Dina Vozab

**Speakers:**

*Sónia Cristina Melo da Silva, Teresa Ruão, Sandra Marinho*
- Evaluating Communication Online Training in the Workplace during COVID-19 Pandemic

*Li Peng-Peng*
- Communication mechanism and inspiration of Covid-19 in Chinese society

*Mahmoud Farhadimahalli, Zohreh Javadieh*
- Studying the reactions of Iranian celebrities and their fans to Covid-19 on Instagram

*Natalia Walkowiak*
- The image of the pandemic in Polish women's magazines

*Romina Surugiu, Vyara Angelova*
- A risk to me? A risk to us? Media and pandemic. Insights from Bulgaria and Romania

*Edina Kriskó*

*Magdalena Ratajczak*
- Solidarity in the crisis

**Discussant:** Anna Słupek

---

**11.00-11.15 BREAK**
SESSION II (11.15-13.15)

International relations and media

Chair: Malgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska

Speakers:

Julia Trzcińska, Róža Norström
● Polish Press Agency as a non-state actor in international politics?

Gergely Gosztonyi
● How states around the world censor the Internet?

Jakub Stolarczyk
● Searching for publicity - radical non-state parties and their search for popularity on social media

Marta Kobylska
● Enemy image construction in US Presidents’ justifications for the use of force

Teodora Şandru, Andreea Mogoș
● Media frames in ro.sputnik.md. The coverage of the 2019 Romanian presidential campaign

Katarzyna Pagacz
● How to compare digital diplomacy activities? The proposal of E-dip measure

Discussant: Teresa Sasińska-Klas

Old and new ways of political expression

Chair: Agnieszka Stępińska

Speakers:

Ralitsa Kovacheva
● The ‘gender danger’: how the EU became an enemy of the traditional values

Szymon Wigienka
● Challenging the ‘leftist social media’: Polish conservative media discourse on right-wing alternative social media
Paweł Matuszewski, Jarosław Flis, Waldemar Wojtasik
● Four sources of success – the EP elections in Poland

Roksana Zdunek
● Youth, media and politics. Social media use among Polish first-time voters: a case study of Covid-19 pandemic and women's strike

Olga Dąbrowska-Cendrowska
● The profiles of politicians in women's press in Poland in 1990-2019. Comparative analysis

Karina Veltzé
● Spaces of creative political expression – form, language, community

Discussant: Agnieszka Walecka –Rynduch

---

Media and culture

Chair: Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz

Speakers:

Otilia Ármeán
● Agency and sense of agency in online cultural practices

Dariusz Brzękiński
● Media and nostalgia in the 21st century

Damian Guzek
● Shaping the pope's authority through media consumption

Małgorzata Kisilowska
● Binging - a fad or a permanent change in media consumption?

Jarosław Kinal
● Media consumption in the interface regions on the example of Poland, Ukraine and Hungary. Analysis of empirical research

Eugent Kllapi
● Characteristics of advertisements in Albanian newspapers for the years 2013-2015
Teodora-Elena Grapă
● The Joker myth as mediated stereotype in international media discourse

Discussant: Sławomir Doległo

Risks and threats of contemporary communication

Chair: Katarzyna Drąg

Speakers:

Marita Zitmane, Elza Lāma
● ‘Wake up and think of the children!’: Ambivalent relationship between motherhood, femininity and anti-vaccination

Qiu MoFan
● Record, link and revolt. Alternative practices of journalism under the State of Exception in Hong Kong

Ioan Miclea
● E.coli outbreak, Romania and crisis communication: a case study on the Brădet dairy products

Agnieszka Szymańska
● Media scam excellent – Claas Relotius case

Jindřich Oukropec
● Brands at Risk From Disinformation. Meta-Analysis of Commercial Disinformation Studies and Cases

Katarzyna Lorenc
● Online astroturfing in presidential campaigns in a comparative perspective: the examples of the United States and Poland

Discussant: Katarzyna Radwańska

13.15–14.15 LUNCH BREAK
SESSION III (14.15-16.15)

The communication revolution

Chair: Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz

Speakers:

Katarzyna Kopecka-Piech
- The communication revolution - what it is about and whether it is possible to turn away from it in anyhow?

Epp Lauk, Halliki Harro-Loit
- Challenges to journalistic human capital (JHC) in adaptation to the conditions of new communication revolution: a conceptual deliberation

Erika Tőkés Gyöngyvér
- Is the digital transformation for all?

Waldemar Bojakowski
- A shift in perspective: from news culture to interactive explanations

Jakub Nowak
- Doing privacy. Media practices and digital citizenship during (another) media revolution

Karolina Brylska
- The use of biometric measurements in assessing the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns - research opportunities and challenges

Discussant: Julia Trzcińska

Central and Eastern Europe – regional challenges and current context

Chair: Andrej Školkay

Speakers:

Klara Smejkal
- Just a ‘mouthpiece of biased elites’? Populist attitudes and trust in the public service media in the Czech Republic
Norbert Merkovity
● Ideologically-charged news. The case of Hungarian public broadcast and the attention-based politics

László Petrovszki, Tamás Szekeres
● Viktor Orbán’s Facebook activity related to Covid-19 during the first wave of the pandemic

Tamás Szekeres, László Petrovszki
● Viktor Orbán’s Facebook activity related to Covid-19 during the second and third wave of the pandemic

Orsolya Szabó Palócz
● Changing concepts and power dynamics. Public discourse in a time of crisis

Natallya Ryabinska
● Populist framing of politics in political entertainment – the case of Volodymyr Zelensky’s TV comedy show

Discussant: Aleksandra Urzędowska

Communication Inequalities and Contradictions of Journalism in Socialist Yugoslavia

Chair: Jernej Amon Prodnik

Speakers:

Igor Vobič, Kristina Milić, Ana Milojević
● Memories of SFRY Journalists: A Historical Study of Journalistic Roles at Tanjug News Agency

Dunja Majstorović, Dina Vozab
● Communicating dissent in socialist Yugoslavia: How did the Yugoslav press represent June 1968 student protests?

Marko Zajc
● Slovenian critical intellectuals between the Yugoslav and Slovenian public sphere in 1980s

Jernej Amon Prodnik, Nina Žnidaršič
● Journalist as a Socio-Political Worker: Ideology and Practice of Slovenian Journalists in Socialist Yugoslavia
Discussant: Dina Vozab

---

**Communication in the pandemic**

**Chair:** Weronika Świerczyńska-Głownia

**Speakers:**

**Bartłomiej Łódzki**
- News shareability analysis: Global television channels and multicultural digital audience during the pandemic time

**Anna Jupowicz-Ginalska**
- Towards the conceptualization and implementation of a pan(de)medial event: from sources of inspiration to a theoretical and methodological framework

**Liis Auväärt**
- Fighting Covid-19 with data: analysis of award-winning data journalism from Sigma Awards 2021

**Krzysztof Kowalik**
- The impact of COVID-19 information on local governments communication in social media. A study of selected official city profiles on Facebook.com

**Dominika Saad, Maria Nowina Konopka**
- Towards online research – adapting to new methods caused by Covid-19 pandemic social isolation

**Martyna Dudziak-Kisio, Wojciech Dudziak**
- Participatory culture in the social media – the birth and development of the Visible Hand Movement during the Covid-19 pandemic

**Marlena Sztyber, Katarzyna Piórecka**
- Consumer TV habits during the COVID-19 pandemic – newscasts in the times of social isolation

Discussant: Sławomir Doległo

---

**16.15–16.30 BREAK**
SESSION IV (16.30-18.30)

Media transformations and political communication

**Chair:** Epp Lauk

**Speakers:**

**Irina Milutinović**
- Media and non-consolidated democracy regimes

**Lindita Camaj, Gjylie Rexha**
- Facebook as a Platform for Election News Engagement in an Emerging Democracy

**Kinga Adamczewska**
- Social media use in political communication - (r)evolution of flow of information?

**Grzegorz Ptaszek, Anna Miotk, Marek Robak**
- Do left-wing partisans dominate Polish Facebook and Twitter? Digital trace data analysis of Internet outlets and social media users in the context of ideological slant

**Denis Halagiera, Agnieszka Stępińska**
- Why people avoid political news? Findings from quantitative and qualitative studies on news consumption in Poland

**Tomasz Gackowski**
- Who do you believe, and who do you support in politics? Preliminary results of the experiment (triangulation of methods – eye-tracking, facetracking, questionnaire, IDI)

**Discussant:** Norbert Merkovity

Misinformation and disinformation

**Chair:** Małgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska

**Speakers:**
Mihhail Kremez
● Susceptibility of the Estonian Russian-speaking Audience to the Spread of Fake News and Information Disorder in the News Media

Kateryna Savranska
● Russian Information Warfare in Poland

Hedviga Tkáčová
● False beliefs about resistance to manipulation in media – the handicap of adolescents in the context of their current communication trends in social media

Mato Brautović, Romana John
● Impact of fact-checking sites on debunking COVID-19 disinformation and misinformation on Facebook: Case of Faktograf.hr

Weronika Świerczyńska-Głownia
● Media discourse on coronavirus – aspects of misinformation

Lora Simeonova
● The rise of influencers: an update to the multi-step flow theory of communication in the perspective of Covid-19 infodemic in Bulgaria

Victoria Leszczyńska
● Infodemic as a threat for the society. How COVID-19 affects activity of media and politics

Discussant: Małgorzata Majewska

Social aspects of communication in the 21st century

Chair: Katarzyna Kopecka-Piech

Speakers:

Martina Novotná, Alena Macková
● Cross-cutting online discussions on social network sites: who is involved and why?

Paulina Barczyszyn-Madziarz, Mateusz Ziełinski
● Media and information literacy of students – conditions, skills and challenges. The example of Poland
Dorota Rak
- Digital emigrant - new or old participant in communication?

Michał Jas
- Influencers: on the new type of opinion leader

Gergana Markova, Kalin Kalinov
- Community management: theoretical framework and concept acceleration

Katarzyna Radwańska
- 'United by football' as a sportainmental revolution of Polish Football Association. Communication factors

Discussant: Barbara Sitko

---

Communication technologies

Chair: Ralitsa Kovacheva

Speakers:

Miroslawa Wielopolska-Szymura
- Radio and new communication technologies - how radio and its listeners in Poland adapt to the communication revolution?

Monika Wawer
- The role of genres in non-linear television. Programmers and broadcasters’ perspective

Agnieszka Węglińska
- Public television journalists in Poland – political pressure and public service media

Lumnije Bajrami
- Opinion in the mass print media of Albania

Maciej Zweifel
- Digital revolution and the place of printed books

Przemysław Ciszek
- Female streamers on Twitch: New type of content and communication
Xudong Weng, Siqi Liu
● Unsilencing home village. A Discursive-theoretical Analysis of the Construction of the Rural in Chinese Short Video

**Discussant**: Agata Paszek

---

**18.30-18.45 BREAK**

**18.45-19.00**
ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEXT CEECOM CONFERENCE

**19.00-19.30 CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE**
1. KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

1.1 Global narratives, local adaptations. The case of pandemic conspiracy narratives crossing the public spaces in Central and Eastern Europe

ALINA BÂRGĂOANU
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF POLITICAL STUDIES AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, ROMANIA

The COVID-19 pandemic has been accompanied by massive waves of false or misleading information, rumours, conspiracy theories, pseudo-scientific claims about treatments or vaccines, what is generally designated with the term “infodemic”. This paper is premised on the idea that the national public spaces in Central and Eastern Europe have largely followed the global patterns, narratives and even vocabulary of disinformation, with local adaptations in order to resonate with pre-existing political, social and cultural features of each particular country. Besides, many of the global conspiracy narratives crossing Central and Eastern Europe are not new, have been dormant and recycled in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. They are likely to survive the current pandemic and linger in the public space until the next crisis. Hence, the stake of identifying local manifestations of global conspiracy narratives is manifold: building a reservoir (“bank”) of debunks that other experts can use in order to check a transnational claim and preparing for the next big wave of global disinformation, when these narratives are likely to be recycled again.

1.2 Discursive Polarization in the Debate on Climate Change

MICHAEL BRÜGGEMANN
UNIVERSITY OF HAMBURG, GERMANY

Polarization is a major challenge for democracies, particularly in some countries in Central and Eastern Europe. To a certain degree, polarization may be part of any democratic process, but it becomes harmful, when decision- and policy-making about fundamental issues becomes impossible.

In my talk, I will take one of the most important issues facing humanity, climate change, as a case study of how a debate may or may not polarize to the degree that it becomes intractable, comparing a case of extreme polarization, the United States, and one case of moderate polarization, Germany, drawing on a selective review of recent empirical studies in the field.
In the first step, I will introduce discursive polarization as a framework to analyze polarization from a journalism and media studies perspective: i.e. studying how polarization is emerging in mediated public communication. I will be looking at both social media networks and journalism as arenas of communication with certain affordances and dynamics that may facilitate polarization. Discursive polarization is operationalized as a multidimensional process that may, ultimately, split up the public sphere as common space of communication in a democratic society. While polarization may be measured and may emerge in discourses, it is driven by constellations of actors and their strategies in dealing with social problems that are being pursued within the structures of today’s digitally networked media system.

In a second step, I will explore what we know empirically about the discursive polarization of debates related to a sustainable transformation of society, taking climate change as a case study. The United States provides a well-researched example of an elite-driven process in a country with deep social divisions. Yet, polarization is enhanced by a bias of both journalism and social media networks to circulate extreme views thus creating a self-fulfilling vision of a society that is falling apart.

In the third step, I ask: Is Europe on the same trajectory as the United States and what could we do about it? More research is by all means necessary, but some tentative conclusions can already be drawn from looking at the case of Germany: both the media system and the political system have, thus far, contained polarization around climate change, but persistent extreme networks of counter-publics thrive online. The major challenge of distributive conflicts about how to transform society towards sustainability lie ahead. A discussion about how to avoid going down the path outlined by the case of the United States is therefore worthwhile, also in those European countries, where climate change, thus far, was not one of major dividing lines of societies.

1.3
Media Systems in Central and Eastern Europe. Three Decades After the Communism: Closer or Further to Democracy?

BOGUSŁAWA DOBEK-OSTROWSKA
UNIVERSITY OF WROCLAW, POLAND

The collapse of communism in 1989 changed deeply the map of Europe. The third wave of democratization included Central and Eastern part of this continent, which was controlled after the second world war by Soviet Union, or, in a case of Yugoslavia, by communist leaders as Tito, after the Tito-Stalin split. Nowadays, there are twenty one countries, which we call Central and Eastern Europe, which are in a different place in the process of democratization. Some of them try to build democratic standards, other reject them.

After three decades of changes in the region, three groups of them have disclosed. Firstly, there are eleven members of European Union. Secondly, eight Balkan states and two post-Soviet Union republics (Moldova and Ukraine), which are still in a long political transition. Thirdly, two former post-Soviet Union republics (Russia, Belarus) are authoritarian states. Each of twenty one countries, although located in this same geographical region, they have a different political history and democratic experience (or its lack), poor or better condition for development of civil society.

The role of public media in politics in CEE countries is an ongoing question. It is unknown whether they can survive in the saturated market, and if so, in what form. We can presume that the politicians will lose their monopoly and control over them, which will cause politicization to disappear, as politicians will no longer be able to influence the media content. Such a perspective seems to be closest to the countries
included in the Hybrid Liberal and Northern models, such as in Baltic states. But, entrenched journalism in public media will not be eliminated, and strong political instrumentalization, partisanship, and structural bias will not only persist but will be strengthened. Commercial media will distance themselves from politics, and the horse-race coverage and escapism will become their most convenient strategy.

1.4
The Communication Critical Juncture: The Shape of “Hybrid” Media Systems in CEE

ZRINJKA PERUŠKO
UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA

How media systems change is perhaps one of the most important questions of communication research, especially in localities, like the Central and Eastern Europe, where change was volatile and not unidirectional but included both advancements and regressions. While the answer is certainly complex, clearly the change was not/ is not, monocausal, but the result of a combination of social, political, economic, cultural and technological conditions and practices in specific historic contexts. Change is also not linear, but only happens after the conditions for change occur within various (and historically determinable) critical junctures. While in the past the critical junctures shaping media system developments in CEE were predominantly political, this region is today, together with the rest of the “western” world, in the middle of a communication critical juncture that is changing not only the relationships of power within the communication field, but is also changing the political and economic fields and social relations more generally. This “communication revolution” that is shaping the present critical juncture, is allowing us to change the institutional make-up and the relationships in the media and communication systems and in society. The paper examines several of the key, already visible, dimensions, of this change.
2. SPECIAL PANELS

2.1 ECREA’S CEE NETWORK PANEL

CEE Network – its origin, development and future

Panel Chair: Lenka Vochcová (Charles University, Czech Republic)

This special panel aims at opening a broader discussion on the importance and relevance of the CEE Network more than 30 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain which offered new opportunities as well as challenges to the scholars from the region. Do we, as CEE scholars, still need a special network, or were its aims already fulfilled? The panel will offer perspectives of a founding member of the network, a view of a western scholar focusing on the region and experiences and reflections of young members of the academia in the CEE region.

2.1.1

Academic emancipation in media studies in CEE: mission completed?

IRENA REIFOVÁ (CHARLES UNIVERSITY, CZECH REPUBLIC)

This paper is engaged with prospects of ECREA CEE Network in the context of controversy between dewesternisation of media studies on one hand, and inescapable objective of catching up with the West on the other hand. Presented by the founding member of ECREA CEE Network, the paper will provide very brief archaeology of the conditions and motivations leading to establishment of the network. CEE region entered the global academia after 1989 surrounded by the narrative of a laggard which became firm part off its own identity during the 1990s. The paper will explain introduction of CEE Network in 2009 as a reaction to this narrative and reality of the then persisting lack of quality and visibility of media research in CEE region. The objective of emancipation of CEE academia from lagging behind the standards of excellence will be reminded as the initial starting point for equalisation of academic niveau in CEE. The paper will acknowledge that academic emancipation in CEE considerably progressed, although the regional academia could still benefit from peer-to-peer support from the side of more consolidated academic cultures. The mentoring and co-writing schemes will be addressed as a tool for further equalisation and a possible direction to be explored by CEE Network.
2.1.2

Does ECREA still need a CEE Network? Taking stock and moving on

JOHN DOWNEY (LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY, UK)

The CEE network is one of only three ECREA networks. (The others being for early career researchers and for women.) It was established to provide support for academics from the region or working in the region in recognition of the particular challenges faced in developing academic careers and cultures in social sciences and humanities disciplines in the post-1989 period. After more than thirty years, it is right to pose the question of whether such a special status for scholars from or working in CEE countries is still required. Are the challenges facing academics from or working in CEE more severe than those facing colleagues in other European regions? What progress has been made? Has progress been uneven geographically and/or temporally? Are there specific challenges that face the field in the region? And if so, what role should the network have in addressing those challenges?

2.1.3

Professional identity of young communication scholars from CEE – obstacles and opportunities

DINA VOZAB (UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA)

There have been several authors questioning the position and identity of communication and media studies in Central and Eastern Europe (Demeter, 2018, 2019; Peruško and Vozab, 2016; Splichal, 1989). The term „peripheral” is often linked to the status of CEE in communication studies. For example, Slavko Splichal described the position of communication studies in Yugoslavia as peripheral to the center (1989). Demeter’s analysis found that the majority of research conducted in the region remains unnoticed by international community (2018), and the title of the CEECOM conference in 2017 held in Ljubljana was „Critique of/at/on periphery?”. If the scholar from the CEE region aims to develop an international career path, it seems that he/she should develop a specific academic habitus and aim to collaborate with the institutions and scholars from the Global North (Demeter, 2019). In what position does this put young scholars from the CEE region? Based on the survey with young scholars from the region, this lecture will describe how they perceive their professional identity and opportunities for their career paths.
2.2 POLISH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION (PTKS) PANEL

Social communication and media studies in Poland – heritage and future

Panel Chair: Iwona Hofman (President of the Polish Communication Association)

The panel is devoted to the presentation of Polish achievements in the field of social communication and media. The panel gathers initiators and co-founders of the Polish Communication Association, of university journalism studies, and of new discipline of social communication and media studies, as well as a representative of the young generation of media researchers. The panel will present the genesis of these initiatives and scientific and didactic undertakings, the achievements of the past, as well as the perspective of the development of media and new communication technologies as a research challenge.

Speakers:

Iwona Hofman (President of the Polish Communication Association)
- The discipline of social communication and media studies – genesis and achievements

Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska (University of Wrocław, Poland)
- The establishment of Polish Communication Association and the role of the society in consolidating the community of Polish journalism and media researchers

Teresa Sasińska-Klas (Jagiellonian University, Poland)
- Journalism and social communication as a field of study – history and present

Jadwiga Woźniak-Kasperek (University of Warsaw, Poland)
- Information science and book studies in the discipline of social communication and media studies – genesis and achievements

Stanisław Jędrzejewski (Kozminski University, Poland)
- The development of media and new communication technologies as a research challenge

Katarzyna Kopec-Piech (Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, Poland)
- Development of young academics and international cooperation in media research
2.3 CENTRAL EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION (CEJC) PANEL

Scholarly Journals in Central and Eastern Europe: Collaborative Practices to Support Knowledge Exchange

Panel Chair: Michał Glowacki (Central European Journal of Communication, Poland)

The goal of the session is to discuss the critical role of advanced and collaboration-oriented editorial practices, to support adapting to new advanced media industries (high technologies, creative clusters, digital culture, and so on) alongside more agile and informal forms of the knowledge exchange (pitching sessions, summer camps, the Living Labs, after-work culture). The overall goal is to ask the CEE Journals Editors how they reflect on the pandemic effects; for instance, face-to-face communications replaced by the hybrid and the virtual workplace. During our session we will also ask about the understandings of scholarly collaboration, as opposed to competition, alongside ways to engage with the youthful representatives of media and communications scholarship. The discussion on a need for the Central and Eastern European hyper knowledge exchange ends with practical recommendations to strengthen CEE research communities.

Guests:

- Viktorija Car (Medijske Studije, Croatia)
- Marton Demeter (KOME – An International Journal of Pure Communication Inquiry, Hungary)
- Anna Gladkova (The World of Media, Russia)
- Rafał Kuś (Zeszyty Prasoznawcze, Poland)
- Elena Negrea-Busuioc (The Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations, Romania)
- Sergei Samolenko (Communication Association of Eurasian Researchers, CAER)
- Agnieszka Stępińska (Central European Journal of Communication, Poland)
Scientific journals for young scholars in Central and Eastern Europe: experience and challenges

Panel Chair: Dominika Popielec (Com.press, Poland)

‘Com.press’ editors will present journal’s history, explaining the inspiration for the project and approach to scientific journal publication. They will review how the journal has evolved and how new entities have been included. The team will cover also journal’s online conferences, which were among the first to be held in this format during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the first Com.press monograph on social communication during the pandemic. One of the issues addressed during this panel will also be the editorial process adopted by “Com.press”, with a specific focus on its different stages as well as useful tools improving it, such as the Open Journal System (OJS). The innovative approach to content distribution and specialized scientific platforms where the journal can be found, i.e. Arianta, CEEOL, CEJSH, ERIH PLUS, JUR and Index Copernicus International, were discussed.

Guest:

- Com.press editors
- Yordan Karapenchev (Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria)

The presentation on the Media and Language Journal is aimed at sharing the established best practices in managing, editing and promoting a peer-reviewed journal in the scientific community in Bulgaria. Media and Language is the first Bulgarian journal dedicated to the field of medialoguistics. The presentation explains the reviewing process and the methodology used by the editorial team. On the topic journal management data from Google Analytics is shared, tracing the journals growth in popularity over the past five years. This data further reveals that the most widely read articles in the journal correspond with popular topics, discussed in the media during the same timeframe. For example – articles on the Romany community in Eastern Europe, the linguistic techniques used by political leaders and common mistakes in the Bulgarian language are popular articles in the journal, which corresponds to common topics in other Bulgarian media.
3. THEMATIC SESSIONS

3.1 SESSION I

3.1.1

Broad-, narrow- and egocasting. How does mediamorphosis affect the work of journalists?

Roundtable discussion with representatives of Polish media

Chair: Sławomir Doległo

The invited journalists will share their views on professional activities taking place under new conditions. The role of institutional media coverage and its significance in the contemporary public sphere facing the post-truth, disinformation, and various unethical communication practices will be discussed. The journalists will reflect on current challenges for quality journalism, journalistic autonomy, new ways of gathering and interpreting data, providing attractive and convincing solutions which may sustain the loyalty of viewers and readers. Last but not least, they will present how Covid pandemic affects the functioning of editorial offices.

Guests:

- Beata Biel, TVN24, News Digital Premium Development Unit Director
- Adam Czerwiński, RMF FM, Music Director
- Daniel Rząsa, 300Gospodarka.pl, Editor in Chief
- Patryk Stanik, Tygodnik Powszechny, Communications Manager
- Kamil Turecki, Onet.pl, International Affairs Journalist
3.1.2

Researching public spheres

Chair: Svetlana Bodrunova

Speakers:

Svetlana Bodrunova
Cumulative deliberation: A closer-to-life way of assessing networked discussions

Today, the (post-)Habermasian idea of public consensus based on rational and equal deliberation is challenged in many ways. Thus, the concept of dissonant public spheres was suggested by Pfetsch (2018). It implies that the new state of public deliberation does not, in principle, have any orientation to finding an overarching consensus that would incorporate opinion of minorities and balance interests. At the same time, the concept of dissonance remains highly normative, and critics of irrational public spheres demand that the scholarly community provides remedies and recipes of how to get the public spheres back to ‘normality’ of consensus seeking. However, we doubt that rational consensus is the ultimate goal sought by platform users when they post: research shows it is much more expressing oneself than seeking any dialogue, and the resulting public opinion is not a result of round-by-round deliberative efforts. We offer an interpretive concept of cumulative deliberation that, instead, explains how public discussions are won by cumulation of support and opinion, rather than a by rational deliberative process. Patterns of public opinion formation and collective action like the spiral of silence, the silent majority, echo chambers, affective conglomerates, connective action and contributive action, as well as various forms of online participation like petitions or flash mobs, and even slacktivist liking and sharing, may all be united by the umbrella idea of cumulation within issue-oriented communication online. Metaphorically, online battles are won by the tug of war and not at round tables. Given this, the concept offers an alternative view on the nature of mediated public communication and allows for avoiding excessive normativity in explaining today’s deliberative processes.

Svetlana Bodrunova, Anna Litvinenko
Aggressive Commenting on the Russian YouTube: Deliberative Potential of Opinion
Cumulation

Today, aggressive verbal behavior is generally perceived as a threat to integrity and democratic quality of public discussions, including those online. However, we argue that, in more restrictive political regimes, communicative aggression may play constructive roles in both discussion dynamics and empowerment of political groups. This might be especially true for restrictive political and legal environments like Russia, where obscene speech is prohibited by law in registered media and the political environment does not give much space for voicing discontent. Taking Russian YouTube as an example, we explore the roles of two under-researched types of communicative aggression—obscene speech and politically motivated hate speech—within the publics of video commenters. For that, we use the case of the Moscow protests of 2019 against non-admission of independent and oppositional candidates to run for the Moscow city parliament. The sample of over 77,000 comments for 13 videos of more than 100,000 views has undergone pre-processing and vocabulary-based detection of aggression. To assess the impact of hate speech upon the dynamics of the discussions, we have used Granger tests and assessment of discussion histograms; we have also assessed the selected groups of posts in an exploratory manner. Our findings demonstrate that communicative aggression helps to express immediate support and solidarity. It also contextualizes the criticism towards both the authorities and regime challengers, as well as demarcates the counter-public. Moreover, aggression grows in cumulative manner and diminishes when users engage in one-to-one talks. We illustrate cumulative deliberation by the examples from online discussions on Russian YouTube and operationalize the concept for networked discussion studies. We show that, in the
states with no long democratic tradition, cumulative deliberation offers an opportunity to the political opposition, marginalized in the political process and content of traditional media, to accumulate support online. We also show how cumulation of frames employed by the users allows for contextual interpretation of activities of the ruling elites.

**Anna Smoliarova, Yuliya Taranova**

*Media and (or) networked public: Russian-speaking Instagram blogs in Czech Republic, Poland, and Serbia*

Digitalization has profoundly influenced the private and public communication of transnational migrants [Diminescu 2008]. Their mass self-communication [Castells 2010] added new layers to the multi-layered networks of communication comprising a global public sphere [Volkmer 2003]. Social media users with migration background share information about host countries and tell stories about moving and living in a new country in their personal blogs. As residents, they can be considered "as ambassadors for their place brand who grant credibility to any communicated message" [Braun et al. 2013]. Still, the role of transnational migrants in the place branding remains underresearchered. The involvement of residents as stakeholders is largely facilitated by the development of digital technology and online communication [Kavaratzis, 2012]. Our previous research has shown that bloggers simultaneously pay attention to the advantages of the country they moved in and reflect critically the patterns of life organization in host countries. Interaction with the followers, other bloggers with migration background and their follower/followee network creates an arena for social critique, thus, the critical networked publics [boyd 2010] emerges through mass self-communication. In this paper, we explore how Russian-speaking Instagram bloggers residing in Czech Republic, Poland, and Serbia contribute to the formation of host country image. Through the content analysis of posts published in 2020 in 9 blogs (three per country), we reveal the topicality in their coverage of the host country and ways in presenting information to the audience. To evaluate the structure of the public(s) we developed a methodology for studying comment sections under the posts on Instagram. Our findings suggest that bloggers with migration background simultaneously perform as migrant media and as participants of the public. This dualistic nature influences their participation in the formation of the host country image. The focus on the three countries also contributes to the comparative studies of media systems.

**Kamilla Nigmatullina, Nikolay Rodossky**

*Complaining audiences and hyperlocal journalism on VK.com*

Social networks in Russia have become a source of hyperlocal news in the Russian regions, as well as a space to share emotions and, in particular, complaints. Recently, the Russian local governments have started to monitor public opinion via official accounts, local news media accounts, and automated systems for collecting complaints. Thus, the local segments of social media platforms are today a powerful tool for constant exploring of citizens’ attitudes towards public issues. Even official local media have started to use the officials’ accounts on social networks as a source for user-generated stories and monitoring of complaints. As Western researchers claim (Jangdal, 2019), hyperlocal media play today a huge role in news flows and in constructing the very social fabric (boyd, 2019). However, there is still no answer to what extent they invest in democracy. This gap is especially wide for the countries beyond Euroatlantics, like Russia. In politically and communicatively restricted public spheres like Russian, platforms are considered to be open for discussions while, in fact, audiences are limited by many factors, starting from platform rules to legislation and spread of fake news, as well as legal restrictions (Litvinenko & Kharuk, 2017). Our research question is how discussions and complaints on social networks, especially at officials’ accounts, affect hyperlocal journalism and are treated by it. The paper is based on content analysis of 30 media on Russian social network VK.com in 10 Russian regions/ We have also conducted 12 expert interviews with regional journalists and social media managers who work for local authorities to
validate our conclusions from content analysis. As a result, we show that platform logic shapes today local news flows in social networks and increases complaints activity of their audiences.

**Discussant:** Teresa Sasinska-Klas

---

**3.1.3**

*Media regulation – Poland, CEE countries and the EU*

**Chair:** Alicja Jaskiernia / Jędrzej Skrzypczak

**Speakers:**

*Alicja Jaskiernia*

*The technological approach in the European Union’s audiovisual media policy*

The paper presents the challenges and strategies that have been undertaken currently by the EU as a result of the “fourth industrial revolution” and growth of tech industries that plowed not only the economic market but the lifestyle of every European. The European Union’s audiovisual media policy has been developed over the last couple of years as a substantial part of digitalization and convergence of the communication and culture sectors. In that vision a successful transformation of audiovisual media sector is based on the adaptation into new technological infrastructure and development of new skills (both citizens and professionals), resulting in a more resilient and prosperous society. There are many challenges associated with that move audiovisual industry into digital world where dominance of tech companies is more and more visible. Among several concrete objectives of the EU’s strategy in that area for the media are some key points: a digitally skilled population, secure and performant sustainable digital infrastructures and progressive digital transformation of businesses. The strategy includes a set of principles designing digital rules and regulations that deliver the benefits of digitalisation for media and creative sectors as well as for all citizens. This approach emphasise the necessity to support such values as: public interests issues (f.e. freedom of expression, pluralism, protection of minors), access to diverse and trustworthy information, increase responsibilities of internet platforms, etc. Accelerated shift towards digital world forces further modernization of common rules in the single markets for new media sector covering aspects like: advertising, promotion of European works, the possibility of sharing content across the EU, and the various challenges around fake news and disinformation and the spread of illegal content online.

*Jędrzej Skrzypczak*

*The future and prospects of press publishers in the Digital Single Market*

The speech will present the results of research conducted among Polish Press Publishers in 2020 about the challenges of media policy in the time of digitization of the media market (especially the printed, local, regional press). Panel: The Technological Approach in Media Policy
**Beata Klimkiewicz**

*Media, state and transparency: Gateways and limits of media transparency regulation in Poland*

Over the past decades, platform players have replaced many functions of traditional news media. At the same time, new and old media interrelate and give a way to entire “hybrid media system”. The proposed paper addresses the implications of the analysis of news media transparency in this environment for understanding the ongoing risks to democratic functions of the news media. On the one hand, media transparency stems from conditions under which the media players attempt to make themselves reliable vis-à-vis their users and other actors (e.g. MRA). On the other hand, an outcome of media transparency depends also on how the public institutions share full, publicly accessible information about their actions or regulatory interventions concerning the news media and platforms. In this paper, news media transparency is assessed at the policy level, taking into consideration evolving policy standards in Europe (such as the 5 ALM Directive – in particular Art. 30, revised AVMS Directive – in particular Recital 15, and self-regulatory instruments). The state of art at the national level is examined through the analysis of regulation in place according to three strains: economic, political and social transparency. In addition to regulation, selected cases of policy outcomes will be studied.

**Dagmara Sidyk-Furman**

*The approach of audiovisual regulators to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Case of Ofcom and KRRiT*

The global COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the way we not only live and work but also communicate. During this unprecedented time, the sector of communication is heavily influenced by the pandemic: broadcasters are adapting their schedules to maintain high-quality content to entertain and inform the public, and telecoms providers are working to ensure resilience across landline, broadband and mobile services as the demands on networks increase. This is also the time when media regulatory authorities appear in the spotlight: keeping in mind the importance of connectivity and playing a vital role in supporting business and individuals. The aim of this paper will be to present the importance of the activities carried out by audiovisual media regulatory authorities in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. A detailed analysis will be carried out in order to identify, present and systematise mechanisms regarding the structure and methodology of their actions. The basis of empirical studies, as well as desk research and documents review, will provide observations of activities in the field of communication in the wake of the coronavirus. A part of the paper will be dedicated to the case studies of Ofcom and KRRiT –regulatory authorities representative for two models of the regulation of the audiovisual media: the convergent and traditional approach. Finally, this paper will try to estimate the efficiency of the regulators' actions from the perspective of the public.

**Katarzyna Konarska**

*Ex ante tests in the media policy of Central and Eastern countries*

Ex ante testing was introduced in Europe in response to the European Commission’s call to define standards for the development of public service broadcasters in new media markets. The first evaluations were carried out in Great Britain, Germany and Belgium. From the perspective of over a decade, it turns out that evaluation causes a lot of problems. The main objection is that public service media is treated as part of the market. Media with public tasks are held accountable for how their services affect the market. That is why the necessity to evaluate the activities of public media in the performance of their public tasks is more and more often mentioned. What is the role of tests in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe? Some countries, such as Hungary, Poland and Lithuania have introduced a value assessment into their laws. What is the practice? Have the ex ante tests worked? To what extent do they serve the society and to what extent the market and competition?
Michał Kuś, Paulina Barczyszyn-Madziarz
Disinformation as a challenge to media policy

Unfortunately, opportunities created recently by the development of digital media are also exploited in very iniquitous ways, and the weaponization of digital platforms has become reality. Waves of disinformation and the development of fake news production practices, especially in online media, are increasingly visible and relevant phenomena, influencing political, economic and social processes in many countries (Bradshaw & Howard, 2018), but also in the international context, e.g. Russia’s activity in the field of disinformation, which (Freedom House, 2018). In this context, disinformation practices are also increasingly seen as a challenge to media policy, both on national and international (European Union) level. Our paper discusses the most important of these challenges - and responses given by national and international policy makers.

Discussant: Beata Klimkiewicz

3.1.4
Regional experiences during COVID-19 pandemic

Chair: Dina Vozab

Speakers:

Sónia Cristina Melo da Silva, Teresa Ruão, Sandra Marinho
Evaluating Communication Online Training in the Workplace during COVID-19 Pandemic

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic and sequent government policies all over the world, in 2020, schools and companies suddenly had to carry out online learning, although without any previous groundwork. The pandemic changed the world rapidly and consequently the way people and organizations learn, interact and communicate. Even so, this emergency context also provides numerous learning opportunities to communication scholars. Therefore, this research aimed to understand the value and risks of communication online training in workplace environments, by studying workers perceptions on communication training programs using virtual settings, regarding interest, participation and impact in task performance. More specifically, the research looked to analyze: (1) how companies adjusted their communication training programs to distance learning models; (2) how employees evaluate the development of their communication skills; and (3) the level of employee satisfaction in the face of distance training. It is, therefore, a research that combines theoretical and practical knowledge developed in the fields of organizational communication, communication training and distance learning, in order to deepen the comprehension on how organizational learning can be sustained in the face of teleworking and social distance measures. Organizations need to establish communication skills training programs that help employees achieve high levels of performance to reach market demands. According to literature, the development of such programs improves the communicative performance of teams, but also their confidence levels, leadership abilities, and creative intelligence (Brown & Bylund, 2008;
Chaoensap-Kelly, Broussard, Lindsly & Troy 2016; Coffelt, Grauman & Smith 2019; Rodgers et al., 2018, for example). However, since March 2020, organizational learning practices have been largely migrating to virtual environments, which present many new challenges. In the past year, several studies have focused on the impact of distance learning, but mainly in schools settings (Alawamleh, Al-Twait & Al-Saht, 2020; Daniel, 2020; Lassoued, Alhendawi & Bashitialshaaer, 2020) and fewer in organizational contexts (as Rodriguez-Santero et al. 2020). In order to fill this gap – regarding the scarcity of research on online communication training practices in workplace environments –, this study was developed to analyze the adjustments made in the communication training programs of a multinational automobile company. This analysis was developed in the context of a broader study on the functioning of the internal communication system in the company that used the action research methodology. After a diagnostic phase has been carried out - using documentary analysis, non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews as data gathering methods - , a conclusion emerged: the training on communication skills was indispensable to improve the quality of information flows and the interaction abilities within teams. Following this evidence, a program of three communication workshops - one in person (in a less severe period of the pandemic) and two remotely (in a more severe moment of the pandemic) - was organized with 36 of the company's team leaders, in the second semester of 2020. After the training, participants completed an evaluation questionnaire, in which they were asked to compare the face-to-face workshop with the online workshops. Results showed that the organization was able to adapt its communication training program to the virtual environment, while maintaining high levels of participation and interest. In addition, employees considered that distance training was favorable to the development of knowledge about human, organizational, and team communication. However, it was also noticed that workshops were less effective regarding actual changes in communication practices in their daily lives. Concerning the online setting, some gains were mentioned in the survey: the possibility to participate from any location at any time; the involvement of a larger number of people; and the relaxed environment of telework that facilitates learning. In the list of disadvantages, collaborators pointed out: the ease of distraction and the incitement to do other tasks simultaneously; the difficulty of concentration; the reduced interaction between participants; and the absence of non-verbal communication. Still, most respondents admitted that they were interested in participating in more online communication training programs. Taking into account this data, as well as other data collected by observation during the workshops - such as the tendency of employees not to turn on the cameras - , it can be include that: planning and preparation should inevitably be done for better online learning in the future since it requires more time than face-to-face class to be well-prepared and ready; the moderators must be equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills to maximize their practices in carrying out the online learning; and the participants must be familiarized with online learning to enhance their digital literacy and refine their misperceptions about this new setting. In addition, the lack of internet quota and stable connection are critical issues to attend to. Therefore, online communication training demands a comprehensive integration of technology in information and communication learning, and more researches should be encouraged to investigate the consequences of switching face-to-face training into online learning in workplaces.

Li Peng-Peng

Communication mechanism and inspiration of Covid-19 in Chinese society

In December 2019, the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus Covid-19 (Coronavirus Disease-2019) risk event caused tens of thousands of infections and thousands of deaths worldwide in just a few weeks, and there are still a large number of infections and deaths. Considering that the public, as the most direct victim of risks or risk events, often presents complex dynamics in multiple discussions such as experts, government, and media, the perceived risk attributes and risk hazards will further affect its behavior and the effectiveness of government risk management. Therefore, this study wants to know what kind of communication pattern this risk event presents, including the role of government, media, and individuals in communication. How are traditional media and social media performing in the fight against the epidemic? What factors affect the public's perception of this risk event? To solve the above problems, this study use case study and the combination of depth interview method, by “individual - organization relationship”, “individual cognitive action”, “cultural identity” of the path, to the risk event propagation mechanism and management practice, review, and reflection, observing for effective control of risk and
public communication research reference in the future. First of all, the outbreak of Covid-19 is a sudden risk event with uncertainty, novelty, and concealment. Government and traditional media in the process of information spread, and generally presents the “Information lag - mass reporting – accountability - information correction - unified caliber” of the transmission mechanism, still follow the “technical model” in the process of transmission, the pursuit of the scientific reasoning process, and discusses in epidemic information appear inconsistent situation, reduced the public trust of traditional media, caused the upsurge of collective negative emotions. According to this study, the specific transmission mechanism of epidemic information in social media can be summarized into three stages. First, the “perception, early warning, and diffusion” of epidemic information in social media can trigger attention and reports from mainstream media and official notification from official units “from bottom to top”. Secondly, by using the scientist (Zhong Nanshan)’s speech and risk comparison (SARS) and the strategy of “fear appeal”, the risk perception and emotional response of the public were stimulated, and then the interpersonal communication, discussion, and network forwarded effects were enhanced. Finally, the comments of social media and mainstream media formed a dynamic cycle of “interaction - union - error correction”, and completed a complete closed-loop of risk information dissemination. Therefore, three implications are drawn from this study. First, the government should strengthen the use of social media, improve the rumor control and fact-checking mechanism, and maintain dialogue, communication, and contact with the public on time. Secondly, in the process of spreading risk information, the media should pay attention to the timely and accurate reporting and presentation of risks or risk events, and deal with the social and public psychological impact of risk reporting prudently. Third, the public should enhance the awareness of risk information identification and dissemination to avoid the spread of rumor information.

**Mahmoud Farhadimahalli, Zohreh Javadieh**

*Studying the reactions of Iranian celebrities and their fans to Covid-19 on Instagram*

Due to some socio-economic changes in recent decades, celebrity culture has emerged in Iran society. There are many facts that show the importance of celebrities and their impact on the society. Amir tataloo an Iranian celebrity break the record of comments on Instagram with more than 18 million comments. Popular media products such as yellow magazines and TV shows transform sports athletes, music and cinema artists to popular celebrities. Rising online social media is a new opportunity for celebrity culture, because in one hand new informal space have been created that government could not control over it, and on the other hand ordinary users have obtained the power to participate in content creating and sharing. In this context, Instagram has a key role in Iranian Celebrity Culture. Instagram is an online mobile photo and video-sharing and social networking service that enables Iranian celebrities to share their photos with their fans. Moreover Instagram in one of few non-Iranian social networking services that have not been filtered by the Iranian government, so both celebrities and ordinary users can freely access this application. With the covid-19 crisis, both celebrities and their fans reacted to the phenomenon. In this article, we studied Iranian celebrities and the activities of their fans on Instagram during the covid-19 crisis. Using qualitative methodology approach, by analyzing celebrity photos and texts on Instagram and fan comments on their posts during this crisis. Results showed that both celebrities and fans use their space for different purposes. The results of these online activities are the circulation of celebrity culture on Iranian Instagram which is not the same as real actions of citizens in the society. So, Iranian fans are not satisfied with the actions of domestic celebrities by comparing the actions of foreign celebrities with those of Iranian celebrities.

**Natalia Walkowiak**

*The image of the pandemic in Polish women's magazines*

The pandemic has changed people's everyday life. According to the research carried out by CBOS in January 2021, over 65% of Poles are afraid of coronavirus infection. Not surprisingly, the topic of coronavirus has also completely dominated the media discourse. This applies to all types of media, both new and traditional. In this research, the author focuses on the image of the pandemic in Polish women's
magazines. This segment is an important element of the Polish media system and accounts for approximately 20% of the entire magazine market. The aim of this research is to show how women's magazines communicate the issue of the pandemic (What subjects are mentioned and how are they presented? What journalistic genres are used? Who plays an expert role on coronavirus-related topics?). The author chose two monthly magazines for her study, both are sales leaders in their segments: “Twój Styl” (luxury magazine) and “Kobieta i Życie” (advice magazine). The analysis is based on 12 monthly editions of each title from 2020. The qualitative content analysis focused on: cover content, political information on the government's fight against the virus and the 2020 presidential election in Poland, expert advice, interviews with celebrities, advertisements, and health and beauty during the pandemic. This paper is an attempt to answer the aforementioned questions and to show the relationship between the type of communication and journalistic genres, and the type of magazines in which they are contained.

Romina Surugiu, Vyara Angelova
A risk to me? A risk to us? Media and pandemic. Insights from Bulgaria and Romania

There is a legitimate question nowadays related to the status of media institution and journalism practice during the pandemic of COVID-19. The paper's aim is to analyze the status of media and journalism in Romania and Bulgaria during the emergency state from March–May, 2020. Taking into account the Romanian and Bulgarian experience, we argue that the academic investigation on media and journalism during the global crisis should take into consideration the prior state of the domain. Therefore, we conducted a research based on statistics, official data and media discourse regarding the media and journalism in the two countries, before and during the emergency state. We focused on two levels: (a) media institutions, (b) journalism practice. We raise the question of the possible result of the combination between the economic crisis of media in Romania and Bulgaria and the unexpected Covid-19 crisis that might lead to a new information order, where nobody can be sure that the democracy values will be in the center. In this context, we argue for the necessity of re-evaluating the importance of media institutions for our society, and of challenging the opinion of the prominent researcher Mark Deuze that traditional news industry can be discarded as it is not necessary for quality journalism and journalists to survive.

Edina Kriskó
An illiberal Press Genre. The Press Conferences of the Operational Group during the SARS COVID-19 Pandemic in Hungary

On 31st January in 2020, the Hungarian Government decided to establish an Operational Group responsible for managing the coronavirus epidemic. Till then, the daily press conferences of this unit were (and still are) the central forum of the government communications on the SARS-COVID-19 pandemic to citizens. Later, of course, a (seemingly or semi-)independent government information website (koronavirus.gov.hu) and a Facebook page (Coronavirus Information Page – facebook.com/koronavirus.gov.hu) were created. As the pandemic period progressed, the public, instead of widening, has become narrower. The Operational Group began to increasingly ignore first the journalists’ and later the rest of the (entirely legitimate) questions. A high degree of arbitrariness could be observed in the publishing of data, in the selection of journalistic questions and mediums, and in answering. Thus, the communication of the government (which characterized its governance as illiberal) has taken a very risky turn. One of the main tasks of epidemic management is to build trust with civilians, which is based on fast, accurate and credible information. If there is no intention whatsoever to do this at a governmental level, it is difficult to imagine achieving the goals set out in the WHO Communication Guide, such as applying human-centred and community-driven approaches, strengthening trust and social cohesion, which together can reduce the negative effects of COVID-19. In my presentation, I compare the communication practice of the Hungarian Operational Group with the definitions of the press conference as a press genre, the previous information policy principles of the Hungarian press
history, and the professional recommendations of the crisis communication experts and academic literature of the crisis communication profession.

Magdalena Ratajczak
Solidarity in the crisis

The world faces various crises, which affect particular regions (continents) or are more global in nature, such as the recent economic crisis, the migration crisis that started in 2015 or the current Covid-19 pandemic. Migrations and the pandemic have become an important element of discourse in the media. It is partly through the migration crisis and then, to a fuller extent the Covid-19 pandemic, that use and frequency of use of the media has changed. This presentation focuses on the narratives about refugees and migrants as well as information about the Covid-19 pandemic, in the context of mutual understanding, solidarity with others, community-building in a crisis, all presented through the media of photographs. I have studied the subject of refugees and migrants in the media for a number of years using various research methods. This paper is the result of an analysis of visual images on the internet. I have posed the question as to what extent do the images taken during the migrant crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic shape or create the discourse supporting such notions as solidarity, understanding others, community or helping others.

Discussant: Anna Słupek

3.2 SESSION II

3.2.1
International relations and media

Chair: Malgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska

Speakers:

Julia Trzcińska, Róża Norström
Polish Press Agency as a non-state actor in international politics?

Scholars often acknowledge that news agencies, sometimes referred to as press agencies, are not only “a source of news and knowledge about events, a supplier of products that are processed by the mass media and reach to the audience”, but also “wholesale news providers” and a component of the news cycle. In the era of misinformation and fake news, reliable sources are exceptionally important and many users tend to seek that quality in news and press agencies. We believe that more focus should be put on their role in each country’s media system, and also domestic and foreign politics, as well as international information cycle. Our presentation will focus on Polish Press Agency’s (PAP) case. It will provide general information of the agency’s status and context of its functioning as well as the content of its materials. Firstly, we will focus on the place of PAP in Polish media system to verify which of the two stances is more true in this case: the one suggesting that press agencies are an element of the external environment of the system, or the one arguing that because they are both the information carrier and a source of it, they should be seen as relatively close to the core of the system. This part of the presentation will allow us to verify the first hypothesis (H1) arguing that PAP is highly politically dependent (institutionally, legally, etc.). Secondly,
we will focus more on the potential of PAP in international relations and information cycle. We will make analysis of the content published on the agency's website in both Poland and English. This will allow us to verify two hypotheses. First one (H2) stating that PAP's English-language articles more often create a positive image of Poland in the international arena than Polish-language ones, and the second one (H3) arguing that PAP articles reflect the directions of Poland's foreign policy. Mixed research methods will be used to conduct the study. It is planned to conduct content analysis with elements of framing, as well as comparative analysis, systems analysis, and desk research. Content analysis will be the main research method and will be carried out using the MAXQDA program allowing for the analysis of textual and audiovisual materials, which is a key function in the context of the scope of the proposed research. Ten randomly selected days during one month will be analyzed. The code system created for this task will allow for further comparative research on different countries' press agencies in the future. In the end our presentation will not only present the verification of the three aforementioned hypotheses, but also it will be the first step to answer the question whether Polish Press Agency can be regarded as a non-state actor in international politics.

**Gergely Gosztonyi**

*How states around the world censor the Internet?*

"The Internet has now become one of the principal means by which individuals exercise their right to freedom to receive and impart information and ideas." (European Court of Human Rights, cited in Cengiz and Others v. Turkey). Are these rights merely window dressing for some countries? How is this connected to censorship? Perhaps the most crucial question is what lies behind this so-called Potemkin village that is very much in evidence? For example, in 2019, there were at least 213 documented internet shutdowns worldwide, with the number of countries experiencing shutdowns increasing from 25 in 2018 to 33 in 2019 – or 17% of the countries in the world today. In this respect, Russian and Turkey are standouts as landmark cases that have come before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Moreover, the question is not only examinable on a European level: in 2020, a court in India finds indefinite restrictions in Kashmir illegal, and shutdown also happened in Africa and Latin-America. Here, the fundamental issue is blocking access to the Internet, regardless of the methods (collateral blocking, excessive blocking, wholesale blocking, slowing down internet traffic, or a combination of the above) used by each State. The presentation examines the use of shutdowns worldwide in recent years intending to understand how these States, in particular, are responding to the propagation of fake news, hate speech, content that promotes violence, and how to balance drastic measures with the need to ensure public safety and/or national security and freedom of expression.

**Jakub Stolarczyk**

*Searching for publicity – radical non-state parties and their search for popularity on social media*

Radical nonstate parties are searching for publicity, furthermore, it appears that social media became an excellent platform of conduct due to cheap and wide possibilities for becoming popular. Politically unstable Central and Eastern Europe, incapable of creating effective limitations remain exposed for such activity. How do these radical parties reach millions with recorded executions if Facebook bans accounts just because of using particular words? How do they overcome affordances, limitations, and how reach both supporters and wider auditorium in order to spread fear? The conference speech will be focused on how social media affordances shape the actions of chosen radical parties conducting actions in the area mentioned above. In addition, the speech will bring to debate how the limitations created by affordances restrict the parties' actions. The counterpublic theory will act as the main theoretical background. So far the theory was referred to in relation to democratic movements, such as feminist or ecological however the main hypothesis of the paper states that the counterpublic sphere might be the solution for radical non-state parties in order to successfully conduct activity in social media. The author will present
preliminary results on the issues as part of his doctoral thesis. Ten chosen parties will be analyzed in light of the theoretical issues mentioned above in order to increase the reliability of proving the hypothesis. The author will examine social media platforms in Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia and compare similar posts posted and reposted by radical nonstate parties operating there. A list of keywords being used as content might be created in the process.

**Marta Kobylska**

*Enemy image construction in US Presidents’ justifications for the use of force*

This article identifies the characteristic elements of the enemy image construction in presidential justifications for the use of force in times of international crises. President Donald J. Trump’s representation of Iran in the 2019-2020 Persian Gulf crisis is the starting point for the examination. A close reading of the president’s rhetoric reveals what tools were used to shape the enemy image of Iran and how they were similar to or different from those used by his post-Cold War predecessors in their efforts to define foreign states as adversaries. The analysis is based on particular typologies of crisis/war rhetoric, including those defined by Theodore Otto Windt, Jr., Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, and Edward J. Lordan. With the rhetorical elements identified, the article discusses the implications of the adherence to and departures from the convention of the enemy image construction in presidential foreign crisis rhetoric.

**Teodora Şandru, Andreea Mogoș**

*Media frames in ro.sputnik.md. The coverage of the 2019 Romanian presidential campaign*

The 2019 presidential campaign was a major national event that held the attention of the Romanian news media. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the content produced and distributed by the site ro.sputnik.md, a Romanian language media outlet funded by the Government of the Russian Federation, reveals political and ideological leanings in the coverage of the two main presidential candidates campaigns. Our research aims to detect the main frames used by ro.sputnik.md to portray Klaus Iohannis (candidate of the National Liberal Party) and Viorica Dăncilă (candidate of the Social Democratic Party). The content analysis and the lexical analysis were applied to the sample of articles (N=226) about the two candidates. The time frame covers the first and second rounds of the electoral campaign (from October 12 to November 9, 2019 and from November 15 to November 23.) The textual analysis focuses on the types of headlines, linguistic elements aimed to capture the attention, the frames used, the use of sarcasm and irony. The visual frame analysis considers the types of shots, the angles of the photos, the nonverbal language displayed in the photos published together with the sample articles. The small size of the sample allows a semiautomated frequency analysis, with an in-depth analysis of the rhetoric and persuasive formulas used by the articles published on ro.sputnik.md. The preliminary analysis reveals an unbalanced coverage of the two candidates. The headline construction technique relies on click bait, with a keyword vocabulary selection focused on the lexicon of war and the exploit of negative emotions, such as fear. The female candidate, Viorica Dăncilă is associated with strength/power visual frames, while president Klaus Iohannis is portrayed as being the opposite.

**Katarzyna Pagacz**

*How to compare digital diplomacy activities? The proposal of E-dip measure*

The aim of this paper is to present the way of measuring the potential of effectiveness of using social media in the public diplomacy of the European Union countries. The theoretical considerations allowed to identify that the particular use of language can determine the targeting of the messages and that the attractiveness of the message is associated with the type of the content. On the base of these considerations a universal measure (called E-dip) has been developed. The measure was applied to three
types of entities of the national diplomatic system of each European Union country. The quantitative analysis was based on the data related to content published in 2018 in five most popular social media - Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Flickr. The conducted research allowed to compare countries and their representatives and capture both the similarities between them and differences in approach to social media.

**Discussant:** Teresa Sasińska-Klas

---

### 3.2.2

**Old and new ways of political expression**

**Chair:** Agnieszka Stępińska

**Speakers:**

**Ralitsa Kovacheva**

*The 'gender danger': how the EU became an enemy of the traditional values*

The paper studies the creation and dissemination of a sustainable anti-EU narrative in Bulgaria based on the supposed contradiction between European values and traditional Bulgarian values. The European (liberal) values are (mis)represented as morally rotten and corrupt, thus incompatible with the (good) traditional Bulgarian values. By comparing the EU-related narratives prevalent in the Bulgarian public sphere from 2014 to 2021, the paper proves that the value-based narrative appeared at the end of 2017 due to the debates on the so-called Istanbul convention. However, the real reason behind its broad popularity is its instrumentalization by political parties. The paper presents the main themes and stories constructing the 'Gender Danger' narrative and its prominent advocates. The outcomes presented in the paper are based on the author's own empirical studies, conducted in 2014, 2017, 2019 and 2021. A whole and specific new language was coined due to this issue. It is claimed that the EU is imposing a policy of 'gender ideology', 'gender propaganda' or even 'genderism'. 'Gender' is a newly invented noun used to name people with fluctuations or deviations in sexual orientation and/or gender identity, as well as activists and NGOs supporting 'the genders'. The paper also looks for traces leading this 'Gender Danger' narrative to the Kremlin propaganda and the ultra-conservative propaganda in the West, both using the same moral value-based criticism against liberalism in general and the EU in specific.

**Szymon Wigienka**

*Challenging the 'leftist social media': Polish conservative media discourse on right-wing alternative social media*

During the ongoing debate on content moderation on social media sites, that escalated mainly due to the deplatforming of Donald Trump from Facebook and Twitter at the beginning of 2021, alt-tech social networking services (SNS) gained popularity. The platforms (e.g., Parler or Gab) promised less rigorous moderation policies ensuring their users that they will not be banned or muted in any way for publishing posts. A couple of such platforms were launched in Poland as well (e.g., Wolni Słownik and Albicla). They criticize mainstream social media for "liberal bias" and present themselves as protectors of freedom of speech. The study provides the first in-depth overview of the state of debate on the alt-tech SNS in the
Polish conservative media. The main research question is: how is the issue discursively constructed in these media outlets? To look into the problem, I will implement Critical Discourse Analysis. The method allows for tracking how various voices try to impose and neutralize certain meanings in order to enforce or sustain preferred social order – including (re)shaping the media landscape. Based on the empirical textual analysis, I will outline the main linguistic choices (i.e., emotionally valuating words, ways of naming and describing core phenomena in the debate), argumentation patterns and normative notions contained in the discourse. The research data consists of news and commentaries concerning the alt-tech SNS published at the beginning of 2021 (when the domestic platforms were launched) in the five most popular Polish digital conservative media. The outlets are: nczas.com, niezalezna.pl, dorzeczy.pl, wpolityce.pl, televizjarepublika.pl. The topic of the alt-tech SNS is worth exploring because it significantly accelerated the debate in the Polish conservative media on intertwined questions of the power of social media companies, various approaches to online content moderation and free speech on the internet. I do not want to evaluate the validity of the discourse but, with systematic research, unpack its inner logic and, as a result, show how the issue can be weaponized in ideological and political struggles.

Paweł Matuszewski, Jarosław Flis, Waldemar Wojtasik

Four sources of success – the EP elections in Poland

The study aims to examine a link between politicians' social media visibility and their election outcome. We argue that the number of votes every candidate obtains in an election can be explained by four variables: social media visibility (recognition and ability to influence public opinion on social media), electoral capital (the candidate's previous electoral achievements), localness (the relationship between the candidate's constituency and place of residence which corresponds with the neighbours voting effect), and party favorability (a measure of adequacy between the candidate's expected – due to the candidate's attributes – and obtained position on the list). Although there are contradictory findings on using social media data to predict political results, we show that social media visibility can successfully replace more often used politicians’ position in traditional media as a cheaper and more available alternative. The beta regression model with social media visibility as a single predictor achieves the R-squared of 0.44, whereas the model with all four predictors achieves the R-squared of 0.68. The in-depth analysis of the candidates’ electoral outcomes leads us to conclusions that they result from four independent forces that form very diversified configurations. We demonstrate these findings by analyzing the Polish European parliamentary election in 2019. The dataset consists of the Polish National Electoral Commission's data and data collected from Twitter and Facebook.

Roksana Zdunek

Youth, media and politics. Social media use among Polish first-time voters: a case study of Covid-19 pandemic and women's strike

Contemporary first-time voters are the oldest representatives of the digitized Polish Generation Z, for whom social media is an attractive source of information about the world, including politics. They have not experienced the world without the Internet hence it makes them an important object of media studies. They are the youngest cohort of voters who has the right to vote in a general election for the first time. The empirical research aims to analyze the use of social media by Polish first-time voters in two cases: in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and women's strike. The coronavirus pandemic is being considered as Gen Z's Generation Defining Moment because creates an unforgettable emotional impact on the threshold of entering adulthood. Women's strike is an event that has politically “awakened” young people. The research focuses on voters making their debut in the 2019 and 2020 elections, i.e. in a period of increased civic activity in Poland (elections to the European Parliament, parliamentary elections, presidential elections). This paper uses survey research (CAWI) to explore activities undertaken in social media by youth concerning the discussed events. The results present also the most popular social media in the studied group (based on the secondary data analysis, i.e.: YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat & TikTok) as a source of information and portray discussed cases as a motivation to increase
interest in politics. A completely new group of young people, different from the previous ones, comes to the fore. They use the media in a revolutionary way and on a large scale, being constantly online. Understanding Generation Z and digitized first-time voters are understanding the future - each of us.

**Olga Dąbrowska-Cendrowska**  
*The profiles of politicians in women’s press in Poland in 1990–2019. Comparative analysis*

As an element of the Polish media system, women's press has been analyzed by researchers from various academic fields. Studies focus on its content, formal features, internal segmentation and questions of ownership and definition. This paper attempts to fill a gap in analysis of the content of women's press, focusing on the presentation of politicians in luxury magazines from 1990 to 2019. The research sample was chosen deliberately and consists of ten magazines. Eight of them were owned by companies with foreign capital (5 German, 3 Swiss) and two belonged to Polish publishers. Consequently, an important element considered during analysis of the materials was the provenance of the capital shaping the Polish women's press market. The author hypothesizes that although women's press is largely dominated by lifestyle advice, it also informed readers about politics by presenting profiles of politicians. Main research topics: dynamics of change in the presentation of politicians, dominant figures, quantitative ratio of Polish to foreign politicians, quantitative analysis by gender and age of the politicians presented.

**Karina Veltzé**  
*Spaces of creative political expression - form, language, community*

Political expression is one of the dimensions of modern political participation brokered by new media. Online activity, primarily in the content space of social media, is attributed mainly to young people with advanced online navigation skills, high potential of creativity, and at the same time looking for alternative ways to manifest their political beliefs. Following the latest news from the institutionalized media, these Internet users translate opinions, news, and comments from the sphere of politics into the language of distributed creativity, whose messages are multimodal, created according to the current, although unwritten, convention. Communities centered around spaces of creative political expression play an important role. Following the poetics of image-words, the Internet users, by using their creative input in an expressive and personalized way, participate in the political life that takes place in virtual reality. Moreover, they interact on this level with other users and with the administrators or creators of each space. The paper aims to discuss the results of research that aimed to diagnose forms of political expression in the Polish Internet space through the perspective of creative participation. In addition, the research includes the determination of the basic types of interaction in communities focused around creative spaces, and the determination of the linguistic convention on the basis of selected case study.

**Discussant:** Agnieszka Walecka - Rynduch
3.2.3 Media and culture

Chair: Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz

Speakers:

Otília Ármeán
Agency and sense of agency in online cultural practices

During the last year we were all banned from participating in our everyday life, using instead online transmission, homework, homeschool and different digital tools. But with all this we have also gained access to cultural or other practices that were previously not part of our everyday life. That resulted in a detailed spectrum of participation, from the form of listening-observing to the different levels of giving feedback and taking control (for example, asking questions from the other participants or the crew, taking part in the discussion, pausing or leaving an event). This paper investigates the possibilities of agency given to participants by online theatre, starting from personal experiences and resulting in questions regarding the medial nature of this new transmission form: to what extent should digitally transmitted performances, shows be considered theatre? And if they are not theatre, what are they?

Dariusz Brzeziński
Media and nostalgia in the 21st century

“The twentieth century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia”, stated in 2001 Svetlana Boym. She claimed that yearning for the past – taking very different forms and involving a variety of practices – will be of increasing importance in contemporary culture. In the twenty years that have passed since Boym’s book The Future of Nostalgia was published, many intellectuals have agreed with this diagnosis. Some of them have referred to the contemporary condition as: “retromania” (Simon Reynolds), “the nostalgic boom” (Katharina Niemayer) or “retrotopia” (Zygmunt Bauman). The extraordinary influence of nostalgia is also clearly visible in media and online communities etc. The new communication revolution not only did not weaken the importance of nostalgia, but even contributed to its petrification. Examples of this phenomenon include: high popularity of films and series referring to past events; references to the aesthetics of the past in the latest TV and film productions; or the fashion for vinyl records, cassette tapes etc. In my speech, I will indicate how modern media (including streaming platforms and social media) contribute to the increase in the popularity of nostalgia, as well as to changes in the way it is experienced. I will also try to answer the question about the role and meaning of nostalgia in the reality of the new communication revolution.

Damian Guzek
Shaping the pope’s authority through media consumption

‘Rome has spoken; the case is closed.’ Today, this statement is still true among many believing Catholics in Poland as synonymous with the papacy settling doctrinal, moral, and disciplinary issues. This conference paper attempts to reverse this sentence and, instead, ask the question of how Pope Francis’ activities open the way for a discussion among web users, who follow the topic with exhuming interest. I want to find out to what extent the form and contents of the Pope’s teachings are subject to changes under the influence of transformations that communication is presently undergoing. Here, I am naturally assuming that the Pope, like every other significant social life actor, is subject to deep mediatization. As a
result, media users, including many believing Catholics, are changing their beliefs about papal authority in the Catholic Church. Within the conference paper, I am dealing with the analysis of in-depth interviews and media diaries of two specific groups of Polish Catholic media users. The research tackles those who perceive the Catholic Church and its guide in the categories of a guardian of God's objective law, which remains valid regardless of the applied context. It is also based on those who perceive the Church as a community of believers in the current world. Therefore, this conference paper’s main issues concern how media users construct papal authority and how they consume this construct.

Małgorzata Kisilowska
Binging - a fad or a permanent change in media consumption?

Binging – and binge-watching in particular – has been receiving growing interest from communication scientists for a couple of years. It has been explored as a research field more intensively since the streaming platforms started offering complete seasons of series. Thus, after five decades of watching audiovisual content according to TV selections and schedules, a recipient gained more decision-making regarding the contents and way of watching. The author aims at the analysis of factors influencing the potential permanence of this specific way of media consumption, with literature review as the main method. These factors include different definitions of the concept (and thus its perception), synonyms (e.g. media marathoning), applying the "binging" term to different media formats (binge-watching - binge-listening - binge-reading - binge-gaming), technological and social circumstances (participatory culture, listicle culture), content providers' influence on the audience behaviour, and - last but not least - individual conditions and lifestyles of media users. These factors differ in their quality and scale. Will their convergence and synergy change permanently practices of media consumption? One can confirm that referring to previous changes in media differentiation, accessibility, and reception, although binging would probably become rather next, but not dominating form of media practices of leisure time.

Jarosław Kinal
Media consumption in the interface regions on the example of Poland, Ukraine and Hungary. Analysis of empirical research

The aim of the presentation is to present the panel research conducted on media consumption in the contact regions of three selected countries. As part of the study, 456 users living in border areas with the intention of getting to know their communication rituals, the absorption of domestic and foreign media as well as preferred places and forms of reception were tested using the CATI method. The research allowed for the formulation of some interesting conclusions regarding the method, times and places of collection, and allowed for the creation of initial reception profiles of the inhabitants of the border areas. The selection of regions in three countries allowed for the identification of differences that may be useful not only in research on the media and their recipients, but also in marketing research and research on consumerism.

Eugent Kllapi
Characteristics of advertisements in Albanian newspapers for the years 2013-2015

As a for-profit organization, the media has two functions: the transmission of information as a public good for the widest possible involvement of the public and its trust, as well as its second functioning, financial gain as a media industry. In the second function, the most important part of them is to absorb as much advertising as possible for its survival, also in function of the free market economy system. Among the main media where we are informed are the print media. In competition with other media, classic or new media, newspapers try to position themselves in this market and absorb their share of advertising.
Their survival with the emergence of new media is difficult due to the fact that advertisements are positioned more in the new media, especially on television. But how do advertisements vary in periods and between dailies in Albania? How are advertisements distributed according to daily newspapers and their type? What problems are distinguished between the written newspapers? This scientific approach is based on a monitoring for the years 2013-2015 in certain monthly periods. It tends to provide some answers to these crucial questions.

**Teodora-Elena Grapă**

*The Joker myth as mediated stereotype in international media discourse*

This study is a critical investigation of the Joker’s ubiquity within international news media discourse and online participatory culture. Using a mixed-methods design, the research comparatively examines the myth’s presence within The Guardian and The New York Times’ news reporting (1999-2020) and determines intermedia agenda-setting processes (Coleman and Campbell, 2019). The paper also examines news media’s deployment of the Joker as a figure of speech, with the purpose of identifying prominent news values (Caple, 2018). The results indicate a high prevalence of consonance, eliteness, proximity, negativity, and superlativeness. Moreover, the study investigates the role that user-generated media plays in perpetuating or countering dominant hegemonies, through semiotic and intertextual analysis (Kellner, 2020; Chandler, 1999; Hall, 1997) of internet memes that use the myth within the r/meme subreddit community. Overall, the study finds that the Joker is a popular resource for the mediated construction of a derogatory stereotype, often in connection to political actors and celebrities.

**Discussant:** Sławomir Doległo

---

3.2.4

*Risks and threats of contemporary communication*

**Chair:** Katarzyna Drąg

**Speakers:**

**Marita Zitmane, Elza Lāma**

‘Wake up and think of the children!’: Ambivalent relationship between motherhood, femininity and anti-vaccination

Anti-vaccination sentiments have grown strong in public discourse in recent decades and especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, as online environment has proved to be the fertile setting for spreading conspiracy theories and false news. Anti-vaccine groups are using social networks to spread dubious health information, creating their own content without any evidence to confuse users who access their pages (Ortiz-Sánchez, Velando-Soriano et.al, 2020). Recent surveys found men were more likely to take the Covid-19 vaccine, compared to women (National Geographic survey, Gallup poll, Pew Survey, etc.), whilst existing studies show that the “vast majority” of people commenting, sharing, and liking anti-vaccination information on Facebook are women. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend, how notions about femininity and motherhood relate to decisions about vaccination. The dominant discourse of contemporary motherhood supports “intensive mothering”, coined by Hays (1996), which implies...
reinforcing traditional gender roles and providing undivided attention to the child, in order to ensure the best possible environment for his/her development (Schoppe-Sullivan, S.J., Yavorsky, J.E., Bartholomew, M.K. et al., 2017). “Intensive mothering” and Western culture has also gradually transformed childbearing and rearing from a natural phenomenon into a strictly medicalized process, valuing physical wellbeing of child and mother above all else, and stressing the superiority of medical knowledge over any alternatives, including woman’s own knowledge of her body and instincts (Miller, 2005). Alternative medicine and esoteric well-being is often assumed to be attractive to women because it is coherent with normative femininity (being caring and gentle, having strong communication skills, taking emotions seriously, and seeking to care for rather than cure) as well as it legitimizes the relationality that women are socialized to embody in their care-giving (Sointu and Woodhead, 2008). Recommending against vaccination is common amongst esoteric well-being practitioners (Ernst, 2001). Therefore, although the dominant discourse of motherhood both stresses the importance of “Western medicine” and places the weight of health and other decisions on the shoulders of mother, various alternative discourses have also emerged. “Hypnobirth” movements, “free range parenting”, “yummy/slummy mommies” etc., challenge the principles of “intensive mothering” (Das, 2019). However, many of them continue to acknowledge the framework of the dominant discourse instead of creating a new one. Thus, this paper explores the ambivalent relationship between the dominant discourse of “intensive mothering”, femininity and the “anti-vaccination” movement: the connection between gender roles, imposed by a patriarchal society, and the “antivaxx” movement supporters. The study raises the following research questions:

- How is the dominant discourse of intensive mothering reproduced or challenged in the social media posts and comments of the opposers of child vaccination?
- What are the core arguments employed by “anti-vaxx” supporters?
- How does the notion of traditional femininity play out within the ‘anti-vaxx’ discourse?
- How does the patriarchal concept of motherhood influence decisions about vaccination?

The research employs discourse analysis and netnography approach to Facebook threads that are discussing arguments concerning vaccination of children. Analysis of two Facebook groups “Atsaučīgo māmīnu forums” [Sympathetic Mothers’ forum] and “Vākcinrēalitāte Latvijā” [Vaccine reality in Latvia] is carried out for a period of eight months (October 2020 – May 2021), when the discourse of vaccination grew strength due to vaccination of adults against Covid-19. “Vākcinrēalitāte Latvijā” functions as a Facebook page and it has 7604 followers. “Atsaučīgo māmīnu forums” is a private group on Facebook with 25,6 thousand members. Both are heavily targeting women in particular mothers. The study sheds light on the pressing problem of tackling false news on social media, providing valuable insights into the arguments, fears, emotions, and views of people, especially mothers, struggling to link seemingly conflicting concepts of “good mothering”, anti-vaccination and properly “doing gender” online.

Qiu MoFan

Record, link and revolt. Alternative practices of journalism under the State of Exception in Hong Kong

In the 21st Century, there is still no fact emerges without giving rise to the struggle of subjective knowledge about population control and surveillance. This action in the AoT (Analytics of Things) age, also the intellectuals, cannot take up the challenge of tradition without deconstructing the paradigms, techniques, and practices through which it regulates transmission forms. We could provisionally call ‘Critique of Human Sciences’ the course within New Communication Revolution; however, Journalism as an essentially anthropic and linguistic discipline is more subordinate and aphasic to the technical algorithm than ever before. This Network Society inquiry tried to make the “self-redemption” practices of journalists comprehensible in Hong Kong. In the first part, the author compares several texts proclaimed by the State Council of China that determine the knowing subject and mainstream development strategy in recent years. It is just for this reason that the discourse link to the micro-level of state—own media institution’s news production process—the Media Convergence strategy, shaped the cooperation relationships between multinational corporations, state-own media institutions, and political institutions. These dimensions would thus seem to affect the borders of the nation-state profoundly. The second part examines Castells, Foucault’s theories on urban spatial transformation and population governance. Based on the empirical field investigation of the subjective identity movement of 《Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill》movement in Hong Kong, it puts forward the problem awareness of this study: What is at
stake (Epoché, suspension) in the displacement of the historical sequence paradigm from Old (the postindustrial society) to New (an ultimate internet algorithm convergence). Finally, take the "Likecoin" as an example, which has shaped the Liquid-democracy and extends the concept of platform-cooperationism, suggests that the transition of alternative media operations and how is it refers to various media aspects social, political, economic, or technological activities in Asia. In this sense, the mainstream narrative of the "Internet" and "Media" domain by the knowing subject requires re-examination.

**Ioan Miclea**

**E. coli outbreak, Romania and crisis communication: a case study on the Brădet dairy products**

The E. coli outbreak in Romania in 2016 turned a national diary company, Lactate Brădet, unknown at that time into the company which was accused by the Romanian Minister of Agriculture to have been the cause for the onset of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) to a large number of babies*. The crisis of the babies’ illness in Romania has evolved between February 4 and April 12, 2016. Throughout this period, the media emphasized the crisis by putting pressure on Romanian institutions to find out the cause of these mass diseases (Cloacă, Briciu, 2017, p. 307). Purpose: This study aims to examine how the instructional risk messages are communicated to the large public by the Romanian online media outlets. Methodology: Using the IDEA Model for effective instructional risk and crisis messages (T. L. Sellnow, Sellnow, Lane, & Littlefield, 2012; Frisby et al., 2014; Littlefield et al., 2014; D. D. Sellnow, Limperos et al., 2015; Sellnow et al. 2017) and the Exemplification theory (Zillmann, 1999) I will employ a content analysis of online news articles published by 48 Romanian media outlets. The IDEA model consists of four components that can be used to conceive effective messages in order to instruct non-scientific publics taking suitable actions for self-protection when involved in risk or crisis events: internalization (the way in which communicators can get the attention of the publics and make them remember the messages through proximity, timeliness and personal impact), distribution (the way in which the messages are delivered, using multiple and adapted channels - social media, print, online outlets, TV, radio etc.), explanation (the way in which the scientific information is made accessible for non-scientific publics) and action (the specific way in which the publics should act for self-protecting, based on previously sent messages). Results: the most used IDEA element is Explanation (E), E–Scientific information (21.3%, n=1,341) and E-National institutions (17%, n=1,070) being the most salient categories, followed by E-National experts (12.3%, n=778). The Romanian mass-media news outlets tailored their messages around the element of Explanation (E), constructed by emphasizing scientific information combined with the presence of the national (Romanian) institutions and experts. The element of Explanation (E) was also used together with the element of Internalization (I), constructed by the emphasis of proximity and of personal relevance for the publics. Since the elements of Explanation (E) and of the internalization (I) are the most salient IDEA Model elements in the news published by Romanian mass-media news outlets, those three main themes could be highlighted:

1. the quest for the disease source;
2. the personal relevance of the epidemic situation;
3. the effective measures associated with the actions / statements of national experts.

Agnieszka Szymańska
Media scam excellent - Claas Relotius case

The German weekly „Der Spiegel” is a news magazine that has consistently applied extremely high standards of journalism and over the years has become a symbol of German investigative journalism. For this type of qualitative journalism, the credibility of the message, based on the veracity of the transmitted content, is crucial and is one of the highest values in the editorial office. This above-average commitment to the reliability of the information provided can also be found in the organizational structure of the magazine, which – despite the crisis that has plagued the press market for years also in Germany - still employs a very large documentation department. In this situation, it was a huge surprise when, in December 2018, „Der Spiegel”s editorial board informed the public about the forgery detected in many publications of its reporter Claas Relotius. The goal of this paper is to approximate the details of the so-called Relotius case, in particular the actions he has taken to camouflage his fraud as well as the actions that „Der Spiegel” has taken to deal with the crisis it is causing.

Jindřich Oukropec
Brands at Risk From Disinformation. Meta-Analysis of Commercial Disinformation Studies and Cases

Kay Jewellery lost 11% of its share value in the week after fake news began to spread, which claimed that its rings were using low-quality gemstones instead of real diamonds. Similarly, Pepsi's shares fell by 4% during the U.S. presidential election campaign in 2016 after false information circulated that the company's CEO, Indra Nooyi, was supporting then-candidate Donald Trump. The spread of false information, which has long been a problem in politics, has already leaped those boundaries and is now becoming an important issue in the field of marketing. This development calls for an understanding of what happens when a brand is affected by false information and what response is demanded by this new threat. With the advent of the mass use of the Internet, propaganda and its application in public relations gained new prominence. Propaganda is information used to manipulate a specific audience into a behaviour intended by the creator of the propaganda (Bernays, 1928; Lasswell, 1948; Jowett & O'Donnell, 2015). Regardless of the intent of the propagandist, the online circulation of rumours involving a company's name can damage a good reputation, negatively affect sales, and impeach the credibility of a brand (Parsons, 2020; Visentin et al., 2019; Christov, 2018). The goal of this meta-analysis is to examine how this problem has been addressed by the academic literature. As early as 2018, more than a fifth of the companies in the European Union stated that their reputations had suffered at least once because of fake news (ECM, 2018). By the same time in the USA, about 20% of companies had experienced an attack on their reputation based on false news about their brand circulated on the internet (NACM, 2018). The Brand Disinformation Impact Study (New Knowledge, 2019) revealed that 55% of consumers think they have been exposed to disinformation about brands. Despite all that, only 12% of the EU organisations affected by disinformation have taken steps to proactively identify fake news that may affect them (ECM, 2018). This meta-analysis is a comprehensive review of the academic literature and research studies dealing with commercial disinformation. The results of the meta-analysis will provide a basis for future research that will aid in understanding the relationship between disinformation ecosystems and the work of public relations professionals. This analysis argues that the new field of research into how the existing good reputation of a brand should be managed in the face of a revolution in communications and the spread of disinformation is an important new field of research. I believe that my work fits perfectly into the agenda of the CEECOM 2021 conference. Fake news and disinformation are adversely impacting the fields of marketing and public relations, which must quickly adapt themselves to the new challenge.
With the rise of Web 2.0, social media promised to create a new space for the freedom of speech - the online public sphere where anybody can share their thoughts about political issues. Internet users quickly make use of this opportunity, gathering in bottom-up movements so dispersed and large as never before. However, with the wider publication possibilities and anonymity, came also threats of a new kind as not every social media movement happens to be real grassroots. Some of them turn out to be examples of a propaganda tool called astroturfing – campaigns with the use of bots in social media that imitate a bottom-up movement and create the impression that the action is supported by a large group of non-related people. Examples of such activities have been found in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the Brexit referendum, and the 2016 United States presidential election, and thus was expected to take place during the 2020 Polish and U.S. presidential election as well. The purpose of this paper is to present the findings of the research on political online astroturfing conducted during the 2020 presidential campaigns in the United States and Poland. The aim of the research is to prove that astroturfing was used on Twitter in the mentioned presidential campaigns, estimate its scale as well as to distinguish a set of characteristics in order to reveal patterns that may be useful for detecting and studying online astroturfing in future political campaigns and to compare the outcomes from these two countries that can be seen as opposite poles of political communication: different media systems, Western vs. CEE countries, young and old democracies, and benchmark vs. follower in political marketing. We analyzed Twitter accounts that had been using the most popular hashtags related to the election campaign during two periods: at the beginning of 2020, before the COVID-19 outbreak, and within two weeks before the election date. These accounts were tested with the Botometer tool – an algorithm assessing the probability that a Twitter account is in fact a social bot, proving that almost 9% of active, politically-oriented Twitter accounts were algorithm-controlled, not actual humans. We also analyzed a wide spectrum of the Twitter accounts’ metadata, noticing particularly interesting patterns regarding features such as replies to tweets ratio, retweets to tweets ratio, the share of retweeted tweets, numbers of followers and following, tweets per day ratio, and various distributions of botscores. Big data analysis and comparisons conducted between bot and human accounts, different periods, and between the United States and Poland allowed us to propose two distinctive models of political online astroturfing, including features such as automation of Twitter communication, retweet ratio, and follower and following networks, among others, suggesting a relationship between astroturfing patterns and the political and media system of a country as well as its level of democracy and political competition development.

**Discussant:** Katarzyna Radwańska
3.3 SESSION III

3.3.1

The communication revolution

Chair: Małgorzata Lisowska-Mągdiarz

Speakers:

Katarzyna Kopecka-Piech
The communication revolution - what it is about and whether it is possible to turn away from it in anyhow?

The new communication revolution is taking place on many levels, of which the technological level is key in terms of its possibilities, but also its threats. Media technologies are founding digital media, which have a dual nature: representational and interactive. They serve transmission and interaction. It is on both of these planes that a constant revolution is underway. New technical solutions are emerging, whether infrastructural, device, application, or configurations of affordances that determine what is available, possible, and what is not allowed. The contemporary communication revolution is based on several fundamental processes: algorithmisation, dataification, automation and platformisation. They constitute the framework of contemporary mediatisation (at micro, meso and macro levels). This metaprocess is less and less a constructivist or institutionalised shaping of users' lives; and more and more it is becoming a material-virtual technological process of shaping the meta-possessions of this transformation. This is occurring as a result of, for example, big data analysis and the application of artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality. It is no longer only the content, structure and process of communication that determine the mediatisation of reality, but their permanent analysis and the application of its results to frame and change the content, structure and processes, which influences the actions and behaviour of users, and in consequence change their lives. Mediatisation is therefore treated as an irreversible and only deepening process. This raises the question of what the functioning of media technologies in such a model results in; what it potentially leads to and whether a reversal is possible in any dimension. This conceptual critical study was based on the analysis of key imaginaries of the present and future of media technology and technologised life, presented in the visions of its creators and critics. To this end, statements by leading representatives and ex-representatives of Silicon Valley and the hi-tech industry contained in documentaries (especially movies and series, e.g. iHuman, Social Dilemma, China's World Takeover, Człowiek przyszłości/Human of the Future etc.) but also in short videos, public talks and interviews were analysed. Exemplifications of specific cases were used to illustrate the main pillars of the communication revolution and possibilities of reverse turns in communication practices perceived from utopian as well as dystopian perspective.

Epp Lauk, Halliki Harro-Loit
Challenges to journalistic human capital (JHC) in adaptation to the conditions of new communication revolution: a conceptual deliberation

The existing research on journalism and journalists has largely been engaged in examining the implications of political, economic and social conditions (in CEE countries, especially the processes of transition and transformation) on journalists’ performance, and their roles and ethical perceptions (Himelboim & Limor, 2010; Hanitzsch et al., 2019). The research also emphasizes that an important condition for existence and sustainability of quality news journalism is the knowledge and skills of journalists and editors who are “wise enough to make full use of those skills” (Anderson, 2014: 16). Thus,
our approach departs from the idea that the human resource of journalism – journalistic human capital (JHC) – has critical impact on the way journalism is functioning in a democratic society. Examining the qualities of professional journalistic workforce, this approach makes it possible to reveal and explain various unique conditions and traits of journalism cultures in different countries, simultaneously considering journalism’s universal functions, characteristics and values. Our interpretation of human capital relies on Bourdieu’s recognition that capital is not only economic, but a complex of particular assets put to productive use (Bourdieu, 1986). Human capital refers to the stock of competences and experience, social and personality attributes, including creativity, that can be transferred to certain goods and services. When applied to journalism, in addition to individual qualities and experience, human capital can be understood as a collection of resources in the possession of journalists as a professional community. Only high-quality human capital can ensure the necessary level of labour quality that journalism needs for fulfilling its democratic duties. The JHC approach is neither about journalistic career paths nor the opportunities. Instead, in the core of JHC stands the level of competency of journalistic workforce in information processing and interpretation, and the ability of transferring complicated issues into well understandable narratives. In our paper, we argue that the contemporary information society needs to maximize human information processing potential, as both the individuals and society benefit from investments in human capital. We are suggesting and discussing six indicators for assessing the potential of JHC in the process of the rapidly changing communication environment: access and entry to the journalistic job market; career paths; working conditions; labour contracts; feedback and feedforward about professional performance; and exit conditions from the job or journalism sector. References: Anderson, P. (2014). Defining and Measuring Quality News Journalism. In P. Anderson, M. Williams, & G. Ogola (Eds.), The future of quality news journalism: A cross-continental analysis (pp. 7-34). New York: Routledge. Bourdieu, P. 1986. The Forms of Capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.) Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood Press. Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Ramaprasad J. & A. S. de Beer (Eds.) Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures Around the Globe. New York: Columbia University Press. Himelboim, I., & Limor, Y. (2010). Media institutions, news organizations, and the journalistic social role worldwide: A cross-national and cross-organizational study of codes of ethics. Mass Communication and Society, 14(1), 71-92.

**Erika Tőkés Gyöngyvér**

*Is the digital transformation for all?*

The coronavirus pandemic speeded up the process of digital transformation and has brought to the fore the search for theoretical explanations that could help understand and favorably influence the phenomenon of digital inequalities. An essential point in researching digital inequalities is to find their connections with other aspects of the deepening social inequalities (Atkinson, 2015). Researchers examining the social impact of the appropriation of digital technology in the last two decades have distinguished between the first (Hargittai, 2002; van Dijk, 2005), the second (Hargittai, 2007, 2010; van Deursen, van Dijk, 2014) and the third level of the digital divide (Helsper, 2012; Helsper, van Deursen, 2015, Ragnedda, Muschert, 2013; Ragnedda, 2018, 2019; Ragnedda, Ruiu, 2020; van Deursen, Helsper, 2015, 2018), revealing the multidimensional character of the phenomenon. The third level of the digital divide refers to the inequalities in the outcomes and benefits of using digital technology, and as such, the ways in which this affects the life chances of different social groups (Ragnedda, 2017). The third level of the digital divide can be considered to have the most influence on social structure: on the one hand, it can be derived from traditional social inequalities, and – on the other hand – it tends to reinforce the social inequalities upon which it is based (van Dijk, 2005, 15; Ragnedda, 2017, 69; Calderon Gomez, 2020). According to research results, the elderly are lagging behind in the adoption of digital technology due to their age and their disadvantaged position in the social structure (Hepp, Berg, Roitsch, 2017; Schreurs, Ouan–Haase, 2017). There is a relationship between the types of activities in which the elderly are engaged in the digital realm, the level of their digital skills, the outcomes and benefits derived from their digital participation, and their position in the system of social inequalities. The aim of the presentation is to analyze the third level of the digital divide among the digitally savvy elderly people from Romania in order to identify the strategies used by the ones who are able to turn their digital technology use into meaningful resources in the real (offline) world. The presentation focuses on the so-called “negative cases” with the intention of finding differences between the “typical” and the digitally engaged elderly

Waldemar Bojakowski

A shift in perspective: from news culture to interactive explanations

The contemporary information ecosystem consists of not only professional media outlets but also a growing number of bottom-up generated content. Thanks to the evolution and democratization of technology, the role of provider of new information, once reserved to media workers and legitimized media institutions, is now shared with nonprofessional users/creators of the digital environment. This leads directly to a legitimization crisis of the journalistic field. The main consequences of this crisis might be classified into two categories. The first of them is strictly related to the need to regaining the aforementioned legitimization, which is correlated to the control of the whole information ecosystem by media workers. In this context, the main objective of journalists is to prove that only professionals might deliver relevant, and, most of all, true information. The second category of consequences of the journalism legitimization crisis could be characterized as a shift in perspective, a need to rethink some basic rules of the profession itself. Instead of seeing themselves as providers of news, media workers could occupy a crucial space in the digital environment — as suppliers of necessary explanations, contributing therefore to limiting an ever-growing information overload. By selecting, organizing, and designing information in user-centered manner journalists can attract the attention of the media audience, confirming their right to create useful content in the contemporary mediashere. My main thesis in this paper is that characterized shift in perspective, observable in some of leading newsrooms around the world (The Guardian, The New York Times, Thomson Reuters), would also mean a change of dynamics of media institutions, primarily in slowing the pace of journalism. A shift from news culture to creating meaningful explanations requires certain resources. Probably the most needed one is time to design relevant stories for the audience to interact with. The main objective of this paper is to
characterize described changes in more scrutiny, basing on empirical evidence from selected media narratives. My second aim is to provide a methodological proposition of researching these narratives, pointing to prospects and new avenues of research in the field of interactive explanations.

**Jakub Nowak**  
**Doing privacy. Media practices and digital citizenship during (another) media revolution**

Datafication and digital mediatization of seemingly any aspect of people’s lives pose tremendous – and revolutionary – challenges to citizenship. In that respect, citizenship has been diversely theorized with encouraging accounts on cyberactivism, hacktivism and political online protests. These recognitions are counterbalanced by arguments on hampering aspects of datafication, including surveillance, commodification, and social profiling-sorting. The presented paper – being a part of a broader research project – pursues the concept of privacy as political media practices being one of the key aspects of digital citizenship nowadays. To examine digital citizenship is to ask how privacy is constructed nowadays: how it is understood, contextually negotiated, secured, and, not least, violated. The realms of cultural imaginaries of privacy and privacy-oriented practices are inherently tied and together they comprise privacy as an everyday and mundane citizen practice. Therefore, the goal of the paper is to analyze these two interconnected aspects of digital citizenship: 1) how citizens do their privacies by their media-oriented practices? 2) What are citizens’ imaginaries of privacy? Not least, the pandemics of COVID-19 has given a new, surprising context for the research, as radical digitalization of work, education, and family environments due to physical distancing have highlighted privacy as vastly important and diversely redefined issue. The presentation discusses the qualitative methods-based research outcomes, in particular: how privacy is done by inherently collective and contextual media practices. To learn about that I reach for: in-depth semi-structured interviews with privacy activists; and focus groups with the already ‘networked’ citizens and ask: 1) what are citizens’ imaginaries of privacy?; and 2) what are people's repertoires of social practices of doing privacy? By this I learn how privacy is approached, what are differences in people's definitions and expectations of privacy, and how these differences may be matched to various sociological or context-enacted factors, as well as what are – always context-related – particular media practices towards privacy. In the broader context, these outcomes contribute to learning the conditions, contexts, and practices of digital citizenship.

**Karolina Brylska**  
**The use of biometric measurements in assessing the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns – research opportunities and challenges**

Modern, technologically advanced research tools to analyze media content are becoming more and more popular. Increasingly valuable and standard techniques include biometric and behavioural measurements, such as eye-tracking, face tracking, GSR / EDA, ECG or EEG. These techniques allow us to supplement and enrich the knowledge gained with traditional methods and techniques, such as questionnaires, FGI or IDI. Modern measurement tools (sometimes triangulated with traditional techniques) are already widely used to evaluate advertising effectiveness or media and political communication research (e.g. Dahmen, 2012, 2015; Kaplan, Freedman, Iacoboni, 2007; Marquart, Matthes & Rapp, 2016; Ravaja, 2004; Renoust et al. 2016; Scherer et al. 2012, Stewart et al. 2009, 2013; Stewart, 2010; Arendt, Marquart, & Matthes, 2015). However, they are also used to research specific advertising content, such as social advertising or public awareness campaigns. It seems that in the face of the pandemic situation we have been dealing with since the end of 2019, assessing the effectiveness of public health campaigns becomes particularly important. Issues such as vaccinations or safe functioning principles in public space (distance, disinfection, masks) have become critical issues of Polish and global public discourse in recent months. Due to various disinformation activities or fake news appearing mainly on the Internet, effective persuasive communication of rational principles becomes extremely difficult. Evaluation of planned and implemented social campaigns using biometric measurements can significantly increase their
effectiveness and thus contribute to a significant change in public debate. The paper will present the results of a broad, systematised query concerning the use of biometric measurements to evaluate social campaigns’ effectiveness. The review covers the most important scientific texts databases (Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar) and covers the years 2010-2021. The search is conducted according to keywords taking into account the types of measurements (e.g. eye-tracking, face tracking) and the type of content (e.g. public awareness campaign, social campaign, social issue ads). The query will answer the following questions: to what extent are biometric measurements used to evaluate social campaigns? How is the methodology of this type of research project structured? What content does such analysis concern? What kinds of difficulties and challenges arise in this type of research? Furthermore, most importantly - what findings regarding the effectiveness of specific forms and content of social campaigns result from research of this type conducted so far? At the time of submitting the abstract, the database of analyzed articles already has several dozen items. The presentation prepared in this way will fit the scope and objectives of the conference. The author strongly believes that the described issue is an important element of "the new communication revolution" - both on the theoretical level of media & communication studies and the social level - communication practices in a mediatized world with citizens surrounded by interactive, ubiquitous media. Moreover, the issue is socially essential in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which reminded us of the importance of effective persuasion to civic attitude and civic participation.

**Discussant:** Julia Trzcińska

### 3.3.2

**Central and Eastern Europe – regional challenges and current context**

**Chair:** Andrej Školkay

**Speakers:**

**Klara Smejkal**

*Just a ‘mouthpiece of biased elites’? populist attitudes and trust in the public service media in the Czech Republic*

Research on public service media (PSM) is primarily focused on technological change and adaptation to a converged media environment. However, recent studies show that they are currently facing also political challenges. These challenges are widely coming from authoritarian populist politicians, which label professional media as ‘fake news’ or ‘a part of liberal propaganda’. Professional journalists are referred to as flawed cultural and intellectual elites and enemies of people. However, the reasons why the public service media in particular are a thorn in the side of the people who make up the electorate of populist parties have not yet been explored. There are just some studies that explore general trust in professional media in the context of populism. In a fragmented and polarized media environment, where each medium has a different target population and where media more and more hold specific opinion position, it is important to consider specific types of media. In this case especially the public service media, which should serve all. This study, which is based on a representative survey of the Czech adult population (quota sampling, combination of CAPI and CAWI, N=3251) collected between December 2019 and January 2020 as part of the project Trust in Media in a Fragmented Media Environment: The Case of the Czech Republic aims to fill this gap in research. Its main target is to determine how people who vote for populist
parties and people who vote for all other parties differ in predictors of trust in the public service media in the Czech Republic. Preliminary results show that for the people with populist attitudes is the most important feeling that journalists are trustful and media they consume correspond to their worldview. For people who vote for all other parties, it's most important that media adhere to journalistic standards and inform independently and impartially.

Norbert Merkovity
Ideologically-charged news. The case of Hungarian public broadcast and the attention-based politics

Attention is limited, people can pay attention only to a very small number of things at the same time (see Simons & Rensink, 2005), and unconscious or unintentional processes are at play in the meantime, which also affects the visual form of attention (Lamme, 2003). Attention-based politics refers to politicians who recognised that the operation of a party- and political system, and the media is unable to keep pace with the explosion in communication, which occurred in the last decades. In attention-based politics, the emphasis will be on the use of media, mainly social media. Online communication will become important, this is where different events of social life take place, and voters also take an active part in this communication. However, active participation of politicians does not entail interactivity, as the majority of political actors will avoid situations where they engage directly with voters, for example through dialogue (e.g., Aharony, 2012; Merkovity, 2016). Thus attention-based politics is not linked to interactivity. But what about traditional media? Television screen time during mega-events like the FIFA Football World Cup is probably one of the most valuable ad-spaces due to extremely high viewership. This opportunity did not go unnoticed by political parties, as evidenced by the broadcast of the 2016 Olympic Games in the Hungarian public broadcast when the government’s narrative on the refugee crisis was injected into the broadcast in every possible instance. This presentation explores this phenomenon in the example of the 2018 FIFA World Cup. The games were only broadcasted by the public media stations M4 and Duna TV, and during each half-time break, a one-minute long news block was shown. The transcripts of the news are coded and analysed. The primary purpose of these types of examinations is to identify whether the World Cup was used to convey political messages and if yes, then to what extent. This aspect of the research will help to determine how frequently the one-minute news was used to disseminate the government’s narrative in Hungary. This analysis can give a possible answer to the question, how attention-based politics works on traditional media.

László Petrovszki, Tamás Szekeres
Viktor Orbán’s Facebook activity related to Covid-19 during the first wave of the pandemic

Coronavirus has reached Hungary in March of 2020. The initial reaction of the Hungarian government was comparable to other European responses. During the first wave of the pandemic, Hungary avoided a massive outbreak and the number of cases remained relatively low, making it possible for the government to communicate about their success. Viktor Orbán, who holds the position of Prime Minister since 2010 and who is currently leading his fourth government, is a central figure of European and Hungarian politics. His and Fidesz-KDNP’s right-wing populist communication style caused numerous conflicts and criticism both from inside and outside of Hungary, Orbán’s charismatic approach to governance and communication also applies to COVID-19. Special task groups and forces have been created to lead and organize the multilayered defense against the pandemic, while Viktor Orbán became the face of the fight against the virus. Social media, especially Facebook is a popular and effective way for politicians in Hungary to reach their voters and create content for them. Viktor Orbán’s Facebook page became one of the main platforms to announce important new actions and communicate about the pandemic. As a new development, Orbán started to prioritize this way of communication and neglecting the appearances on traditional media. In this paper, all of Orbán’s coronavirus-related posts have been collected from the period between March and September of 2020. Using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
subcategories can be determined among the posts corresponding with COVID-19, hence Orbán’s tone, communication style and intended messages can be identified and examined.

**Tamás Szekeres, László Petrovszki**

*Viktor Orbán’s Facebook activity related to Covid-19 during the second and third wave of the pandemic*

The COVID-19 pandemic has determined politics and communication at every level since March 2020. In October, the second wave of the virus reached Hungary. The increase of the infections led to a new, more restrictive lockdown policy, quickly followed by the third wave of the pandemic and additional restrictions in March 2021. There is no clear separation between the second and third wave of COVID-19: the number of the cases decreased during the holidays and begun to grow in the second half of January. The quick change in the amount of infections caused the lack of relief in restrictions since November 2020. Since October 2020, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán treats the pandemic-communication similarly as he did during the first wave: his own social media (namely his Facebook page) dominates the communication of the government and determines the handling of the health crisis. The most important announcements regarding the provisions were posted by Orbán himself preceding the official means of declarations of new laws and regulations. Orbán’s presence on his personal Facebook page also overshadows his appearances in traditional media (the only exception being his weekly interviews regularly airing in the public radio station). Adapting to the forms and style of social media, the prime minister simplifies and shortens the messages, posting mainly videos and photos, focusing on ambiance and mood. In this paper the goal is to examine and analyse Orbán’s Facebook posts related to COVID-19 during the period of the second and the third wave of the pandemic (from September 2020 to March 2021), using thematic analysis. Using this method, the main and sub-topics can be determined, and therefore quantitative changes in these categories can be examined.

**Orsolya Szabó Palócz**

*Changing concepts and power dynamics. Public discourse in a time of crisis*

As per the premise of Political Discourse Studies political narratives and debates shape the way in which we perceive the realities we live in, hence they affect how we act in certain situations, forming those realities. The concept of control for example, especially when discussed regarding the relations between states and their citizens, or debating the optimal extent of it, has inspired – and still continues to inspire – political thinkers, actors and scholars alike. The order-chaos and the freedom-security dilemmas have always formed an integral part of political thinking, as great debates surrounding them shaped the way of how nowadays we perceive politics and our political institutions in general, with special regard to the ideas of state, power and democracy itself. The meaning of these concepts, however, is everchanging, as new challenges are constantly testing and forming them through various political discourses reflecting on the situation. This holds especially true in times of crises, when the familiar aspects of order and security seems to be fading away, simultaneously with the ascension of a newfound desire for control. Considering the abovementioned trends, the aim of this paper is to analyse these changes in connection with the COVID-19 global pandemic and how the crisis affected political discourses, and therefore the meanings of the discussed concepts within the context of Hungarian politics. The examination is narrowed down to the analysis of the various speeches and interviews given by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán between September and December of 2020, based on the premise that Hungary can be considered a plebiscitary leader democracy in which the legitimacy of the political leader (and their actions) is determined by their charisma and agency. Since crisis narratives are rather convenient tools in this process a closer look on the utilisation of these narratives can give us insight on how certain communication strategies affected the meaning of certain concepts in order to alter public perceptions and thus, power-dynamics.
Natalya Ryabinska

Populist framing of politics in political entertainment – the case of Volodymyr Zelensky's TV comedy show

This study is aimed to contribute to a growing field within Media and Politics research, which concentrates on political humor in the media and, in particular, in a television comedy show. The main bulk of studies comes from the U.S. (for examples, see Brewer and Marquardt 2007, Baym 2009, Lichter et al. 2015), where these shows started to 'enter' the territories previously occupied by hard news and public affairs discussion programs (Young 2014: 2). According to Anthony Gierzynski (2018), these shows' real potential lies in their ability to affect audiences' views about the overall nature of the political system. In his political campaign, Volodymyr Zelensky, a comedian who won a landslide victory in Ukraine's presidential election-2019 skillfully deployed populist slogans: he promised to "break the system," demonized his predecessor, and identified corruption and the old regime as the enemy. These populist ideas reportedly helped him mobilize millions of voters across Ukraine (Marder 2019; Hosa and Wilson 2019). Many of those who voted for Zelensky never participated in elections before. According to the recent study by the researchers from Amsterdam School of Communication Research (Bakker et al. 2020) there are people who distrust politics and are cynical about it who are most susceptible to populist discourse and are usually supporting populist politicians. Other studies (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Krämer 2014; Mudde 2005) argue that the media play a pivotal role in the success of populist parties and getting populist viewpoints across. My interest in this study is to understand whether Zelensky's Vecherniy Kvartal show could impact the Ukrainians' attitude to politics by presenting Ukrainian politics and politicians via the populist frames.

Discussant: Aleksandra Urzędowska

3.3.3

Communication Inequalities and Contradictions of Journalism in Socialist Yugoslavia

Chair: Jernej Amon Prodnik

Speakers:

Igor Vobič, Kristina Milić, Ana Milojević

Memories of SFRY Journalists: A Historical Study of Journalistic Roles at Tanjug News Agency

Throughout history, journalistic roles have been re-articulating with respect to the prevailing conceptualizations of freedom of the press, the materiality of news production and its contradictions, and the continuous discursive re-affirmation of journalism as an institution. Proceeding from the normative underpinnings of journalists as "socio-political workers", this historical study investigates how former Tanjug news agency editors, journalists and correspondents re-articulate their roles against normative principles, professional ideals and performance during the period of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Tanjug represents a relevant case for the historical study into re-articulation of journalistic roles. Namely, as the information backbone of the federal media system the national news agency Tanjug (est. 1943) evolved through the early administrative period of 'democratic centralism' to multifaceted adaptation of 'objectivist' reporting practices in the continuously transforming 'socialist self-management'. To explore re-articulation of journalistic roles within complexities of the historical
The media system in former Yugoslavia largely differed from media systems in other socialist states and challenges simplified dichotomies. As Jović (2006: 20-21) argued, Yugoslavia was a “mirror image reflection of the Soviet type of communism”, with weak state, far greater media freedom, freedom of civil society and far more linked to the West. With the aim of differing from the Soviet type of communism, Yugoslavia was gradually weakening state influence in various fields (Jović, 2003), including the media field, which was with time substantially freed from the administrative and financial control of the state (Nixon and Bryan, 1966: 291). Robinson (1977) divides the development of Yugoslav media system into four stages: administrative (1945-1950), transitional (1951-1961), decentralized (1963-1970) and uncertain (then) present (1971-1975). The conception of journalism norms changed with the liberalization of Yugoslav media system in the 1980s. Journalists were no longer expected to just interpret party views, but also to criticize the system and promote public debate using various sources in reporting (Zubak, 2018: 29). Media system in Yugoslavia, not uniform in various historical stages of its development, also differed among its federal republics, so we can speak of multiple media systems which existed within Yugoslavia (Peruško et al., 2021). Recent comparative analysis (Peruško et al., 2021) of media systems within Yugoslavia found several disparities in development: Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia formed a specific cluster of media systems with stronger media markets and richer media supply, which were also more favorable for the development of journalism profession. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro were weaker in market development, which made journalism in these systems less diverse and more vulnerable to political influence (Peruško et al., 2021). The goal of this paper is to explore the disparities between these media systems in greater detail, and the extent they were open to represent different political cleavages and «socialist public sphere». We will analyze this by focusing on how high circulation press discussed and represented a contentious issue which reflected these political cleavages in Yugoslavia – student demonstrations in June 1968 which started in Belgrade and spilled over to Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Sarajevo (described in great length in Klašić, 2012; Morrison, 2018). The contentious event happened in decentralization stage of Yugoslav media system (Robinson, 1977), when journalism norms were liberalized (Zubak, 2018). The analysis will be based on a qualitative content analysis of articles published in June 1968 in Oslobodenje (Sarajevo, FR Bosnia and Herzegovina), Večernji list (Zagreb, FR Croatia) and Večernje novosti (Belgrade, FR Serbia). We chose these republics because they represent both media systems with higher (FR Croatia and Serbia), and lower (FR Bosnia and Herzegovina) media market development, those with higher political pluralism (FR Croatia and partly FR Serbia) and those with greater political party influence (FR Bosnia and Herzegovina) (Peruško et al., 2021). The selected newspapers had a high circulation in their respective republics and were published in publishing houses which functioned in accordance with the market logic, present in the specific Yugoslav type of “market socialism”. With this paper we hope to further open a venue of research which will discuss the development of «socialist public spheres», and the way socialist press covered dissent and social movements, which is rather rarely covered in media and communication research (see Surowiec, 2018).
Marko Zajc
Slovenian critical intellectuals between the Yugoslav and Slovenian public sphere in 1980s

The purpose of the paper is to carry out a historical analysis of the role, significance, and position of the critical Slovenian intellectuals in the Yugoslav and Slovenian public sphere in the last decade of Socialist Yugoslavia (more precisely, in 1986). The central focus is on the intellectuals Tomaž Mastnak and Dimitrij Rupel and their standpoints in the context of the relations between the Slovenian and Yugoslav public. For our analysis, the contents published by the media are more important than the decision-making processes in the political forums that we can follow in the relevant archival sources. We are interested in the political history of the public rather than in the history of politics as a decision-making process in the circles that wield political power. The critical theories of Zygmunt Bauman, Antonio Gramsci, and Siniša Malešević serve as the foundations for comprehending the role of the critical Slovenian intellectuals in the final years of Socialist Yugoslavia. This part is followed by an in-depth historical analysis of two media scandals in the Slovenian and Yugoslav public. In the case of Tomaž Mastnak, we are referring to the judicial restriction of social critique; while in the case of Rupel, we have in mind the severe reactions to his interview. The Yugoslav context is crucial for both examples. Mastnak's case focuses on legal and democratic legitimacy; while Rupel's example is related to the national question in the context of the Yugoslav state. Mastnak also operates with the concept of the national, while Rupel develops his arguments within the paradigm of democratisation and civil society. According to Rupel, apart from observing the rights of individuals, the rights of the nations in Yugoslavia needed to be taken into account as well. The affair that involved Rupel was only possible due to the existence of the all-Yugoslav public; while Mastnak's case (and its resolution) could only take place in the late system of the Yugoslav federation.

Jernej Amon Prodnik, Nina Žnidaršič
Journalist as a Socio-Political Worker: Ideology and Practice of Slovenian Journalists in Socialist Yugoslavia

In socialist Yugoslavia journalists were defined as "socio-political workers" that were "consciously dedicated to the ideals of Marxism-Leninism", a notion present in The Code of Yugoslav Journalists well into the 1980s (SNJ, 1982). While branding journalists as socio-political workers remains a curse word to this day, mostly aimed at them by the right-wing politicians, academic discussions focusing on what this wording exactly meant and how it differed from Western journalistic norms have been few and far between. Amongst exceptions were Rastko Močnik, who emphasized that journalists as socio-political workers were deprived of their individuality in order to transform them into representatives "of the general truth, i.e. a bureaucrat in a special field of public informing". In other words, journalists became representatives of the bureaucratic class struggle. An analysis done by Igor Vobič connected this notion to the norm of objectivity that remained present in socialism, but one that differed notably in its understanding from other historical contexts. Our aim in the article is to contribute to the existing body of work on this topic by focusing on what this notion meant for journalists and their actual work, namely whether it significantly influenced them and curtailed their journalistic autonomy. Instead of primarily grounding the analysis on written norms, theoretical discussions, or historical underpinnings, we will turn to the actual actors under discussion: journalists working and acting in this environment and how they viewed this notion. Our analysis will be based on an extensive series of in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with former Slovenian journalists that worked in the socialist era. This well-established qualitative research method will enable us to approach the issue at hand in an inductive manner, making possible an analysis with somewhat limited prior presuppositions. As the legacy of socialist Yugoslavia still looms large, resilient preconceptions can often make it difficult to provide insights that would go beyond moral condemnations of journalistic practices in this era. It is our belief this type of approach can help to open up avenues for further research and provide groundwork for tackling this topic further from several other perspectives, which will be briefly tackled in the last part of our presentation.

Discussant: Dina Vozab
3.3.4 Communication in the pandemic

Chair: Weronika Świerczyńska-Głownia

Speakers:

Bartłomiej Łódzki

News shareability analysis: Global television channels and multicultural digital audience during the pandemic time

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the functioning of societies. The news media focused on the development of the pandemic for weeks. Unprecedented in history, the media's concentration on a global scale on one topic has significantly contributed to the increase in the sense of threat among societies. This is confirmed by the first international research conducted by the Reuters Institute (Kleis Nielsen et al., 2020) and the Kantar company (2020). The results also show a significant increase in confidence in traditional news media. In many countries in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe, in North America and Asia, national media channels, government agencies, and international advisory body websites were the most reliable information sources regarding the pandemic (Kantar, 2020). According to the EBU Report (2020), the news reached up to twice the audience, especially on crisis peak days in the most affected markets - on days when key announcements were made, there was a declaration of a state of emergency or movement restrictions were imposed. The research aims to empirically verify the role and importance of global news stations on an international scale, analyse multicultural audience reactions to media reports, and identify the most frequently shared COVID-19 information based on hard data (webometric indicators and data from social media). To implement the project, the author collected news published between 1st January and 30th April 2020 on the websites of CNN International (USA), BBC World (Great Britain), Deutsche Welle (Germany), RT (Russia), France24 (France), EuroNews (France/Europe), Al-Jazeera (Qatar) and the shared content by broadcasters on their official social media (Facebook) profiles and multicultural audience reactions to the content (shares). The selection of media entities uses a European Audiovisual Observatory classification (Ene et al., 2018). These stations are distinguished by the fact that they reach a global audience and focus on the global thematic agenda. The presented study combines different methodological approaches. Firstly, the quantitative method focuses on collecting a massive volume of data (news from websites, website traffic data such as website visitors, monthly visitor traffic, the length of time spent on the website or the number of views), analysis of digital audiences (engagement on social media profiles and level of news shareability), and quantitative and qualitative content analysis of selected news. Results show visible differences and similarities between audience reactions. The audience of BBC and CNN mostly shared news referring to elites and political issues. News distribution from the websites of RT, Al Jazeera and Facebook had a more international context. Some articles raised personal histories or had a religious background. An image of the West, mostly of the USA, was portrayed as negative. In the case of EuroNews, the dominant news had a neutral perspective and referred to medical data. DW's audience shared articles thematically diverse. Most of the shared articles on Facebook during the first wave of the pandemic have typical features of shareability like a reference to the elite, relevance of topics (events can impact groups of people generally or personal), personification and human interest (the heroes of the events were identified and presented personally), unexpectedness, negativism, conflict and/or controversy. A small part of news refers to success or positivity. Positive sentiments appeared mainly on profiles of stations with a lower popularity range. Ene, L., Translations, A. A. M., Schmidt, S., Polo, M., Press, S., & Hindhaugh, A. (2018). TV news channels in Europe: Offer, establishment and ownership. http://www.obs.coe.int Kantar. (2020). COVID-19 Monitor Wave 1 results for Poland and the key markets around the world. https://radiotrack.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Kantar_COVID-19_Monitor_Full_Report_POLAND_Wa
Towards the conceptualization and implementation of a pan(de)medial event: from sources of inspiration to a theoretical and methodological framework

The pandemic has undoubtedly changed the world in which we live. Presidential elections or the Olympic Games were held in its shadow, with global social and political unrest accompanying acts of extraordinary solidarity and the struggle for human lives. The coronavirus has struck every industry, including the media. Media consumption has changed under its influence, and the fight against infodemic and disinformation has taken on a new meaning. COVID-19 has become dominant in the news, but not only there. The media, in order to maintain their continuity (which was threatened by government restrictions), had to adapt to the pandemic conditions. They focused, for example, on the reorganisation of product, distribution, pricing and communication offerings. Ongoing modifications included the suspension/cancellation of existing programmes, the introduction of ‘COVID-based’ programmes, re-broadcasts, or strengthening multiplatform solutions. All these measures disrupted the routines of media work, thus fitting into the nature of media events (Dayan & Katz, 1992). On the other hand, the pandemic (in terms of its duration, scale, specificity, unpredictability and consequences) fulfilled also the assumptions of disasters marathons (Lieber, 1998; Katz & Liebes 2007), popular media events (Hepp & Vogelgesang, 2003) and global media events (Sonnevend, 2016). It can therefore be concluded that the pandemic fulfilled the contradictory criteria of all types of media events, but at the same time it slipped away from them, thus making any classification practically impossible. Therefore, the question should be asked: are we perhaps dealing with a completely new type of media event - a kind of ‘pan(de)media event’? To find the answer, I resort to literature review, case study (Becker, 1970; Fidel, 1984; Tellis, 1997) and content analysis (Mayring, 2014). I embed the selected examples of the impact that the pandemic has had on the condition of the media industry within the theoretical assumptions of media events, with an attempt to validate the idea of a ‘pa\(de\)media event’ theoretically and empirically. This research not only contributes to the literature on media events and media management, but also offers a new concept, which, if developed, could help to organise current and future research on the media effects of the still ongoing pandemic.

Fighting Covid-19 with data: analysis of award-winning data journalism from Sigma Awards 2021

The COVID-19 health crisis has been heavily reported on an international scale for almost two years. This has pushed news journalism to a datafied direction: reporters learning how to analyze and visualize the statistical effects COVID-19 has had on different sectors of the society. As a result, in 2021 the international Sigma Awards competition for data journalism highlighted coverage of the pandemic. Using content analysis with qualitative elements this paper analyzes the shortlisted works covering COVID-19 from that competition (n=73). It focuses on the data references made by the teams – sources, types and type of data used. But also lists the main problems the journalists had to face while working on their project, as described by themselves. By doing so this paper aims to contribute to the growing scientific knowledge concerning data literacy as a journalistic skill.
Krzysztof Kowalik
The impact of COVID-19 information on local governments communication in social media.
A study of selected official city profiles on Facebook.com

The coronavirus disease epidemic has changed the way people, organizations and institutions communicate. The so-called lockdowns, and restrictions have increased the importance of online communication channels, especially messengers and social media. The risks of COVID-19, its health and socio-economic consequences have become the main topics of social networking sites (SNS) content published by private individuals and public institutions. SNS have created opportunities to keep people safe, informed and connected. These kind of media have an amazing coverage, and penetration rate. The speed and local character of information make it possible to effectively implement the principles of safe community coexistence. Local governments, as public institutions with significant statutory prerogatives, were charged with numerous tasks related to the fight against the pandemic. Official self-government profiles on SNS have become an important connection in the chain of information transfer from the office (public institution) to the local community. The author focuses his attention on studying the impact of messages related to COVID-19 on user reactions on Facebook.com. The portal allows publishing a wide range of content: text, links to other websites, graphics and multimedia etc.. All users can immediately react to the message by "likes", comments or "sharing". The author performs a quantitative and qualitative analysis of posts - a set of textual, graphic and multimedia contents having their crisis context related to COVID-19. He compares two research periods - before the epidemic (as a reference point - posts and reactions without impact of COVID-19) and during the pandemic period. The results show differences in the creation of the thematic agenda, the structure of the message. The data analysis shows the change and trend in community responses and the intensity of interactions SNS users to coronavirus - related messages. The conclusions may be a significant contribution to research on proper crisis communication carried out by public institutions in the period of a threat of considerable scope and importance in health and socio-economic terms.

Dominika Saad, Maria Nowina Konopka
Towards online research – adapting to new methods caused by Covid-19 pandemic social isolation

Due to the necessity of social isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers were forced to reorganize many of their undertakings, adapting to new, dynamically emerging limitations. Social distancing conditions led to abandoning, postponing or the need to modify research projects involving direct interactions, travel or even leaving the place of residence. As a result, scientists in many fields were forced to use a limited range of research tools allowing remote research. The aim of the presentation will be to describe selected tools for online research, applying focus on their methodological limitations.

Martyna Dudziak-Kisio, Wojciech Dudziak
Participatory culture in the social media – the birth and development of the Visible Hand Movement during the Covid-19 pandemic

Nowadays, it can be noticed, following Troszyński (2020), that the definition of social media is changing, which, especially in times of social isolation caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, is changing into a media-social system that performs specific functions: it transmits information, creates a sense of community, and at the same time, is responsible for determining the order and importance of topics for public debate (agenda setting). The use of social media is an essential aspect of the new communication revolution, with one aspect of which is the development of a participatory culture that enables citizens to actively co-create digital communities that are dynamically operating in a bottom-up way. An important
case study based on which the above issues can be considered is the social movement of the “Visible Hand” ("Widzialna Ręka", which was born at the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020) and in just a few weeks turned into a movement bringing together over 100,000 members in over 200 local subgroups in Poland and abroad. Initially, the group acted as a pandemic-focused aid, but after the first wave of the pandemic, it turned into a group that responded not only to the needs related to COVID-19. In this paper, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the content of local groups of the Visible Hand will be presented to answer the questions around which self-help civil society movements in Poland organise aid practices. This topic is significant from the perspective of the new revolution in communication and its participatory nature because the movement was born in social media and still bases its activities mainly on social media, which shows that the Internet is a place where civil society ideas are coming true.

Marlena Szyber, Katarzyna Piórecka
Consumer TV habits during the COVID-19 pandemic – newscasts in the times of social isolation

In modern media society, information is one of the essential factors of production, and at the same time, an economical category - a product - which generates significant profits. The television is one of the primary information transmitters. Polish people spend on average 4 hours, 16 minutes, and 4 seconds in front of a television every day. However, studies indicate that television content consumption is falling year by year, and the Internet is becoming an increasingly common source of knowledge about current events. Such a situation requires the media to adapt to the expectations of their audiences constantly. However, what remains the same is that performing the media’s informational function is one of the critical elements in the functioning of media companies. From this perspective, information is treated as a commodity sold in the most attractive form possible. The phenomenon of the transformation of information programs into the so-called infotainment is becoming more common; these changes concern the programs’ typological conditions and how their narratives are carried out. The media researcher Stuart Allan believes that nowadays, it is possible to find common features between news and entertainment - visual pleasure and the power of attraction are important. Therefore, a journalist has to take this point into account when creating news. Crossing the border of "entertainment" is a significant problem, both for the recipient of the message and the material's authors. On the other hand, experts warn that such actions may discourage more and more "sophisticated" viewers of news, who expect professional journalism. Despite the digital revolution and the above-described processes, especially in crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, TV news services, and news channels are, for many viewers, the primary source of knowledge about current domestic and world issues. This presentation will be both an outline of almost two-year-long monitoring of news services, carried out by the Association of Electronic Media Analysts, which the authors are a part of, and a summary of scientific research on media consumption in Poland in times of social isolation. The paper will answer the following research questions: 1) How is the narrative shaped in Polish news services during the COVID-19 pandemic? 2) What content dominated news outlets during the analysis period - January 2020-October 2021? 3) How did the coronavirus pandemic change the way narratives were constructed in news outlets? 4) What is the function of television in times of social isolation? 5) Can television be a source of reliable information during crises?

Discussant: Sławomir Doległo
3.4 SESSION IV

3.4.1 Media transformations and political communication

Chair: Epp Lauk

Speakers:

Irina Milutinović
Media and non-consolidated democracy regimes

The aim of the research is to examine the relationship between the classical-liberal values of media freedom and pluralism, on the one hand, and modern non-consolidated democracies of the Western Balkans, on the other. The research starts from the fundamental values of the single European regulatory framework for the media, with which the Western Balkans countries are required to align within their accession negotiations process. Media harmonization processes in the Western Balkans are discussed in the context of contemporary malformations of democracy, terminologically defined as a populism, hybrid regime, unconsolidated democracy and competitive authoritarianism. Special attention is dedicated to the aspects of media populism that erode the quality of social debate, antagonizing the public opinion in societies of fragile and unconsolidated democratic attributes. By using comparative and analytic-synthetic research methods, the study leads to the conclusion that the issues faced by media policies in the Western Balkans countries do not differ much from those in European ones. However, phenomena such as disinformation, misinformation or dissemination of various kinds of deception, as well as the media abuse for the purposes of manipulative and polarizing distribution of information with a strong emotional and ideological charge, seem to have more intense and harmful impacts in the Western Balkan societies of non-consolidated democracy, characterized by frail democratic institutions and rule of law, as well as a steady decline in media freedom and pluralism.

Lindita Camaj, Gjylie Rexha
Facebook as a Platform for Election News Engagement in an Emerging Democracy

Introduction: Campaign reporting in the current hybrid media systems (Chadwick, 2013) has changed the rules of the game in which news media are not the only gatekeepers. Social media platforms endow news audiences with an agenda setting power by giving them the opportunity to take roles of “active recipients” of news (Singer et al., 2011). News media actors have to adopt to these new realities, increasingly striving to provide content that enhances audience engagement, and research suggests some content characteristics lead to higher engagement than others (Kalsnes & Larsson 2018). Yet, very few studies have explored such instances in the context of election news reporting (Kalsnes & Larsson, 2019) and non-Western media context. Focusing on the under-researched context of a post-conflict society, this paper analyzes the use of Facebook as a platform for election news reporting and audience engagement during the 2019 elections in Kosovo. First, based on the logic of campaign framing, this article examines three trends in Kosovo election coverage on Facebook: (1) focus on policy versus candidate character, (2) process driven coverage, and (3) negativity; and ties it to audience engagement. Second, guided by the mediatization concept, it explores audience interaction with functional and populist messages on news media’s Facebook pages. The growing research on the integration of social media within journalism predominantly focuses on mature democracies, although audience engagement depends on media cultures and how deeply social media have been integrated in audience viewing practices (Moe et al., 2016). Providing empirical data of audience news engagement practices as performed during the 2018 Kosovo elections, this study provides useful insights from a post-conflict political and media system
characterized by polarization, clientelism and high degree of voting. Conceptual framework 1. Media, elections and democratization. Similar to the rest of the Central and Eastern Europe, the performance and development of media in Kosovo since the independence has been tied to its political transition. One of the most important achievements of political transitions in Central and Eastern Europe is the creation of a public climate of competition between a wide range of competitors for political and economic power or for cultural predominance (Gross, 2002: 167). Founded on the parliamentary model, the political system in Kosovo is dominated by party plurality and deep social cleavages, which are also reflected in the media scene. Political communication in Kosovo has evolved in a hybrid system (Pfeitsch and Voltmer, 2012) marked by mutual bonds and two-way interactions (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2008). Old-school governmental propaganda practices have been gradually replaced with subtle pressures through inter-organizational relationships between media and political and institutions and business elites (Camaj, 2016). Specifically, South-Eastern Europe is dominated by systems that closely resemble the polarized-pluralist models of journalism (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). They are marked by, by clientelistic relationships (Coman and Gross, 2012; Örnebring, 2012) manifested through political parallelism and media instrumentalization (Mancini, 2012). Structural relationships are a strong predictor of journalistic role perceptions (Hanitzsch Hanusch and Lauerer, 2016), and literature suggests that journalists in non-Western transitional societies are more likely to endorse an active role in promoting particular values, ideas and groups; influencing public opinion; and advocating for social change (Hanitzsch, Hanusch and Lauerer, 2016). Similarly, journalists and editors in the Western Balkans perceive their role as facilitators of democratic transitions in their respective societies (Andersen, Hoxha and Godole, 2017). Thus, it is important to understand how these role perceptions manifest through news reporting during elections which represent a very critical time in political transitions. This paper analyzes too what degree news media use technological advances to reach, educate and engage voters during this critical time. 2. Election News Framing. Unlike previous research that focuses on the consequences of news values and norms, the present study specifically focuses on two well defined frames in political communication literature: game or strategic framing and issue-based framing of news coverage of elections (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). Strategic news frames represent politics as a game, emphasizing winning and losing aspect of elections, and focuses on candidate style and strategies to win the election. Issue framing focuses on media coverage of candidates’ issue position and their platforms. Another feature of campaign reporting is its emphasis on negativity (Patterson, 2000), as both campaigns and their share of negative reporting has increased over the years. Comparative research suggests a low level of substantial issue coverage and high emphasis on critical or negative tone has become a standard feature of election news reporting across countries (Van Elest et al, 2018). So, the first part of this study explores frames that dominate election coverage on social media platforms in the context of emerging democracy. Functional theory and the rise of Populism. Benoit's (2007) functional theory, which has been used to analyze political campaign messages in a wide range of contexts, provides another foundational premise this study. Traditionally, political campaign messages are functional in nature as they serve as instruments to achieve a particular end. Candidates try to establish preferability through discourse with three main functions: (1) to acclaim (present their own deeds or policy plans); (2) to attack (their opponent); and (3) to defend (reaction to attacks or criticism). Yet lately, political campaigns have also been marked by populist discourse across political contexts (Aalberg et al., 2016; Blassing et al, 2019). Populism is defined as a set of anti-establishment and moralistic ideas. It consists of two major premises on anti-eliteism and people-centrism. This study analyzes the degree to which functional and populist messages predominate election reporting on social media in Kosovo. 3. Audience Engagement in Digital Journalism. Audience engagement has become both a media industry buzzword and a movement, as the idea that the profession's survival depends on the strength of its relationship with the public has seen a comeback in industry (Ferrucci et al., 2020) and academia (Belair-Gagnon et al., 2019; Nelson, 2019). Yet, empirical research suggests that technological, economic, and professional/organizational culture of newsrooms influence how and to what degree audience engagement is actively practiced within news rooms (Lawrence et al., 2018; Nelson, 2019). This study focuses on reception-oriented engagement, as opposed to production-oriented engagement, which includes post-production participation via distribution and interpretation of news content via digital media (Nelson, 2019). Such engagement conceptualizes audiences as active users of news already published and is determined by the platform employed for news dissemination. In the context of Facebook, such engagement can be manifested in the forms of reactions - the least immersive form of engagement, to shares and comments - representing a higher degree of audience engagement (Hille & Bakker, 2013). Studies have explored the relevance of story topic, conversation prompts and news framing (Stroud et al. 2015) for audience engagement. This study examines which content is more likely to gain traction and virality in the context of electoral campaigns reporting, and how newsrooms in an emerging
media markets and have adopted the new social media platforms to engage their audiences during a critical time in a democratic process. Thus, the second part of this study examines the degree to which different news frames mediated on Facebook news platforms are more likely to serve as audience engagement prompts. Methods This study combines 1. content analysis and 2. in-depth interviews and ties it to 3. audience engagement with election news on Facebook via shares, likes and comments. The content analysis includes 3, 170 news stories posted on Facebook pages of six major news outlets in Kosovo during the 10-day electoral campaign. The second phase of the project involves in-depth interviews with social media editors at the 6 news organizations (underway). In-depth interviews with social media editors explore the impact of professionalism, news values and audience engagement on their news decision-making. Preliminary findings Content analysis data suggest that whereas campaign strategy was the predominant frame used across media, it wasn’t a relevant predictor to most interactions on Facebook. On the other hand, one third of stories focused on policy and ten percent on candidate personality, but these frames predicted a higher number of user generated reactions, comments and shares. The tone and mode of political discourse, measured via candidate attacks and populism, did not have a significant relationship with audience engagement. In-depth interviews (N=4) suggest that while news media do not seem to have a clear strategy on using Facebook, the main criteria that guided their reporting was objectivity and avoiding bias toward parties with largest support on social media, while audience engagement came secondary.

Kinga Adamczewska

Social media use in political communication - (r)evolution of flow of information?

Social media has become a tool for journalists to intercept the flow of information, assess issues arising in public opinion, and disseminate news (Hermida, Lewis & Zamith, 2014; Vis, 2013). Both, journalists and politicians, are aware of the opportunities and challenges posed by online communication in their relationship. One of the communication practices is engaging in direct communication between the media and politicians (Broersma and Graham, 2016). In addition, citizens gain an important position in the information exchange process in the new political information environment (Van Aelst at al., 2017), they cease to be a passive and marginalized subject of the political communication process. The aim of the presentation is to examine ‘classic’ patterns of information flow (Bordewijk and B. van Kaam, 1986). In particular, the paper addresses two questions: (1) What patterns of political information flow were present in the political communication process on social media during the election campaign in 2015, 2019 and 2020 in Poland? and (2) Are there differences in the use of various patterns of information flow with different levels of interactivity by different entities of political communication in different time periods – election campaign in 2015, 2019 and 2020 in Poland? The research sample consisted of political information from social media: Facebook and Twitter (posts and tweets published on public profiles of politicians and journalists). In the empirical research, two research methods were used. The first was media content analysis, which allowed to identify and characterize the entities involved in the process of political communication. The second method was the social networks analysis, thanks to which it was possible to recognise the position and role of individual entities in the process of information flow. The preliminary results show that journalists do not often appear in politicians' posts as interaction partners. In addition, the study revealed that politicians (in contrast to journalists) avoid interactive patterns of information flow (consultation and conversation), while more often using the most ‘traditional’ one – allocation. Over time, no major difference has been identified in the use of noninteractive and interactive information flow patterns in political communication. Social media as a channel only enables interactive communication, the use of which by the media, politicians, and citizens still seems to slowly evolve.
Grzegorz Ptaszek, Anna Miotk, Marek Robak
Do left-wing partisans dominate Polish Facebook and Twitter? Digital trace data analysis of Internet outlets and social media users in the context of ideological slant

From year to year, researchers observe the growing importance of social media as the main source of information among Internet users. This tendency is becoming more and more apparent among Internet users aged 18-24, whereas many as 38% of respondents indicate social media as the major source of access to news, and only 16% of them absorb news directly from websites (Newman, Fletcher, Schulz, Andi, & Nielsen 2021). If we additionally consider the role of social media, mainly Facebook and Twitter, as important tools of political marketing and social and political participation (Tufekci 2017; Dennis 2019; Freelon, Marwick & Kriess 2020), as well as research on the phenomenon of partisan selective exposure (LaCour 2015; Nelson & Webster 2017; Freelon 2019; Matuszewski & Szabo 2019), the question arises: to what extent the environment of the most important opinion-forming social media is ideologically diverse and what group of users are supporters of various political options. As the events following the US last presidential election showed, technological companies have become heavily involved in politics, speaking out against Trump and the Conservatives. Twitter began labeling more and more of his tweets as “confusing,” and after the attack of the Capitol by Trump's supporters, it temporarily banned the former president's account (as did Facebook). This political commitment by tech companies led many right-wing users to move from Twitter and Facebook to the Conservative-founded Parler site. Such a strategy, according to Freelon, Marwick, and Kriess (2020), is characteristic for right-wing activists who use digital and traditional media differently than left-wing active members to achieve their own political goals. According to researchers "left-wing actors operate primarily through > and offline protest, right-wing activists manipulate legacy media, migrate to alternative platforms, and work strategically with partisan media to spread their messages" (Freelon, Marwick, & Kriess 2020: 1197). A similar observation can be made in relation to the Polish media environment. In a protest against Facebook, which in their opinion restricts freedom of speech, Polish conservatives launched their own social network Alibica in February 2021. In order to investigate whether there is a differentiation in the use of social networking sites (Twitter and Facebook) by the users of Internet portals in relation to their political and philosophical preferences, a multi-stage study was carried out. The following hypotheses were formulated: H1: Users of left-wing internet outlets show more interest in using Facebook. H2: Users of left-wing internet outlets show more interest in using Twitter. The analysis focused on the users of 22 Polish-language news portals with the greatest reach, as well as Facebook and Twitter users according to the PBI / Gemius survey. In the first stage of the study, an expert survey was carried out among the members of the Polish Communication Association, in which the analyzed Internet portals were assessed in terms of their dominant beliefs. On the basis of these surveys, a model was created that allows to define the political, ideological, and economic orientation of these websites and to determine the degree of their extremes. In the second stage, this model was combined with PBI / Gemius data on the degree of co-viewership of the analyzed websites with social networking sites (Facebook and Twitter), and statistics on the course of the coronavirus pandemic in Poland in the same period, with changes over time in weekly resolution. References: 1. Dennis, J. (2019). Beyond Slacktivism. Political Participation on Social Media. Switzerland. 2. Freelon, D. (2019). Tweeting left, right, & center: How users and attention are distributed across Twitter. Knight Foundation. Available at http://dfreelon.org/publications/2019_Tweeting_left_right_center_How_users_and_attention_are_distributed_across_Twitter.pdf 3. Freelon, D., Marwick, A., & Kreiss, D. (2020). False equivalencies: Online activism from left to right. Science 369, p. 1197-1201. 4. LaCour, M. (2015). A Balanced News Diet, Not Selective Exposure: Evidence from a Direct Measure of Media Exposure. APSA 2012 Annual Meeting Paper. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2110621 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2110621 5. Matuszewski, P. & Szabo, G. (2019). Are Echo Chambers Based on Partisanship? Twitter and Political Polarity in Poland and Hungary. Social Media + Society. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F205630519837671 6. Nelson, J. L., & Webster, J. G. (2017). The Myth of Partisan Selective Exposure: A Portrait of the Online Political News Audience. Social Media + Society. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2056305117729314 7. Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Schulz, A., Andi, S., & Nielsen, R. K. (2021). Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2020. Oxford. Available at https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/DNR_2020_FINAL.pdf 8. Tufekci, Z. (2017). Twitter and Tear Gas. The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest. New Haven & London.
Denis Halagiera, Agnieszka Stępińska
Why people avoid political news? Findings from quantitative and qualitative studies on news consumption in Poland

Studies on news consumption usually focus on habits and patterns of media use, as well as on factors influencing particular media diets across a society. Recently, much attention has been paid to selective news exposure as well as to reasons people avoid (political) news. While the former leads to knowledge gaps between the informed and the ignorant or misinformed and increases attitudinal polarization (Hopmann et al., 2016; Müller et al., 2017), the latter has implications for several aspects of citizens’ lives, including health (Narayan, Case, & Edwards, 2011; Golman, Hagmann, & Loewenstein, 2017) that seem to be relatively significant during the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous research (Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2019) showed that some people perceive public affairs’ coverage as being too negative, while others feel overloaded by the number of available media messages, or just simply do not trust the news. Despite changes that have been introduced to the supply side of the political information environment (Esser et al., 2012; Van Aelst et al., 2017), news avoidance has been remaining at the same high-level for years now (Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Nielsen 2020). Our study goes in line with previous attempts of understanding the factors behind political news avoidance. The presentation aims to share the findings of the study on news avoidance in Poland. In particular, we address the following research questions: (R01) How often Polish media users avoid political news? (R02) What are the main reasons for news avoidance of the Polish news media users? (R03) Are there any differences in frequency and reasons of news avoidance across generations of Polish media users? To provide answers to these questions we conducted quantitative (a survey) and qualitative (focus groups) studies on news consumption in Poland. While the survey provides us data on the representative sample of the Polish population (18+), the focus groups allowed us to get an insight into perceptions, opinions, and experience of two groups: the young adults (18-25 years old) and eldest cohort (55+) of the media users. The survey was conducted under the Network of Political Communication Scholars (NEPOCS) cooperation frame in winter 2020/2021 (two waves). The focus groups were conducted in Spring 2021 under the framework of the project called “THREATPIE: The Threats and Potentials of a Changing Political Information Environment activities”. The project is financially supported by the NORFACE Joint Research Programme on Democratic Governance in a Turbulent Age.

Tomasz Gackowski
Who do you believe, and who do you support in politics? Preliminary results of the experiment (triangulation of methods – eye-tracking, facetracking, questionnaire, IDI)

In a paper, the author will present assumptions and preliminary results of an experimental research project conducted in the Laboratory of Media Studies at the University of Warsaw in autumn 2019. The main research question was: what drives Poles in their political choices? Is it identification with the leader of a given party or rather identification with the party’s political program? Participants of the research were divided into two groups: first one – respondents were aged 23-26, students living for at least three years in a city with 500,000 inhabitants and more; the second one – respondents were aged 50-55 who could vote in the first democratic elections in Poland. The choice of respondents reflects the structure of support for individual parties in the last election. We selected them deliberately based on their declared political views. Our experiment contains the following elements: the survey where respondents reported their emotional state before and after our investigation; the survey where they expressed support and the liking for both leaders and the leading parties. In the next stage, respondents saw 16 anonymous quotations about the situation in Poland and Europe on the screen. They had to agree/disagree (5-points Likert scale). Their reactions during the process were registered using eye-tracking and face-tracking software. Furthermore, they took part in a Political Party quiz/ Vote compass survey to check which of the five leading parties best match their political opinions (to verify if their political declarations are following the party programs). In the next step, they saw on the screen 16 same as previous quotations about Poland and Europe’s situation – next to the quote was the name and the picture of the author – one of the political leaders. Again they had to agree/disagree (5-points Likert scale). Their reactions during the process were registered using eye-tracking and face-tracking software. In the end,
we have surveyed respondents who reported their emotions (surprise, discomfort) experience during the experiment. After all, we have also conducted IDIs about their political view.

**Discussant:** Norbert Merkovity

---

### 3.4.2 Misinformation and disinformation

**Chair:** Małgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska

**Speakers:**

**Mihhail Kremez**  
**Susceptibility of the Estonian Russian-speaking Audience to the Spread of Fake News and Information Disorder in the News Media**

The main questions of my PhD thesis “The Media and Audiences as Agents in Contemporary Infosphere: News about Russia and Estonia–Russia Relations and Their Perception” are: how the media influences construction of the image of Russia in Estonia and other EU countries, whether the audiences perceive manipulation, and whether they are capable of criticizing media materials, detecting fake news and unbalanced information. The audiences are not passive recipients of information and may play an active role in decoding messages. In my second paper (the full text of the just published first paper in English is available here: http://jq.bgu.ru/reader/article.aspx?id=24350), which I would like to present at CEECOM conference and submit to the Central European Journal of Communication, I have studied the perception of the content of the Russia-related news by Russian speaking residents of Estonia (the biggest national minority of Estonia: 24.8% of the population). I and my colleagues have conducted 29 individual semi-structured in-depth interviews with stimulus materials (news about Russia-related events). After that, I have conducted qualitative analyses of the transcriptions. The summarized results: • The exposure to news is selective rather than incidental. • Most of the interviewees are active consumers of the content of the Estonian media in the Russian language and foreign media from Russia, the US, the UK, Finland, and other EU countries. Interviewees, who speak English well, read and watch foreign media channels in English: Fox News, CNN, etc. Most of the interviewees evaluate Estonian media positively, especially the public broadcaster ERR, in the way they cover everyday news in Estonia. Many interviewees question the credibility of the news in the Russian state media and the US media. Hence, it would be an exaggeration to say that the Russian minority lives in the information space of the Russian media. • The question of credibility does not arise for an interviewee if the topic covered in the text is irrelevant or uninteresting to him or her. • The pandemic situation has led the audience to assess the credibility of the news. • When assessing the credibility of the text, the assessment is primarily influenced by the general attitude towards the media: from full trust to complete distrust. A distinction is also made between reliable and unreliable media channels. Interviewees are more skeptical regarding social media information. • Interviewees assess the reliability of a media text primarily on the basis of their existing knowledge (if the text contradicts such knowledge, the text is considered unreliable) – but for such a cognitive operation to be performed, the topic/event must be important enough for the interviewee. The attention is paid to text-level elements: references to reliable news sources, specific citations related to persons, links to the sources, click-bate headlines. • A media text is considered unreliable if the interviewee has a general critical attitude towards the channel or has a strongly established attitude towards the parties of the event, the participating countries, the persons involved or specific topics. Also, if it conflicts with the interviewee’s knowledge or assessment. As far as I know, no such kind of research was ever conducted.
The results of the research may be interesting not only for scholars from Estonia but also from other EU countries with Russian national minorities.

**Kateryna Savranska**  
*Russian Information Warfare in Poland*

Information warfare is a modern challenge to international security. Its reach has no physical limits and does not necessitate major financial or time commitments. Methods used to accomplish an actor's geopolitical aims are structured to transform any unsuspecting person into a possible collaborator or victim. With the rise of information technologies, individual organisations' networking activities have expanded, allowing for quick contact and convenient access to sources. The Russian Federation is one of the countries that is actively engaged in global information warfare. The content and techniques of transmitting information material decide the specificity of the its disinformation and propaganda campaigns. Russia is known to use two main channels to extend its information influence. The former are official channels (e.g., RT and Sputnik) that can be targeted internally (Russian segment) and externally (foreign target group). The latter are unofficial channels which are difficult to identify, but have some links to Russia. In my presentation I would like to consider Russian information influences in Poland and present the preliminary research results of my doctoral thesis that are based on the network analysis of fringe websites in Poland. The research would determine the relationships between the webpages that disseminate content consistent with Russian propaganda and disinformation.

**Hedviga Tkáčová**  
*False beliefs about resistance to manipulation in media – the handicap of adolescents in the context of their current communication trends in social media*

The starting point of the theoretical article is the presentation of the issue of media manipulation in the contemporary social media environment, where there is among other things a lack of the regulation of content and the responsibility of the “creators” of media messages. The theoretical part is followed by a description and analysis of selected factors that create an idea of the individual's resilience to media manipulative elements. Among the researched factors of individual's 'resilience' to media manipulation we include (7): media illiteracy/literacy, thought activity/laziness, searching/not searching for "consensus" in the media, not emphasizing/emphasizing emotions, non – reliance/reliance on own intuition, non-credibility/credibility in the opinion of "celebrities" and automatic distrust / trust of recipients in the information presented in the media. We do not see as the main danger the presence of manipulative elements in social media (manipulation is always in a sense part of the media message), nor the fact that manipulative elements have an effect on individuals (media - manipulative and non-manipulative - effects cannot be doubted). In our opinion, the very significant risk is also the fact that the media message is followed by a false belief of the recipient about his own "immunity" against (covert and overt) media manipulation. The result of this false notion is the individual's belief that manipulation in media content does not "affect" him ("I can easily recognize media manipulation") and does not "touch" him ("It can't happen to me"). Such a person then resembles a "house on the sand", as his opinions, arguments or beliefs quickly collapse under the onslaught (5): Critical thinking, strategies for verifying the credibility of information sources, rational assessment of issues, (minimal) reflection of reality and challenges in the context of media literacy, etc. The article is a theoretical analysis of the presented phenomena and previous research in the field of the use of social media in the group of contemporary youth. The conclusion of the analysis is the elaboration of a positive proposal for the researched issue.
**Mato Brautović, Romana John**  
*Impact of fact-checking sites on debunking COVID-19 disinformation and misinformation on Facebook: Case of Faktograf.hr*

COVID-19 has affected all aspects of today’s life, and one of the main issues that came to focus in the communication and media field is the spread of disinformation and misinformation about COVID-19. Many citizens living globally consider the threat of COVID-19 exaggerated, as the government attempts to control them, or as conspiracies by global corporations against their way of life. All this undermined the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and this process was characterized by the World Health Organization (2020) as an ‘infodemic’. Scholars from the University of Oxford found that Facebook and social media were seen as the main channels for spreading false information in general (Digital News Report, 2020). Because of that it is very important to debunk false information and fight the manipulative aspect of social media content. As tools for debunking crystallized the fact-checking sites which became even more important than the past years. This study explores the role of fact-checking sites in debunking the disinformation and misinformation about COVID-19 based on the case of the Croatian fact-checking site Faktograf.hr which was originally founded by Gong (civil society organization) and Croatian Journalists’ Association. Faktograf.hr is a member of The International Fact-Checking Network (Poynter Institute) and accredited partner in Facebook’s Third Party Fact Checking program. By using computational methods combined with content analysis we analysed 381 debunked stories about Covid-19 (N=381) published by Faktograf.hr from January 2020 till end of March 2021. Selected sample was used for comparison of debunked and disinformation versions of the same story regarding their impact on the users in the form of engagement (likes, comments, shares) as a measure of estimated efficiency in combating the infodemic. The main findings show that the practice of publishing on their own websites and using social media in promoting debunked content by the only Croatian fact-checking site is not sufficient.

**Weronika Świeczyńska-Głownia**  
*Media discourse on coronavirus – aspects of misinformation*

The paper presents results of content analysis of leading, the most opinion-forming newspaper in Poland (according to the Institute of Media Monitoring, IMM) – i.e. Rzeczpospolita. This press title is also included by the IMM in Top5 most opinion-forming media from all sectors (press, television, radio and Internet) in 2020 and 2021. The research was conducted in the period from March 2020 to March 2021. The misinformation on coronavirus was researched in the context of Polish leading internet portals. The choice of internet portals was deliberate because it was in internet portals that the greatest increase in the number of materials on disinformation was recorded. In 2020, in internet portals, issues related to disinformation appeared almost four times more often than in the previous year. The number of media publications on disinformation doubled during the year. The first wave of COVID-19 fueled the media discussion about fake news and it is interesting and important to explore the perspective of a credible and influential press title on the subject.

**Lora Simeonova**  
*The rise of influencers: an update to the multi-step flow theory of communication in the perspective of Covid-19 infodemic in Bulgaria*

This study offers a new, upgraded metamorphic multi-step flow theory of communication – a natural prolongation of the evolving concept, observing opinion leadership and The Limited effects paradigm in a public sphere, shaped by social networks. Current typology of influencers is presented (both in online and offline environment), in 7 different categories and subcategories: authentic (traditional and modern), elite (traditional and modern), “Web-born” (authorities and buffoons) and ephemera. The metamorphic model is tested in the context of the infodemic, unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The study evaluates the potential of opinion leaders both to consolidate and polarize the society during the Coronavirus crisis in Bulgaria. The most prominent speakers of the “COVID-19 narrative” have been distinguished and analyzed.
in terms of their influence on the flow of communication and the response in social and traditional media triggered by their messages. Results show that the pandemic mobilizes all types of opinion leaders – authentic, elite, "Web-born" and ephemera. New influencers are emerging in the "Facebook" echo chambers – especially experts in the field of science. Influential both in platforms and mainstream media, some of them are "monetizing" their social capital starting political career in 2021 – an year, marked by two major elections in Bulgaria – parliamentary and presidential. The analysis confirm that influencers, audience and media are continuously exchanging their roles within the Web 4.0 era. The platforms have proven as a "nutrient medium" for opinion leaders to broaden their influence and reinforce messages sharply. Meanwhile, the audience accesses more diverse sources of information and mechanisms to set their own agenda in the social networks. The great challenge lies ahead of media – which need both to extract and produce information for the platforms, while disputing with influencers their right to lead the socio-political debate.

Victoria Leszczyńska
Infodemic as a threat for the society. How COVID-19 affects activity of media and politics

In the scientists’ opinions, infodemic is one of the biggest pandemic's problems. Fake news in media isn't something new, but during first wave of COVID-19 they appeared more often. World Health Organization, which included infodemic in their report about pandemic explosion in February 2020, is explaining that: An infodemic is too much information including false or misleading information in digital and physical environments during disease outbreak. It causes confusion and risk taking behaviors that can harm health. Is also leads to mistrust in health authorities and undermines the public health response. An infodemic can intensify or leghthen outbreaks when people are unsure about what they need to do to protect their health and the health of people around them. With growing digitization – an expansion of social media and internet use – information can spread more rapidly. This can help to more quickly fill information voids but can also amplify harmful messages. The main goal of this appearance is to show, that infodemic is a serious threat for people's lives. There is a lot of examples: man dies after drinking fish tank cleaner to prevent virus, some people believed that snorting cocaine will protect them against coronavirus or that garlic is antibacterial and will protect against virus etc. I also want to take up an discussion about: is there anything what media and politics can do (or did) about fake news during COVID-19?

Discussant: Małgorzata Majewska

3.4.3
Social aspects of communication in the 21st century

Chair: Katarzyna Kopecka-Piech

Speakers:

Martina Novotná, Alena Macková
Cross-cutting online discussions on social network sites: who is involved and why?

As social network sites allow people to filter news and information based on their personal preferences, it has raised questions about individuals' engagement in cross-cutting discussion online. Exposure to the
opposing view is considered to be a crucial element for a well-functioning-democracy by enabling the exchange of deliberative thoughts. In contrast, like-minded discussions are perceived as the cause of risk of antidemocratic polarization in society. Nowadays, there is a high demand for an investigation into users’ practices within the online information environment because of their impact on the level of heterogeneity and characteristics of the information flow. The urgent need for an investigation is driven by opinion conflicts that are apparent within societies across the world. People are polarized in their opinions on essential questions concerning elections, racism, or homophobia. Online discussions are attracting increasing attention because public opinion exchange can potentially shape peoples’ awareness and attitudes. While studies mainly focus on attributes of online discussions or social media users’ activities, researches that deal with individual factors and determinants of cross-cutting discussions are not frequent. This study seeks to fill the research gap within the Czech Republic, where similar data are not available yet, by focusing on users’ involvement in cross-cutting discussions. The presentation’s main contribution lies in extending our knowledge of the discussants’ characteristics and attitudes toward cross-cutting discussions. The results of our research will complete previous studies that analyzed users’ behaviour on social networks sites from a different perspective. This paper relies on data from the representative survey from Czech adults (N = 3’763, age 18 +) that was designed for the project - Political polarization in the Czech Republic: The case of a multiparty system. Data collection based on quota sampling combining CAI and CAWI methodology occurred during November and December 2020. By employing a national survey, we investigate the relationship between cross-cutting discussions and individual characteristics as well as attitudes/reactions towards opposite opinions. Preliminary results show that although people’s willingness to participate in online discussions is overly low in the Czech Republic, it is apparent that a considerable amount of people is involved in cross-cutting discussions and consider those discussions as interesting. This paper provides an overview of who are those people and what are their characteristics.

**Paulina Barczyszyn-Madziarz, Mateusz Zieliński**

*Media and information literacy of students – conditions, skills and challenges. The example of Poland*

The main purpose of the work is to present in a multidimensional manner the level of media and information literacy of Polish students based on empirical research. Media and information literacy (MIL) is a key issue for today’s societies as it equips citizens with the skills needed to use various media and information channels and exercise their basic human rights. Phenomena such as post-truth, the way people are more inclined to accept arguments based on emotions and beliefs than facts, disinformation and fake news are an important context and subject of ongoing scientific discussions. It is therefore worth looking at the level of MIL competence among students who are usually credited with relatively high skills and understanding of the new media ecosystem. In Western European countries, the understanding of MIL is more entrenched in media education, while Eastern European countries associate MIL with computer literacy and information skills (Frau-Meigs, Velez, Flores Michel, 2017: 32). According to the Media Literacy Index 2019, Poland was 18th (53 points) and along with the Czech Republic and Slovakia experienced the greatest decline recently (Lessenski, 2019). The authors will try to present the level of media and information competences of Polish students of social sciences and humanities, as well as identify the biggest challenges in this area. The first step will be desk research, necessary to present the state of research, outline the socio-political context and indicate the level of MIL in Poland compared to other European countries, with particular emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe. Secondly, the main tool that will be used in the work is a questionnaire, which means that the work will be quantitative. Keeping in mind the limitations of self-report methods, the authors, in addition to questions encouraging to indicate the level of students’ own skills, also included questions that test their theoretical knowledge and competences related to recognizing fake news. The survey consists of 4 parts, it is anonymised, and the respondents fill it in the form of an online questionnaire. The authors assume that the research sample will consist of approximately 500 students of social sciences and humanities. The results of the research will provide detailed knowledge about the level of MIL in Poland, which is part of the discussion on trends and phenomena affecting society, such as disinformation, discourse polarization or the problem of fake news.
**Dorota Rak**

*Digital emigrant - new or old participant in communication?*

The development of modern information technologies contributed to the communication revolution. The ongoing digital transformation forces further changes in the information exchange process. On the other hand, there is also another, completely opposite trend - “technological fatigue” - which results in giving up participation in the digital world. The aim of the paper is to answer the question of how the approach to the media and the communication process of those users who voluntarily decide to withdraw from participation in digital life are changing. Another goal is to try to identify what the similarities and differences are between user preferences with regard to information processes and media used. The research will primarily use the interview method as well as the method of analysis and critical analysis of the literature. The interviews are attended by people who meet several criteria simultaneously: they have Information, Digital and Media Literacies to navigate in the digital environment, have been active in the digital environment, have used digital media before and the decision to give up their use of ICT was conscious. The research results will be presented using appropriate visualization elements.

**Michał Jas**

*Influencers: on the new type of opinion leader*

An ‘Influencer’ is a new type of celebrity whose activities are closely related to social media. New media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook) is not only a source of information about the world, but also a place where influencers build their communities. By being natural, authentic, and unique, internet celebrities become the new idols and authorities, as well as contemporary opinion leaders. The opinion leadership of influencers has a real impact on both consumer and political behaviour. The aim of this study is to present influencers as contemporary opinion leaders. The article analyzes the content of the Dziki Trener’s (The Wild Coach) video materials, a Polish influencer with 1.25 million followers on Facebook. The author concludes that influencers have become an important source of communication and opinion formation for millions of internet users.

**Gergana Markova, Kalin Kalinov**

*Community management: theoretical framework and concept acceleration*

Community management is the process of building, establishing and sustainable development of mutually beneficial one or multiple communities relating to a common cause or a particular purpose. Currently such networks are established in many fields, including commercial brands, social movements, technology and innovation, social media networks, influencers, etc. However, the concept itself is not recent and its roots can be traced back in time to the dawn of humanity (Harari, 2011). The technological advancements in recent years accelerated the phenomenon and led to significant changes in its essence. While the first communities were established on a geographical principle and were based on the physiological needs and the necessity for safety and security at the bottom of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), now as an evolutionary result and partially thanks to technology and the invention and diffusion of the internet, today's communities are more diversified in their aims and aspirations. Thus, through the decay (Castels, 2004) or vacuum (Virilio, 1991) of space and time related with online communication, modern communities are formed to address the social and psychological necessity for acceptance and belonging, which are further amplified by the dehumanization effect of technologically mediated interpersonal communication. Methodologically, the authors offer a wide and interdisciplinary theoretical review in building hypotheses suitable for future empirical research. Secondary empirical data
(survey results, statistics, etc.) is employed to illustrate key concepts. Special emphasis is placed on the differences between communities and crowds. The first being more purpose-oriented, with a higher sense of belonging, pro-influencing, and more often than not - sustained by stories (Barry, 2016). The authors differentiate community management into goals-based short-term communities and cause-based long-term ones with their implications and specifics. The research is conducted within the framework of the NSF funded project "CoM: Insist" (contract No. KFT-06-M25/3 from 14.12.2018).

**Katarzyna Radwańska**

'United by football' as a sportainmental revolution of Polish Football Association.

Communication factors

The topic presents redefinition of sportainment term examined by communication perspective. Investigating the previous research, a strong impact of sport marketing was observed. However, sport is a part of mediated sphere of the culture and society. Jhally (1988) identified even "sports-media complex" that entertains the fan community. Accordingly, sportainment itself refers to the processes of merging sports and entertainment within the media sphere (Radošinská, 2018). This case study shows revolution of Polish Football Association's brand image caused by 'United by football' slogan in sportainmental way. The critical analysis of various sources (PFA website, social networking sites, UEFA National Association Research by Kantar and others) illustrates the role of communication in the audience engagement. Moreover, the set of changes implemented payed a reinforcing role in PFAs perception among the fandom. The research's results reposition sportainment as an approach to coexistence sport and its background under current conditions and to engage the fans' community.

**Discussant:** Barbara Sitko

---

3.4.4

Communication technologies

**Chair:** Ralitsa Kovacheva

**Speakers:**

**Mirosława Wielopolska-Szymura**

Radio and new communication technologies - how radio and its listeners in Poland adapt to the communication revolution?

Radio, like other media, is subject to convergence and digitization. Radio broadcasting uses new technologies that make it easier to reach recipients and listeners with the program - websites, podcasts, streaming, or mobile applications are just some of the new possibilities. The switch to digital and Internet broadcasting seems even more significant - this increases the possibilities of both broadcasters and radio listeners. Thanks to new technologies, the number of radio broadcasters and their specificity is increasing - niche, specialized radio stations are created that adapt the program to a narrower group of listeners than in traditional radio. An important question arises when we consider how these new possibilities for radio affect the change of management and financing models of radio stations, new rules for creating the programming offer, and market stability in Poland? Equally important is the question of
how the change in the radio changes the habits of Polish listeners? Do they use all the technical possibilities offered by new technologies? My goal is to look for possible answers to the above questions. I will use comparative methods and content analysis to compare organizational forms, financing methods, and the program offer of selected Internet radio stations. Also, I will survey listeners of these radio stations to check their radio listening habits and preferences regarding programs and stations’ choices. Finally, I will compare the obtained results to the communication changes that broadcasters and listeners undergo in other selected countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

**Monika Wawer**

*The role of genres in non-linear television. Programmers and broadcasters’ perspective*

The role of genres in non-linear television. Programmers and broadcasters’ perspective. In traditional linear television, genres played an essential role for broadcasters. They defined the audience’s preferences, determined the program’s place in the scheduling, determined the content production cost. In short, these categories broadcasters have used to communicate with the viewer, communicate in programming and production teams, and have used to build a competitive advantage on the television market. How is the role of genres changing today, as we see television transforming from linear to non-linear? How do VOD programmers use this category to grab viewers’ attention? Researchers note that genres have become the most critical content category in digital television, while the role of the TV channel’s DNA has decreased and blurred due to the distribution typical for VOD platforms. Managers of television organizations are increasingly focused on defining specific genres that enhance linear and non-linear television synergy. This article will examine the role of the genre in programming content in those Polish TV groups where linear television coexists with non-linear television. The subject of the analysis will be press materials, company documents, and interviews with broadcasters, programmers, and producers.

**Agnieszka Węglińska**

*Public television journalists in Poland – political pressure and public service media*

The theoretical context of my research was the situation of public media in Europe and how to define their work. I also examined various media systems in Europe, Polish and EU media legislation, ways of financing the media, the commercialisation of public media, the relationship between public media and politicians and the journalist’s role in a democratic system. In the case of Poland, after 1989, its media system took shape based on models from democratic systems in Europe (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; 2013; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015; 2019). My initial research interest was Poland’s public television network, TVP SA, since the station’s responsibility is to pursue public objectives covering the whole country. Because Polish Television Network (TVP SA) is public Polish citizens have become accustomed to paying licence fees to support it. TVP SA also hires journalists who are responsible for the content of the programmes, and the network is subject to legal regulations on several levels: national, European and global. Legislation at these levels affects the station’s work. The main aim of my analysis focuses on how TVP SA journalists are subject to influences from the political class as well as from the market: this situation results from flawed legislation, the absence of a political culture, an inefficient internal regulating process and suitable training for the journalists themselves. In the course of my work about how journalists work at TVP, I formulated the following general research questions: 1. To what aspects of TVP SAs work do the guidelines of the European Union and international organisations apply? 2. To what extent does TVP SA operate according to the contemporary interpretation of public media as a creative enterprise? 3. How did the transformation of TVP SA occur in the context of the change from communism to liberal democracy? 4. In what areas is TVP SA influenced by politics or the marketplace? 5. How exactly is TVP SA’s remit defined? In proceeding with the next, empirical part of the research, it seemed justified to specify the research questions that would systematise further deliberations. These specific questions are as follows: 1. How do the legislative regulations related to public media function in practice, with reference to TVP SA? 2. How do journalists understand and pursue public objectives? 3. Do TVP SA journalists view TVP SA as a creative enterprise? 4. How has the multi-platform nature of new media

Lumnije Bajrami

Opinion in the mass print media of Albania

In the print media in Albania, opinions are a very controversial part of the way public discourse is created. Positioned in the capital of Albania, they often circulate the same information. Important in this genre of opinion are comments, analysis and opinions in editorial form and headlines. It seems that the most important information is served on a golden plate for the public that is being overloaded and bombarded by other media such as television, radio or online media. Mass communication here unfolds in a wider range that, apparently informative, turns into a game with gates between political camps. Opinionism openly announces its strategies from one medium to another where more than the public benefits those who make these opinions, ie journalists, politicians or explicitly linked exponents for the purposes of political communication. On the other hand we see a lot of spectacle in the form of entertainment and so far the information stagnates. Necessary information for citizens is missing. This paper tends to theoretically analyze the gender issues of opinion in the print media.
**Maciej Zweiffel**  
*Digital revolution and the place of printed books*

“Digital first” seems to be a crucial idea of our time. From the practical, economical, and even ecological point of view printed books are not the best solution. But still this practise exits. The aim of this survey is to answer, why in digital environment occurs the textual niche. Is it a kind of relic or something which is deeply connected with human reading comprehension and the quality of text experience? To solve this problem will be used case study and cognitive methods. The crucial question for presented paper is weather printed (codex) book and its reading means a form of distributing texts which will be progressively declining under pressure the digital revolution (01). To answer this question it is necessary to describe the current situation of traditional printing and also raise the question if printed documents especially printed and codex books have any features which cannot be replaced by online publishing (02). In the second question one should take into account cultural and subjective context of reading or possessing printed books.

**Przemysław Ciszek**  
*Female streamers on Twitch: New type of content and communication*

Twitch is a live-streaming service launched in 2011. It is mainly used by gamers who broadcast themselves playing video games. The vast majority of Twitch streamers are young men, as are so-called ‘hardcore gamers’. However, there is also a specific group of young women broadcasting games (and more), wearing skimpy outfits. Some of them play video games, but some just do routine household chores, cook or simply answer chat questions. They use specific types of visual and verbal communication means aimed at attracting the attention of male audience. Each stream is multi-modal and has several different forms of visual and audio messages. The aforementioned female streamers try to adjust these elements so that the content is interesting for potential viewers. Like many other streamers, they try to make money with viewer donations and paid Twitch subscriptions.

**Xudong Wang, Siqi Liu**  
*Unsilencing home village. A Discursive-theoretical Analysis of the Construction of the Rural in Chinese Short Video*

Countryside, a space that cannot be overlooked, is actually always neglected in China (Fang, 2002). Behind the high-speed urbanization in Chinese society, the construction of rural areas has been dominated by a hegemonic discourse from urban elites for a considerable time. In the media sphere, the countryside is imagined and represented by the mainstream media largely through “them versus us” articulations (Whang, Min, 1999), while its own voice is unable to be heard. In Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory, however, this kind of fixation is never stable and all-encompassing because discourses are structures “in which meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed” (Laclau 1988, 254). That means different discourses engage with each other in competitions to simultaneously generate meanings on a particular object and struggle for social dominance (hegemony). The increasingly popular short video platforms activate the visibility of the daily life of countryside by providing a low-threshold media tool and widely connected distribution platform which engages the rural people in user-generated content production. The revolutionary impact that has brought lies in the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the countryside’s “appearance” (Liu, 2018). In other words, the rural is empowered with unprecedented capabilities for self-representation, to highly engage in discourse struggles, challenge and dislocate the hegemonic construction of its identity. How to discover the countryside’s subject position and break through the alienated research paradigm dominate the field of rural communication studies in China (Sha, 2016). Even if discourse analysis approaches are widely used in these studies, few approaches in the perspective of Discursive-theoretical Analysis (DTA) (Carpentier, 2017), which has been further developed in European academia of communication studies in recent years, leaving a gap in further revealing the discursive
TEXTS:

The silent death of free speech ................................................................. 89
Shake that money-maker ................................................................. 93
Bulgarian Insecurity ................................................................. 97
Romanian Uroboros ................................................................. 101
The day that changed everything ......................................................... 105
Living after Ibiza-gate ................................................................. 109
Rebuilding itself ................................................................. 113
Repolonisation ................................................................. 117
The silent death of free speech

As the age of globalization is rapidly changing the worldwide media landscape, Hungarian government seems to be trying its best to eradicate the pluralism of their local news outlets.

As a young Pole, I find the parallels between Hungarian and Polish governments’ influence on country-wide media outlets, and accompanying them far-right propaganda, to be equally terrifying and fascinating. Both governments seem to put a huge focus on fighting the “lgbt ideology” which conservative circles see as a threat to the core Christian values of their countries, while hoping to protect their kids from it at any cost.¹ The willingness to bend over an entire society to their will is very well documented, and both Jarosław Kaczyński’s Polish “Prawo i Sprawiedliwość” party, as well as Viktor Orbán’s Hungarian “Fidesz” party became infamous for challenging the circuit of free media. And as years are progressing, the state of free media outlets keeps falling deteriorating. But the approach of Viktor Orbán and his right-wing populist Fidesz party to the transformation of media ownership structure, that slowly but surely keeps tightening their grip on news outlets in Hungary, is a morbidly interesting case.

From authoritarianism to authoritarianism

Hungary as one of The Soviet Union’s satellite states after World War II was subjugated to heavy censorship by the controlling state. It is a picture well known to people from post-soviet countries in Eastern Europe. Media has been instrumentalised in such a way that would promote the political elites. It was also in large part a result of the country’s history of constantly changing media landscape, influenced by new regimes continuously replacing each other every few decades. That state of things was a regular occurrence until late 1980s and early 1990s, when during and right after the fall of USSR press and media freedom in Hungary was in full blossom.

Right after the fall of communism in Hungary, the country became a forerunner of democratic change in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. Parties launched their own new outlets, and a solid amount of foreign investors became more interested in new available sources of income in Hungary. That allowed country to finally have their own free and fair elections. After Radio and Television Act was passed in mid 1990s, state broadcasters were transformed into public service media, which in result made Hungary skyrocket in all sorts of press freedom rankings.²

The state of things started falling apart soon enough. Following the 2008 economic crisis and a series of scandals surrounding "Hungarian Socialist Party", the 2010 elections allowed the Fidesz/Christian Democrats party alliance to come into power. In result of earning a supermajority of seats, Fidesz was able to take control of most major media foundations and agencies, and victory in 2014 only helped the alliance to expand their influence even more, reaching private media company through a network of media market giants with connections to Viktor Orbán's party.³

**Hegemony**

“...the media in Hungary is freer and more diverse than the media in Germany”, said Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in a public letter to German politician and previous President of the European Parliament Marin Schulz, in response to the accusations of anti-Semitism, media suppression and economic free-riding during an interview on 19th November 2020.⁴

As much as Orbán might want general public to believe the pluralism of different voices in local media is still prevalent to keep-up the image of a modern democratic country in the world of international politics, it is a statement that could not possibly be further from the truth. Especially when Hungary's Prime Minister had set himself a goal of exceeding 50 percent of the country's media sector back in 2010. From that point onwards, Orbán was slowly putting his plans into practice, first through government's claiming control over the state-owned news outlets, and then by putting constant pressure on the private-owned companies.

Foreign investors began leaving the country under pressure of intimidation campaign from Hungarian government. The shares they owned in local media and news companies have been sold to Orbán's allies, officially not associated with Fidesz party, but in practice it simply expands the reach of government's propaganda. After the two decades long period of free media and access to different voices, a new hegemony showed up in public news circuit. Press and broadcast media are almost exclusively supporting conservative and nationalist ideologies, whereas critical outlook on these has been borderline removed, marginalised.

**The Last Radio on Earth**

Eleven years later, Fidesz seems to provide the final nail in the coffin for free widely available news outlets in Hungary. In February 2021, Hungarian Media Council had announced that they are not going to renew the license of one of the last independent radio stations in the country – “Klubrádió.” Media Council revoked their licence for allegedly violating rules on advertising. It is an effective way of forcing the last major

---


⁴ @zoltanspox. „PM Orbán responds to @MartinSchulz’s accusations of anti-Semitism, media suppression, economic free-riding: “The media in Hungary is freer and more diverse than the media in Germany...” Read the full text of the PM’s letter:“ Twitter, 30 Nov. 2020, 9:21 a.m., [https://twitter.com/zoltanspox/status/1333325155466507221](https://twitter.com/zoltanspox/status/1333325155466507221) .
independent radio broadcaster off the air. While “Klubrádió” is still able to broadcast its regular programming via the internet, their radio frequency is lost. 5

“Klubrádió” being taken off air is somewhat reminiscent of arguably an even larger and more devastating incident back in 2020. The leading independent media outlet at the time, “Index”, was bought by a businessman and president of “TV2”, Miklós Vaszily, known for having close ties with Fidesz party. 6 Soon after, the editor-in-chief Szabolcs Dull announced that Index was in danger of losing its independence. Not long after that, his contract was terminated, which was followed up by resignation of 70 of the Index’s employees.

The staff did announce a launch of new news service called Telex, but it’s just another example of Fidesz indirectly supressing free media while technically not having anything to do with it. Through these schemes he was capable of publicly saying that the proportions of right-wing and left-wing media are roughly balanced and more diverse than most of western media landscape.

The outreach of government’s power was basically confirmed to get nearly 50% of the Hungarian press to convey the government’s position. Meanwhile, opposition parties can point towards very small number of their own publications, making them almost undetectable in the grander scheme of things. The enormous proportions of government-controlled media outlets are basically unmatched in Europe, and unseen since the fall of The Soviet Union. 7

The new model

With no surprises, Orbán’s model of a new media landscape has been a source of inspiration for many of its neighbouring countries, like Poland or Slovenia. The covid-19 pandemic was also another pretext to tighten Fidesz’s grip on media outlets, threatening journalists with prosecutions under accusations of sharing fake news about the global crisis. The government seems to utilize every opportunity to bend the society to its own will by carefully controlling the public information. 8

The budget of news outlets is about as uneven as the proportions of Fidesz propaganda and the influences of other parties in public eye as well. Orbán’s media empire costs tens of millions of euros a year, which comes from the public money. Meanwhile most

opposition outlets run on tens of thousands of euros. Shocking, but ultimately, not that surprising, considering Fidesz’s almost 500 centrally controlled press outlets, commercial television and network of country-wide newspapers completely overshadows the few stand-alone publications of opposition parties with much lower reach.

It all unfolds itself, crafting a Hungarian bubble, an echo-chamber where finding any sort of opposing voice among the overwhelming instances of right-wing populist propaganda is extremely difficult and, sooner or later, it might just stop existing all-together. The country has been constantly falling down in world press freedom rankings, and while independent sources are trying to keep fighting for their free speech in the online sphere, it is going to be an uphill battle until they’ll reclaim full autonomy.

– Jakub Wachowicz
Shake that money-maker

Even though people of Czech Republic can be happy with their relatively free state of mass media at the moment, the country is facing a lot of uncertainties about its future. Independence of state-owned broadcasters is being put into question, while more and more concerns show up in relation to the wealthy businesses’ influence on private media outlets, which can be a potential threat to the pluralism of voices in the country.

Czech Republic’s state of media has been rather consistently satisfactory after the fall of The Soviet Union. Ever since, the country has been lauded as one of the best examples of post-soviet country successfully integrating into modern socio-political standards of European Union. In the 1990s, as a result of foreign (mostly German and Swiss) media companies buying a major percent of the local media market, Czech mass media landscape changed drastically. With the new focus on profit-oriented model of journalism born from the capitalist system, the commercial pressure started transforming the core Czech ideas in mass media.\(^9\)

Until 2007, about 80% of Czech print media market was owned by German and Swiss companies. But then, the media landscape of the Central European nation turned upside down. After the financial crisis of 2008, many foreign investors started leaving the country as companies in Czech Republic stopped being profitable. This situation created chances for Czech firms to acquire many local news outlets.\(^10\) As a result, it led to slow centralization of national media, as selected domestic billionaires kept taking over more and more of the country’s news market. One of these billionaires was called Andrej Babiš.

The power of money

Andrej Babiš is a politician, businessman, second richest man in Czech Republic with estimated net worth of around 4.8 billion dollars, founder of the conglomerate “Agrofert” and founder of populist party “ANO 2011.” He’s also the current Prime Minister of Czech Republic.

Babiš entered the world of politics and in 2013 acquired the “MAFRA” media group. That investment basically gave him control over two of the four most influential newspapers in the country: “Lidové Noviny” & “Mladá Fronta Dnes”, as well as the most popular news

---


website in all of Czech Republic – “iDnes.cz.” Soon after, he also got control of a huge privately-owned radio station “Radio Impuls” and music TV channel “Óčko.”

The sudden raise in amount of locally owned news outlets became a concern for a lot of journalists, worried about potential political interference emerging as a result of pressure from privately-owned domestic companies. One such example would be the time in 2014 when a journalist Vladimír Ševela was fired by Babiš from his job at “Dnes.” Reason? Ševela published an article that criticised “Agrofert.”

In leaked recordings, we can find out that Babiš suggested to journalists that they should publish materials discrediting his political rivals. His media outlets also never shied away from crafting a very biased coverage in his favour.

Of course, the timing of Babiš’ acquisitions wasn’t accidental. He bought “Mladá Fronta Dnes”, “Lidové Noviny”, and “Metro” (all of them being very popular and influential) just two weeks before the elections in 2013, thanks to which ANO managed to become the strongest party in the parliament.

**Change is coming**

Babiš of course isn’t the only major player who decided to invest in Czech’s media outlets.

Daniel Křetínský is a CEO of “Energetický a průmyslový holding”, the largest energy group in Central Europe. From 2014 he’s also one of the owners of Czech News Center, one of the largest media houses in Czech Republic.

Entrepreneur Zdeněk Bakala acquired in 2008 a Czech media company “Economia.” Some journalists at “Respekt”, one of Economia’s newspapers, admitted that censoring themselves is a preferrable option to actually criticizing the magazine’s owner.

Marek Dospiva, co-owner of “Penta Investments”, runs a group of dailies with a monopoly on regional print media. He admitted to primarily having interest in media groups in order to ensure nobody is going to attack his company.

Billionaire Jaromír Soukup founded “Empresa Media”, and in 2012 bought “TV Barrandov”, becoming its CEO.

Even though most of the Czech billionaires who invested money in these media outlets aren’t exactly worried about politics, owning said groups is supposed to give them a feeling of safety for their businesses. This led to the situation, where most major news outlets controlled by these billionaires are being extremely careful not to criticize each other.

But what happens when these oligarchs do dare to criticize each other?

Zdeněk Bakala for example is a rather liberal person, and his views (which goes the same for his newspapers) are very critical of Prime Minister Babiš and President Miloš Zeman. In turn, both these politicians are trying their best to undermine the credibility of Bakala and his media outlets. All-out war.
It's easy to see the correlations between news outlets' pieces and the views of their owners. Křetínský's “Reflex” for example is very critical of climate protection demands, which shouldn't be surprising considering he has high stakes in the coal industry.\(^{11}\)

**I want it all**

Across Europe we can notice the public media slowly turning into plain mouthpieces for governments. It happened in Poland, it happened in Hungary, and there's a threat that Czech Republic might fall to that fate as well. During March 2021, the council tried to remove the CEO of the public television broadcaster “Czech Television” Petr Dvořák. While it was rejected by majority of the council, it didn't break the spirits of the government.

In April of the same year, European Broadcasting Union reported, that government was trying to fill up the council with their favourable candidates.\(^{12}\) It's another attempt at removing Dvořák and plant new “Czech Television” council that would report favourably on the government's campaigns for the upcoming elections, planned for October 2021.

National Czech Radio is facing similar threats, due to council members of the outlet trying to influence the broadcasted material. Council member Tomáš Kňourek was supposed to approach the CEO of the radio “René Zavoral” and complain about the broadcast not presenting enough “main currents of opinion.” These so-called currents of opinion would include more coverage of Euroscepticism and anti-immigration.

The perception of the independence of Czech Republic's mass media has been steadily falling down. According to “World Press Freedom Index” published by Reporters Without Borders, Czech Republic fell from 5\(^{th}\) spot in 2006 to 40\(^{th}\) position in 2019 and 2020. That change was supported by the continuing deterioration of the quality of published materials and deficiency in funds allocated to investigative journalism.\(^{13}\)

Despite this, the public Czech media are still generally seen as independent and trustworthy, even in spite of a lot of smear campaigns against them from the people linked to the government for supposedly favouring the opposition.

Mass media in Czech Republic is being more and more frequently seen as a chance at expanding your network of contacts for companies and businesses. The controversy that emerged from the aggressive acquisitions of media companies by local oligarchs gave birth to new online media projects, which are being promoted as news outlets with


focus on objectivity and independence. Many journalists who used to work for the press taken over by Babiš found new employment in these online spaces.

Marginalisation of foreign capital on the Czech media market helped to strengthen the hegemony of local billionaires, with some of them ultimately diving into the world of politics and using their new toys to bend the profile of country’s socio-economic picture. However, in spite of visible weakening of Czech’s media, the country still can be considered a safe space for journalists thanks to strong independent public media and conflicts between billionaires crafting space for pluralism of voices in most privately-owned news outlets.

~Jakub Wachowicz
Bulgarian Insecurity

Sitting at 3rd worst spot among European countries in World press freedom index ranking, the state of Bulgarian’s media is extremely complicated. The harassment of outspoken journalists combined with strong influence of pro-government sentiments in many popular news outlets paints a rather dreadful, but not entirely hopeless picture for the future.

March 17, 2020

Slavi Angelov, editor in chief of weekly newspaper 168 hours, was attacked near his home in Bulgaria’s capital, Sofia. The journalist was assaulted by two masked men using metal bars, while another man was recording the entire thing on his phone. The assailants didn’t steal anything from him. Soon before that point, Angelov has been writing about the controversial richest businessman in Bulgaria, Vasil Bozhkov, as well as about the underworld of organised crime.

June 18, 2020

Bulgarian journalist Nikolay Staykov, former deputy editor-in-chief of Capital.bg, began receiving multiple death threats. Staykov believed that these threats were linked to the investigative documentary he’s been working on about high-level judicial corruption. That night, his residence was vandalized with eggs. It took the authorities 2 weeks to officially order police protection for Staykov, after questioning him about some of the allegations made in the documentary.

August 4, 2020

Paulina Panuova, of Radio Free Europe – Bulgaria and Genka Shikerova, of Alternativa TV, were attacked by several young men that tried to expel them from a conference of the ruling GERB party. Panuova’s phone was thrown away several times and she herself was called “trash.” Some of the men were wearing GERB stickers and badges.

September 2, 2020

Anti-government protests are happening in Sofia. Journalist Dimitar Kenarov is in the centre of the demonstrations when a brawl between the police and protesters began. Karpov, despite wearing a gas mask marked “Press” to protect him from police’s pepper spray, was brought down to the ground by officers, arrested and taken to the police station, even though he was showing them his press card. Following baseless arrest, interior ministry denied that Kenarov had been held despite obvious evidence and then prosecution stalled his case in court.

According to the head of Balkans Desk at RSF, Pavol Szalai, Bulgaria is affected by regressive trends that other Eastern European countries are suffering from, but unlike
other countries in EU, like Poland and Hungary, in Bulgaria you can observe frequent physical attacks against journalists.\textsuperscript{14}

**Fear the power**

Even though Kenarov might insist that violence against media professionals in Bulgaria isn’t that much harsher than in other European countries, it doesn’t downplay the country’s serious issue. An issue that stretches across an entire decade, if not longer.

Nowadays, journalists are often being questioned by police about their work, which combined with other pressures and intimidations, gives rise to self-censorship.

If anything, it helps the extremely high concentration of media in Bulgaria.

The top 4 major owners in the broadcasting sector of the country share about 94\% of the market. Top 4 major owners of daily newspapers share close to 80\%. Top 4 major owners in radio – over 80\% share.\textsuperscript{15}

The danger of major media concentration in Bulgaria is only amplified by the blatant lack of transparency in media ownership. Despite some attempts at legislative changes, there are many loopholes remaining that allow local oligarchs to strengthen their links with news outlets.

The Union of Bulgarian Journalists isn’t strong enough to effectively aid its members whose professional lives are at risk. Combined with the fact that most journalists are hardly ever getting offered long-term contracts (outside of public service media), it makes the situation of many local Bulgarian journalists rather complicated.\textsuperscript{16}

Back in 2010, it was revealed that a media group owning newspapers, internet news outlets and a TV station has borrowed huge amounts of money from “Corporate Trade Bank.” Same bank that hosted significant amounts of money of several ministers and state-owned companies. The group was also connected with very influential political party “Movement for Rights and Freedoms”. The owner of such media group, Delyan Peevsky, is also a son of Irena Krasteva, owner of multiple print media outlets within “New Media Group.”

**Banking on the media**

“New Media Group” has history that’s reaching all the way back to the 1990s, when German “WAZ Group” acquired two most influential newspapers at that time – “Trud” and “24 Hours”. A group would later on dominate the market up until the late 2000s, when “New Media Group” was created and very quickly gained a 70–80\% share in the print


media market. Following study concluded that the concentration of news outlets became a major obstacle for new companies that wished to enter the market.

In “A comparative analysis of media freedom and pluralism in the EU Member States”, Alexander Kashumov says that “Corporate Trade Bank” fell into bankruptcy in 2014, but most of the media in that group was saved by Delyan Peevsky, which makes it informally connected to Movement for Rights and Freedoms. The party’s past leader, Ahmed Dogan, said publicly that he’s surrounded by a circle of companies. The linkages between “New Media Group”, the party and other businesses were revealed by the press, which in response often hit them with various fines.

Multiple media outlets in Bulgaria have strong political affiliations. Many of them are owned by influential politicians. Far-right party “Ataka” has registered a TV channel called Alpha TV, while co-chair of nationalist party “National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria” is also the owner of tv channel SKAT TV. All of these affiliations are known to the public, as Bulgaria doesn’t have any laws that disallow politicians to own their own media outlets.

At the same time, some of the biggest media outlets in country often aren’t actually politically affiliated.

**The Wild (Southeastern) West**

Unlike in most European states, Bulgaria doesn’t have any rules concerning the supervision of mergers and acquisitions in the media sector. It’s no surprise that very vague legal framework for media ownership in country allows the influential figures in Bulgaria’s socioeconomic landscape to utilize various outlets as ways of strengthening their image.

The existence of various soft laws had a little bit of impact on national media law, though not satisfying enough. State authorities are usually unwilling to apply relevant documents for many different reasons. Apart from the Council for Electronic Media, which doesn’t have any competences over print and online media anyway, Bulgaria doesn’t have its own state body in charge of local media. Print media aren’t regulated at all outside of the obligation of reporting ownership.

A lot of people are pinpointing Bulgaria joining the EU as the moment the corruption in the country started rising due to acquisition of large amount of money by politicians in a country that’s in a middle of transitioning from Communist to Capitalist system.

Since 2009, major media outlets have been bought out by people close to Bulgaria’s Prime minister Boyko Borisov, such as Nova TV. After he has stepped down in May of this year, it was revealed that between 2017 and 2021 his cabinet spent more than 6 million dollars in EU funds on media advertisement. Multiple investigative journalists employed by Nova TV had their contracts terminated.

The acquisition of news outlets by German investors in early 2000s and late 90s also slowly turned them into tabloids, which allowed Bulgarian oligarchs to get their hands on
the media landscape following the 2008 financial crisis. The crisis also made outlets and journalists more vulnerable to financial pressure.

The media landscape received another punch in 2010s as a result of monopoly of few big businesses on the country’s market. The result of it was that smaller media outlets ended up in ruin and Bulgaria ended up with the lowest number of journalists per capita in the EU.

However, the recent shifts in political spheres of Bulgaria following Borisov stepping down in May is a small light in the tunnel for local journalist world. Multiple protests in Bulgaria over the last couple of years have clearly showcased the general public’s disappointment in the current state of affairs in their country and the nation is trying to change its ways. Although the country is still in a dire need of a major reshaping of their current judicial reform, it’s a step in a right direction. Hopefully, the country will be capable of following up on that.

~Jakub Wachowicz
Romanian Uroboros

The state of mass media in Romania throughout the last decade can be compared to a broken machine that nobody is really willing to fix. Its fundamentals are lacking and unpolished, and failures in some departments only disturb the other core requirements to craft a satisfying reputation for journalism in the country, whereas the disruption in these departments only makes the previous problems that much worse. It’s a cycle and breaking out of it might prove to be a tremendous task for the country.

Cristina Lupu in her work “The state of Romanian Mass-Media 2020” outlines a series of fundamental problems the mass-media in Romania is facing at the moment. The dilution of journalism. The quantity over quality mindset of the Romanian media landscape. The lack of funding and loss of credibility for news outlets. The disheartening, dreadful atmosphere surrounding the profession of journalists. The attempts of political world at extending their control over media outlets.

Since the fall of communism, over 1200 new publications have appeared in Romania, yet the core problems tangled into the local media landscape are still very prevalent. And the most challenging part of it all is how all these problems seem to flow into one another, not being a list of separate issues that need to be dealt with, but each one seems to be a small part of a greater turbulence. It’s an extraordinarily complex issue that deserves a dissection in way more detail that this article is ultimately going to provide. My primary goal is to showcase and highlight major issues within Romanian media system as means to spread the understanding of the country’s situation. A task that Romanian journalism itself often has a problem with.

Advertising for chosen ones

Romania features very surface level pluralism. At the first glance, the pure overwhelming amount of news outlets in Romania should be a sight to behold, and a very positive one at that. The local newspaper market features about 1500 publications, there are over 150 local radio stations, almost everyone in the country uses television where the public service reaches almost 100%. But the huge amount of news outlets

---


leads to an overwhelming noise of information. It might be hard to find the information you actually want to find in such environment, as much published material by many of these outlets are just press releases.

The quality of the investigative journalism in these outlets also is generally considered to be rather subpar. Possibly one of the biggest reasons behind that can be seen in the news outlets’ attempts at chasing the speed and flow of information available through social media. The focus on quantity over quality in order to make their services ultimately profitable isn’t really helped by harsh allocations of modern ad market in Romania.

In 2019, the ad market in Romania was estimated at 485 million euro, of which only 12 million were allocated to print market. 28 million went to radio, 31 million for outdoor ads, 315 million for TV market and 99 million for online ads – out of which the biggest share went to Google and Facebook.

The unfair competition for availability of earning ad revenue, which has heavily declined especially for print media in the last decade as global conglomerates started getting involved more and more in the local market, creates a ton of financial issues for smaller independent companies.

The ones that function outside of the grasp of media giants operating in Romania (such as famous in central Europe Media Pro, local Dogan Holding, Swiss Ringier or state TVR just to name a few) often face issues of being severely understaffed, since most journalists either end up venturing into better paid and more satisfying professions or ride with the new wave of independent Romanian media.

As a result, their source of income is forcibly almost entirely depended on the local state companies, public institutions, or big private companies, often just ultimately becoming mouthpieces of these organizations. It’s all tumbling down into the vicious loop of negative feedback.

Local small outlets are forced to publish whatever they’re forced to and aren’t capable of sufficiently covering regional news. That leads to the quality of published content being lower. That leads to bad publicity. That leads to loss of readers. That leads to more professionals changing their jobs due to bad profits. That leads to becoming mouthpieces for bigger companies.

The state mechanisms for allocating their media funds are also questionable. According to Reporters Without Borders, said mechanisms are supposedly corrupt and force outlets to work as propaganda tools, by subordinating editorial policies to the interests of owners. During the 2020 covid-19 pandemic, Romanian government provided 40 million euros for media public information to raise awareness and combat misinformation, but the deed was criticised for its lack of transparency and allocation criteria, which favoured outlets known for ethical lapses and which encouraged self-censorship.¹⁹

New Wave

Due to aforementioned controversies surrounding the Romanian world of mass media, the country is seeing sort of a new wave of journalists who still want to provide quality content despite the financial situation of modern news outlets.

Around 97% of Romanians say that they watch TV at least once a week, while 58% use the internet on daily basis. The former is around 5% above the European average. The latter – 20% below said average.\(^{20}\)

Part of the reasoning behind that are the aforementioned issues relating to finances involved in the modern media market, but another thing that enhances the distrust towards journalists is the smear campaign from many major Romanian politicians. Combined with the polarization of media, it culminates in a very familiar picture on the global scale of consumers trusting only the news outlets they want to trust. In that way it’s eerily reminiscent of the creation of social network bubbles with news oriented specifically for the particular consumer, which became a topic of discussion in 2020 after the global release of “The Social Dilemma” documentary.

That loss of credibility can be sufficiently rebuilt though. This was happening throughout the last few years thanks to the rise of new wave media, which is offering an outsider, more regionally friendly perspective on many issues that average members of society can actually identify with. Removing the centralization of mainstream media and showcasing a bright new take on the news, these publications can often be happy with higher level of quality and credibility than most outlets owned by either political oligarchs or different conglomerates.

New media wave most importantly manages to rekindle two major aspects that the local scene was found to be lacking in Romania: courage to take time to write quality pieces on unique topics and competitive nature between journalists.

Most mainstream media ended up just throwing miniscule different spins on the same centralized stories which made the very profession of journalism lose its charm, turned it into factory work with almost no place for uniqueness. Combined with poor wages, it was the main culprit behind the lack of quality journalists in the field, but new wave media’s flexibility created space for such fulfilling work to return.

Who can you trust?

After the 2008 economic crisis a lot of media ended up in a dire situation, mostly due to advertisers pulling out of the local markets and dissolution of classical business model for mass-media, when people started using internet more instead of paying for the

news. As a result, mainstream media were pretty much left without their 2 core sources of income.

So, political grasp on the news outlets got even tighter. Many major oligarchs started getting involved even more in the market, either directly or through intermediaries. The poor state of media ownership transparency in Romania isn’t helping the case.

Authorities have never excelled at providing unbiased and throughout information on the legal state of news outlets, while also making themselves very much unapproachable. Being overly critical of materials that outlets might publish about varied topics, it looks like the journalists have been left in the lurch.

The lack of journalism associations is an essential issue that the Romanian media world would have to deal with in order to make their situations more visible and their voices heard. It would be one of the steps in the long journey to fixing many issues within the Romanian media landscape. How will the country go about these issues? Only time will tell.

—Jakub Wachowicz
The day that changed everything

A shocking murder of 27 years old investigative journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée on 21st of February 2018 was a major turning point in modern day Slovakia. Ever since then, the country’s media landscape has been on a good path of improving its image in Europe, but Slovakia still has some problems that it has to resolve.

Slovakia in the early part of 2010s was seen globally as one of the best countries in the world in regard to media freedom. Despite having its ups and downs, it consistently ranked rather high in Reporters Without Borders’ World Press Freedom Index. However, the country already had a decent number of problems even back then.

The independence of the public media and many private news outlets was being put into question way before the assassination of Kuciak. Slovakia, having the highest percentage of conspiracy theorists in Central Europe, gave rise to a new wave of alternative media which presents dishonest information to the public.

RTSV, Slovakian public broadcaster, has been accused of being overly friendly to the politicians in the government. They’re supposedly being used as a government mouthpiece, with limited freedom of speech and encouragement of self-censoring.

On the other hand, many local journalists also were often victims of badmouthing by major Slovakian politicians, most prominently by then Prime Minister Robert Fico. He has often refused to answer questions from outlets whose mission didn’t align with his political and ideological goals.

Prime Minister of Czech Republic Andrej Babis is one of the biggest examples of powerful media landscape oligarchs tightening their grip on local news outlets. He purchased the “Mafra” publisher through which he’s controlling most popular business newspaper in modern Slovakia, “Hospodarske noviny.” He also became rather infamous for attempts of intimidating journalists and forcing publishers to create articles working in his favour.

The past

As Andrej Skolkay writes for Media Landscapes: Television broadcast has been the most popular source of information in Slovakia. After that we have internet, but the most

---


trusted source of information for years has been radio broadcast. Looking at the bigger picture, public trust in media in Slovakia has consistently been above the EU average.

According to INEKO survey, printed media is contributing the most to democracy, followed by PSM radio and television, while private broadcasting are considered neutral to damaging and social media to be slightly negative. From this we can come to conclusion that politicians are seen as playing more of a positive role than media, while social media have damaging impact on democracy.

In late 2016, Robert Fico divided journalists in two groups and called one of them “The ones who cause damage to the interest of Slovak Republic”. It ties into Slovakia’s missing media/political parallelism. You can easily see the ideological affiliation of most key media outlets in the country, although with one exception there are no official affiliations with political parties.

Data has showcased though, that specific journals are often reporting on specific individuals more than others. Depending on their ideological bias, they might publish more information that combats a politician’s presence.24

To stop these events, some oligarchs took drastic measures.

Jan Kuciak was an investigative journalist focusing on tax evasion. One of his main targets was businessman Marian Kocner. In 2017 he published articles about suspicious transactions involving Kocner which could potentially be related to tax-related criminal activity.

Kocner, according to the prosecution, tasked Alena Zsuzsova with arranging Kuciak’s murder. She then tasked Zoltan Andrusko with that mission, who them ordered Tomas Szabo and Miroslav Marcek to carry out the murder.

Kuciak and his fiancée, Martina Kusnirova, were shot dead on 21st of February 2018.

The present

Although the country has been dealing with some problems in media landscape before that, the deaths of Kuciak and Kusnirova were the breaking points for Slovakian society. The event sparked a series of protests across the country, with over 60,000 people attending one in Bratislava in March 2018. The protests climaxed with Robert Fico and his team being forced to step down.

Next few years were spent on the investigation of the murders, which really only got prioritized so much because of the immense pressure from the general public. Kocner was accused of hiring a team of agents and police officers, to spy on 28 Slovak journalists.

As a result of the investigation, in September of 2018 a group was arrested. Andrusko testified that Kocner had ordered Kuciak’s murder and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Marcek admitted to shooting both Kuciak and Kusnirova, while his cousin Szabo

24 “Slovakia” Media Landscapes. https://medialandscapes.org/country/slovakia
also participated in the murder. They both were sentenced to 25 years in prison. Kocner and Zsuzsova's cases have retired.

The situation in Slovakia ultimately lead to Igor Matovic claiming the seat of Prime Minister. Seen as a committed fighter of corruption, he was picked using the populistic wave as his talking point and hyper focusing on one primary goal. Even though he initially promised support for Slovakian journalists, things soon turned sour.

The future

Edward Szekers reports for BalkanInsight that Igor Matovic’s administration has been promising a massive overhaul of media environment. It became a little light in the tunnel for Slovakia, though the plans were put on hold by the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, he had set up a government-run fund for investigative journalism, but the idea was quickly abandoned due to a backlash from many journalists and editors. Instead, he decided to publish a state-funded newspaper, which again was met with criticism due to concerns of it being misused as a tool of propaganda.

Matovic soon changed his approach to media outlets, from being friendly and hoping to make some connection to badmouthing them for reports about his allegedly plagiarised Masters’ thesis. That turned into consistent demeaning of local journalists.

In April 2021, Matovic was replaced by Eduard Heger as the new Prime Minister. With both politicians being a part of the “OĽaNO” political party, we can expect many of Matovic's policies being carried over to the new cabinet.

Police has finally started their development into the case of multiple journalists being stalked over long period of time.

There’s been a widespread suspicion that many journalists are just puppets responsible for tarnishing the reputation of many local oligarchs. It’s an issue which gave a rise to the online disinformation about certain topics across the country, made even stronger because of the country’s problems with COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Szekers, due to country’s huge percentage of conspiracy theorists, Slovakia has to deal with outbursts of anti-vaxxers protests rather often. While around 70 per cent of EU adults have received at least one vaccine25, Slovakia is only hovering around 40 per cent.

Although, a bunch of independent fact-checkers have seen to start a battle against the very sources of disinformation. Slovaks are deeply suspicious of the mainstream media and public health authorities and the share of people questioning pandemic-related data has risen by 10 per cent over the last year.

Whenever a page filled with hoax information gets shut down on social media like Facebook, its members simply disperse to new groups with similar purposes. But the weaknesses of such outlets lie in one place – their wallets.

Global Disinformation Index values the annual ad revenue of the 20,000 sites filled with harmful disinformation to be around 250 million euros. It’s an online traffic that easily gets clicked and moves very fast. However, an online database Konspiratori.sk (Conspirators.sk) is run by a group of fact-checkers who keep a list of problematic Czech and Slovak websites.

The list in the database then have PR agencies flag these websites to the customers, stripping them from adverts and the funds required to keep them alive.26

In late April, Penta Investments, financial group with ties to political groups, sold its minority stake in one of the largest publishers in Slovakia, Petit Press. Together with proposed media law, it gives Slovakia an optimistic, although warry outlook on the future.27

— Jakub Wachowicz

26 Szekeres, Edward. „Slovakia grapples with the ‘Big Business’ of disinformation.“ BalkanInsight  

27 Szekers, Edward. „Beleaguered Slovak journalists look to new media law for protection.“ BalkanInsight  
Living after Ibiza-gate

Despite being generally considered one of the world’s leading countries in relations to press freedom, a number of major scandals on Austria’s socio-political scene in past few years implemented some doubts in the nation’s well-being.

The media landscape in Austria is dominated by two major players: public service broadcaster “ORF” and newspaper “Kronenzeitung” – writes Professor Josef Trappel for “Media Landscapes.”

The former has uncontested lead in the television, radio, and online media landscape, while the latter is delivered to about a third of Austria’s population. The newspaper’s online edition, “krone.at”, is the most popular media website in Austria.

Media ownership concentration in Austria is powerful to such a degree, that it basically got rid of any competition in daily newspaper market. Most provinces in the country are controlled by a single publisher. Austrian media officially aren’t affiliated with any political parties, although some of them are famous for sharing euro-sceptic and populist ideologies.

However, the role of the state in Austrian media landscape is often criticised by the public. Unregulated allocation of money for media advertising has been spent on all sorts of image campaigns, which made many media companies’ profit uneven. The public service broadcaster’s board being composed of more than half politically appointed members creates some worries within society as well. There is very little alternatives to this issue, since most third-sector media initiatives by civil society has very limited influence on public in comparison to local media powerhouses.

Despite journalists’ potential difficulties at finding work, which often forces them to join PR departments or to pursue freelancer career path, the system surrounding the profession is well oiled. The country provides good representation for journalists, as well as education and training.

However, independent journalism in Austria might have to deal with some serious problems in the near future.

Media trust

Former Austrian vice-chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache was set up in July 2017. He was recorded discussing the underhand practices of the ruling party “FPÖ” in providing them positive news coverage in order to win the elections.

Strache was discussing the topic with deputy leader of the Freedom Party Johann Gudenus and both were generally accepting of proposals presented by Alyona Makarova. The woman was posing herself as a niece of Igor Makarov, Russian businessman. The entire 6 hours long conversation was recorded and then released to the media on May 17, 2019.

Sebastian Kurz, the chancellor of Austrian government, tried to distance himself from Strache, but to no effect. The only way out of this mess was to initiate early elections, just after Strache's conference where he announced that he had offered his resignation from vice-chancellor position. Kurz also asked the president Alexander van der Bellen to dismiss the interior minister of Freedom Party, after which all of the party's cabinet members offered their resignations.

Opposition Social Democrats wasted no time and issued a motion of no-confidence, which received support from the Freedom party. Kurz's minority couldn't stand up to it and as a result, he was the first chancellor in the history of Austrian Republic to say goodbye to their spot in such a way.

Van der Bellen appointed Brigitte Bierlin from technocrats as interim chancellor until the next elections. It stayed up until legislative elections on 29 September 2019, when Kurz won again and appointed his second government despite the backlash.

The goal of journalism

Independent journalism is in a pretty uneven spot in Austria. The right-wing and conservative government of Austria, lead by chancellor Kurz, has been trying its best to reform public service media and control the agenda. Because of Austria's strong political polarization, the public's trust in media keeps declining – as reported by Sergio Sparviero and Josef Trappel for Digital News Report.

Austria, despite being one of the leading countries in Europe in regard to the usage of printed media, has been seeing decline in subscriptions and sales every year. As a result, one of the biggest press distribution companies in the market, "Morawa", was forced to close down their business. In 2018, interest in media in Austria fell by 5%, usage of public service media dropped via both broadcast and online and general public trust in media declined by two percentage points after a four-point decrease in the previous year.  

That was before Ibiza-gate, before the fall of Kurz's first coalition and before Green Party got strong support in the government after 2019 elections. Despite the growing influence of online media, led by American titans like Youtube and Facebook, Austria still has the highest printed newspaper consumption rate in Europe.  

Now, Austrian media is facing a new obstacle in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic.

---

Pandemic struggle

Greens claim to have rather high press freedom standards, but at the time of writing this article, in August 2021, the party has yet to present some major reforms in Austrian media landscape, such as press financing. One can see the reasoning behind constant postponing of the reforms in how the government might have other priorities during a pandemic, but one might wonder if the situation isn’t actually helping the government in seizing control over media sphere.

While the entire world had to deal with more or less the same issues during lockdown, the restrictions ended up hitting some Austrian journalists less than others. While freelance journalists were hit rather hard by the economic impact of the pandemic, some media outlets were almost seemingly unbothered. The number of journalists that were allowed to take part in government’s press conferences was limited only to the ones working for ORF and Austrian Press Agency.

Many journalists found it to be a limitation on their work, which spiralled into a debate on whether ORF and similar media outlets were too close to the government. Despite it all, in later part of the year, media scrutiny in Austria has generally increased, while many journalists reported that authorities handled COVID-19 exceptionally well.

But the most important part was obviously money.

COVID-19 amplified the pressure on Austrian media outlets, and newspapers began losing enormous amounts of money. The corona financial aid package for media outlets helped in keeping the huge players on the market alive. But that’s the thing – mostly big players. The aid package was an extension of already existing media subsidies, so while big tabloid papers benefitted from it, the smaller outlets saw it as a conflict of interests from the government. It created a tension in the air, lack of certainty what is going to happen after COVID is over.

The already existing issues in Austrian media landscape also became that much more visible.

Lack of a freedom of information act for example is one. Government’s corona crisis protocols are mostly not public, so media and citizens can’t see what’s happening behind the scenes in relation to the pandemic. Many stimulus related transactions were outsourced to other companies, so payments are officially outside of parliamentary control. Being outsourced to a private company also doesn’t allow journalists to access information about the transactions.

Outsourcing is a pretty popular trick, used to hide the inner finances from the journalists. In July of 2020, Minister for Constitutional Affairs Karoline Edtstadler announced that they’re going to fix this problem.
Gallup Institute has conducted surveys regarding interest in Corona pandemic in media. The results indicate that there's a decline in the interest in the coverage of the virus, which correlates with decline of trust in politicians handling the crisis.\textsuperscript{32}

After the November 2020 terrorist attack in Vienna, some tabloids funded by the government began printing photos of people who were shot dead. It was condemned by press freedom NGOs and Austria press council. A petition was launched for an overhaul or end of some state media subsidies.\textsuperscript{33}

\textendquotes{Jakub Wachowicz}


Rebuilding itself

Following the fall of Berlin wall and German reunification, the country did a major progress in the development of press freedom. Although populist parties often try to utilize the far-right movements against German media, the mostly water-tight constitutional rights provide safety for the local journalists.

After the end of World War II and before the fall of “Iron curtain” in 1989-1990, German media system looked vastly different from what it is nowadays.

Media system in German Democratic Republic was, unsurprisingly, under strict control of the USSR and the local Communist Party. It was highly centralized as a means to better control the flow of information within GDR's society.

It was a process that has disappeared from the German media landscape after the unification of the country in 1990. Modern Germany's media system is significantly different, but to properly understand how it functions, we need to go back in time even further.

Dual system

As Barbara Thomaß and Christine Horz write for “Media Landscapes”, the history of German media landscape is very important in understanding the current condition of its system within the society.

Despite being one of the most dynamic media markets in the world currently, the landscape is characterised by the deeply-rooted tradition of the German press, which goes back as far as 400 years ago. It certified periodical press as a major force in the local media landscape, which never really went away, in spite of consistently changing state of things in Germany.

Mass media became, obviously, nothing but a propaganda mouthpiece for the totalitarian state under the control of Nazi Germany. After the end of World War II, denazification and collective guilt became such a huge part of German society, that some hard bans and censorships of Nazi imagery were still banned in media long way into 2010s.

Germany got a new approach to its media control after World War II.

---

The state of media landscape in Federal Republic of Germany was based on the principle of press freedom, stipulated in the constitution of 1949. The universal organisation of press freedom within Western Germany was kept up until the reunification, when the country became a federal state with sixteen different Länder (federal states) within. The broadcasting system was accordingly reorganised to work within the new system.

However, the print titles still differed between easter and western part of the country in the 1990s. Nowadays, major media production centres are located in the “old” West part of the country, as most of the former GDR news outlets either ceased to exist or were bought out by western companies, while broadcasting was integrated in the, already present in FRG during cold war, dual system.

But what is dual system?

A Dual Broadcasting System in this case is simply a mixture of public and private stations. After World War II, the private media sector was in charge of the press, while broadcasting was put under public law. Radio and television operations were under operation of Association of Public Corporations in the Federal Republic of Germany (ARD) in 1951. A Program Conference was consisting of 10 public regional stations for joint TV program, Channel One. Channel Two was established by federal states in 1961, which is organized centrally in Mainz as a company.\(^37\)

Today, The German Federal Constitution is responsible for broadcastings rests with the Länder of the Federal Republic as part of “cultural sovereignty”. “Deutsche Welle” is considered an exception based on federal legislation, which is designed to provide services exclusively to foreign countries.

Meanwhile, newspapers market is holding up surprisingly well in modern Germany. High levels of circulation are ensured by regional and local subscription papers, while most press enterprises are independent entrepreneurs. Compared to TV broadcasting, state intervention in the press market is confined to a discrimination-free media policy and a fiscal privilege of the press enterprises.

As a result of newspaper market concentration, the main five local conglomerates (“Axel Springer SE”, “DuMont Schauberg”, “Funke Mediengruppe”, “Madsack” and “Südwestdeutsche Medienholding”) provide a diverse range of products.

**Political media**

Since 1945, political parallelism has been traditionally low in Western Germany, which carried over to Federal Republic of Germany. Local journalism has achieved high quality levels of self-regulation and ethical standards. However, many recent worrying events, including anti-COVID-19 protests, made a decent chunk of German society suspicious and critical towards local journalism and its lack of pluralism.

---

Public finds very little different outlooks on many problems that the society is facing in modern media, accusing them of “swarm-journalism.” The journalists themselves also often happen to put in doubts their profession, as they describe the primary outlooks of many outlets as predominantly elitist and white, middle-class centred. As a country whose population features many different ethnical and racial minorities, the accusations of white privilege within media have been growing stronger over time.

However, the biggest danger to independent journalism in recent years has been empowered by many right-wing movements within Germany, which outright condemn the work of the journalists and often seem to also be aggressive towards people working for the media.

During anti-COVID-19 protests, groups of Neo-Nazis and hooligans often used the disguise of citizen protests as a way to assault journalists, especially ones from the public media. Demonstrations ran by far-right groups are famous for using violence as a strategy against “Corona dictatorship” and the police are often at loss in how to protect journalists amidst the chaos.  

The pandemic also gave a rise to many conspiracy theories growing within German society. Social media are giving a platform to many theorists, thanks to which they can easily share their harmful disinformation about the ongoing pandemic. It’s obviously not a problem exclusive to Germany, but the wave of calling many basic operations working within society “rigged” is still dangerous to society and is proving, how little do some people trust in local journalism.  

Wake up, journalism

Producers of quality journalism in the press still have difficulties with actually making their work profitable. Even though German media users seem to prefer using traditional media as their news outlets, the growth rates of internet usage are enormous. Public service media is trying its best to keep up with it, by making their content accessible online on many different social media platforms.

Federal Broadcasting Court had put in motion the implementation of various regulations in the media landscape. As the public also wants to be more prominent in your day-to-day news, Public Service Media is currently undergoing a reform. Also, the diversity in the media is becoming more important for the current landscape.

State’s broadcasting sector, being more dominant than print sector, is being set under various regulations to make sure that the regional Public Service Media networks, with the involvement of different social groups, will represent the society’s diversity.

---


But overall, German media and journalism are doing rather well, despite some glaring issues which are being enhanced by different problems in society. It is a fact that as a result of economic crisis, market is cutting back on jobs, meanwhile press and radio are losing their ground on advertising market.

Despite it all, journalism is still experimenting with multimedia presentation forms in order to improve the profitability of the profession. State aid and private sponsorships are also improving the scene. In spite of its shortcomings, Germany’s water-tight basic media rights are vital in ensuring the landscape can prosper and keep delivering quality material.40

~Jakub Wachowicz

---

Repolonisation

With the state-owned TV broadcaster being turned into a propaganda machine, as well as the government’s constant attempts at seizing major private media outlets, the state of Polish media landscape is the worst it has been since the fall of the Iron Curtain.

On the 11th of August 2021, Poland’s right-wing conservative ruling party – Law and Justice (PiS) – managed to push through the parliament a controversial brand-new media law. Despite initially losing its parliamentary majority, the ruling party has managed to pass a law that is supposed to prevent companies outside of European Economic Area from owning television stations in Poland.

The decision was seen by many as a direct hit on the main opposition news outlet in Poland, “TVN.” The largest private station in the country is owned by American mass media TV company “Discovery, Inc.”

In strongly politically polarised and divided Poland, “TVN” is generally seen as the major media “counter-news” to the pro-government, state-owned public broadcaster “TVP.”

The Civil War

The controversial law is yet another example of how Law and Justice party has been trying its best to eradicate media pluralism in the country.

After winning the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2015, beating the incumbent centrist Civic Platform (PO), PiS quickly got to work, by drastically changing the ministers and editorial staff at “TVP” in order to replace them with people who strongly support the new ruling party.

The content broadcasted by the station since then has gathered a ton of criticism, with many accusing the station of showing clear bias towards the ruling Law and Justice party, while also trying to downplay and dismiss the other political players as much as possible.

The constant propaganda and hate speech promoted by “TVP” is widely considered as one of the major reasons behind the ever-growing disparity between two major political “pro-PiS” and “anti-PiS” camps in Poland. It’s also being cited as the reason behind such events as the assassination of the mayor of Gdansk Paweł Adamowicz, or the

---


wide-spread distain for LGBTQ+ community\textsuperscript{43} or “western ideologies” thanks to its manipulation of facts and constant reproducing of hurtful stereotypes.\textsuperscript{44}

“TVP” also was a big player prior to the 2020 presidential elections, with its overwhelmingly positive coverage of the ruling party’s candidate Andrzej Duda and negative of the other candidates, mainly the PO’s candidate Rafał Trzaskowski,\textsuperscript{45} at one point using anti-semitic language in order to berate the latter.\textsuperscript{46}

Andrzej Duda won the elections with 51% of the votes.

\textbf{Polish(-only) media}

However, even in spite of President Duda’s re-election, Law and Justice’s popularity has significantly dropped in 2021 as compared to the previous year.

For vast majority of 2020, Law and Justice had a very strong support from most Poles according to opinion polling. The party averaged at least 40% support all the way until October.\textsuperscript{47} Even despite not that excellent handling of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the efforts by the government were still generally considered satisfying by most of the society.

But, as if with a simple finger snap, Law and Justice’s popularity drastically dived following their very controversial decision about introducing a near-total abortion ban across the country. Despite already having some of the strictest abortion laws in all of Europe, the new law also took away the choice of aborting an embryo or fetus in cases of severe and irreversible foetal abnormalities, which could potentially be dangerous for the mother or would result in a very small chance of a child surviving after birth. In 2019, 98% of abortions in Poland were carried out on these grounds.\textsuperscript{48}

The decision was met with country-wide protests and condemnation, even from some of the Law and Justice’s supporters, as only a very small percentage of society actually supported the decision in the first place. According to a poll by IBRiS from February of

2021, only about 10% of people want a total abortion ban, while 12% are fine with the new law.\(^{49}\)

The decision sparked a massive series of protests across the country and did a significant damage to Law and Justice's reputation, which was only worsened by the wave of positive feedback for a new political party "Poland 2050" founded by rather popular politician and one of the candidates in the 2020 presidential elections, Szymon Hołownia.

Another hit was marked by the return of a very popular Polish politician Donald Tusk to Civic Platform in July, taking over as a leader of the party. Granted, the reputation hits weren’t massive enough to actually knock PiS down from their first place in vast majority of opinion polls, also the next elections are planned to happen in 2023 so there’s still a lot of time between then and now. But the support for the ruling party has still been consistently significantly lower throughout 2021 as compared to previous years, which reasonably planted some seeds of worry within Law and Justice's cabinet.

So, they decided to strengthen their grip on Polish media landscape.

Specifically, on the privately owned print market. Polska Press is a large private media group with its own press agency, 20 out of 24 major regional newspapers, 120 weekly magazines and 500 online portals, which reach nearly 17 million readers across all of Poland, almost half of its population.

The group was owned by German Verlagsgruppe Passau which, in December of 2020, had sold its shares in the company to Polish state-run giant in the fuel and energy market – PKN Orlen. The reach of Polska Press’ influence is the most significant in smaller towns and villages, from which the ruling party gets the largest number of votes and support.

Admittedly, so far there hasn’t been that many significant changes in the editorial staffs at these newspapers, but the entire operation is very reminiscent of how Viktor Orban managed to grasp control over most of Hungary’s media landscape through private business deals. Using companies which have close ties to the ruling party and its members, but officially aren’t connected to them.\(^{50}\)

A way forward?

These business decisions justifiably raise some worries among journalists and media experts, who are worried of potential significant changes to their work and pressures of self-censorship in order to become another propaganda mouthpiece just like TVP.


If the most recent events surrounding TVN’s broadcasting licence and uncertainty in keeping their station alive are indication of something, it’s that Law and Justice isn’t planning on stopping their “colonization” of media market anytime soon.

TVN24, a commercial news channel that’s a part of the TVN Network, ended up finally receiving their new broadcasting license after 17 months. Despite the decision being long overdue without any clear reason, it means that TVN24 will still be able to broadcast news on national television, but the situation of the station is still unclear.

The Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has said that Poland considers American investments in the country to be very important and wants to make it as friendly for western businesses as possible.\(^5\)

According to Freedom House, private media that criticise the government nowadays have experienced pressures from different regulators and a fall in advertising revenue from state-run companies. With a lot of uncertainties in the air about the future of Polish media, Poland is standing in a very complicated position, where the inner conflicts are crafting strong political divide within society and makes a huge part of Europe very uneasy.

-Jakub Wachowicz

ABOUT CEECOM

The Central and Eastern European Communication and Media Conference (CEECOM) is organized by the CEE Network of the European Communication Research Association (ECREA).

The main objective of Central and Eastern Europe Network (CEE Network) at the ECREA revolves around two prerequisites. The network aims at a more harmonious integration and proportionate representation of CEE scholarship and scholars within the field and ECREA structures. It also seeks to revitalize and strengthen cooperation and exchange links between the CEE scholars and their colleagues and institutions outside the region. Also, all scientists interested in the research on media and communication in the CEE region are welcome in the CEE Network.

The history of CEECOM started in 2008 when the first Forum on Political and Communication Studies gathered media scholars from Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia in 2008 in Książ Castle (Poland). The conference was organized by the Polish Communication Association (PCA) and University of Wrocław.

The idea of annual Central and East European (CEE) conferences continued in the next year with the event organized 2009 in Brno and Telč (Czech Republic). About 50 media and communication scholars from different countries (not only from Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia, but also from Hungary, Romania, Belgium, Germany, Finland, USA, United Kingdom) discussed various aspects of media transition. In the same year the CEE Network was established. The Network organized its first business meeting and inaugural workshop/panel on ‘Communication Research in Central and Eastern Europe’ on October 14th, 2010, at the 3rd ECREA conference which took place in Hamburg. The network was joined by scholars and students representing CEE as well as western European countries/universities. The 3rd Forum, entitled “Media in Crisis. Crisis in Media”, was organized by the colleagues from Pan European University in Bratislava, where the growing CEE Network was extended to researchers from Austria and Hungary. Another forum took place in Krakow and concerned convergence: ‘Media in the future, future in the media’.

The Central and East European Communication and Media Consortium (CEECOM) responsible for the development and coordination of activities on media and communication research in Central and Eastern Europe was officially launched in 2012 during the conference in Prague entitled “Media, power and empowerment”. During the closing ceremony participants of the conference agreed to create an international consortium of CEECOM responsible for the development and coordination of activities on media and communication research in Central and Eastern Europe.

The CEECOM Board comprised scholars from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia. Aukšė Baličytienė (Vytautas Magnus University), Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska (Uniwersytet Wrocławski), Michał Głowacki (Uniwersytet Warszawski), Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä), Zrinjka Peruško (Sveučilište u Zagrebu), Irena Reifová (Univerzita Karlova), Ilija Tomicić-Trivundža (Univerza v Ljubljani) and Tomáš Trampota (Univerzita Karlova) were involved in the works of the Board. Among
the main tasks of the authority was the organization of the CEECOM conferences as well as the support of studies, education and collaboration between media researchers, media personnel and students in this part of the world and cooperation with scholars and institutions from other countries interested in the CEE region. The idea of organization of the CEECOM conferences was further strongly supported by the management board of ECREA’s Central-East European (CEE) Network, whose representatives agreed to organize the next conferences under the auspices of ECREA.

More information on the CEE Network can be found at: https://ecrea.eu/Central-and-East-European-Network

**CEECOM conferences:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Kraków POLAND</td>
<td>Online conference: A New Communication Revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Sofia BULGARIA</td>
<td>Communication Management: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Szeged HUNGARY</td>
<td>Communicative Space – Political Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Ljubljana SLOVENIA</td>
<td>Critique of/at/on periphery?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Tartu ESTONIA</td>
<td>Media and Communication studies: Bridging disciplines, bridging countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Zagreb CROATIA</td>
<td>The Digital Media Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Wrocław POLAND</td>
<td>Changing Media and democracy: 25 Years of Media Freedom and Public Sphere in CEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Kaunas LITHUANIA</td>
<td>Liquidity, Fragmentation, and Individualization in the Mediascape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Prague CZECH REPUBLIC</td>
<td>5th Central and East European Communication and Media Conference: Media, power, and empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Kraków POLAND</td>
<td>4th Central European Communication Forum Convergence: Media in Future, Future in Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Brno-Telc CZECH REPUBLIC</td>
<td>2nd Polish-Czech-Slovak Forum on Political and Communication Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Książ POLAND</td>
<td>1st Polish-Czech-Slovak Forum on Political and Communication Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>