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The Matrix of Media Culture in Central and Eastern Europe

While media scholars have gone a long way in identifying the structures and outcomes of democratic reforms in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the concept of media culture has been primarily used as a context for socio-political relations (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2019; Bajomi-Lázár, 2020) or journalism culture research (Lauk, 2008). Atthe same time, the weakness of media accountability, high level of political parallelism, or the region's inability toadapt to Western media traditions (Hallin and Mancini, 2012; Castro Herrero, 2017) has not fully engaged in understanding collective memories, bureaucratic mindsets and other forms of the cultural path-dependencies (Mihelj and Huxtable, 2018; Peruško et al., 2020). What's also missing is media culture understood via the organisational cultural artefacts and informal relationships (afterwork culture, community creation), which have implications on the current state-of-the art, including recent adaptation gaps between the media and creative/high technology industries (Głowacki, 2020). To fully understand the Central and Eastern European media, we argue that one needs to look outside the box and related institutions and systems. This chapter introduces the Matrix of Media Culture – a multilayered analytical prism to identify a wide range of methodologies and approaches that can serve as a reference for studying the current and future CEE transformations. Through critical findings from the ongoing book project ("Media Culture in Central and Eastern Europe: Beyond Institutions and Systems" – forthcoming), the Matrix of Media Culture addresses highly interwoven connections between pasts, presents, and futures, which are further juxtaposed with the societal, organisational and individual lenses of the cultural analysis. Looking at a set of tensions between cultural path-dependencies and ends, we aim to identify emerging topics with potential implications for studying the CEE media via people, values, and processes. On the surface, the Matrix of Media Culture evidences a set of cultural path-dependencies, which at the level of corporate culture corresponds with internal power struggles, a hierarchy of management and structural rigidity – critical barriers for the CEE media adaptation and change. There is also a noticeable generational shift and the blend of old and new working patterns, supported by the societal clash of values alongside organisational tensions between risk-averse vs change ready. Moreover, the Matrix of Media Culture offers a unique space for examining post-soviet and post-industrial artefacts. For example, this study highlights the cultural importance of collective nostalgia for post-industrial and vintage symbols in arts, technology and furniture. We argue that cultural examination of media's workplace design (meeting rooms, kitchens, coffee places, cantinas, and so on) can further advance our knowledge of media and people's attitudes towards innovation and change. A call for more culturally inclusive and fluid research approaches in the form of Matrix comes together with the potential of exploring new areas and methodologies with more ethnographic research involving workplace design, organisational rituals and post-industrial architecture. We hope that the

analytical framework presented in this paper will serve as a reference point for raising the importance of media culture in other regions and countries.

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Culture in the Bulgarian Media Transformations: Media and Legal Culture

Media culture and legal culture should support democratic culture also interact with one another. While media culture expands the regulative potential of the legal culture through its communication power, legal culture strengthens the rule of law values in media culture and lends stability and effectiveness to media regulation and governance. Together with the analysis of the interplay of legal and media culture the presentation will also trace the formation of the media legal culture as a facet of the legal culture; it will refer to the Bulgarian media and legal cultures in the period of transition from totalitarian rule to democracy as an example. Among other interpretative contexts we can contemplate the democratic changes in Bulgaria and their bearing on the society through the perspective of the formation of the laws related to the media passed during the years of turbulent fluxes. While media culture is construed as media institutional culture and represents the core of legal media culture, media journalistic culture is linked to the journalistic profession and develops predominantly as self-regulatory culture relying on codes of professional behaviour and ethics. Political majorities in Bulgaria have always strived to take advantage of the media and the public service media and purposefully influenced the content of the legal acts to their benefit. The passivity of civil society at the expense of the super activity of media owners facilitated such conduct. Among other reasons the understanding that one should not trust the law and strengthen the rule of law principle produced additional adverse effects in this respect. Media culture represented predominantly by journalistic culture and legal culture have been at odds for a long time. The close ties between the media and politics during the years of democratic transition, the impossibility to entrench a consistent practice of decommunization at least in the media sphere and the perverted understanding of the role of law as a restriction and not a guarantee of freedom prevail in society and among journalists. Thus, legal instruments have not been effective media regulatory mechanisms responding to fundamental principles. They have failed to embed respect for such values like freedom of expression, pluralism and media independence in society.

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Estonian Journalism Culture from the Perspective of Journalistic Human Capital

The three decades after the fall of the Berlin wall saw a tremendous expansion of Central and Eastern European (CEE) media markets, an overall economic crisis, globalisation of the internet, the appearance of social media and global platforms, and the current news media crisis. Journalism researchers have had an opportunity to investigate the transformations of the CEE media and journalism in real-time, as in a laboratory. While focusing on the implications of political, economic, and social conditions on journalists' perceptions about their profession, on the quality and contexts of performance of journalists and their career perspectives, journalists' agency concerning all these aspects has not received much attention. In our paper,

we argue that agency is a crucial aspect in examining the quality and sustainability of journalism and journalism culture. Therefore, we suggest an agency approach that departs from the concept of journalistic human capital (JHC) – the human resource of journalism – that has a critical impact on the way journalism is functioning in a democratic society. Examining the qualities of the 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. Taking Estonia as a case, we ask: What characterises the journalistic human capital and its potential to shape journalism culture in a country, which in the past 30 years has experienced drastic and rapid changes in all fields of life? We introduce a JHC assessment model, which can be applied for detecting the quality and sustainability of the journalistic workforce, and consequently – sustainability of journalism cultures. The model is based on six indicators: access and entry to the journalistic job market; career paths; working conditions; labour contracts; coaching and feedback about professional performance; and reasons of exit from the job or journalism sector. The Estonian example confirms that these indicators reflect the potential of journalists' agency to influence the way journalism is conducted in a country. Various factors related to JHC, e.g., the uncertainty of working conditions, missing tradition of coaching and constructive feedback, as well as the low level of education and high labour force turnover in the regional and local news media do not stimulate journalists' agency. As a general framework, the small media market and journalistic community shape the sum and substance of Estonian journalism and journalism culture.

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Comparing the impact of the longue durée in European media systems change (a fsQCA approach).

Recent research by Peruško et al (2021) showed that causal configurations that impact present day media systems in Central and Eastern Europe are influenced by the longue durée, and these influences go back to the period of modernization, as well as to the period of socialism. In a set-theoretical research approach (Ragin 2008, Schneider and Wagemann 2012, Downey and Stanyer 2013), the analysis employed conditions from three temporal frameworks and three fields of power (the political field, the socio-economic field, and the cultural-symbolic field). The study showed which conditions contributed to media freedom and media market development in the six countries of southeast Europe, the six countries that used to be part of Yugoslavia. Using the fsQCA and the historical institutionalist approach, this paper investigates how the same theoretical and methodological framework can be applied in an extended analysis in which countries with different historical legacies are compared to analyze the current developments of media systems. The paper will be extended with the analysis of a new set of countries, as follows: besides Russia, the three Baltic countries – Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland and only partly Poland belonged to the Russian Empire in the modernization period. Austria, Croatia, Czechia, and Slovenia belonged to the Habsburg monarchy, although its influence was partly felt also in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Poland, and Serbia. The Ottoman Empire left its strongest legacy in southeast Europe, expanding from current-day Turkey throughout the Balkan peninsula, contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia. The paper aims to find out whether different longue durée conditions produce different configurations and receipts leading to different outcomes of media system transformations. The findings are expected to contribute

to the broader theory of media system change, as well as to the comparative analysis of media systems in a cross-country longitudinal design.
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