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Democracy and Media in Central
and Eastern Europe 25 Years On

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PETER LANG
EDITION

25 years after communism: four models of media and politics in Central and Eastern Europe

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Abstract: There are 21 post – communist countries in Europe, which after the collapse of this regime in 1989/1991 made a more or less successful transition toward democracy. We call them Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). But it is not a monolith in respect of democratic consolidation and European integration. It is quite a varied region with different political standards and levels of economic development. The media systems operate between political pressure, which leads to politicization, and economic pressure, which is responsible for commercialization. These are the two negative tendencies that result in the low quality of the media. A quarter of a century after the collapse of communism, there are four models of media and politics in CEE – the Hybrid Liberal, the Politicized Media, the Media in Transition and the Authoritarian.

Keywords: Authoritarian Model, commercialization, democracy, Hybrid Liberal Model, journalistic culture, Media in Transition Model, models of media systems, politicization, Politicized Media Model, transition.

Introduction: What does “Central and Eastern Europe” mean?

The media systems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are the main object of research presented in this volume. What does CEE mean and how can we define it? According to Lerman, Csaki and Feder (2004:4), it is a generic term for the group of countries in Central Europe, Southeast Europe, Northern Europe, and Eastern Europe, i.e. the former communist states in Europe. This term has been in use since the collapse of communism in 1989–1990 in this part of the European continent.

There is also another concept of East-Central Europe (E-CE) (German *Ostmitteleuropa*, French *Europe médiane*), which describes the region between the German-speaking countries and Russia (Palmer, 1970), and reflects the land situated “between two”: “(...) between two worlds, between two stages, between two futures” (Braudel, 1990). In this geopolitical sense, East-Central Europe is perceived as one of the “Three Europes”, situated alongside Western and Eastern Europe.

The two terms CEE and E-CE are based on different criteria: the first one indicates political criteria, the other one uses geographical, historical, economic and cultural circles (Huntington, 1996), but politics cannot be analyzed outside of this context. It is the result of many circumstances and factors, such as geographical location, historical experiences, levels of economic and cultural development. The concept of CEE is more adequate for the research dedicated to the media systems in the 21 countries (see Figure 1), which appeared amongst the ruins of European post-communist/post-socialist states, both terms are used by scholars and they are synonymous.

Figure 1: Map of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)



Source: *European Map – Political Map of Europe* (2015).

Non-democratic systems, such as authoritarian and communist regimes, have to go through some phases towards mature democracy, such as pre-transition, transition and consolidation (Rustow, 1970; O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986), and different stages of media reform which are linked with them (Rozumilowicz, 2002:17) (see Table 1).

Table 1: Democratization process and media reforms

Media reform Democratization	Pre-transition stage	Primary transition stage	Secondary transition stage	Late or mature transition stage
Pre-transition	X			
Transition		X		
Consolidation			X	
Mature democracy				X

Source: Rozumilowicz (2002:17).

The main aim of this research is to answer the following question: Where are the media and where is the politics in CEE 25 years after the collapse of communism in Central Europe in 1989, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the war in Yugoslavia (1991–2001)? Media systems do not exist in a vacuum. They are in constant movement, only the speed of changes can be different. They still act under pressure from external factors, and they are a complex of many elements which are subject to mutual interactions. Media systems are the result of interactions between historical heritage, politics and political culture, economic development, media owners and journalistic culture, social culture and civic society, and also of the implementation of and access to new technologies. We cannot forget about the international context, which in the case of CEE plays an important role. It should be noted that this construction is dynamic and transforms more or less dynamically, but in the case of CEE, the changes of the media system happen very quickly.

Methods

In this chapter, the analysis will be concentrated on relations between political actors (political parties, politicians, state authorities), and the mass media (owners and journalists) which decide on the level of political parallelism (media politicization). But in the case of CEE, factors such as economic development play a crucial role in the transformation of the media market (media commercialization).

Based on the accessible empirical data and academic research, we try to verify two hypotheses:

- H1: There is not one CEE 25 years after the collapse of communism. The countries are in different phases of democratization and stage of media reform.
- H2: The media in CEE act between politicization and commercialization, which are of a different scale and significance than in mature democracies.

In this research we use mixed methods, a combination of publicly available data and literature.

In the beginning we present a historical background of CEE, which can be noted in the media systems today, and their international context, which seems important.

One of the most visible features which distinguishes CEE from Western mature democracies, is the lower level of democratic standards, on the one hand, and weaker economic development, on the other. But the differences are noted also among CEE countries, and additionally, the changes occur so quickly that it is often difficult to predict a final effect. Widely available data and common statistical methods are used in the second part of this analysis to show the difference among the 21 countries in this part of Europe. There are five data sources, which are the base for this comparative research and which refer to the same period of 2014 and 2015 (see Table 2):

- Democracy Index 2015 (The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited)
- Freedom of the Press 2015 (Freedom House)
- World Press Freedom Index 2015 (Reporters Without Borders)
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 2014 (The International Monetary Fund)
- Penetration of Internet 2014 (Internet Live Stats).

Contrary to 18 Western countries analyzed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) and Brüggemann, Engesser, Büchel, Humprecht and Castro (2014), the states in CEE are in a different phase of transition towards democracy. The Democracy Index opens this research, because it helps to locate each country in this process. The next two indexes cast light on the level of media independence from political actors and degree of media politicization. The data from the International Monetary Fund indicated that PPP are included in the study because economic development stimulates media reform and has an influence on their quality and the degree of commercialization. Finally, this analysis is supported by the *Internet Users by Country* (2014) data. The internet is the most dynamic medium today and in cases where traditional media are controlled by political actors, it can serve as a form of protest for citizens and help them to resolve their problems. We would like to see whether access to the internet is related to a country's position in other rankings. These five factors are not as important in these 17 Western countries.

The five rankings indicate that in these 18 full and rich Western democracies, the distance among them is not significant and does not play such an important role in comparison to CEE. Democratic development and independence of the media seems to be a crucial factor in the transformation of media systems and relations between media and politics.

The media systems in CEE between politics and the market

Political transition from communism and its effect

The states in CEE are divided in their historical, cultural and linguistic aspects, and, what seems very interesting, these differences stimulate the development of media systems today. The majority of the population speaks Slavonic languages. There are three groups which are quite different in their historical aspect and political culture. Western Slavs live in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia. Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians belong to the Eastern Slavonic group, and traditionally they are linked with the most authoritarian political culture. The Southern Slavonic population lives in eight small and very small countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia. Only Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia (partially) were historically and culturally linked with Western Europe (via the Habsburg Monarchy). Apart from countries where Slavonic languages are spoken, there is the Romanian language in Romania and Moldova, Hungarian in Hungary, three micro populations speaking Baltic languages (Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian), but similar in many aspects of political culture, and Albanian. Additionally, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia (apart from Vojvodina) and Dalmatia in Croatia, and Albania are situated in the region of the Balkans. The common history and cultural heritage of this geographical region, situated between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy, is reflected even today in its political and media cultures.

During the communist era from 1945 to 1989/1991, the mass media were instrumentalized by the communist/socialist elites and leaders to a different degree. The media were strictly controlled by the communist party in the Soviet Union, but also by the communist dictators such as Todor Zhivkov (1954–1989) in Bulgaria and Nicolae Ceaușescu (1967–1989) in Romania, and by the political police Stasi and the dogmatic loyal communist leader Erich Honecker (1976–1989) in East Germany. The strong control of the media in Czechoslovakia began after the 1968 Soviet military intervention. Oppositional media appeared in Poland and Hungary; official media had some space to criticize the official authorities, and their existence during the antidemocratic regime helped to develop the pluralist media system

after 1989 more quickly and easily than in other countries. The charismatic leader Josip Broz Tito (1953–1980) decided on the destalinization of Yugoslavia in 1953 and on governance independent from Moscow. The mass media there had more autonomy and freedom than in the other Soviet Bloc countries.

After the collapse of communism eleven states joined the European Union (Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia). Only three post-Soviet republics are in this group i.e. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and they had to work harder than the other countries to reject or minimize their Soviet heritage. Four other post-Soviet republics (Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine) and six small Balkan states (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro) are outside. EU membership is a significant factor. Generally, it reduces the gap between Western Europe and CEE, because it positively stimulates the process of Europeanization, helps to adopt democratic standards and accommodates the media systems to the models elaborated by the EU.

Table 2: The 21 countries in CEE according to the applied rankings

State	Democracy Index 2014		Freedom of the Press 2015		World Press Freedom Index 2015		Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 2014		Penetration of internet (% of population) 2014
	Rank	Overall score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Per capita USD	
Flawed democracies			Free						
Czech Rep.	25	7.94	18	21	13	11.62	38	29 925	77.48
Estonia	34	7.74	12	16	10	11.19	42	26 999	81.62
Slovenia	37	7.57	24	25	35	20.55	39	29 658	72.32
Lithuania	38	7.54	24	25	31	18.80	41	27 051	70.25
Latvia	39	7.48	28	28	28	18.12	52	23 707	76.45
Poland	40	7.47	27	26	18	12.71	46	25 105	67.15
Slovakia	45	7.35	22	24	14	11.66	40	28 175	82.65
			Partly free						
Croatia	50	6.93	34	40	58	26.12	58	20 889	65.09
Hungary	51	6.90	31	37	65	27.44	48	24 942	74.38
Bulgaria	55	6.73	32	38	106	32.91	67	17 860	56.97
Serbia	56	6.71	34	40	67	27.66	86	13 329	48.69
Romania	57	6.68	36	42	52	24.9	60	19 712	51.66
Moldova	69	6.32	2*	48	72	27.85	130	4 979	44.81
Macedonia	72	6.25	41	58	117	36.26	85	13 349	No data
Hybrid regimes									
Montenegro	77	5.94	33	39	114	3.63	77	14 996	58.72
Albania	88	5.67	37	49	82	28.77	95	11 377	56.47
Kosovo	Data not available		37	49	87	30.63	105	9 242	Data not available
Ukraine	92	5.42	3*	58	129	39.1	106	8 668	37.49
Bos & Herz	103	4.78	39	51	66	27.51	104	9 833	67.52
Authoritarian regimes			Not free						
Belarus	125	3.69	10*	93	157	47.98	64	18 161	51.18
Russia	132	3.39	7*	83	152	44.97	49	24 805	59.27

* Eurasia ranking (12 post-USSR states).

Source: *Democracy Index 2014* (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015); *Freedom of the Press 2015* (Freedom House, 2015), *2015 World Press Freedom Index* (Reporters Without Borders, 2015), *List of countries by GDP per capita 2014* (2015), *Internet Users by Country 2014* (Internet Live Stats, 2014).

The political system plays a fundamental role in the process of media transformation. The media system is a mirror of the political system, it reflects the culture of politicians and citizens and, in consequence, the quality of democracy (or lack of it), because democracy is defined not only as a political system but also as a culture

(Christians et al., 2009: vii). For the last 25 years, the states in CEE have been in transition from communist regimes to democracy. It raises some questions: Has democracy been implemented there, or other regime forms? Is CEE homogenous or heterogeneous? Does one general model exist or can we recognize many patterns?

At the beginning of the political transformation in CEE, Agh (1998) four scenarios for this part of Europe: Sleeping Beauty (easy westernization), Deepfreeze (return to the past), Latin Americanization (falling back to the Third World), and Fair Weather (Central Europe joins European integration). What are the results today? Some 20 years later, the same author came back to his predictions, and he noted that the proposed picture of the “weather forecast” promised rather fair weather with many clouds (Agh, 2010:135).

Schmitter and Karl claimed that CEE states:

“(...) have been the sites for modes of transition to democracy driven from below by reformists not in (or at odds with) the previous ruling elite (...), the then Czech Republic, Croatia (...), the German Democratic Republic, and Latvia. Transition characterized by pacting can be found, including Poland (which has both reformists and pacted features), Hungary and Bulgaria (both with elements of imposition) (...) and Moldova. Finally, imposition seems to characterize such cases as Albania, (...) Belarus, Estonia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, and the Ukraine.” (2010:36)

The first stage of this research is to identify the democratization level, and the next one is to indicate the place of each country in transition from communism to consolidated democracy. The data presented by The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2014, and other rankings let us locate the media systems in the process (see Table 2).

Thanks to the general data, international rankings, and rather limited research dedicated to CEE (Jakubowicz and Sükösd, 2008; Jakubowicz, 2010; Jakubowicz, 2011; Örnebring, 2012; Bajomi-Lazar, 2014), we can notice similarities and differences among the 21 countries in 2015. The data presented in Table 2 let us recognize the four groups of countries which have more similar features (see Table 3).

Table 3: The groups of countries in CEE

I	II	III	IV
Czech Republic	Bulgaria	Albania	Belarus
Estonia	Croatia	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Russia
Latvia	Hungary	Kosovo	
Lithuania	Romania	Macedonia	
Poland	Serbia	Moldova	
Slovakia		Montenegro	
Slovenia		Ukraine	

Source: Author.

The Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia are included in the first one. They are members of the European Union and have the highest positions in the Democracy Index 2014 among the 21 countries and the status of 'free' in the Freedom of the Press ranking 2015. Additionally, in this ranking Estonia (16) and the Czech Republic (21) scored more than the old mature democracies such as Austria (22) and France (23), while Slovakia (24) has the same result as the United Kingdom. Other countries in this group have a better position in the rankings than Spain and Italy.

The second group is composed of four members of the European Union – Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, and Romania, and one from outside the EU – Serbia. According to the rankings and data used, it seems that Serbia is closer to this group than the third one and is a borderline case. They are rather in the early consolidation phase of democracy and in the secondary transition stage of media reform. All five countries are classified as 'partly free' according to the Freedom of the Press 2015. They are still rather in the phase of early consolidation, between 50th and 57th places in the Democracy Index 2014. Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania represented a low democratic culture in the past. But Hungary, one of the leaders of the democratic transition in CEE after the collapse of communism in 1989, was downgraded to 'partly free' in 2011, which was the consequence of the extensive legislative and regulatory changes since 2010. Apart from Bulgaria (106th), the countries are close to each other in the World Press Freedom Index between 52nd and 67th place.

The next group is formed by 'partly free' Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova and Montenegro (*Freedom House*, 2015). It seems that due to recent events and an extremely dynamic situation in Ukraine, it is possible to move this state to this group, but there is no certainty as to how long it will be able to remain there. In 2013, Ukraine was classified as 'not free' as a consequence of a dramatic increase in harassment of and violence against journalists but regained its 'partly free' status in 2015. All of these seven countries are outside the European Union. They are still in the process of transition towards democracy, and the media there are in the primary transition stage. Only Moldova and Macedonia are among the flawed democracies, the other countries belong to hybrid regimes (Democracy Index 2014). Ukraine is in 92nd place, better than Bosnia and Herzegovina (103rd). All of them are classified as 'partly free', apart from Montenegro (39th), other countries are located at the end of the European list (between 49th and 58th place).

There are two countries in the fourth group. Belarus and Russia are classified as authoritarian regimes (*Democracy Index 2014*, 2015) and 'not free' countries (*Freedom of the Press*, 2015). They have also a very low position among 180 countries in

the 2015 World Press Freedom Index (Russia, 152th, and Belarus, 157th). It is rather difficult to predict changes toward liberalization and democratization there in the nearest future.

The media in the 21 countries in CEE act in a different political context. The friendliest conditions for the media are found in the West Slavonic countries, the Baltic states, and Slovenia. In general, political actors hold back from interference and pressure on media owners and journalists, and in consequence, on media content. Today, the politicization of media and political parallelism is the weakest there in comparison with other parts of the region. The Balkan states and also Hungary and Croatia are characterized by high political parallelism. The private media are often linked with political actors, sometimes they are media owners, either officially or secretly. Instrumentalization of the public broadcasting service is a common weak point. Frequently, party logic is linked with media logic. The owners like to have not only political but also economic profits, like in Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Russia, and Ukraine. This kind of media logic leads towards entrenched journalism and produces media instrumentalization and political bias. The extremely high politicization and a lack of political pluralism is typical of “pure” authoritarian regimes in Belarus and Russia. It changes so dramatically and dynamically in Ukraine that it is difficult to predict the nearest future.

Economic development and consequences of media privatization

The economic environment is the other important factor. In contrast to the 18 Western countries analyzed by Hallin and Mancini (2004), and Brüggemann, Engesser, Büchel, Humprecht and Castro (2014), the media in CEE act in poorer or very poor conditions.

The analysis of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in Europe published by The International Monetary Fund in 2014 or The World Bank for 2011–2013 (*World Economic Outlook*, 2014) indicates three groups of countries on this continent. The richest one is composed of Western full democracies (*Democracy Index*, 2015), where the Liberal and Democratic Corporatism Models were developed (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). The states classified by Hallin and Mancini as the Polarized Pluralist Model (Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece) are poorer and they are in the second group. In 2014, an average GDP for the 20 Western states was over 42 445 USD, and in the case of all 28 members of the European Union – over 34 763 USD¹. The average GDP for the 21 states in CEE was about 18 180 USD per capita², but

1 The author’s estimation according to *World Economic and Financial Surveys* (2014).

2 The author’s estimation according to *World Economic and Financial Surveys* (2014).

it is not a homogeneous region. Half of them gained over 20 000 USD per capita, like the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, and Croatia. About 35 per cent of the states in the region including Belarus, Romania, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, and Albania were classified in the middle (10 000 to 20 000 USD per capita). Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Kosovo and Moldova (about 15 per cent) are the poorest European states (less than 10 000 USD per capita). This significantly different economic condition is also reflected in the quality of the media and journalistic professionalism in CEE.

Privatization of state-owned media was one of the first steps of media democratization after the collapse of communism. It was also an introduction to competition on the market, and then, to ownership concentration and economic instrumentalization of the media in the 2000s. The lack of national capital provoked foreign owners to invest in this region. They did it above all due to economic reasons. In a short time, commercialization of the media became a fact (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015b:213).

In general, commercialization is not only a negative tendency. It supports the introduction of new products and stimulates the development of the media market. Thanks to privatization, it was possible to introduce pluralistic and competitive media systems in CEE. There are some positive examples such as the RTL Klub in Hungary (the most critical medium in accordance with governments and ruling political actors) or Slovenian POP TV owned by CME, which broadcasts an evening news program every day. Even if one medium is politicized and not objective, a reader/listener/viewer can select another one. Additionally, tabloids often help the less educated audience to understand politics and enhance political participation.

Unfortunately, negative features of commercialization dominate the positive ones in CEE. Norris noted that commercial pressure leads to tabloidization of the news (1997:2) and to growing political cynicism and apathy among the public (1997:8). The problem also occurred in CEE. Strong tabloidization of media content was confirmed by many scholars in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Štetka, 2014; Školkay, 2011; Volek, 2011; Trampota and Končelik, 2011; Ondrasik and Škop, 2011), Hungary (Bajomi-Lazar, 2014, 2015), Poland (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011b). It was also noted in Romania and Moldova (Milewski, 2013; Milewski, Barczyszyn and Lauk, 2014), Bulgaria (Dobrev, Pfetsch and Voltmer, 2011), the three Baltic states (Balčytiene, 2012; Balčytiene, Lauk and Glowacki, 2014), and Russia (Vartanova, 2013; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015b). The empirical research and critical analysis of the media in CEE show that commercialization produces a lot of negative effects there, more than in the Western developed media market characterized by the high culture of media owners, journalists and the audience. In CEE, commercial private media are often owned by Western companies, which

are interested above all in profits and they present media logic (Mazzoleni, 1987), and produce low quality content. They often escape from the political sphere or they cover politics in a horse-race manner (Patterson, 1980).

A new tendency has been observed in CEE in the last few years. Some of the most significant foreign media companies, which entered the market in the 1990s and invested a lot of means there, have decided to sell their division in not very profitable markets, such as in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, the Baltic states among others. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the Swiss Ringier sold its media division to Czech and Slovak owners Patrik Tkáč and Daniel Křetínský (Czech News Center), the Mafra company owned by Rheinisch-Bergische Druckerei- und Verlagsgesellschaft was bought by Andrej Babiš (Agrofert). Verlagsgruppe Passau GmbH will sell its regional divisions VLP in the Czech Republic to Penta investment (formerly a Slovak company). In Romania, Ringier sold the daily “Evenimentul Zilei” and the weekly “Capital”. This same process is observed in Hungary, when since 2014, one of the national biggest television stations TV2 was bought by new investors. The Swedish Media Company sold the free newspaper “Metro” and it belongs now to Hungarian media mogul Lajos Simicska. In 2011, Polish businessman Grzegorz Hajdarowicz bought the daily newspaper “Rzeczpospolita” from the British company Mecom. The same company sold the regional newspapers to Verlagsgruppe Passau GmbH in 2013 (Štetka, 2013:10–11). All these examples confirm the process of “re-nationalization” of media ownership in CEE.

Four models of media and politics in CEE

Studies dedicated to the models of media systems

‘Four rationales for mass media’ such as the Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet/Totalitarian/Communist concepts were presented as the earliest theory (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956). The Soviet/Totalitarian model in Europe, which is geographically linked with CEE, ended with the collapse of the communist regime in 1989–1991. The Authoritarian model is still a practical concept in the case of CEE, but “absolute power of a monarch and his government” (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956:7) was replaced by the ruling elites. Today, some aspects of the Libertarian and Social Responsibility theories are still useful in many aspects in the analysis of full democracies.

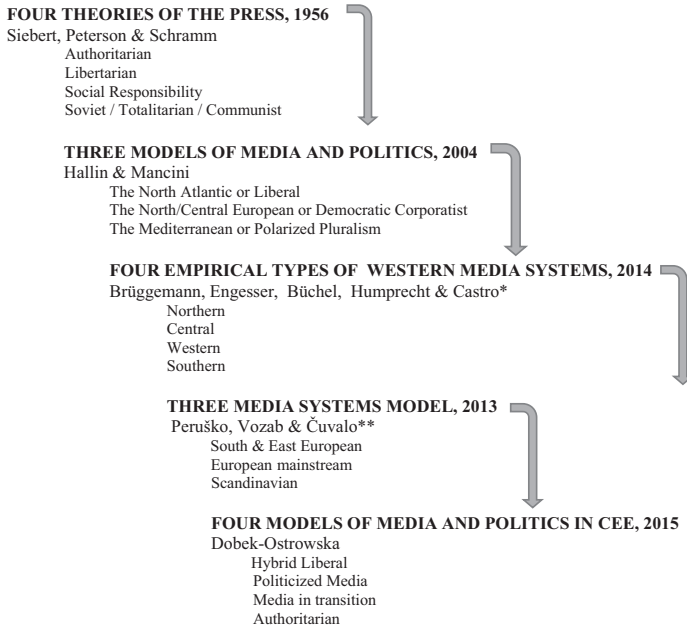
Hallin and Mancini (2004) presented three models of media and politics half a century later, and their concept was needful in communication studies. The Liberal, Democratic Corporatism and Polarized Pluralism Models, dedicated to the 18 very well-developed American and European democratic countries, were a stimulating theoretical proposal. This concept motivated a lot of scholars in the world to discuss

and develop studies on media systems in other parts of the World. The three models are also very useful in research dedicated to CEE (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011a,b; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012; Perusko, 2014). The media system is a very dynamic structure, which is responsive to its technological, political and economic background. It systematically evaluates and changes much more quickly than political and economic systems. A decade later, the concept of Hallin and Mancini is still important, but it has a rather historical value in the 21st century. Hallin underlined that “Media systems are always in fact in a process of change” (Hallin and Mancini, 2011:317).

Perusko, Vozab, Čuvalo (2013) presented the first empirical research dedicated to media systems and is very useful in our studies. The authors analyzed 24 countries in total, including 10 countries from CEE – members of the European Union (without Latvia). They created the three models based on clusters of structural variables. Lithuania, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria were classified as the South and East European model (with Greece and Italy). Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Slovakia were included in the European mainstream model with Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, Portugal, and Great Britain. It is a very important study and helps a lot in research dedicated to all 21 countries in CEE.

The next step in this comparative empirical research was made by Brüggemann, Engesser, Büchel, Humprecht and Castro (2014). Their article was published shortly after the Croatian scholars, and probably for this reason, the Swiss authors did not use the earlier concept. They adopted the Three Models of Hallin and Mancini to a changeable reality in a total sample of the 18 Western countries. The authors used empirical tools, such as correlation and cluster analysis. Finally, they presented Four Empirical Types of Western media systems as Northern, Central, Western, and Southern, in comparison to the original models of Hallin and Mancini. In conclusion, the authors suggested including “additional dimensions into analysis as Internet access, social media and press freedom” (2014:1062). They mentioned the possible application of their framework to non-Western and Eastern European countries. This idea stimulates research dedicated to the post-communist part of Europe (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Development of studies dedicated to the media systems



Source: Author.

* This concept is dedicated to those some countries analysed by Hallin and Mancini

** This concept was presented earlier than “Four empirical types of Western media systems”, but authors included the new democratic states from CEE.

It was difficult to propose a concept covering all the 21 countries in CEE because the political and media systems were in a dynamic transformation. Jakubowicz and Sükösd were one of the first scholars who raised the question of media models in CEE and the former Soviet Union:

“Central and Eastern Europe have provided a venue for “a battle of the models”, where the American and Western European concepts of media system organization fought for dominance.” (Jakubowicz and Sükösd, 2008:28)

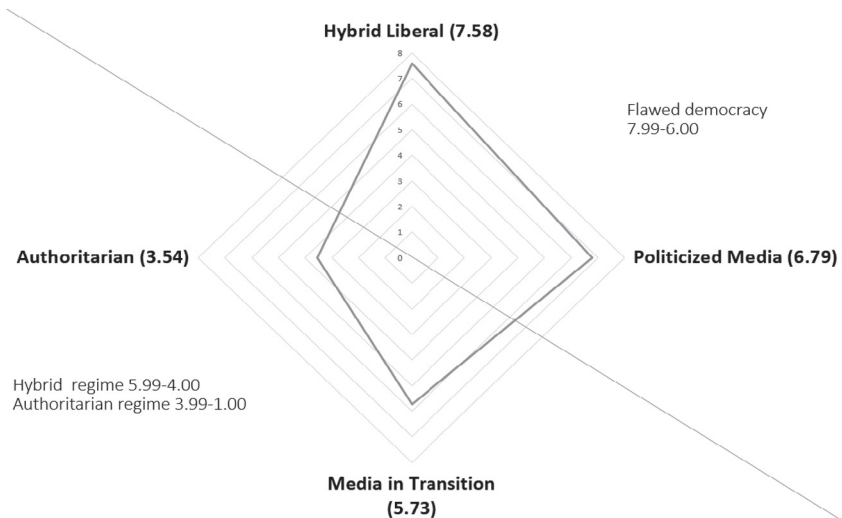
They evidenced ‘multiple transformations’ and Mediterraneanization of post-communist media systems. They indicated ‘spillover effects’ as the key area of systemic change and compressed waves of media change. They underlined ‘traumas of transformation, globalization, and democratic backlash’ (2008:33). Jakubowicz and Sükösd indicated a complex analysis of post-communist media transformation. It was implemented with Mungiu-Pippidi’s concept, who tried to reconstruct

‘divergent paths from communist media control’ (2008:88). All these authors conducted significant research dedicated to the transformation of media systems in CEE, but in the 2000s it was still too early to recognize and propose media models in this part of Europe due to intensive changes observed in the media.

It seems that 25 years after the collapse of this regime in Europe, it is possible to present the first concept of a media and politics model, which should be an introduction to a wider discussion.

Analysis of the relations between media and politics in CEE is based on all three earlier concepts (1956, 2004, 2013, 2014). The first step in this research process is to identify the democratization level, and the next one is to indicate the place of each country in the transition from communism to consolidated democracy. The data presented by The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2014, and other rankings describe four media systems, called the Hybrid Liberal (7 states), the Politicized Media (5 states), the Media in Transition (7 states) and the Authoritarian models (2 states). The first two models include the flawed democracies with mean scores of 7.58 and 6.79 in 2014. The two flawed democracies and hybrid regimes are classified into the Media in Transition Model with the mean score of 5.73. The fourth model with the mean score of 3.53 reflects a complex of authoritarian features (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: The four models of media and politics in CEE according to the Democracy Index 2014 (mean of overall scores for each model)



Source: Author on the basis of The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited data, 2015.

Hybrid Liberal Model

The first group of countries is called the Hybrid Liberal Model. This kind of model is typical for the West Slavonic (The Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia) and the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) situated close to each other, with many common historical routes. South Slavonic Slovenia, which is located at a geographical distance from the other countries, is also classified into this model. Historically, Slovenians belonged to the Western World (the Habsburg Monarchy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire), and they were outside Balkan culture and the Ottoman heritage. These seven states are the richest in CEE. They have a 'free' status according to Freedom of the World 2015, the higher position among the countries in this region of Europe in the Democracy Index in 2014, Index of Freedom in the World in 2015 and Gross Domestic Product in 2014 (see Table 2).

All the states were classified as flawed democracies between 25th and 45th place in 2014, and they have the highest rankings in the region. The Czech Republic lost its place among full democracies in the latest rankings, which it maintained from 2006 to 2013 as being the only CEE state there. Latvia, Lithuania and Poland improved their overall scores. The reverse process is being observed in the case of Slovenia and Slovakia.

The Index of Press Freedom (2015) shows that the situation of the mass media in these states is the best in comparison with other countries in CEE. In 2015, four states, such as Estonia (10), the Czech Republic (13), Slovakia (14), and Poland (18) are classified among the first 20 states in the world. Estonia has had a very high ranking in the Press Freedom Rankings since 2002 (a best of 3rd in 2007 and 2011–2012, and the worst being 12th place in 2003). We note a distance in the case of Latvia (28), Lithuania (31), and Slovenia (35) in these rankings, but they overtake other CEE countries significantly.

The economic situation also has stimulated Internet development, which has played a more important role in media system structure. In 2014, Slovakia (82.65 per cent) and Estonia (81.62 per cent) were among the states with the highest position on the list in the world. Apart from Poland (67.15 per cent), internet access is quite high, at over 70 per cent.

According to communication and media studies dedicated to CEE, it is possible to indicate some general common features for the media systems in these seven countries. On the one hand, there are the highest democratic standards and a weak/or weaker politicization than in other parts in the region. On the other hand, we observe escapism from public trust, which was underlined in the case of the Baltic states:

“(...) are shapeless, blurred, or somehow unsolid (...) characterized by low and decreasing public trust in political parties, commercialization of the press, lack of ideological diversity, lack of transparency in editorial leanings.” (Balčytiene, 2012:71)

A domination or a very important role of foreign media companies was noted. Generally, these kinds of owners are not interested in political topics. They operate in this part of Europe for economic reasons above all. On the one hand, they are responsible for strong commercialization and tabloidization, and on the other, after the collapse of communism media systems, they could not develop without the support of foreign investors. In consequence, in most states, a decrease in journalistic professionalism, like in the Czech Republic, is observed:

“The key dynamic in all this was commercialization. Most of the Czech media adapted to the economic realities of the market: the media are just one more commodity forced to adapt to market imperatives as they come ever closer to being little more than infotainment.” (Volek, 2011:268)

In the case of Slovakia, Ondrašik and Škop claimed that:

“Economic pressure within the Slovak media took its toll on the news coverage and the work of journalists too. After 1998, media organizations attracted huge foreign capital (...). It has to be stressed though that foreign investment capital was for many media a positive incentive and the negative developments were more related to Slovak media moguls.” (2011:119)

Poland is the biggest market in this model. For this reason, it has more forces than other states with a limited population to save national ownership and to keep a higher pluralistic and more competitive market. However, the changes were dynamic during the last decade. The presidency of Lech Kaczyński (2005 to 2010) was characterized by high politicization and the lowest ranks noted in the Press Freedom Index. Then the Polish media system was closer to the Polarized Pluralist Model, thanks to visible political bias of media owners and journalists (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011a:194; Tworzecki, 2012:456). At the beginning of the 2010s, the Polish media system was at a crossroads between the Liberal and the Polarized Pluralism tendencies (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2011b:188). It has evolved systematically toward:

“(...) a hybrid of the Polarized and Liberal models, with a few elements of the Democratic Corporatism model and the country’s post-communist legacy.” (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012:49)

The other feature of this model is strong commercialization and a lack of or relatively weak politicization today. The analysis of the media systems in these seven states in 2015 shows that they have a lot of common features, which were

mentioned by Siebert, Paterson and Schramm (1956) in the Libertarian theory, and by Hallin and Mancini (2004) – above all in the Liberal Model. In CEE, the transformation occurred 25 years after the collapse of communism and is still a dynamic and open process. In comparison with other states in this region, the media systems are in better condition. Political pressure has diminished in a visible way, but it is being systematically replaced by the economic environment, above all foreign ownership, which plays a more important role and leads to strong commercialization and tabloidization. It seems that among the four presented models, the Hybrid Liberal is the most stable.

Politicized Media Model

The second model of mass media in CEE is called the Politicized Media and includes five countries such as Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and the one state from outside the European Union – Serbia (see Table. 3). The Serbian media model has more common features with this group than the third one, and there are some arguments that allow it to be classified into this model. Apart from Hungary, the other states were located between Balkan heritage and Western European culture. All five countries have a ‘free’ status according to Freedom of the World 2015. There are some common features, such as low democratic standards and political culture of societies, a high politicization of public broadcasting service and control over public radio and television by political actors. But it should be emphasized that this model is dynamic and changeable. It is rather difficult to predict what will happen in the future.

The countries are poorer than in the case of the Hybrid Liberal Model. The highest GDP in this group in 2014 was noted in Hungary, and the lowest in Serbia, but generally, all states are going through an economic crisis or stagnation.

All the states are close to each other in the Democracy Index 2014 (from 50th to 57th place). Apart from Serbia, which has bettered its overall score in the ranking in recent years, the other countries classified in this group have lost points, above all Hungary, where the democratic standards were weakened year by year (overall score 7.53 in 2006 and 6.90 in 2014).

The negative trend in this model is observed in the Press Freedom Index. Apart from Croatia, which has improved its position in the rankings (from 79th in 2009 to 58th in 2015), the other states have lower scores. The most dramatic situation, not only among the countries classified into this model but also among all members of the European Union in CEE, is observed in Bulgaria. This process started in 2007 (51st place) and this state was classified in 106th place in 2015.

The highest access to the internet was noted in Hungary (above 74 per cent) and in Croatia (65 per cent) in 2014, and there is relatively low penetration in the other three countries.

According to Freedom of the Press 2014 all the states were classified as 'partly free'. The main feature of this model is strong politicization, above all of the print media and the public broadcasting service. Generally, private broadcasting media belong to foreign owners who are interested in economic profits, and a clear support for one political party or group can be risky for their interests. Political activity of many journalists and media managers is visible. So, the media are politicized not only by political actors, but often by journalists and some media owners, who have clear political preferences.

Bajomi-Lázár (2015:6) presented a concept of party colonization of the media, which reflects a relationship between parties and party systems, and also media freedom. The author included Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia in one group according to his research done a few years ago. The Press Freedom Index 2015 and other current studies let us claim that Poland and Slovenia are outside the Politicized Media Model, but the concept of party colonization of the media is very useful in the case of the other three states.

Hungary was one of the leaders of political transformation after 1989. Since 2010, power has been in the hands of the conservative Fidesz party with Victor Orbán as Prime Minister. Then Hungary lost places in the Democracy Index, Freedom of the Press and World Press Freedom (see Table 2). Some private media were sold and in a few cases transactions were not transparent and the new owner supports the ruling party, as in the case of TV2. The description of the relationship between media and politics in this country is developed by the Hungarian scholar Sipos, who claims:

"Political media is only partly an instrument of political parties. There are many journalists with strong biases, who are not affiliated with any political party. But the fact is that bias is a prevalent journalistic norm." (2013:101)

This same phenomenon is observed in Romania. Milewski notes that journalists do not have any professional identity, and they are frequently related to political parties or politicians. In this case, the deep dependence of journalists on many economic and political groups of interest is underlined (Milewski, Barczyszyn and Lauk, 2014:110). A lack of clear separation between the world of politics, business and media is noted there. The Intact Media Group, with TV channels Antena 1 and Antena 3, was founded in 1991 by Dan Voiculescu, who founded a political party at that time and was a member of the Romanian Senate. In 2013 he was accused in corruption scandals, found guilty and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

But the Intact Media Group still belongs to his family, and his daughter is the president. Sorin Ovidiu Vintu, the former owner of the Realitatea-Cațavencu media company is another example. In 2012, he was accused of corruption and tax evasion and given a prison sentence.

Avadani and Lupu (2015) present a list of new media trends in Romania. They mention censorship, self-censorship, low ethics, depopulation and de-professionalization of journalists, employment contracts have been lowered and alternative forms of employment have been suggested, erosion of credibility and public trust in the media, strong de-capitalization of media business due to the financial collapse of the media market triggered by the economic crisis in 2009, and the dissolution of the traditional business model.

The characteristics presented by Avadani and Lupu are visible also in Bulgaria. On the one hand, Bulgarian society, which experienced a hard totalitarian regime, accepted democracy as a political system (Dobрева, 2013:170). But on the other, party colonization is present, where similar ‘symbiotic’ relations between journalists and politicians are visible. This kind of interaction is typical in their daily routines of news production, and is supported by:

“(...) the apparently widespread practice of paid news coverage that involves both politicians exerting pressure through bribes and threats, and journalists expecting favors for their service, i.e. positive coverage of the commissioning politician or damaging attacks on his or her opponent.” (Dobрева, Pfetsch and Voltmer, 2011:189)

A few years later this opinion was supported by other Bulgarian scholars (see further Chapter 12). Zankova and Kirilov (2014:126) claim that the media in this state are trapped by politicization and commercialization. The New Bulgarian Media Group Holding, officially owned by Irena Krasteva, is an example of a lack of transparency and links between politicians and business (Leviev-Sawyer, 2014). She is the mother of the controversial politician Delyan Peevski, elected head of the State Agency for National Security a few years ago, and a candidate in the European Parliament elections in 2014.

Croatia is the youngest member of the European Union. Many scholars note that political power was marginalized in the policy regulation and implementation of the media system in this state, but still this system “exhibits very clear characteristics of the Mediterranean model” (Peruško, 2014:245). A similar conclusion is expressed by Popović, who argues that the Polarized Pluralist model identified by Hallin and Mancini (2004) in Mediterranean countries, is applicable to South East European media systems too. There are some similarities, such as:

“(...) enduring social structures and cultural peculiarities that are not easily molded by media policy regulation and mechanisms imported in accordance with European standards”. (Popović, 2014:241)

A typical feature of the Politicized Media Model is high political parallelism, and this one is observed also in Croatia. Peruško notes that the relationship between the media and politics is not separated (2013:715–716). High parallelism of media owners is observed and, in consequence, it limits the diversity of media content and produces a negative influence on the democratic role of the media. Additionally, a historically rooted high degree of exchange between journalism and political professions is underlined:

“Many diplomats, members of parliament, and even one recent Croatian prime minister were also journalists. In the last change of government in 2012, at least four active journalists took advisory or spokespersons’ roles in the new government.” (Peruško, 2013:716)

Serbia, the only non-EU member in this group, is closer to the states classified in the Politicized Media Model than to the Media in Transition Model. The placings in the Democracy Index and Press Freedom Index situates this state as between Bulgaria and Romania. It is the poorest country and with the lowest Internet access in this model. Serbia’s placing in Freedom of the Press 2015 has declined due to increased government harassment of journalists and restrictions on their work, as well as a decrease in the diversity of media after the cancellation of major political talk shows. Serbian journalists confess that their autonomy “is limited by the unbreakable alliance between the state, political actors and owners of capital” (Radojković, Milojević and Ugrinić, 2014:140). When asked to indicate the sources of stronger pressure on the media in Serbia, journalists put the political parties that constitute the ruling coalition first (Radojković, Milojević and Ugrinić, 2014: 140–141). Additionally, economic pressure is also visible in the case of private media. A significant position of foreign media ownership causes commercialization, which is expressed by tabloidization of media content and low journalistic professionalism. On the basis of their empirical research, the authors conclude that Serbian journalists are more similar to Romanian and Bulgarian ones than to Polish or Czech journalists (2014:146).

In the light of available data and research, we find some common features in Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Serbia, which let us classify these five states into the same model. One of the most important is politicization of the media, lack of transparency, and the connection between political, business and media elites, and for this reason it is called the Politicized Media Model.

The Media in Transition Model

The next proposed model is more difficult to diagnose because of very limited research and data. The two flawed democracies such as Moldova and Macedonia, and the three hybrid regimes such as Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina are classified here. Kosovo is the most problematic case because it does not exist in many rankings and indexes. All of them are in the phase of transition toward democracy and the primary transition stage of media reform (Rozumilowicz, 2002). They still need a lot of time to establish a democratic political system.

The common characteristics are poverty (the poorest part of Europe, see Table 2) and low education of society, additionally the small size of the market in these states, which does not motivate foreign media companies to invest there. Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina have higher placings in the Press Freedom Index, but they are the poorest states in this model. In general, in a poor state there is poor media. Political elites politicize the media and strictly control them. Vladimir Plahotniuc is a Moldovan businessman and politician, a member of the national Parliament and the Council of Europe and also the owner of newspapers (“Publica”, “Ziarul Timpul”) and the main TV channels (Prime, 2 Plus, Canal 3). There are many other examples such as Kiril Lucinschi, Vlad Filat, Vladimir Voronin, and Valentin Bodișteanu. According to Reports of Freedom of the Press 2014 in each country of this model, journalistic autonomy is limited by business leaders and the government. Lack of objectivity is a rather typical feature of both private and state-owned media. Above all, it is linked to public broadcasting, which is accused of favoring the ruling elites and the government in its news coverage. This model is characterized by a lack of or very weak oppositional political parties. In this situation, the private media sometimes try to play the role of political opposition.

Weak democratic standards are accompanied by very low journalistic professionalism. Milewski notices in the case of Moldova:

“The success in this [media] industry depends on a partnership created between journalists and politicians, and sometimes there is no partnership at all, because politicians are media owners and journalists are future politicians.” (2013:260–261)

When the media lost government subsidies, they began to look for other sources. ‘Friendly services’ such as support of political parties, politicians and businessmen entered into journalistic practice (Milewski, Barczyszyn, Lauk, 2014:110). Nepotism is something obvious for Moldovan journalists, and they do not perceive that a close and friendly relationship with political actors can reduce their credibility (Vasilendiuc, 2011:140–141).

Ukraine is the most controversial state in this classification. The dramatic Euromaidan Revolution, and then the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014, have changed deeply the political elites, society, and the media (Ukraine, 2015). The state's score improved its placing (from 63rd to 58th) and status (from 'not free' to 'partly free') in the Freedom of the Press 2015 rankings. It may have happened due to the positive process in the media after the collapse of the Yanukovych government. Many observers of the Ukrainian situation note the weakening of political pressure on the media and a decrease in hostility toward the ruling elites and the government in society. The law on access to information and on the autonomy of the broadcasting regulator is improved systematically. For this reason we have decided to classify Ukraine into the Media in Transition Model.

The significant part of the media is private (about 78 per cent), 19 per cent of them belong to communal and 3 per cent to state broadcasters (Ukraine, 2015). The year 2014 was extremely difficult for Ukrainian journalists, due to a rise in violence against journalists associated with the Euromaidan protests and the subsequent conflict in eastern Ukraine. There were about 1,000 documented violations of free speech, twice as many as the year before, and three times as many as two years before. Five journalists and two media workers were killed in 2014, more than 280 were physically attacked, above all during the Euromaidan. According to Freedom Barometer 2015, there was one murder, 16 assaults, 13 cases of impeding journalistic activities and 2 cases of censorship (2014: *Summary for Freedom of Press in Ukraine*, 2015). Another problem is linked with the limited transparency of the media. The television news network TV Channel 5, which began to operate on the market in 2003, is owned and still controlled by the businessman and President Poroshenko. The Ukrainian media system is in a deep transformation, it is very fragile and we cannot be sure about the future.

The Authoritarian Model

The Authoritarian Model includes East Slavonic post-Soviet states – Belarus and Russia. They were classified as 'non free' states according to the Press Freedom Rankings in 2014. One year later, Belarus was classified as the 'worst of the worst' states' (*Press Freedom Maps*, 2015). Belarus and Russia are recognized as authoritarian regimes (Democracy Index, 2014). In 2015, Russia was placed 152nd and Belarus 157th among 180 states presented in the Press Freedom Index.

The Authoritarian Model in CEE reveals many features described by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956). The mass media are extremely highly politicized. They are used by political authorities as an instrument of strong political propaganda

and 'effecting government policy'. Criticism of political machinery and officials in power is forbidden. Thanks to the media, the ruling elites control society and create attitudes and behaviors which support the regime. But, it should be stressed that this model is different from the one in Soviet times.

Belarus is a difficult case to analyze because there is not any accessible academic research dedicated to this state. According to the Democracy Index (2014), the state was classified as 125th out of 167 countries. In the Freedom of the Press 2015 rankings, it was noted as the 'worst of the worst', and the environment of the Belarusian media was estimated as 'extremely restrictive': press freedom score – 93/100, legal environment – 29/30, political environment 36/40, economic environment 28/30 (Belarus, 2014). Belarus has the worst ranking among CEE countries and one of the worst in the world in the 2015 World Press Freedom Index. The data confirm that it is an extremely authoritarian media system not only in Europe, but in the world. Alyaksandr Lukashenko has been the president of this state for over 20 years (since 1994). He is a dictator responsible for human rights violations, and using torture in the case of political prisoners and political murders. In 2013, the police detained 45 journalists and bloggers while they were attempting to cover protests or other political events. The Belarusian media glorify the political leadership of Lukashenko and the benefits of a stronger state. The content of the media is restrictively controlled through highly secretive and politicized licensing procedures (Belarus, 2014). At the end of 2014, Reporters without Borders warned that the very limited freedom of information in Belarus had been drastically reduced by blocking websites (Belarusian authorities, 2014).

The Soviet Union, according to press theories of Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956), was a classical example of the 'Soviet Communist Press'. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and of the communist regime there, Russia evolved towards the Authoritarian Model. Bodrunova (2013) presents some important features of the media system in Russia. Firstly, the political system is characterized by a non-competitive party system, persistence of political leaders (Putin since 1999 and Medvedev has collaborated with Putin since 1999), and high centralization of power. Secondly, the media are instrumentalized by political elites, and clear separation between political, economic and media elites does not exist. It is a 'fusion' of politicians and media owners, and connections between local media and local authorities due to weak regional advertising markets. Thirdly, one of the crucial problems in Russia is not only the absence of freedoms, but a weak commercial condition of the media on both national and regional levels and non-controlled political and business elites who instrumentalize the media. Fourthly,

there are oppositional media and internet still less regulated than in many Western countries, which support political protest, but in recent years a stronger control over them has also been noted (Lenta.ru, Levada Center).

These features are also observed by other scholars. About two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, de Smaele (2010:57), characterized the “Russian” pattern by a low development of the mass press, high political parallelism, low professionalism and very high state intervention. She noted that politicization in this case was an effect of the ‘work’ of political parties and political-industrial cliques and the government:

“Because the worlds of business and politics have merged, media in Russia are not close to politics *or* business but to politics *and* business. Business is politics.” (de Smaele, 2010:58)

The symbiosis of the two groups is a fundamental feature of the Russian media system during the Putin regime (see further Chapter 3 and 6). Post-soviet capitalism is characterized by a merger of power and property institutions into ‘the single institute of power-property’ (Raybov, 2011). Pasti claims that etatization of the media insures them against market uncertainty and retards commercialization of the media in the 2000s (2014:169).

Vartanova denominates the Russian media system as the Statist Commercialized Model:

“(…) where new principles and values of consumption (…) practically eliminated necessary alternatives in topicality and values of print and – especially – TV journalism’, and ‘relations between media and politics (…) found themselves under the impact of authoritarian and paternalist traditions.” (2013: 23–24)

Journalistic elites, media owners and managers are integrated into the state, and this integration reflects the traditional paternal character of the relationship between the media and the state where “media still play the role of an innocent and obedient child.” (Vartanova, 2012:142).

The border between politics and journalism in Russia is very weak, strong bias and broad –based voluntary censorship is developed (Oates 2012:469). An asymmetrical model with domination of political actors is noted in the relationship between the media and politics. More than half of Russian journalists surveyed in 2012 accepted politics as an alternative profession (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015a:285). These data support the opinion of Pasti who considers journalism as ‘a social lift’ (2014:158). This conclusion seems to be very accurate:

“Russian journalists work and live within the confines of a liberal-oriented market whereas the institutions of media and journalism remain locked under an authoritarian state.” (Pasti, Chernysh, and Svitich, 2012:280)

Conclusion

In the introduction we formulated two hypotheses. H1 is approved. The presented analysis shows that there is not one CEE. All 21 countries are situated in the same region of the continent but they differ significantly in the context of their historical background, political standards, economic development and in consequence, in the media systems, which are products of all those elements.

The media systems in CEE reflect a level of political and journalistic cultures that are a mix of post-communist heritage and newly-created features during the transition from communism (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1988) toward democracy or other kind of 'non-communist' regimes. Today, the media systems in CEE operate in the pincers of two kinds of profits – political, which generate politicization, and economic, which are responsible for commercialization. In the first case, political actors tend to control the media because they are geared to keep their political power, whilst in the second, media owners want to have an income. Sometimes, these two tendencies go together, when politicians are also media owners (openly or secretly). Politicization is not limited only to political actors, but also includes journalists who publicly express their political views and support real politicians and political parties. But this analysis shows that the degree of politicization and commercialization in each of the 21 states is quite different.

Table 4: Media system models in CEE

MEDIA MODELS IN CEE	THEORY/ MODELS OF MEDIA AND POLITICS			
	LIBERAL (2004)	POLARIZED PLURALIST (2004)		AUTHORITARIAN (1956)
Phase of democratization	Democracy	Consolidation	Transition	Authoritarian regime
Stage of media reform	Late transition	Secondary transition	Primary transition	Media as a tool of political power
Main features	Media free Hybridization Commercialization	Media partly free Political pluralism Politicization	Media partly free Strong politicization Not clear political-business relations	Media not free Extremely restrictive regime State control censorship
LIBERAL HYBRID MODEL	Czech Republic Estonia Latvia Lithuania Poland Slovakia Slovenia			
POLITICIZED MODEL		Bulgaria Croatia Hungary Romania Serbia		
MEDIA IN TRANSITION MODEL			Albania Bosnia & Herzegovina Kosovo Macedonia Moldova Montenegro Ukraine	
AUTHORITARIAN MODEL				Belarus Russia

Source: Author.

Similarities and differences help to indicate the four models of media systems in CEE (see Table 4). The first one is called the Liberal Hybrid Model and has some attributes typical of the Liberal Model of Hallin and Mancini, and is characterized by hybridization, commercialization and 'free media', economic profit predominates over the political. We find them in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, the same countries which Perusko, Vozab and Čuvalo (2013) classified as the European mainstream model.

The second Politicized Media Model is formed by five 'partly free' countries – Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and Serbia. Four of them are located on the Balkan Peninsula (without Hungary), but all of them are situated close to each other. In this case, Hallin and Mancini's concept of the Polarized Pluralist is very useful. Many features, recognized by the authors of the three models of media and politics, are visible there, such as political pluralism and media politicization. Peruško, Vozab and Čuvalo (2013) call it the South and East European model and include Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and also Lithuania, which in this study is assigned to the Hybrid Liberal model.

The Media in Transition Model is the third one. It includes six 'partly free', poor and very poor Balkan countries, such as Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, and most controversially, Ukraine. Poverty in this region and an unclear political situation discourage media investors from outside. National media owners are strongly linked with political elites. This situation creates rather unfavorable conditions for the de-politicization process. Political and economic stagnation is typical of this model and delays modernization. Positive changes are not expected soon.

The fourth Authoritarian Model in CEE is based on the concept of Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956). The Communist/Soviet 'rationale of the press' has evolved into another non-democratic form. Russia and Belarus are authoritarian, extremely restrictive political regimes with 'not free' media.

The presented analysis verifies H2. The media systems in CEE operate between politicization (above all in the Politicized Media, the Media in Transition, and Authoritarian Models) and commercialization (above all in the Hybrid Liberal and the Politicized Media Models).

There are a lot of questions and problems which are waiting to be analyzed, among them journalistic professionalism and culture, media policy, and public broadcasting services. The media and politics models in this part of Europe need empirical verification, like cluster analysis of profiles or correlations between the dimensions. The first step was made by Peruško, Vozab and Čuvalo (2013), and this kind of research is needed. The crucial problem is linked with dynamic changes and low predictability in many countries.

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