

Westernization and Westification: Social and Media Change in Central and Eastern Europe. A Polish Case Study

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to test one of the many ways of tracking the progress of media transformation in Central and Eastern Europe in the context of European integration, based on a descriptive/analytical and relativistic research approaches.

The conceptual and analytical framework adopted for the analysis of the process is an institutional and cultural one, which is best suited in this case of “systemic transformation” of an exceptionally large scope.

The dissidents’ primary weapon of struggle against the Communist system, and their main objective for the future was civil society, a model of “ethical” civil society with its many idealistic features. This and concept of the media institutions of civil society, as described in the article, are taken as the criteria for assessing the results of the systemic transformation.

Because of a number of characteristics of post-Communist societies, including a high politicisation of public life, a weak state and weak society, a low level of public involvement on the part of citizens, etc. the goal of developing a civil society has not truly been attained. Also the media system falls short of what the dissidents hoped it would be, involving only the privately owned print media and public and commercial broadcasting. In most post-Communist countries this “standard model” has meant the empowerment primarily of the new political and business elites.

This analysis shows that in the Polish case the views of the 1980s dissidents could not serve as an accurate predictor of their own later policies and behaviour, nor indeed of the direction and consequences of transformation. Therefore, the early views and concepts of the initiators of that transformation cannot provide a set of criteria for judging the progress and success of that process.

Ključne riječi: preobrazba medija, medij, civilno društvo, disident, postkomunizam, Poljska

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Introduction

In a 1998 paper, Marius Lukosiunas (1998) of Vilnius University asked “Is the [Media] Transition Over?” and answered his own question in the following manner:

[...] one may probably say that the first phase of the transition – which included the disruption of soviet media system and emergence of the new structure of the media which is capable of integrating Western journalistic practices and is ready to be integrated into the structures of Western media businesses – is over, and the next stage – which is to find its place and voice in united Europe – has just started.

This answer – which applies both an internal and a wider European frame of reference in assessing the process of transition – fits the theme of this paper perfectly. However, it obviously raises a host of questions concerning the approach and analytical framework to be adopted in this case.

The purpose of this paper is to test one of many possible ways of tracking progress of media transformation in Central and Eastern Europe in the context of European integration. The range of possibilities is, of course, extensive. In making the choice, one has to arrive at some determination as regards

- the nature of the process of change unfolding in Central and Eastern European countries,
- the most suitable approach to be applied in studying it;
- and consequently the criteria for assessing the progress and results of that process.

Choosing an Analytical Framework

Offe (1999: 41 ff.) says that post-Communist countries are undergoing “a triple transformation”, covering:

- the issues of nationality and territoriality involved in the delineation of borders and the national or ethnic composition of particular countries;
- constitutional issues involved in determining the system of government;
- and issues of the economic order, property and management of the process of production and distribution.

Along the same lines, Balcerowicz (1995) points out that, compared to other instances of transition, the scope of the process in Central and Eastern Europe is exceptionally large, covering as it does both political and economic systems, both of which interact with changes in social structure.

In view of this, one can go along with the tendency of many scholars to regard the process unfolding in Central and Eastern Europe as one of “systemic transformation”.

Ziólkowski (1999) says that this is “imitative transformation”, based on assimilating institutions, behaviour patterns and values characteristic of different stages of development of capitalist societies. In other words, what is happening in Central and Eastern Europe could be given the simple name of “westernisation”.

While it would be tempting to define “systemic transformation” in line with a normative approach, as implying transformation from one socio-political and economic system to another clearly defined one (e.g. liberal democracy and market economy), it is more realistic to interpret it analytically as meaning that transformation affects all or most of the constitutive elements of the system. Whether and to what extent it really does alter them, and with what effect, is the moot question which analysis of transformation should answer.

Balcerowicz (1995: 293) defines “systemic transformation” in economic terms as incorporating “macroeconomic stabilization”, “microeconomic liberalization” (enlarging the scope of freedom for private firms), and “fundamental institutional restructuring”.

Also Staniszkis (1999: 62) views the end of Communism and the emergence of the post-Communist order from an institutional perspective, as comprising “on the one hand, a de-institutionalization (or disarticulation of the structures of communism) associated with the dynamics of the system’s contradictions and, on the other, an advancing institutionalization of the new order...”.

This preference of Polish scholars for the institutional approach can be explained by the fact that much of what is going on in the process of transformation does involve institutional change. In fact, Wnuk-Lipiński (1995: 13) points out that in recent years institutional theories have attracted more and more attention from researchers also beyond Poland, because – he says – other approaches have failed to provide adequate description and explanation of developments in social reality.

Morawski (1998) points out that institutional analysis concentrates on the emergence of new institutional patterns or systems, which take shape and mature slowly since the process takes place by trial and error. His model of institutional analysis encompasses the following elements: (i) new rules (systems); (ii) the internal driving forces of their emergence; (iii) the logic of structural adaptation to the external context; (iv) diverse conditions of realization; (v) mechanisms of emergence of new political, economic and social system; (vi) legacy of the past; (vii) institutional effectiveness of new systems.

As already indicated by Wnuk-Lipiński (1995), the adoption of such an analytical framework requires the use of an interdisciplinary approach, examining social reality by means of an extensive array of research methods.

The whole point about the process of systemic transformation is that there is no direct and automatic institutional determinism. Even if new laws have been passed and new institutional structures called into being, patterns of social behaviour change much more slowly, and not necessarily in ways that are consistent with change in the other two areas. Often the key to understanding this entire process of transformation is the ability to ascertain the reasons for the gaps and inconsistencies between new laws and institutional structures being put into place and actual social mechanisms which may contradict them to varying degrees. These are either a die-hard legacy of the past, or have developed in response to, but also partly in defiance of, the direction of change in the other areas¹.

This is why the institutional perspective both includes (as shown in Morawski's model) and must be further supplemented by a cultural perspective. Piotr Sztompka (1999: vii) argues convincingly that "both the functioning of institutions and social behaviour or people's attitudes are often no more than an effect, manifestation, symptom or index of profound elements of civilization and culture". Staniszkis (1999: 213-215) points to the crucial role of the cultural context in determining the "historical form" of the end of communism, and goes so far as to say that it is "the heuristic aspect culture [which] is decisive for the course and direction of change".

Of course, the cultural perspective must also prominently include what is known as "political culture"².

Of the many approaches to the tracking of progress in post-communist transformation and assessing its results, one is particularly popular: a historical and comparative method consisting in juxtaposing the original ideas for institutional change and the outcome of the change that has actually taken place.

We will seek here to test this approach, with the application of the institutional and cultural perspective, to see to what extent it can really offer an insight into the process and results of transformation.

Civil Society: the Goal of Anti-Communist Opposition

Ogrodziński (1999:67) writes that the tendency to apply the concept of civil society, and use it as a framework for analysing social reality and as a goal to be pursued, "was a reflection of crucial aspects of the process of change" in Central and Eastern Europe.

Splichal (1993: 12) agrees:

The importance of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe is rooted in "radical" civil movements mobilized against the state-party system and its monopolistic economic and political power ... it was and still is primarily aimed at legalization of democratic grassroots movements, i.e. at the (re)creation of civil society which has been largely abolished by omnipotent socialist states. These efforts go back to the fifties in Hungary, the sixties in Czechoslovakia, and the late seventies in Poland, as well as to a number of democratizing projects in Yugoslavia ... The importance of discussions about an autonomous civil society in Eastern Europe is in the fact that they emphasized, in addition to human rights and liberties, the role of autonomous special interest groups and general political associations as a necessary infrastructure of contemporary pluralism.

Bauman (1981: 30) comments that the emergence of the idea of civil society³ represented the result of "collective learning" on the part of opponents of the system. It was that "No victory, however spectacular, of a strike action is likely to move the victors far beyond square one, unless it is institutionalized by making an event into a rule,

and transforming what had originally been a breach of of the pattern into a law of the land". Having learnt this lesson, Bauman explained, Polish workers attempted to conquer a territory for civil society. The novelty of their approach, born of bitter experience, lay in the fact that they were determined to depoliticize their action. They engaged in a "consistent and ongoing struggle for the redefinition and relocation of the whole sphere of public debate and public opinion as separate from the state and hence non-political. The struggle was, in other words, for the establishment of a civil society" (Bauman, 1981: *passim*). The goal was clearly, as Arato (1981) pointed out, that of gradually reconstituting civil society through the re-establishment of the rule of law, an independent public sphere and freedom of association.

When "Solidarity" became a 10-million strong social movement in 1980-1981, the ultimate goal of social and political reform it was planning was the transformation of Poland into a "Self-governing Commonwealth". This has been described as a "direct self-managing form of democracy". Smolar (1991: 22) calls it the "apotheosis of self-management from top to bottom" a "utopia of the third way ... practically speaking *a civil society liberated from the state*" (emphasis added). Morawski (1999: 58) regards adoption of the concept of civil society by the dissidents as a manifestation of what he calls the democratic model of systemic change. He adds: "the main feature of the 1980s [in Poland] was the belief in the possibility of creating direct participatory democracy, i.e. the direct contribution of everyone into decision-making at state level". Of course, it is not surprising that ideas and values animating forces opposing the Communist system were antithetical to those of the then prevailing system: freedom, justice, equality, dignity, solidarity, access, participation.

To some extent, by embracing the concept of civil society with its many idealistic features, the dissidents and their supporters provided evidence of a syndrome known as "the revenge of the Communist utopia", with people seeking to achieve realization in practice of the elements of the Communist ideology they had internalized (e.g. the concept of social justice).

The above reasoning reinforces the point made earlier concerning the need for a institutional and cultural perspective in analysing the process of transformation.

Media Institutions of Civil Society

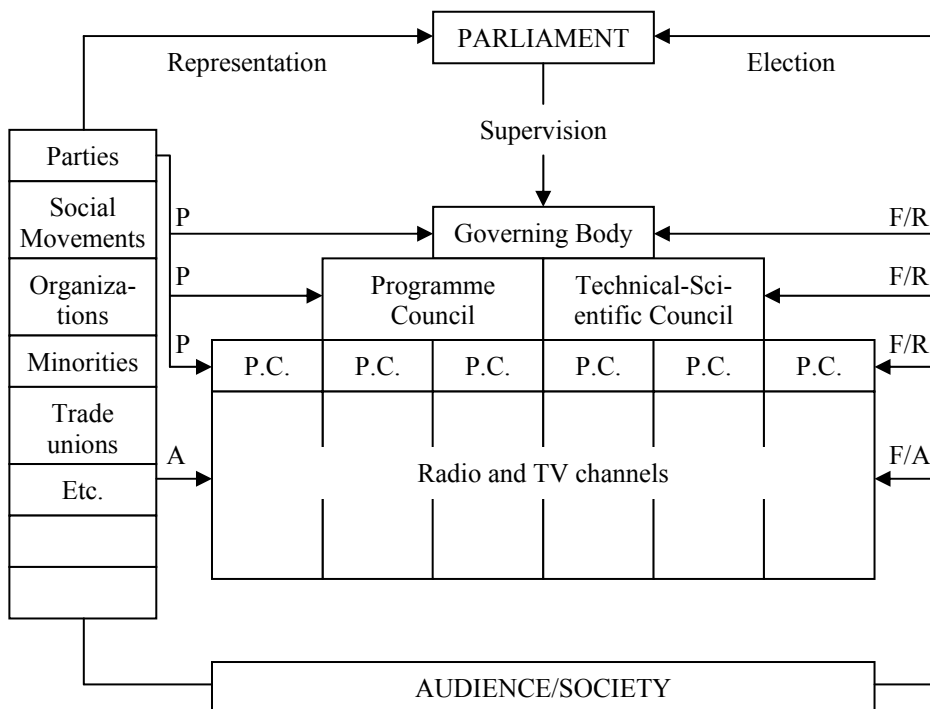
The media system as projected by Solidarity was based on the principle of inclusion and on what McQuail (1992: 66-67) regards as one of basic communication values, that of justice/equality. The adoption of one such a communication value naturally has far-reaching implications for all aspects of media institutions – from public policy in this field, through patterns of social communication affected by this policy, to practical forms of media operation (cf. Jakubowicz, 1999).

The process of designing the new media system began with the Solidarity plan for "socializing" the monopoly state broadcaster as one of the institutions of the Communist state.

This was to involve:

- creating mechanisms and structures of feedback, access, participation and direct social management of the media by means of “socially representative” bodies overseeing the work of broadcasting organizations at all levels, or, for example, dividing Polish Radio and Television up so as to leave some channels in the hands of the state and turn over others to social forces;
 - and ensuring that all groups of society would enjoy equal opportunities of joining the public discourse, preferably by means of their own media (though demands in this sphere were limited to liberalization of the print media).
- This general vision of the new media system was part of a more general project of empowering civil society (Jakubowicz, 1990).

Figure 1. “Socialized” Polish Radio and Television as Proposed by Solidarity



A – access; F – Feedback; P – Participation; P.C. – Programme Council;
R – Representation.

When, after the fall of the Communist system, the time came to prepare blueprints for a new media system, the institutional concept, based on the original Solidarity

plans in this regard (Jakubowicz, 1990) called for a truly open system, marked by pluriformity (accommodating many media ownership patterns) and pluralism (providing a forum, within the law, for all ideologies, points of view and beliefs, as well as for general diversity of content). It also provided for a new definition of public service broadcasting as serving not only top-down, one-way, univocal communication, but also bottom-up, pluralistic communication.

In addition to commercial media, and public-service broadcast media, with socially-representative governing bodies, there was also to be a “third sector” of broadcasting: non-profit private stations representing a wide variety of opinions, orientations and beliefs. In Poland, the Broadcasting Reform Commission appointed in 1989 named this the “civic sector”⁴ of broadcasting, comprising, as its chairman has explained,

socially-motivated privately or collectively owned stations, mostly local and community ones, speaking for, on behalf of, or to various groups, parties, organizations, movements, minorities, territorial groups and communities (at this time of fast social and political change in post-Communist countries, there is an unusually high level of need for opportunities for active communication, especially in the field of political communication) (Jakubowicz, 1991: 62).

Full implementation of that idea would have required the development of a sophisticated, wide-ranging media system, perhaps along the lines proposed by Curran (1996). He has pointed out that in a democratic system media should differ in their internal organizational principles and possibly their economic base, so that both competition and participation can best be addressed.

He has, therefore suggested a “five sector” approach, with each sector addressing a different democratic need:

- “Core” sector: An institutionally centred and revitalised public-service broadcasting system which would serve the society as a whole and create a single forum for the proliferation and development of issues, which would promote democratic participation within society.
- Civil sector: It would serve the competitive interests of democracy. A public agency such as a modified Swedish Press Subsidies Board has been mooted as a possible institution which would provide assistance to marginalized groups seeking voice. This sector would serve a myriad of interests through traditional media of newspapers, newsletters, and magazines.
- Sector of media professionals: here, professionals would be free to pursue their own standards, freed from the control of either governmental or market constraints.
- Private enterprise sector: this would account for the interests of the market.
- Social market sector: this would allow the expression of new and not fully voiced interests, which may be gaining in importance within a society.

As noted above, the development of such a model would require considerable public interventionism into the media system, involving public expenditure to enable dif-

ferent sectors to emerge and survive on a competitive market. Splichal (1993: 25) points out that especially the regulated market economy model can provide selective subsidies which “weaken the market mechanism, favour disadvantaged newspapers, and can reverse a negative course of structural development”.

John Keane (1991, 1993) goes beyond these ideas to propose a mechanism for keeping the state accountable and keeping open channels between state and social institutions. He sees a need for a fundamental revision of the public service model into a plurality of non-state (and indeed non-market) media of communication which serve as the primary means of communication for citizens situated within a pluralistic civil society and safeguard both freedom and equality of communication. This necessitates the regulation and maximum feasible reduction of private corporate power over the means of communication, the maximum feasible decommodification and “re-embedding” of communication media in the social life of civil society is a vital condition of freedom from state and market censorship.

If the right to participation is at the core of civil society, then in the media field it must be understood as the right to communicate – and this is precisely what Keane insists on as a fundamental tenet of his proposed new media system serving civil society.

One can say that this is what would have been required to implement Solidarity ideas as regards the media in civil society.

Societal Results of Transformation So Far

The concepts embraced by the anti-Communist opposition were never fully developed because they were dropped practically as soon as Solidarity took over power in 1989, a process accompanied by the victory of the neo-liberal tendency which at that moment triumphed over the democratic tendency which had previously dominated in the dissident movement.

For many Poles, the “struggle of civil society within the Communist state had meant the search for a ‘Third Way’, combining the positive features of socialism and capitalism” (Ogrodziński, 1991: 74). In that sense, Solidarity’s political identity was largely social-democratic in orientation which, incidentally, eased the way to the final negotiations and agreement with the reform-oriented Communist elite. Yet very soon afterwards, the Solidarity government virtually abandoned that orientation and opted for a neo-liberal one.

Faced with the need to guide the nation through a difficult period of economic shock therapy and seeking to prevent the outbreak of social discontent, the early Polish post-Communist governments pursued a deliberate policy of discouraging social participation in public and political life, i.e. of mobilizing the population for the purpose of elections or other short-lived campaigns, and dampening their enthusiasm at other times. They argued that the development of a full-fledged party system would be premature and that society should remain as united in facing the new challenges as it was in resisting the Communist system. Therefore, they hoped to maintain Solidarity as a mass social movement providing a focus for popular backing for the process of transformation and delay as much as possible the emergence of political parties, with all the

political differentiation and power struggles that would bring in its wake. That policy involved effectively stifling some of the grassroots movements (such as the “civic committees” created to conduct the election campaign of Spring 1989) which could have provided a foundation for an active and self-confident civil society (Frączak, 1992).

Figure 2 sums up the political and ideological evolution of the current Polish political establishment.

Figure 2. Models of systemic change in the political sphere

Main elements	Type of Model of Systemic Change		
	Democratic	Liberal	Conservative
Emerged as dominant in:	1970s and 1980s (Dissident views)	1989	an evolutionary process, culminating in 1997
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • freedom and equality • participatory democracy • multiplicity of values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • freedom and inequality • representative democracy • values: freedom, law, property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • freedom and inequality • corporatism • social thinking of the Church (social justice)
Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • society • trade unions as a collective actor 	elites	elites endowed with social responsibility
Spheres and methods of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • civil society • political mobilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rule of law • political demobilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local level • negotiations leading to resolution of conflicts of interests

Source: Morawski, 1999: 95.

What was to have been a grassroots revolution and turned into a top-down process as a result of the political contract between Communist and dissident elites, became even more so after 1989 – not just as a matter of political expediency, but also of conviction. Liberals placed major stress on the role of the elite in guiding the process of transformation and rejected as “populism” the old Solidarity ethos of popular participation. They feared that popular involvement would lead to diluting the neoliberal strategy of economic growth, since rank-and-file unionists would use that to demand a less stringently monetarist policy. In a word, “not socialization, but quite the reverse: depoliticization of society was to be the cornerstone of systemic change” (Morawski, 1999: 241).

This politically costly strategy, leading i.a. to the “Velvet Restoration” of left-wing rule as a result of the 1993 general election, subsequently led to a search for a compromise solution which involves the development of corporatism and endless negotiations of the demands and interests of particular groups of society.

Meanwhile, the general population was becoming more and more passive and detached from public and political life, signifying widespread rejection of the way the country was run.

These developments are not unknown in other post-Communist countries, George Schöpflin (1995) points to some features of their situation, noting among other things that the weakness of civil society and autonomous organizations and the discouragement of society with politics and public life. This, combined with excessive faith in, and dependence on, the state, results in etatism and “political inflation”, with the state pushed to intervene into all areas of social life.

Kurczewska, Staszyńska and Bajor (1993) concluded that in Poland the full development of civil society had been prevented by the fact that a weak society was interacting with a weak state. They list a number of barriers to the emergence of civil society that either have to do with the relationship between the state and society or stem from the characteristics of society itself:

- Central authorities single-handedly developed a doctrine describing the new social order⁵, and then proceeded to define ways of putting into effect also at the regional and local level, leaving little room for civil society to contribute to the process;
- Political conflicts among political parties at the national level were reflected at the local level, leading to the politicization of many local issues, lack of cooperation even on practical matters of importance to the local community;
- Survival of the dependent mentality of the socialist welfare state, discouraging local initiative and breeding an expectation that the state had the duty to look after the citizens;
- Preference for negative rather than positive institutionalization, i.e. self-organization to fight against something rather than to strive for something. This leads to short-lived forms of common action, usually quite aggressive, lack of will to negotiate, and finally the dissipation of social energy once the cause for common action had disappeared;
- A tendency for civil society groups to coalesce around political, religious or other similar identities, leading to the emergence of autarchic groups closed to others, claiming unreserved and total support from their members and treating other similar groups as potential enemies;
- A process whereby the elites of civil society, both at the national and local levels, had been drawn into institutions of power, depriving their communities and associations of leaders;
- A tendency that is deeply rooted in Polish social life, to perceive social values and institutions in macro-social, collectivistic terms, i.e. in terms of the nation as a whole, rather than local or regional communities. Hence individuals and collectivities are predisposed either to organize spontaneously at the level of minimal strategy, around a particular issue requiring a burst of energy to deal with, or as part of a large community (society or the nation) and its goals, usually divorced from the realities of life around them.

With time, some of these barriers to widespread civic involvement and activity will disappear or constitute less of a problem. For the time being, however, too few Poles seek to promote their own individual and group interests, and in general to affect developments in public life. They have the freedom to do so, but too few exercise it. When they do, they often engage in what Gliński and Palska (1997) describe as “en-

clave activity”, concentrating on some specific area and isolated social groups. Often, this has to do with taking over the functions of caring for the poor, homeless and the disadvantaged from which the administration has withdrawn in eliminating its welfare state functions. Also some counter-cultural groups have transformed their lifestyles into civic activity, e.g. in the area of environmental protection. This, they point out, does not, as yet, translate into civic participation in public life in general.

Thus, we believe that the concept of the civil society can and should be used as a criterion for evaluating progress in building mature democracy, but always “in the light of the reigning historical circumstances”.

The Media of the “Really Existing” Civil Society

Dahlgren (1995: 3) has called the approach represented by Keane, for example, a case of romantic radicalism:

regarding the romantic view of democracy, I would just say that it is often associated with what is called its direct or participatory version. As a model for the political system it cannot, of course, be taken seriously ... The Utopian antithesis [of the political system of liberal capitalist societies – K.J.] is easily revealed to rest on a cheerful mixture of wishful thinking and sociological near-sightedness.

This view is certainly widely shared. This is why the ideas developed in Eastern Germany after 1989 as regards change in the media system (see endnote 4) were given short shrift after reunification⁶.

The same process, though for different reasons and in different forms, took place in post-Communist countries. Splichal (1993: 17-18) has commented that the ruling coalitions of post-Communist countries “see the media, particularly television and radio, as a ‘corporate’ organ of the new ‘pluralistic’ party-state, i.e. in the same perspective as it was regarded by the old authorities”. This, he added, amounts to an old authoritarian conception of the total polity practised by the old socialist regimes. We might add that this confirms our earlier points about lack of automatic institutional determinism and the importance of cultural factors (in this case, of political culture).

Whether or not Splichal’s assessment fully reflects the situation in each post-Communist country or not, the fact remains that in Poland concepts formulated after 1989 provided for nothing but the privately owned print media and the dual system (public and commercial stations) in broadcasting.

This is what Sparks (1998) calls the “standard model” in most post-Communist countries: it has meant the empowerment primarily of the new political and business elites and entails a mixture of the paternal and commercial system (see also Becker, 1995).

Whatever ideas Solidarity might have had of “socializing” the broadcast media (Jakubowicz, 1990), the actual model chosen combines private with public stations,

the latter constituting (as in other post-Communist countries) an extension of a part of the political establishment, rather than of civil society (Jakubowicz, 1999).⁷

Thus, of the five sectors listed by Curran, only two have been created in Poland: public service broadcasting (though not corresponding fully to his description) and the private enterprise sector.

The idea of creating a third, “civic” or “social” sector of broadcasting in order to promote more pluralism and greater social access to broadcasting was formulated during the process of drafting the Broadcasting Act, but was not written into the law at that time. Later, the concept of “civic broadcasters” was introduced into the Broadcasting Act but in reality the concept was defined so as to mean primarily Catholic broadcasters.

The only trace of that idea which has made its way into secondary legislation is the provision that the fee private broadcasters pay for receiving their licence is reduced to 20% in the case of programme services which contain no advertising or sponsorship, and to 50% in the case of programme services where time allotted to advertising does not exceed 2% of air time (as compared with up to 15 per cent permitted to other broadcasters). Though very limited in impact, this may go some way towards helping the emergence of some “third-sector” broadcast media operated by voluntary organizations, regional associations, national minorities, etc.

In addition to subsidies for some cultural periodicals and occasional grants for other publications, this is virtually the only form of public interventionism into the operation of private media. Otherwise, they are left entirely to the operation of the market mechanism.

Poland’s media market is becoming more and more concentrated and globalized (see Jakubowicz, forthcoming), raising the stakes for any minority media hoping to survive on the market and enabling big and foreign media owners to bring more influence to bear on media policies. In addition to preventing the regulation of media concentrations, they are seeking to exploit conflicts between the current right-wing government and public service broadcasting organizations in order to marginalize especially public television and prevent it from entering new fields, such as digital television and the creation of thematic channels.

Conclusion

Offe has remarked on the “atheoretical” nature of the revolutionary upheaval in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989-1991. While some theoretical thinking preceded other revolutions during the last 200 years, he says, in this case “the most significant and characteristic feature is the lack of any developed theoretical premises and normative arguments concerning such issues as who should undertake what action in particular circumstances, what will be the nature of the new post-revolutionary order and what would constitute ‘progress’” (Offe, 1999: 36). Any ideas actually developed, he adds, were in the nature of a spontaneous reaction by participants in the process and of a largely tactical nature.

By comparison with most of the other countries, Poland had a well-developed dissident movement. It produced a considerable body of theoretical and political ideas and literature. Nevertheless, Morawski (1999: 89) agrees that Solidarity's programme was more negative than positive. He points out, however, that a mass movement can hardly be expected to develop a programme of governing the country: "The history of social movements shows that such a programme can be created only once the transfer of power has taken place and a sphere of public activity has been created". In any case, he adds, Solidarity's programme was innovative in the 1980s in that it was formulated in response to the situation prevailing at that time. Accordingly, it is not necessarily suited to another set of political and social circumstances.

The above analysis shows that in the Polish case the views of the 1980s dissidents could not serve as an accurate predictor of their own later policies and behaviour, nor indeed the very direction and consequences of transformation. Therefore, the early views and concepts of the initiators of that transformation cannot provide a set of criteria for judging the progress and success of that process, nor a frame of reference for analysing it. On the other hand, of course, the evolution of their views and methods of pursuing their objectives offers an excellent opportunity of studying political movements.

Many observers of transition in Central and Eastern Europe in fact began by adopting a prescriptive/normative approach, and then, in some despair, switched to the descriptive/analytical approach when they realized that their prescriptions failed to materialize, or began to materialize in unexpected ways. The "train of transformation can break down between stations" as Leslie Holmes (cited in Kofman and Roszkowski, 1999: 148) has put it. Indeed, it usually does and in consequence the actual process of change can lead in directions far removed from any pre-conceived normative state. Accordingly, as Ziółkowski (1999:39) says, echoing the views of many observers: "What we should concentrate on is not a description of 'transformation away from...', or 'transformation towards ...', but an analysis of the situation today as a reality in its own right".

On the other hand, the institutional and cultural perspective, as outlined above, does seem to offer a proper framework for the study of transformation.

As for Central and Eastern European media, let us recall that Fabris (1995) has formulated four possible scenarios of how the situation might develop:

1. "Westification" of Eastern European media: Eastern Europe could become "a supplemental engine for the Western European media industry" and end up with the status of "quasi-colonial dependency";
2. "Germanification" of the Eastern European media landscape, with German media firms investing heavily in, and becoming dominant on, those markets;
3. Continuation of two different media cultures, with Central and Eastern European countries regressing into authoritarian regimes;
4. "Perestroika" in Western Europe, which itself would adopt the Central and Eastern European pattern of a politicized public sphere, marked by growing nationalism, regionalism and ethnicity.

Fabris believed that both scenarios 1 and 3 might apply, with scenario 2 also succeeding in a part of Europe. He saw no likelihood of scenario 4 becoming a reality.

It is already clear, e.g. from the view of Lukosiunas quoted at the outset, that successful media change amounts mostly to “Westification”, combined with “Germanification”, though of course capital being invested into Central and Eastern European media is certainly not only German. While “quasi-colonial dependency” seems much too strong, there is no doubt that relations between post-Communist and Western media markets are clearly asymmetrical and will remain so for a long time to come.

What accounts for “Westification” which must be seen as a complement to the more general “westernization”? Splichal (2000, 2001) ascribes much of what is happening in Central and Eastern European media to “imitation”. This concept merits closer attention. Should it be understood as deliberate copying of existing or past arrangements (as is indeed the case when EU candidate countries harmonize their laws with the *acquis*), or as natural repetition, or recreation (replay) of the same processes in comparable circumstances, when more or less the same factors and forces impact on the situation as in other countries, or as in the past?

Šmid (1999) points out that while the media system is affected by politics, economics and technology, in fact the key variable in shaping Central and Eastern Europe is of a political nature “and can be defined as ‘political culture’“. One could accept that with regard primarily to those countries where lack of economic growth and privatisation, as well as inadequate development of market economy deprived many media of an economic base and left them at the mercy of whoever was willing to fund them to further their own political or other interests. Lack of proper separation of powers, and of separation of the economy from politics has contributed to an overwhelming predominance of political society over economic and civil society, including the public sphere.

In other post-Communist countries, politics and political culture have certainly been very important, but the market has played a role of equal significance and ultimately will become the main determining force. Because of this and other factors, media evolution has gone further, incorporating also globalization, commercialisation and commodification of the media (see e.g. Gulyas, 1998). Market mechanisms are also affecting Central and Eastern European media in much the same way as in Western Europe and elsewhere.

Thus, if, given similar initial conditions (procedural democracy, however unconsolidated, and an emerging market economy, however immature), societies are likely to produce similar social or media arrangements, then we may begin to understand the whole process better, including why the dissidents' dreams could not be realized. Perhaps this is what Elena Vartanova (2001) means when she says that Russian media are not Soviet: “one cannot deny that many similarities between the Russian media and stable foreign media markets have appeared. Today, the present Russian newspaper system resembles much more that of the USA or Germany than the Soviet one”.

This is a question of crucial importance, because acceptance of this interpretation would offer a key to understanding post-Communist transformation. However, this view may appear overly deterministic. More research and a longer process of transformation are needed to analyse the process in all its ramifications.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ To use Balcerowicz's own example, one manifestation of this can be low voter turnout (about 50%) during successive elections in Poland. Nowak-Jeziorański (1997: 16) explains this by pointing to the existence of what he calls "a third Poland [in addition to the left and right – K.J.], comprising that part of society which is alienated from its own State ... These people are beyond the reach of the media and all the institutions of social prestige, including the Church ... This Third Poland seems to be saying that there is no point in casting one's vote because nothing has changed at the top and nothing ever will. It is resentful of, and alienated from, the State itself, regardless of who is in power at any given time".
- ² For an extensive discussion of this concept see Chapter 1 "Political Culture, Civil Society and Democratization" in Gross (forthcoming).
- ³ Taylor (1994: 54) explains that the term "civil society", as used in Central and Eastern Europe, was meant to describe what those societies had lost and what they were now trying to recreate: "a network of institutions that are independent from the state, which unite citizens around issues of common concern and which by their very existence, or by their activities, can bring influence to bear on policy".
- ⁴ Similar ideas can be found in the legislation of some other post-Communist countries. The 1991 Czechoslovak Law on the Operation of Radio and Television Broadcasts says in Art. 20 that fines imposed for offences under the law "shall be purposefully used for the support of the broadcasting of licence holders [i.e. private broadcasters – K.J.], with priority being given to the needs of local broadcasts". The 1991 Czechoslovak Law puts cable operators under an obligation to reserve free of charge one channel for the needs of the local community. The Slovenian Law on Mass Media says that non-commercial local media (which are "important for the citizens of Slovenia in exercising the right to be informed and for the preservation of Slovene national and cultural identity" – Art. 3) are to be financed partly from licence fees and from the state budget, as well as from advertising. The 1995 Hungarian Act on Radio and Television Services provides for a category of "non-profit oriented broadcasters", defined as "broadcaster[s] who undertake to promote the causes of national, ethnic or other minority interests, interests of groups in a disadvantaged position, or intend to serve as a forum of a residential or local community – provided that [they] recycle any (separately disclosed and accounted) profits generated by [their] broadcasting activity into the continuation and development of his broadcasting activity". Such broadcasters are eligible for financial support from a Broadcasting Fund established by the Act. These provisions have not, however, actively contributed to the emergence of a civic sector of broadcasting in these countries.
- ⁵ Michał Kulesza, a promoter of decentralization of the state and local government reform in Poland after 1989, has pointed out that Solidarity governments "proceeded from the assumption that the situation was so dramatic that transformation [...] should be carried out on a top-down basis, with a strong hand. And that only after that was achieved would there be progress in establishing local democracy" (Pędziwol, 1996: 87)
- ⁶ Hoffman-Riem has explained this as follows: "The media concepts developed initially in the East German states were quickly relegated to the archives of history; these ranged from statutorily mandated media responsibility and new models of journalistic self-organization and autonomy, to ownership of papers by the journalists themselves. Similar ideals and models had also been developed in the West during the 1960s and 1970 ... but were successfully blocked at the political level, and neither media companies nor leading politicians were interested in having these discussions forced upon them once

again ... Reunification was understood ... as a mandate to expand the geographic scope of the social and political status quo that had taken hold in the West" (Hoffman-Riem, 1991: 529).

⁷ The one peculiarity of the Polish situation is that for most of the 6 years of Polish Television's existence, it has been run by people representing the opposition rather than the political forces in power.

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Karol Jakubowicz

Zapadnjaštvo i pozapadnjenje: društvene i medijske promjene u Srednjoj i Istočnoj Europi – slučaj Poljske

SAŽETAK

Cilj ovog rada je ispitati jedan od mnogobrojnih načina praćenja napretka postignutog u preobrazbi medija u Srednjoj i Istočnoj Europi u kontekstu europskih integracija, temeljem deskriptivno-analitičkih i relativističkih istraživačkih pristupa.

Kao konceptualan i analitički okvir za analizu tog procesa korišten je institucionalni i kulturni okvir, koji je najprimjereniji za ovu iznimno opsežnu "transformaciju sustava".

Primarno oružje disidenata u njihovoj borbi protiv komunističkog sustava, a istovremeno i njihov glavni cilj, bilo je civilno društvo, odnosno model "etičnog" civilnog društva s njegovim brojnim idealističnim značajkama. Uz koncept medijskih institucija civilnog društva opisan u članku, to je uzeto kao kriterij procjene rezultata transformacije sustava.

Zbog niza karakteristika postkomunističkih društava, kao što je između ostalog visoka politizacija javnog života, nemoćna država i nemoćno društvo te niska razina javnog djelovanja građana, cilj razvoja civilnog društva nije u potpunosti ostvaren. Medijski sustav također nije zadovoljio očekivanja disidenata obzirom na privatne tiskovine te javnu i komercijanu radio-televiziju. Taj "standardni model" u većini postkomunističkih zemalja značio je prije svega osiromašenje nove političke i poslovne elite.

Ova analiza pokazuje da u slučaju Poljske, nazori disidenata iz osamdesetih godina ovog stoljeća nisu mogli precizno predskazati razvoj njihovih vlastitih politika i ponašanja, a niti sam smjer i posljedice transformacije. Stoga rani nazori i koncepti pokretača te transformacije ne mogu poslužiti kao skup kriterija za procjenu napretka i uspjeha tog procesa.