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## **The field of communication in Croatia: toward a comparative history of communication studies in Central and Eastern Europe**

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Eastern Europe was for a long time in modern history a veritable “black hole” about which little was known in western academia, except to a minority of specialists. While this has started to change with the advent of the third wave of democratization in 1989/90, when much academic interest became focused on it, in the field of communication and media studies Eastern Europe is still very much perceived as the undifferentiated “other”, somewhat like the “global south” described by Thussu (2009).

In this chapter, we begin to unpack this myth of uniformity by providing one country specific historical analysis in the context of wider regional developments and the received history of communication studies in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union. As an example of a historical analysis, itself necessary for every country in Eastern Europe as a basis for a regional post-socialist history of communication and media studies, we analyze the history of Croatian communication science in terms of institutional histories and changes in the thematic foci and paradigmatic approaches in the study of communication and media. The chapter concludes with a brief sketch of the present state of the field of communication and media studies in Eastern Europe, opening into a view on a future Eastern European research agenda.

### ***An Eastern European perspective on media and communication studies***

What is the place of Eastern European media and communication studies in light of the field’s recently expanded optic and calls for the discipline’s internationalization (Downing, 1996, Thussu, 2009) or de-Westernization (Curran & Park, 2000), which recognize the narrow dominant mainstream in the communication discipline and question the appropriateness of western epistemologies, concepts and values for investigating non-western media and communication contexts.

Because “media constitute a modern phenomenon and their study a coming to terms with “modernity’s pathologies” (Scannell, 2007, in Sabry, 2009: 201), media and communication studies were motivated by a hope that they could explain the changes associated with by modernization. While the focus in the early disciplinary agenda in America remained fixed on the influence that new media institutions might have on individuals, several decades later in UK the question was no longer social, but cultural (Scannell, 2007). What question have been posed by Eastern European media studies? The character of political institutions developed during modernity

influenced not only the development of media structures, but also shaped the development of educational institutions and academic research. Different political contexts, and different pressing questions, certainly influenced the development of the field in Central and Eastern Europe. In response to such exogenous influences, their social sciences would expectedly also have distinct endogenous histories (cf. Scannell, 2007).

Eastern Europe shares the western rationalist and individualist epistemology, building on the shared foundation laid by Christianity and the Enlightenment, and on other common historical trajectories. Despite these commonalities, Eastern Europe had divergent outcomes and did not produce the same type of inclusive political and economic institutions as in the West (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). For communication and media studies in Eastern Europe the most important divergence from the West was the introduction of communism as the political and economic system after World War II, just when the proliferation of the media and its growing role in society, politics and culture spurred the institutionalization of the field in America, and later in Western Europe.

Communism was introduced in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union at different times and in a different manner. The Russian revolution of 1917 (the October revolution) introduced Soviet communist rule to the Russian empire, which afterwards became the USSR (Russian revolution of 1917, 2012). In other countries of Eastern and Central Europe, socialism/communism was only introduced at the end of the WW II after 1945. In all of these countries the regimes were characterized by the abolishment (where it had existed before) of political pluralism in terms of political parties (only Communist parties remained) and state control over economy.

As the same common historical trends produced different outcomes in the West and East of Europe, in the East communism was also not the same everywhere. Kitschelt et al (1999) find three types of communism in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, varying according to their socio-economic legacies, modes of communist rule, and democratic consequences (pp. 19-43). While we don't have an account of different types of media systems in socialism, we argue here, following Peruško (2013a, 2013b, Peruško & Čuvalo 2014) against the (prevalent) grouping together of all post-socialist European countries into one "post-communist" media systems (our position is supported by empirical research, cf. Balčytienė, 2009; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2010; Peruško, 2012, 2013a, Peruško, Vozab, Čuvalo, 2013) and for a need to examine specific institutional frameworks and outcomes in each individual country in order to recognize patterns of similarities or difference.

In this chapter we sketch a history of the discipline/field of communication and media studies in Croatia with the hope of also contributing to this intellectual project in Eastern Europe (cf. Peruško, 2013a, for a long-term history of the media system in Croatia). We present Croatian history in comparison to developments in Yugoslavia, in which Croatia was a federal republic until 1991, as well as in the context of the received history of the field in Central and Eastern Europe. We will show how the institutional conditions in Croatia (and Yugoslavia), different from the other countries of Eastern Europe, contributed to disciplinary development of communication and media studies. Our larger object is to show how thin is the received history account when compared to detailed country-specific developments which differ significantly from the received history, and that we actually know very little about the history of communication and media studies as a research and academic discipline in Central and Eastern Europe.

## ***Challenging the received history of communication and media studies in Eastern Europe***

A discussion is warranted about what constitutes Eastern Europe, now that the largest numbers of Central and Eastern European countries have joined the EU. This is certainly not a purely geographical question. This question's examination exceeds our mandate in this chapter. Croatia is the 28th member state of the European Union (EU), which now includes 11 post-socialist Central and Eastern European countries. How is the Eastern European field related to European media and communication studies? And is it defined in studies—research and teaching—by academics and at institutions in the region or do we include also studies about the Eastern European region by academics from other parts of the world? Schoor et al (2003) overview developments in European “communication research and media science”, highlighting the interdisciplinary character of the field. In spite of highlighting democratic transformations in Eastern Europe as one of the key changes influencing the media in Europe, the book does not include any chapters on recent research in Central and Eastern Europe.

There are, overall, very few published accounts on any aspect of the history of the communication field in Eastern Europe. Where research is lacking, the void is filled with myths and overgeneralizations, and we aim to show up at least some of them.

We first dismantle the myth of a “Soviet media theory” as common to all of the Central and Eastern European media and communication studies. The entry by Jan Jiráček and Barbara Köpplová (2008) in the *International Encyclopedia of Communication* presents, on the basis of a handful of references, the received history of communication studies in Eastern Europe and Russia, which is seen to be characterized by “inspiration coming from Western Europe and USA, the fragmentation of communication as a topic into a variety of fields, the development of theory of journalism and the focus on media and media communication after 1989” (Jiráček & Köpplová, 2008). A more thorough presentation of the developments in the 1950s is given by Vroons (2005), but again with only few sources on Eastern Europe.

Longitudinal empirical accounts of intellectual histories based on journal publications are available for Yugoslavia (Splichal, 1989a, 1989b), Croatia (Peruško & Vozab, 2013, 2014), and Poland (Filas & Planeta, 2014). Recent debates on the state of the field in Poland include Peplinski (2010), Jablonowski (2010), Volek et al (2007), and an informative interview with Valery Pisarek<sup>1</sup> (2014) who is considered the founding father of Polish media and communication studies. Köpplová & Jiráček<sup>2</sup> (2013) write about Czech and Slovak media traditions, and Vartanova (2009) provides an overview of the research agenda in contemporary Russian media studies. An edited collection on journalism education also includes individual chapters on ten Eastern European countries (Terzis, 2009).<sup>3</sup>

Scientific disciplinary histories of the social sciences in Croatia are not numerous, but several field and sub-field overviews, institutional accounts, histories

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<sup>1</sup> Walery Pisarek, born in 1931 in Rabce, Poland.

<sup>2</sup> This article is in Check and was not accessible to us beyond its English summary. There are certainly more such articles and valuable research in national languages that merit an international presentation and comparison.

<sup>3</sup> We are indebted to Aukse Balčytienė, Michal Glowacky, Irena Reifova and Veronika Trestrová, for pointing us to these national accounts. We received no reply from colleagues in other countries, which we interpret to mean that there were no such accounts in their countries.

or critiques have been published in recent years (for sociology Batina, 2006, Štulhofer et al, 2010; political science Kasapović, 2007; communication science Mataušić, 2007, audience research Peruško, 2011; information sciences Pehar, 2010, Aparac & Pehar, 2010, technology studies Prpić, 2013). An account of the history of media audience research in Croatia (Peruško, 2011) showed a wasteland of systematic disciplinary accounting as well as a pre-theoretical state of most empirical audience research. Mataušić (2007) problematized the intellectual tradition of communication science in Croatia through analysis of the ways key concepts and definitions are appropriated in the local context.

Continuing from Peruško & Vozab, (2013, 2014), below we present the history of the Croatian communication field in comparison with developments in some other Eastern European countries. The history we present must be viewed as a national history in a comparative context. We start with the examination of the institutional context of the development of social sciences and journalism and communication studies, and then proceed with an analysis of topics on the research agenda in relation to their theoretical framings.

### **Institutional contexts**

Communication as a field or discipline developed in different countries not “by chance” (Scannell, 2007), but in relation to the broader context of institutional as well as social scientific development. Different types of communisms combined with different academic traditions to produce varied developments also in communication and media studies in Central and Eastern Europe.

In Croatia several ancestor disciplines developed at the University of Zagreb already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including art history with its first chair in 1878. Sociology established a chair in 1906 as the first in the then Austro-Hungary, while the first empirical sociological study was published in Zagreb in 1847 by Baltazar Bogišić, who was to become the first president of the International Sociological Institute, later the ISA (HSD povijest, 2012). The discipline developed in the interwar period under the influence of the Chicago School (Tomić-Koludrović, 2009, Batina, 2006), and it continued to be influential during socialism. While research into the pre-history of communication in Croatia is still to be undertaken, first histories of press and television in Croatia were available from the 1960s (Horvat, 1962/2003, and Novak, 2005, Švoger, 2006, Vončina, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004).

Because communism came to Eastern Europe almost thirty years after Russia/Soviet Union, the interwar period enabled different developments of social sciences. In the field of communication, the strongest *interbellum* development was seen in today's Czech Republic, mainly in journalism, while arts, film and radio was present but never united into a common mass communication study. In 1925, series of lectures on journalism and “journalism science” started at the Masaryk University in Brno (Jirák & Köpplová, 2013: 64). The Free School of Political Studies specialized in journalism education and established the study of newspapers in 1928 in Prague (Vroons, 2005: 512), and then published the magazine *Spirit*, which was devoted to press and journalism and advocacy for the creation of a separate social science discipline named *novinověda* (press science, inspired by the German term *Zeitungswissenschaft*) (Jirák & Köpplová, 2013: 65). German *Zeitungswissenschaft* was influential in the late 1920s and 1930s (Jirák & Köpplová, 2008; Vroons, 2005), similarly to its influence in Finland (Pietilä, 2008), and (much) later in Croatia. While in Germany and other western countries the “press science” was after the WW II replaced by mass communication and the early humanities orientation was replaced by a social-scientific thrust (Löblich, 2007). In those Eastern European countries

where it took hold, press science (promoted later also by the Soviet “press theory”) was only replaced after 1990. In Hungary historical press research existed in this period as part of other disciplines (Vroons, 2005: 512). In the Soviet Union during the interwar period, the instrumental use of journalism for propaganda was already the main focus of theory and research (Jiráč & Köpplová, 2008).

The received history of Eastern European communication studies during the socialist decades promotes the myth of the existence of a common paradigm of “Soviet media studies” (Jiráč & Köpplová, 2008, Vartanova, 2009) and shared characteristics of social sciences in this region as a result of the Soviet influence—research guided by governmental institutions and centralized planning, scientific cooperation and communication restricted to countries under communist regime and theory and research in large part shaped by the ruling ideology (ESF, 2006:5). The main paradigm of “press science” included journalism theory and history of journalism (Jiráč & Köpplová, 2008). The main methodological framework was “dialectic and historical materialism, as defined by Marxism-Leninism” (Jiráč & Köpplová, 2008, cf. also Vartanova, 2009), which prevented the development of pluralistic approaches to communication study (Gross, 1999, in Terzis, 2009: 349). Public opinion research also existed, and was instrumentalized for measuring the effectiveness of propaganda (Jiráč & Köpplová, 2008).

While this account perhaps describes the situation in some countries in the region, it does not account for developments in Slovenia, Croatia, or Poland. The Slovenian and Croatian model of communisms were described as national accommodative, while Poland’s communism was a mixture of national accommodative and bureaucratic-authoritarian (Kitchelt, 1999: 39). As a result, the media and society were more open in these nations, and social sciences, including communication studies, were more developed then in the rest of the region.

Croatia and Slovenia were republics in the former Yugoslavia, which was a distinctive case in the East European history of the social sciences, as it was far less centralized in the funding of scientific research than other socialist European countries, and far more open to international scientific communication (Prpić, 2013). Because of emigration and tourism, its status as a non-aligned country and as a European “buffer zone” during the Cold War, Yugoslavia stayed closely tied to Western European countries during communism. Moreover, it had traditional intellectual ties to Austria, Germany and Italy, where intellectual elites were educated prior to WW II (Prpić, 2013: 167). Scientific cooperation with the USA increased in the 1960s with the start of the American Fulbright program of academic exchange that enabled scholars to visit the USA; the same program also brought American scholars to universities in Yugoslavia. German DAAD and Humboldt scholarships contributed in a similar way. The establishment of the Inter-University Center<sup>4</sup> in Dubrovnik in 1970 as the venue for international post-graduate courses and conferences in which the East and the West could meet and discuss (Yugoslavia was the only non-Eastern bloc country to which the majority of Eastern Europeans could travel during the socialist decades, and citizens of Yugoslavia could travel freely to the west), and famous western philosophers and sociologists came there to exchange ideas. Many Croatian students, as well as those from other parts of Yugoslavia, profited from these lectures by international scholars.

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<sup>4</sup> The Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik was created on the idea of Ivan Supek, at that time the Rector of the University of Zagreb (and brother of Rudi Supek, the founder of modern Croatian sociology) <http://www.iuc.hr/history.php>.

Addressing the situation in Poland and Slovenia in the 1980s, Sparks finds that “This very considerable degree of freedom was not present everywhere in the region” (Sparks, 2000: 40). Development of sociology in Poland in the interbellum and its maintenance during socialism contributed also to the development of media studies, and the openness of Croatian and Slovenian university departments to western scholarship contributed to a diversity of intellectual approaches also in communication study. The establishment of the Press Research Institute in Poland in 1954, and the very early conceptualization of mass communication research in terms of communication process, media content, and audience reception (introduced by Walery Pisarek when he became its director in 1969, Pisarek, 2014: 140) is unique in the Eastern European region (as far as we know).

While different types of communication and media research emerged and in some cases thrived during socialism in several places in Eastern Europe, there was no attempt to form a communication discipline and separate it from journalism that epitomized the discipline in this part of the world between 1950-1989. Yugoslavia was an exception to this pattern. In Yugoslavia, disciplinary development showed a first significant growth in the number of articles and books on communication in the 1969-72. Poland was also an exception, with a longer and more active publication history (Splichal, 1989b: 18, 19). After the founding of the first non-academic journalism training programs in the 1950s, university journalism programs started in Yugoslavia in the sixties: at the University of Ljubljana in 1966, University of Belgrade in 1968, and the University of Zagreb in 1970. At all three institutions, these journalism programs were connected to their respective faculties of political science. While the establishment of political science as a topic for university study in early 1960s was much earlier in Yugoslavia than it was in the rest of Central and Eastern Europe, journalism was introduced rather later. First vocational schools and training for journalists were in many countries established at the turn of the 20th century, and university journalism programs appeared in 1950s (in 1950 in Poland and Hungary (where it was abolished after 1956 failed revolution), 1952 in Bulgaria, 1953 in Czechoslovakia (Terzis, 2009). During the 1970's, journalism courses were offered by the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Zagreb, taught as a one-year, and then a two-year program, as an additional concentration open to students who have completed first two years of university study in other programs. A four-year full-time program was established in 1985 (FPZ, 2002).

Faculty of political science at the University of Zagreb, the home of the journalism program from the 1970s onward, seemingly is the most important institution for the development of journalism and media studies in Croatia. However, it did not institutionalize the discipline of communication and media studies. Whether it was because it never cared to do so, or because of the persistently low academic reputation of journalism study before and after transition, or the lack of serious academic research and publications at the crucial time (in the 1980s and 1990s), the academic study of communication and media became institutionalized as part of information sciences.

Information sciences as the youngest, most interdisciplinary, and above average cited field in Croatia (Jokić, Zauder, Letina, 2012) started developing in the late 1960s with the support of an “umbrella of institutions” at the University in Zagreb, with a view to include in one scientific discipline various professional disciplines/practices, including documentation, library science, museology, and archiving. (Aparac, Pehar, 2010: 326-327). The most important of these “umbrella institutions”, the Referral Center at the University of Zagreb, coordinated the

fragmented research community, launched the first journal in Croatia covering also communication (*Informatologia Yugoslavica*), and transformed to become the Institute of Information Science in 1988, (Aparac, Pehar, 2010: 327-328) only to disappear in the 1990s. Its progenitor was Stjepko Težak, who was entranced by the development of computers and the possibilities of their use for efficiency of information handling in natural and social sciences. With a solid academic reputation and good international connections, he was able to create a new academic discipline.<sup>5</sup> From the present vantage point, journalism was, as a stand-in for communication and media studies in that period, included as yet another area of study searching for academic legitimacy, lacking sufficient credence of its own to form a separate discipline.<sup>6</sup>

The development of the Department for Information Science at the Faculty of humanities and social sciences seems to have occurred in parallel to these developments. This department was established in 1981, when chairs in library science and information science (established in 1976) combined to form the new department (Lasić-Lazić, 2013). This department has recently added communication to its name and established a Chair in media and communication science, focusing on media and information literacy (in addition to existing chairs in archiving, librarianship, social and humanistic informatics, books and publishing, museums and heritage, and organization of knowledge).

Aspects of communication were in Croatia studied/taught in literature studies, linguistics, phonetics, art, and philosophy of esthetics, much before the introduction of journalism, but these areas are still not considered to be a contribution to a common discipline. The first to examine topics we now consider part of media studies—cartoons, television, and billboards—was famous art historian Vera Horvat Pintarić (2013(1979)). In the recent period, academic research on aspects of media and communication is still undertaken within the perspectives of political science, sociology, information science, philology, arts, history and psychology, pointing to the interdisciplinary and plurality of the approaches to the communication field, but also to a low institutional coherence and a pre-disciplinary status of communication studies in Croatia.

In some respects we find a similar situation in Poland (despite the existence of the Polish Communication Association, [established in 2007] as an important disciplinary institution), where media and communication is one of the fastest growing fields, but is still not formally accredited as an autonomous academic field (Peplinski, 2010: 6). The field stays heterogeneous as it was in the previous period, interdisciplinary, “incoherent[,] and eclectic” (Jablonowski, 2010: 3).

With the European Bologna Reform of university and higher education, after 2000 the program of journalism at the Faculty of political science at the University of Zagreb introduced the 3+2 year’s combination of BA and MA programs. The journalism program was also reformed to add a stronger emphasis on media and

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<sup>5</sup> In private communications, Nenad Prelog and Miroslav Tudman. July 2014.

<sup>6</sup> In our research for this chapter, we identified the mid-1980 master program in information sciences, with a communication concentration, as the first manifestation of this relationship of communication within information sciences, a relationship which will take almost 20 years to be fully formalized in the present academic disciplinary divisions (which influence departments and programs, project funding and evaluation, as well as academic advancement). Only in 2008 classification of scientific fields in Croatia did the present name “information and communication sciences” appear, to replace information science, with communication science, journalism, public media, as sub-fields.

communication theories and research methods, as well as the professional journalistic skills and practice with the establishment of the student radio and television station. The name of the department was changed to Journalism and Public Relations, highlighting its professional character that was further advanced by the establishment of licensed student radio and television stations. It remains the home of the only public university program in journalism in Croatia (although existing communication departments also predominantly offer journalism and mass media related courses). Journalism education is being offered also at private polytechnics, as non-university post-secondary education, and as vocational training (Zgrabljčić-Rotar & Vrljević Šarić, 2009: 373).

The establishment of communication departments at newly established universities across Croatia after 1990 further expanded the institutional base (in addition to stretching it very thin) for the development of communication as an academic discipline, similar to other parts of Eastern Europe, where a “plurality of normative and theoretical approaches” was developed, and where journalism was often separated as skill-oriented training and media and communication studies became a theoretical “background” for the new field (Jirak, Koppolova, 2008). There is presently one department of journalism (and public relations) and three departments of communication and media in three Croatian public universities (Zagreb, Zadar and Dubrovnik), in addition to courses about communication and media which are offered in cultural studies, drama and film departments, comparative literature, linguistics, sociology, and English language departments.

Media and politics can be studied as part of the political science doctoral program, established in 2012 at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Zagreb. Doctoral programs in information and communication science were established at the Faculty of humanities and social sciences of the University of Zagreb in 2005. Universities of Osijek (which had no communication or related studies at either the undergraduate or graduate level) and Dubrovnik established a joint doctoral program in communication and media in 2012. The establishment in 2007 of the Centre for Media and Communication Research at the Faculty of Political Science, as well as the international post-graduate doctoral course in Comparative Media Systems (in 2012) organized in cooperation with foreign universities at the IUC (Dubrovnik), further strengthen the necessary research basis for the disciplinary development of communication and media studies in Croatia.

### **The role played by people**

As communication is not truly institutionalized as a discipline in Croatia, there are no founding father narratives or origin myths. In order to approach this issue, we can postulate that those whose publications are referenced can be seen as the predecessors in a disciplinary sense. Slavko Splichal<sup>7</sup> performed a bibliographic analysis of the 1965-1988 articles on communication, media and public opinion in Yugoslavia, and found that domestic authors made up fully 40% of citations. The Slovene founder of the discipline France Vreg (1920-2007, PhD in sociology) headed the citation list of Yugoslav authors followed by Splichal (Splichal, 1989a, 1989b). The top ten list includes four Croatian communication/media scholars: Tomislav Jantol and Vesna Lamza, both of whom are scholars of public opinion; Matko Meštrović, who was in the 1960s internationally prominent in the avant-garde art movement *Nove tendencije*

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<sup>7</sup> Slavko Splichal (born 1947 in Novo Mesto, Slovenia), PhD in communication, president of the section for Mass communication and public opinion of the Sociological association of Yugoslavia (1981-1988).



(New tendencies<sup>8</sup>) and is a critical theorist of art and new media technology; the late Pavao Novosel (1929-2003) who researched “delegate information systems” and was a most prominent figure in the Department of Journalism of the Faculty of political science; and one sociologist, the founder of the modern Croatian sociology, the late Rudi Supek (1913-1993).

Rudi Supek (PhD in psychology from the Sorbonne) took active part in the two internationally relevant contributions of Croatian social theory of the time: the radical critical theory developed by the circle of philosophers and sociologists gathered around the Korčula international summer school and the Zagreb-based journal *Praxis*<sup>9</sup>, and the experimental economic and social theory of self-management (as an alternative governance practice opposed to both the state directed management of the economy and to the capitalist liberal free market, cf. Horvat, 1971). Supek was also the author of the first book on public opinion research in Yugoslavia, focusing on concepts and methodology that referenced mostly American authors, like Herbert Blumer, Hadley Cantril, Elihu Katz, Harold Lasswell, Paul Lazarsfeld, Robert Merton, and Wilbur Schramm (Supek, 1961).

Supek founded the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb in 1963, thus reestablishing the study of sociology after a break of a decade or so (during the totalitarian 1940s, sociology was again taught in the faculties of law and economics from 1953). A few years later, Rudi Supek spent a year working on the International Study of Opinion Makers, directed by Paul Lazarsfeld at Columbia University in 1970<sup>10</sup>.

Unfortunately for communication studies in Croatia, Lazarsfeld was at that time no longer involved in media research, and public opinion research never got connected to a broader sociology of communication in Croatia. Supek was very much in favor of international scientific cooperation (Lažnjak, 2013), and chaired (among other international activities) an *ad hoc* group on “Participation, self-management and workers control” at the 1978 International Sociological Association conference in Uppsala, where several other sessions were chaired by Jürgen Habermas, Clifford Geertz, S.M. Lipset, and Elihu Katz (at that time affiliated with the Communications Institute at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem), who chaired a section on mass media and social change (ISA 1976). Sociologists involved in the study of media and communication in Croatia did not migrate to (or create) departments of communication, as was the case in the USA and elsewhere in the West (Waisbord, 2014). The Yugoslavian Sociological Association had a section on Mass Communication and Public Opinion, but more information on its work was not

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<sup>8</sup> For more about this movement, see the book edited by Margit Rosen: *New Tendencies and Bit International*, 1961-1973, ZKM, Karlsruhe, MIT Press 2011. The journal *Bit International* (1961-1973) published articles by Croatian and international authors on Computers and visual art, inter alia. Media art collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, <http://www.msu.hr/#/hr/19/> accessed October 8, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Gerson S. Sher, *Praxis : Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977. Danijel Mrvelj. *Ljeviji od lijevih: opozicija jugoslavenskome režimu u časopisu 'Praxis'*. Diplomski rad, Filozofski fakultet, Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Rudi Supek contributed the following studies in the Columbia project “Several Hypotheses in Connection with the Social Origin and Functional Characteristics of the Yugoslav Political Elite. Rudi Supek, 22 pp.; 6 Power Structure of Statist and Self-Governing Socialism. Rudi Supek, 25 pp.; 7 Democratization and its Effect on Elite Group Relations. Rudi Supek, 38 pp.” [http://findingaids.cul.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-rb/ldpd\\_5012632/dsc/3](http://findingaids.cul.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-rb/ldpd_5012632/dsc/3)

available. Public opinion research was established in many socialist countries in Europe, but (obviously) not used for political opinion polling.

Pavao Novosel had a PhD in sociology, but his original training in psychology is always highlighted as his main disciplinary home. He also cooperated with US scholars, and co-organized the famous session on democratic changes in the media at the 1990 IAMCR conference in Bled (Slovenia), which took place in a room filled to overflowing (this was the first international conference attended by the first author of this chapter, as graduate student and junior researcher at IRMO). Novosel co-edited one of the early books on media democratization in the region (Paletz, Jakubowitz, Novosel, 1995), and organized yearly discussions on the communication discipline in late 1980s and early 1990s. The absence of a substantial academic research contribution and agenda, of a research team and of institutional support probably contributed to the failure of the project for a “communication science” at that time.

Research at the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) in Zagreb from the 1980s was later institutionalized in its Department for Culture and Communication (1989), and was focused on communication and development, international communication, communication and technology. Since 1989, the focus has been broadened to include media pluralism, media and cultural policy, and new media and digital culture. IRMO was one of the few (or only) (other) places of organized academic communication research in Croatia, supported by UNESCO, and starting in the 1990s also supported by the Council of Europe.

After *Informatologia Yugoslavica* which was more oriented to the information sciences, but included also communication topics (established in Zagreb in 1969), *Medijska istraživanja* (Media research) established in 1995 was the first academic journal specifically devoted to media and communication in Croatia. Today 7 journals cover the field in social sciences and humanities.<sup>11</sup> Two professional communication associations are co-publishers of academic communication journals and are not recognized for other contributions to the field, while their activities or membership are not transparent. The Croatian Sociological Association (established in 1914) established a section on media sociology in 2013. Very few scholars from Croatia participate in ICA, ECREA, or IAMCR conferences, and although scientists dealing with communication participate in associations of other social scientific disciplines (primarily sociology and political science), this is another indicator that communication as a discipline is still not coherently institutionalized in Croatia.

### **Research agendas and paradigmatic approaches**

In art and literature Croatia had distinctly different development from that in Central and Eastern Europe, and from other republics in the federal Yugoslavia. As early as the 1950s, its writers and artists had discarded the Soviet “reflection theory of knowledge” in philosophy and social theory, and social realism in literature as well as in visual arts, and they developed internationally acknowledged abstract art (examples

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<sup>11</sup> The journal *Medijska istraživanja* (Media research), now published by Croatian Studies of the University of Zagreb, was established in 1995, the same year as *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis* (Croatian film annual) published by the Croatian Association of Film Critics and Hrvatska Kinoteka. The journal *Mediaanali* (Media Annals) was established by the University of Dubrovnik in 2007. *Medijske studije* (Media studies) is published since 2010 by the Faculty of political science, University of Zagreb and the Croatian communication association. 2012 saw the establishment of two new journals: *In Medias Res*, devoted to media philosophy, published by the new North University, and the *Media, Culture and Public Relations*, published by The Croatian association of communication science, the publisher of *Informatologia* since 1990.

are Exat & Nove tendencije<sup>12</sup>). The social sciences in Yugoslavia were open to non-Marxist approaches; these non-Marxist approaches were taught at universities and were tolerant “towards many empirical studies that were inspired by such, especially narrow or middle-ranged theories” (Prpić, 2013: 167).

The openness of Yugoslav universities to international science enabled study programs inclined more toward intellectual currents from Western Europe and the USA. Western European and American communication scholars came as guest lecturers, and students had free access to original American and Western European literature (Milosavljević, 2009: 503), although economic (and not political) constraints that made it difficult to keep up with international scholarship persisted into the 1990s.. In contrast to Central and Eastern European communication science, which was influenced by German *Zeitungswissenschaft*, communication scientists in Yugoslavia tried to build the foundation of communication science on established paradigms from the USA and Western Europe. The beginnings of communication science in Yugoslavia were based largely on theories developed in United States (Splichal, 1989a: 343).

Concerning the paradigmatic parentage of the Yugoslav and Croatian communication discipline in the 1965-1988 period, apart from Marx, Habermas was the most cited foreign author, followed by McLuhan, Adorno, McQuail, Lazarsfeld, Merton, Bourdieu, Katz, Lasswell and Schramm. The list of authors “covers” four paradigms: classical Marxism, critical theory, individual and structural functionalism, and “eclecticism” (i.e. McLuhan) (Splichal, 1989b:27-31). The frequency of citation grew for critical theory towards the end of the period and dropped for the “eclectics” and the functionalists, while the Marxist approaches stagnated (Splichal, 1989b:30). For comparison, in Poland, only after 1989, which was considered an intellectual and ideological break-point in the field, were Polish communication scholars able to discover the classics in American communication research like Berelson, Hovland, Lasswell, Lazarsfeld, McLuhan, Schramm and others to inspire the newly developing discipline (Peplinski, 2010: 6).

Peruško and Vozab (2013, 2014) trace the intellectual history of the communication discipline in Croatia through a content analysis of journal articles (cf. Splichal, 1989a, 1989b, Potter et al. 1993) dealing with communication and media topics in social science and media journals published between 1969 and 2011.<sup>13</sup> The research aimed to explain trends of growth of the discipline, methodological and theoretical characteristics as well as prevailing paradigmatic approaches in the published scientific articles in Croatia. The content analysis was guided by Potter et al (1993) and adjusted to suit the Croatian context.

In order to trace the main theoretical approaches to communication and media in the whole historical period, we simplified the division of sociological approaches/paradigms by Burrell & Morgan (1979) and implemented in

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<sup>12</sup> On EXAT i.e. Experimental Atelier, see [http://monoskop.org/Exat\\_51](http://monoskop.org/Exat_51) and on New Tendencies see [http://darkofritz.net/text/Fritz.NT\\_oris%2054.pdf](http://darkofritz.net/text/Fritz.NT_oris%2054.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> The sample included 481 articles (more than 50% were published after 2000), constructed from all full original articles published in odd years, dealing with communication and media topics in the most important social scientific journals: *Naše teme* and *Kulturni radnik* (both discontinued in 1990), *Politička misao*, *Revija za sociologiju*, *Društvena istraživanja*, and *Informatologia*, and all full original articles in the academic journals devoted exclusively to media and communication studies (all of them established after 1990) - *Medijska istraživanja*, *Medianali*, and *Medijske studije*, between 1969 and 2011. Data were analyzed with SPSS with mainly descriptive statistics. For details see Peruško, Vozab, 2013, 2014.

communication by Rosengren (1983). We thus defined one approach as the critical approach (including in our analysis both the radical structuralist and radical humanist approaches). The critical approach thus includes classic Marxist approaches, the Frankfurt school, and British cultural studies. The second approach is the social scientific approach formed by those theories where the regulative approach to society is found in concert with the objective approach to science. The same regulative approach to society, which is combined with the subjective approach to science, forms the interpretative paradigm. This approach is mainly found in humanistic approaches, often in relations to analysis of texts. Theories mentioned in analyzed articles were categorized into these three paradigmatic approaches.

In the Croatian communication and media journal articles published between 1969-2011, 24% of articles mentioned altogether 144 different theories from the field of communication and social sciences, and 22 of them were mentioned three or more times. They are: Critical theory (18), Agenda-setting (8), Public sphere (8), Cultural studies (8), the Mathematical theory of communication (6), the Media systems model by Hallin and Mancini (5), Theories of media effects (5), Four theories of the press (4), Functionalist theories (4), Cybernetic theory of communication (4), Systems theory (4), Limited effects theory (4). and Active audiences, Feminist theory, Framing, Frankfurt school, Hegemony, Hermeneutics, McLuhan's theory of media, Semiotics, Symbolic interactionism and Cultivation theory.

Although the most commonly mentioned theory in the 1969-2011 period is critical theory—composed of critical theory of the Frankfurt school, Marxism, public sphere theory, cultural studies, and feminist theory—the prevailing paradigmatic approach is social scientific: 61 % , and over 70% in the 1990 -2011 period (a simultaneous decline is found in the critical approaches which reappear only after 2000).

The least common approach is the interpretative humanistic paradigm, which only appeared in the 1980s, including in our sample the theory of the active audiences, hermeneutics and semiotics. After 2000, only a handful of articles employed this approach.

The number of articles dealing with media and communication during the observed period doubled in each decade (except the 1990s). *Naše teme* and *Kulturni radnik* published the majority of articles in 1969 and in the 1970s, many of them focused on mass culture from a critical perspective. *Informatologia* (established in 1969) came to dominate the published production in the 1980s, while after 2000 new specialized media journals published the largest share of communication and media research. Two sociological and one political science journal proved to be comparatively marginal (cf. Peruško & Vozab, 2014).

While empirical social science was discouraged in many socialist countries, recognition of the usefulness of “information” in delegate decision-making encouraged in Yugoslavia a socialist type of administrative research in the field of communication, supported by public funding (Splichal, 1989a, 1989b). The first (sociological) survey was published in 1936, and surveys were conducted also during socialism on a regular basis, for purposes of academic research. The first empirical research in communication was a kind of a “socialist version of administrative research” (Splichal, 1989: 343). Communication science was “legitimized as productive science” as it studies “information for decision making” (Splichal, 1989a: 343).

In the overall examined period, Croatian articles that report empirical research are in the minority (26 % vs. 19% in the Yugoslav sample, Splichal, 1989b:23).

Topics that are most common in empirical research are message content, audience analysis and production of messages. Empirical research was in most part quantitative (69%) with survey and content analysis the most commonly used methods (46% of empirical articles used survey and 21% content analysis). Qualitative research develops as a substantial factor only after 2000, within a greater plurality of methodological approaches including mixed methods, signaling new methodological advances. This shift in methodological approaches was also seen in post-socialist Poland where the change was from content analyses and historical research towards field research, statistical analyses and linguistic analysis (Peplinski, 2010: 7).

The most frequently researched topic in the past fifty years of communication research in Croatia is political communication (13%), which became predominant during the 1980s. In 1969 and the early 1970s, the critique of mass culture and cultural industry was the most prominent topic, while the areas of message production, interpersonal communication and regulation of communication did not appear yet. After 2000 research topics are more evenly distributed in the published articles, with the least interest in audience studies (5 %) and the most interest in production of messages and public relations and marketing communication. The emergence of specialised media journals with high interest in journalism and development of public relations as a profession and programs of university study can perhaps explain dominance of these topics in the latest period.

Political communication is the most studied topic in the social scientific and critical paradigmatic approaches, while interpretative/humanistic articles focus predominantly on message content and public relations and marketing communication. The social scientific approach is found also in studies on media effects, interpersonal communication and production of messages.

Among the comparable accounts from other East European countries is the content analysis of the 1960-2013 production of the first Polish academic journal for journalism and mass communication *Zeszyty Prazonawce* (Media Research Issues) (Filas & Planeta, 2014). The analysis showed 11 main areas of research concentration: media history as an especially well covered topic, institutional and organizational dimensions of press research, empirical and scientific media research, public opinion and social effects of media (especially during the 1970s and 80s), international communication, cultural approaches to language and media content, political communication (especially in the 1980s), media markets (in the 1990s), broadcasting (starting in 1990s), and media regulation (Filas & Planeta, 2014: 128-133).

### ***The New History of Communication and Media Study in Central and Eastern Europe***

What is the contribution of the democratically repositioned field to the broader disciplinary knowledge about media and communication? Legitimization of the discipline needs “strong academic institutions with a rich culture of scholarship, internationally acclaimed and accomplished faculty, and a tradition of publication in the top international journals and conferences” (Banerjee, 2009:168-169). While this could hardly be found in any Central or Eastern European country prior to 1989, and international visibility of Eastern European scholarship is still rather low, recent developments are exciting.

We can identify two broad research agendas that define the post-socialist field in Eastern Europe and contribute to the wider disciplinary knowledge. First is certainly the early one related to the issues of democratic transformations of media systems in

relation to the changes in the political, social and finally the cultural contexts, brought about by the specific institutional context of democratic transition that necessarily provided an impetus for research. The primary focus was on the relationship of the media to the political realm, including the state, which was during socialism conflated with the field of politics. Attention was in the beginning focused universally on freedom of expression and the new legal regulatory frameworks for media independence and autonomy, including issues of journalism professionalism and journalistic ethics (Paletz, Jakubowitz, Novosel, 1995; Sparks, 1998), and later on issues of media pluralism and market diversity, media systems, and comparative media research (Petković, 2004; Sukosd & Bajomi-Lazar, 2003; Jakubowicz & Sukosd, 2009; Klimkiewicz, 2010; Peruško & Popović, 2009; Downey & Mihelj, 2012; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012; Peruško, 2012a).

The normative dimension and its evaluation was very pronounced, as the changes in media structures and practices were evaluated in relation to western standards of democratic media as well as the implementability of western theories to eastern European media transformations (Splichal, 1995; Downing, 1996; Sparks, 1998; Gross, 2002). Elena Vartanova describes the popularity in Russia in the 1990s of the 1950's American best seller "Four theories of the press" (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956) as the main guide for the media transformation from the normative "Soviet media theory" to a democratic one (Vartanova, 2009). In the first decade of transition in the 1990s, research and media developments in Russia followed these same lines, until the retrograde tendencies and democratic reversals again caused a divergence (cf. Vartanova, 2009).

The second strand of more recent research finds researchers engaging the issue of the legacy/impact of socialism in the field of media and communication. The European (Post)Socialist Television History Network was created in 2013 by researchers from Eastern and Western European universities.<sup>14</sup> Sabina Mihelj at Loughborough University, UK, leads a project on socialist television and a group at the University of Pula, Croatia, has created a research centre on the study of socialism and conducted research into socialist consumer culture<sup>15</sup> (Duda, 2005, 2010). Peruško (2013) is engaged in comparative analysis of post-socialist media systems with attention also to the pre-socialist and socialist decades (cf. on socialist television history in Croatia Peruško & Čuvalo, 2014).

After 2000, research topics completely new to the region are being developed. One such strand is audience studies, which were almost non-existent in the Central and Eastern Europe, except in instrumental terms of market research (cf. Reifová & Pavličková, 2013).<sup>16</sup>

Although scholars from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Russia took part in the IAMCR during socialism (two conferences were organized in then Yugoslavia, in 1966 in Herceg Novi and 1990 in Bled, and other East European countries: Leipzig in East Germany, 1974; Warsaw, Poland in 1978; Prague,

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<sup>14</sup> The journal *View: European Journal of European Television History & Culture* published a special issue on Television histories in Post-socialist Europe (Vol. 5, No. 3, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Socialist popular culture has also been the topic of two recent special issue of journals (*Media Research*, no. 1, 2010, *Narodna umjetnost: Croatian Journal of Ethnology and Folklore Research*, 47, 1 2010), both edited by Sabina Mihelj and Reana Senjković.

<sup>16</sup> A special issue of the Czech journal *Mediální Studia* (Media studies, No.2, 2013) was devoted to post-socialist media audiences, a topic very much neglected in Eastern European media research (Reifová, Pavličková, 2013).

Czechoslovakia in 1984), full internationalization came only after 1990. Internationalization of Eastern European scientific cooperation and the coherences of its research agenda is also promoted by EU funded COST projects.<sup>17</sup> The Central and East-European Network was established as part of European Communication Research Association (ECREA) in 2010,<sup>18</sup> Central and Eastern European Media and Communication Conference (CEECON), established in 2008, is another important institution promoting research coherence and international recognition of the field.

Recently created CEE Journals Database aims to increase visibility and sharing of published research from the region.<sup>19</sup> The first internationally “arrived” (i.e. with impact factor from the Thomson Reuters data-base) journal from this region, *Javnost/The Public* (created in 1994), edited by Slavko Splichal at the University of Ljubljana (to be published by Routledge beginning in 2015), is not exclusively regionally oriented, but is open to regional authors and is one of the most international of internationally oriented communication journals in terms of authorship (Lauff, 2005). The *Central European Journal of Communication*, edited by Boguslaw Dobek-Ostrowska at the University of Wroclaw, is taking on a role of the main academic journal in the field in the Central and Eastern European region, part of its popularity no doubt stemming from western disciplinary journals’ relative lack of interest in Eastern European topics.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter we set out to describe the history of the field of media and communication studies in Croatia, a post-socialist new democracy in Central Europe. The field of communication and media studies in Croatia derived from the humanities, mainly the critical theory approaches to mass culture, but by the end of the 1960s, it had developed a predominantly social scientific approach. This is comparable to the historical development of communication studies in many countries in the continental Western Europe. In spite of some attempts to promote the “press science” in the 1990s, this never became the main theoretical framework of the field which from the 1980s showed some signs of a “socialist administrative” research looking into the functioning of political (“delegate”) information systems. The fields’ formal institutionalization in information and communication science, which absorbed mass communication, communication science, journalism studies, public relations, organizational communication, obscured other existing multi disciplinary approaches that have not so far been recognized and cumulative in a discipline-forming way.

We have here demonstrated the fallacy of the received history of communication study in Central and Eastern Europe, which was not restricted to cooperation within the Soviet zone of influence, even in the countries of the Warsaw pact, and that various topics that went well beyond the myth of “Soviet media theory” had been researched well before the end of the socialist era. Institutional differences provided different conditions for the development of communication and media research as well as for other social sciences, humanities and arts. This underlines the need for further nationally and transnationally oriented research as a basis for

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<sup>17</sup> COST project *East of West: Setting a New Central and Eastern European Media Research Agenda* ([http://www.cost.eu/domains\\_actions/isch/Actions/A30](http://www.cost.eu/domains_actions/isch/Actions/A30)) (2005-2009). The COST ISO 906 project (2009-2015) Transforming Audiences, Transforming societies contributed significantly to the furthering audience studies in the Eastern part of Europe.

<sup>18</sup> (<http://www.ecrea.eu/divisions/network/id/20>).

<sup>19</sup> ([http://ceecom2014wroclaw.pl/?page\\_id=593](http://ceecom2014wroclaw.pl/?page_id=593)),

comparative studies of histories of the establishment of communication and media studies in this part of the world.

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