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The evolution of capabilities of monitoring mediascapes in 14 European countries

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In the 21st century, European media, journalism and communication (JMC) research has led to a plethora of studies that address various challenges and developments in contemporary news media. Both these developments and their research bear the traits of the contexts and conditions of the previous periods, mainly of the 20th century. The advancement of research institutions and structures, and even more the technological innovations (especially the internet and digitalisation), exhibited a remarkable acceleration that has gathered speed in the 21st century. A diachronic look at the development of these research structures and conditions in the context of significant shifts, as well as continuities and disruptions in the 14 EU countries under examination helps to explain and assess their capability of monitoring the news media's transformations. The previous chapters of this book have defined and substantiated the importance, necessity and aims of examining the capability of monitoring mediascapes (CMM). This chapter endeavours to explore the monitoring capabilities of 14 EU countries from a diachronic perspective using comparative qualitative meta-analysis (see Chapter 3). The main categories for this analysis are the evolution of the field of JMC, the institutionalisation of the discipline, and the funding and governance of the research activities in these countries, which are explained in the respective sub-chapters.

All the 14 countries investigated (see the introductory chapter of the book) are members of the European Union. They represent a range, from wealthy to less affluent nations, with a variation in both the quality of democracy and their rank in the Human Development Index as well as minimal differences in the proportion of broadband households (see Table 1 in Appendix). Additionally, they encompass a spectrum from very small (Estonia with 1.3 million inhabitants) to very large (Germany with 84 million inhabitants) countries. From the perspective of this book, it is important to know their ability to invest in research and development

(R&D). This is not only a matter of the size and wealth of a country, but also of the quality of democracy and political and civic culture. A small country could invest more in R&D than a larger and wealthier country, as OECD R&D statistics show (e.g., Sweden spends proportionally more on R&D than Germany).¹

In addition, history plays a role. In our 14 country sample, six countries – Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and part of Germany (i.e. what was the GDR) – were parts of the Eastern bloc under Soviet control, while Estonia and Latvia were annexed and occupied by the Soviet Union for nearly 50 years. Croatia, in contrast, was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), a non-aligned socialist state that broke away from the Soviet sphere of influence in 1948. Unlike Austria, Germany, Italy and Sweden, the former members of the Eastern bloc did not enjoy the freedom of research for most of the period from the end of World War II to 1989. Greece also had a period of political repression and censorship during the military dictatorship that was in place between 1967 and 1974. All the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries in our sample share a common critical turning point that occurred between 1989 and 1991, i.e. the collapse of both the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. When comparing the 14 countries today, various similarities and differences can be found that impact their JMC research and monitoring capabilities – the main theme of the current book.

INSTITUTIONALISATION OF JMC RESEARCH IN THE 14 COUNTRIES

A significant condition for any research area to achieve the status of independent discipline is the institutionalisation of the field. The most important aspects here are organised scholarly activities and research, networks, education, funding models and the existence of scholarly journals and professional associations. Along with professionalisation and the aspirations of journalism to achieve public recognition and an independent position among other professions, interest in examining journalism's specific features and functions emerged. There are always 'founding fathers', whose works bring some phenomena, topics, or interest areas into the limelight. Research interest in the news media of individual scholars appeared sporadically before any research institution was established in the sample countries. One of the earliest known journalism researchers in Europe was the German scholar Robert Eduard Prutz (1816–1872), who in 1845 published the first history of German journalism (Hanitzsch, 2005). The first research and education institutions appear only when a critical mass of qualified scholars had stepped into the field. In several European countries (including for example, Aus-

¹ The percentage of Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D in 2020 in Sweden was 3.49, and in Germany 3.13.

<https://www.oecd.org/innovation/inno/researchanddevelopmentstatisticsrds.htm>

tria, Germany, Estonia and Poland in our selection), the institutionalisation of journalism and news media research started during the interwar period, accelerating and broadening remarkably from the 1960s onwards along with general economic growth and the diversification and expansion of mass media in Europe. For the CEE countries, the political turbulence of the 1989–1991 period and the consequent democratic transition opened new horizons politically, economically and culturally. The concurrent transformation of media environments in these countries, as well as their scholarly analysis and interpretation, did not follow the same patterns because their research traditions and conditions differed remarkably. Therefore, when comparing and assessing the countries' capability of monitoring mediascapes, examining the length and nature of the research traditions becomes significant.

Continuity and disruption in the development of the academic study of journalism and news media also have an impact on the capability of monitoring. Relatively stable political, economic and societal conditions support sustainability of the research tradition and practice. Political ruptures can remove freedom of expression but also academic freedom, and bring about censorship, which makes independent research impossible. On the other hand, as the experience of the 1989–1991 political turning point demonstrated, the opening of new and favourable perspectives for all fields of life can occur. Some countries in our 14-country selection have gone through several ruptures, all of which have left their footprints on the ways the media and journalism have developed and how that process has been studied and understood. We can also talk about disciplinary ruptures, which mainly come with political shifts but can also happen for other reasons (e.g., change of funding policy, or change of research agenda). A disciplinary rupture occurs when scholarly attention makes a turn, i.e. the research interest in certain topics or sectors disappears and research turns to something different, mainly to a more topical issue. Viewing monitoring capability with these aspects in mind helps not only to record the acquired knowledge but also to notice the gaps in this knowledge.

ESTABLISHED STATUS OF JMC STUDIES – GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND SWEDEN

The issue of disciplinary identity initially emerged in Germany, where the first journalism research institutions appeared in the early 20th century.² According to Kreutler and Fengler (2022), throughout the 1920s, several institutions were founded for studying journalism under the label of *Zeitungskunde* or

² Karl Bücher (1847–1930) established the first University institute for *Zeitungskunde* (newspaper studies) at Leipzig University in 1916, “which had a structural impact on the discipline’s development across the continent” (Wiedemann et al., 2018, p.11).

Zeitungswissenschaft (Newspaper Studies). A complex debate about a new term that would include the content of media other than newspapers resulted in the creation of the term *Publizistik* for this kind of scholarly activity. The term became widely used for newly founded or re-established institutes in the field after World War II in West Germany. The discipline faced two destructive phases of political pressure and ideological influence: first under the National Socialist regime and then in East Germany. The period after World War II saw not only the foundation of two separate German states, but also a complete reconfiguration of all types of media activity. In the GDR (German Democratic Republic, East Germany), the journalism faculty at Leipzig University clearly followed socialist ideology. It was closed during the reunification phase and re-established in 1993. In the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany, West Germany) in the 1960s, a turn towards understanding the discipline as an empirically oriented social science took place, identified as *Kommunikationswissenschaft* (Communication Studies). Over the following decades, the discipline diversified and grew significantly. In parallel to *Kommunikationswissenschaft*, a more philological approach, *Medienwissenschaft* (Media Studies), developed, usually placed within the Humanities. Although there is some exchange between the two fields, two separate research associations exist, which the German research funding body, the DFG, treats as separate entities.

German reunification brought another reconfiguration of the media system – and monitoring systems – to the ‘new’ federal states (*Bundesländer*) of the former East Germany. The increase in university professorships from a total of seven in 1970 to 120 in 2012, working in more than 30 academic institutions, is a clear illustration of the development of the field. Simultaneously, the number of researchers grew along with the emergence of new research networks, funding structures and new research institutions. The DGPuK (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft*/German Communication Association) estimates the size of the research community today as totalling 19 thematic divisions with around 1,300 members. The multitude of academic, non-academic and institutional research centres and commercial media monitoring companies demonstrates a considerable monitoring and data gathering capability. In effect, the statutory commission tasked with monitoring concentration in the media sector (*KEK*) can base its reports on scores of different data sources. On the other hand, however, the federal administrative structure of 16 federal states (*Bundesländer*) makes it harder to get a structured and representative picture of the studies and existing data on the overall German media landscape because of its fragmentation and decentralised governance.

The varied landscape of JMC research in Germany is also reflected in numerous academic journals, such as *Publizistik*, *Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft*, *Studies in Communication and Media*, *Global Media Journal* (German edition) and several more specialised journals that focus on specific aspects of the fields. In professional discourse in the media field, the two journalists’ unions (*DJV* and *dju* as a part of *ver.di*) and private publishers’ associations (*BDZV*, *VDZ* and *Vaunet*,

which is mainly for newspapers, magazines and audiovisual media) are especially visible and relevant.

In Austria, compared to Germany, we see a commensurately late institutionalisation of journalism, media and communication studies. The first department of communication was founded as early as 1939 at the University of Vienna. However, the evolution of communication studies from a historical and philological discipline to an empirical social science took until the 1970s, which can be characterised as a period of consolidation for Austrian media and communication research (Eberwein et al., 2022). The advent of two new academic institutions – the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Salzburg (1969) and the Department of Media and Communications at the University of Klagenfurt (1971) – accelerated this development. These three universities are also the leading centres of journalism research in the country, with numerous national and international projects. The University of Klagenfurt and the Austrian Academy of Science jointly operate the Institute for Comparative Media and Communication Studies (CMC), which focuses largely on international research (e.g., through regular contributions to the Media Pluralism Monitor). Academic journals in Austrian media and communication studies (e.g., *MedienJournal*, *Medienimpulse*, *medien & zeit*, among others) primarily focus on university-based research.

In Austria, the discipline is well established and the data and information gathering on the mediascape is coordinated. The governing authorities – the Austrian Communications Authority (KommAustria) and *Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs-GmbH (RTR)* –, as well as the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) release regular reports on audio-visual media usage, various analyses of audience research and programming, and financial statements, etc. In addition, various non-academic research organisations, centres and non-profit associations, such as the Research Institute for the Law of Electronic Mass Media (REM), the Interdisciplinary Media Ethics Centre (IMEC) and the Austrian Press Council are involved in media monitoring and research reporting in various formats. Initiative Quality in Journalism (IQ) is an association of media researchers and practitioners that organises regular events with a focus on the quality and accountability of Austrian journalism. The commercial media is mostly involved in market-oriented audience research, although their data and related studies are not always publicly available. However, data from key sources such as Media Analysis, Radiotest, Teletest, or Austrian Web Analysis, are often used for secondary analysis by academic researchers. As an attempt to synchronise single-media studies and live up to the realities of cross-media usage in the present, the Media Server study has been developed as an all-media survey in Austria that covers print media, television, radio, internet and outdoor advertising. The first survey was conducted in 2014–2015 and repeated in 2019. In sum, JMC studies in Austria can be described as a field generally acknowledged by the authorities and academia, despite its comparably late institutionalisation; its advancement is secured both administratively and financially.

In Sweden, social and cultural background factors have had a stronger effect on the development of media and communication studies than in any other Mediadecom country. As with Austria, journalism and media studies in Sweden have developed within a stable and secure environment without any fatal disruptions. Today, media and communication, as well as journalism studies as the acknowledged disciplines are taught and researched in 14 Swedish universities.

Being the first country in the world to include a Freedom of Information Act in its constitution, in 1766, freedom of expression and information has been the lasting framework for the development of Swedish journalism and media studies. Along with the other Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland), Sweden shares the tradition of viewing a fully functional system for the provision of news and information as a responsibility of the state that cannot be left to the market. Therefore, the wide-ranging freedom of the media is complemented by rather extensive regulation on private broadcasters and advertisers, and by support for public broadcasting as well as broad support for newspaper journalism. Thus, the authorities are committed to continuously monitoring the development of the media sector, often in collaboration with other actors in the media environment (Berglez et al., 2022).

The beginning of the institutionalisation of media and communication studies in Sweden falls approximately into the same period as in Austria, i.e. in the 1960s, when the expansion of mass media led to greater demand for analysis, education and critical reflection (Hyvönen et al., 2018; Springer, 2021). Since the 1970s, the University of Gothenburg has been one of the leading institutes for media and communication studies. Associated with the University, the NORDICOM research centre was established in the 1970s. NORDICOM collects and publishes statistics, books, bibliographies and reports on various aspects of media, as well as the leading Nordic media and communication research journal *Nordicom Review*. It also conducts the annual Media Barometer survey on media use and research.

Within the past 30 years, certain diversification of the research traditions and orientations in media and journalism studies have taken shape. For example, Stockholm University has developed a strong culture studies orientation, while at Lund University, media research is largely oriented to the relationship between the media and democracy, as well as gender and media; Karlstad University is known for its projects on various aspects of journalism; and Uppsala is known for its focus on ICTs, digitisation and internetisation (Berglez et al., 2022). The universities collaborate on various national and international projects. Springer (2021) estimates that around 250 scholars are currently active in the field, with approximately 200 of them being members of the Swedish Association for Media and Communication Research (FSMK).

A diverse range of other actors is involved in media monitoring and studies, including government authorities (especially the Swedish Press and Broadcasting Authority MPRT), commercial monitoring enterprises, trade associations and

NGOs. Most of their data and reports are publicly available, as legally guaranteed access to information is considered among Swedish civic rights and is part of Swedish culture. The multitude of monitoring actors who are provided with sufficient economic resources produce data and knowledge on all aspects of media development, which demonstrates the excellent monitoring capability the country possesses. However, Berglez et al. (2022) in their report on Sweden's media research capability point out the risk of data overproduction, especially if the collected data is "not innately useful either for the media sector or for wider society".

In Sweden, funds for media research primarily come from the Swedish Research Council, *Riksbankens Jubileumsfond*, *Östersjöstiftelsen*, *Forte*, *Formas*, *Vinnova*, *Wallenberg Foundations*, *Hamrin-stiftelsen*, *Anderstiftelsen*, and EU-funded programs such as Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe. Despite a variety of funding sources, media and communication scholars in Sweden often perceive their discipline as being disadvantaged in relation to more established research fields, such as political science. Analysis by Peter Berglez et al. (2022) also demonstrates that it is difficult to estimate the importance and extent of externally funded research in relation to the available internal resources of each university, which is usually embedded in employment.

DISCIPLINARY FRAGMENTATION – ITALY AND GREECE

Another noticeable trait in the disciplinary development is a certain fragmentation of the field in some countries. For instance, although the institutionalisation of JMC in Italy also goes back to 1960 (when the first journalism and communication programme was founded at the University of Perugia), subsequent development did not lead to the discipline achieving an established status (in contrast to Austria) or to the acknowledgment of its autonomy (in contrast to Sweden). According to the *Quacquarelli Symonds* ranking list (*QS*, 2023), there are currently 42 universities in Italy offering 59 JMC programmes. The programmes focused specifically on journalism and digital media studies and research is dispersed among 12 universities, the University of Siena, the University of Padua, the American University of Rome, the University of Milan, and Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, in Milan, among them. Most of the JMC research is conducted in the Universities, which also participate in international projects such as CONCISE on science communication, Media Pluralism Monitor, V-Dem, the European Media Ownership Monitor (EurOMo) and others.

Splendore et al. (2022) are critical of the data offered by the market monitoring units of the media arguing that they are often poor in terms of available variables, which hinders cross-data analysis. In addition, although various independent Italian organisations or professional associations can be considered reliable in this respect, they offer data that are often only useful to themselves, thus not contributing to the advancement of the field. They also argue that there is parallel data

production, but very little cooperation and communication between the media industry and academia.

The three main coordinating institutions related to research on JMC are the Communications Regulatory Authority (AGCOM), which oversees the General Public Broadcasting Service and the media landscape in general, the National Research Program (PNR) and the Italian Ministry of the University and Research. The three main coordinating institutions are also the main funders of JMC research through various initiatives and programmes.

Splendore et al. (2022) argue there are many researchers and that extensive research is conducted in Italy, but the results are rarely made available to a broad range of media specialists and practitioners. Furthermore, there is insufficient coordination between governing institutions and universities and other institutions that collect data and conduct research. This makes it difficult to get an adequate picture of the current situation in JMC research. As is the case in some other countries (e.g., Czechia, Estonia), academia has very little collaboration with the practical field of journalism and media.

Italy has several academic journals dedicated to media communication, but only seven are indexed in Scopus: the *Journal of Science Communication*, *Qwerty*, *Comunicazione Politica*, *Comunicazioni Sociali*, *Reti Saperi Linguaggi*, *Visual Ethnography*, and *Languages Cultures Mediation*, among which none specialises in journalism or media studies.

A degree of disciplinary fragmentation can also be viewed in the case of Greece. Psychogiopoulou and Kandyla (2022), point out the heterogeneity of the research and data sources available, while a comprehensive and cohesive approach to data collection across public and private bodies is missing. Next to academic research, public bodies and independent authorities collect media-related data on aspects under their remit. Professional associations and market research bodies also engage in data collection activities. Different aspects of the state of the media are regularly reviewed by international non-profit organisations (e.g., Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders, etc.), while European and international surveys also cover Greece (e.g., Eurobarometer, Pisa).

The first university department in the field of JMC – the Department of Communication, Media, and Culture of Panteion University – was founded in the early 1990s. Other notable departments include those at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the University of Western Macedonia, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

For the Greek Research and Innovation Institute (ELIDEK), established in 2016, media and communication studies are still not a specific discipline as no public funding mechanism has so far been created. Many Greek media and communication scholars conduct research within European and other international projects. The National Documentation Centre offers online access to research produced by the Greek academic community in the field and hosts journals of

interest. Greece has had an academic journal dedicated solely to communication and journalism, *Zitimata Epikoinonias (Communication Issues)*, but it ceased publication in 2015. However, there are some journals in other fields that address media-related issues, such as *Law of Technology and Communication*.

Greece is a latecomer to the field of journalism and media studies, which partly explains the current status of the discipline and lack of specialised journals. Independent scholarly work in Greece experienced a critical rupture during the 1967–1974 period of the military dictatorship, when a lack of academic freedom, as well as other democratic freedoms, fatally restricted the scale and scope of academic research.

FROM THE SOCIALIST PAST TO THE CAPITALIST PRESENT – (RE)BUILDING JMC STUDIES IN THE CEE COUNTRIES

The transition to free media and the capitalist market with private ownership was a significant juncture that influenced media development in CEE countries from the early 1990s onwards. Adopting media laws and transforming state broadcasting into public service broadcasting were the most critical media reforms during the 1990s. These reforms were part of a much broader range of political, economic and social transformations that had to break the old structures and change the mentality of the people. On this journey, CEE countries faced various challenges and moved forward at different speeds. During the transition period, for journalism and communication studies in CEE countries, the initial ‘reform’ was to re-define and re-orientate research according to the changed circumstances. The only places where journalism was taught (and within limits researched) before the 1990s were universities, which had to follow communist ideology. Social sciences and humanities were politicised.

An exception here is the former Yugoslavia. Slavko Splichal’s analysis (2020) of 32 Yugoslav social science journals between 1964 and 1986 showed that the discipline drew on a variety of schools of thought, including critical theory, functionalism and “productive inclusivism”. This paradigmatic parentage was firmly ‘Western’, with little use or knowledge of Soviet media theory during this time. Therefore, of the nine studied CEE countries, Croatia has the longest tradition of media research, with social-scientific approaches predominating in the field. The discipline’s institutionalisation began in 1969 with the introduction of journalism courses at the University of Zagreb. Here the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences introduced empirical study of public opinion in the early 1960s, and *Informatologia Yugoslavica* (today under the title *Informatologia*), founded in 1969, was the first academic journal in the broader field in Croatia. After living through the 1991–1995 War of Independence and its consequences, academic scholarship revived relatively quickly. Already since 2000 Croatia has experienced growth in academic departments related to media and

communication. Analysis of the Croatian corpus of published research between 2000 and 2020 identified more than 400 publications on journalism, the legal and ethical domains of the media, media usage and competencies. Several universities offer undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in journalism, communication, and media (e.g., the Universities of Zagreb, Rijeka, Zadar, Dubrovnik and Sjever). The two main research centres in Croatia are the Department for Culture and Communication at the Institute for Development and International Relations and the Centre for Media and Communication Research (*CIM*) at the University of Zagreb. Croatia has numerous NGOs conducting media-related research. Notable organisations include *GONG* (Citizens Organise to Monitor Elections), *DKMK* (Society for Media Culture), the Centre for Democracy and Law Miko Tripalo, and the Croatian Law Centre (Peruško & Vozab, 2022).

Six academic journals are devoted to media and communication research. All academic journals published in Croatia are, thanks to a mandatory policy, available in open access.³ The first post-socialist journal was *Media Research*, established in 1995 – earlier than respective journals in most CEE countries. The journal is referenced in SCOPUS. Another SCOPUS-referenced journal is *Media Studies* (since 2010, also referenced in WoS). Other journals are *MediAnali* (2007–2018), *In Medias Res* (since 2012), *Media, Culture and Public Relations* (since 2012), and *CM Communication Management Review* (since 2016).

Poland is another CEE country where media and communication studies have been recognised (since 2011) as autonomous research disciplines. Today, over 70 centres offer education and research in communications and the media. Up to the early 1990s, JMC in Polish universities were traditionally researched under the auspices of other disciplines, most often philology. The tradition continued throughout the 1990s and 2000s, which is evidence of a certain path dependency. However, research centres at several universities were also developing social scientific approaches (Jagiellonian University, the Universities of Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, Gdańsk, etc.). The first scholarly association of the field – the Polish Communication Association – was founded in 2007, its “primary goal was to support the recognition of media studies by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education” (Glowacki et al., 2022). Research progress in Poland includes the establishment of the Committee of Social Communication and Media Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences in January 2021. The social sciences panel of the National Science Centre – the funding and administrative body – includes communications and media in its budgets for grants. Various funding schemes are available for the media and communications’ projects. There are also several other national funding programmes and sources, such as the National Program for the Development of the Humanities (NPRH), the National Center for Research and Development (NCBiR), and the Ministry of Education and Science. There is also a government body called *Narodowa Agencja Wymiany Akademickiej* (NAWA), which sup-

³ See: <https://hrcak.srce.hr>

ports international academic research and exchange, alongside foundations and projects in partnerships with other countries, such as the Kościuszko Foundation, the Polish American Fulbright Commission, Norway Grants and the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies.

In two national databases (POLON, an Information Network on Polish Science and PBN, the Polish Scientific Database) information on researchers, publications, research projects and grants is available. Public opinion research organisations conduct regular studies of media users' attitudes and share their findings publicly. The National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT) publishes all the relevant information about existing media regulation and provides resources on media literacy and education on its website.

The field of JMC in Poland is well covered with scholarly journals in Polish and English. Most prominent among them is the *Central European Journal of Communication* published by the Polish Communication Association and indexed in Web of Science, Scopus and other international databases. The oldest journal published by a university is *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* (Press Studies Notes) founded in 1960 and run by Jagiellonian University in Kraków. There are currently approximately 20 journals covering research in media and communications in Poland (Glowacki et al., 2022).

The Mediadecom bibliographic database⁴ illustrates the strengthening of the position of JMC studies within national research due to a supportive science policy. The numbers of academic publications (articles, books and edited book chapters) increased sharply after 2009. Polish JMC research is predominantly national (80%) and in Polish, and therefore its international visibility is limited.

In Hungary, prior to independence in 1989, the only university department providing journalism education was at Eötvös Lóránd University in Budapest. Under state socialism the department was closed in 1957 because some of its professors and students participated in the revolutionary events of 1956. Since then, the Hungarian Journalists Association's journalism school had a monopoly on journalism education (Bajomi-Lázár, 2009) and there was no university-level journalism education until 1991. During the 1956–1991 period no journalism research could be performed other than what was ideologically suitable to the regime.

Hungarian JMC research had an emphasis on communication from the end of 1969, when the Mass Communication Research Centre was established. The Centre became internationally acknowledged in public opinion and audience research, and its empirical studies of social psychology were recognised, especially in the 1980s. The closure of the Centre in 1991 coincides with the appearance of communication departments at the universities, the first of which was launched at

⁴ The Polish database: <https://datadoi.ee/handle/33/522>

the University of Pécs in the same year. A disciplinary rupture can be detected in the fact that the new communication departments did not continue the research tradition developed by the Centre, instead communication was added to the existing departments of sociology, film studies and other fields. Journalism and media as scholarly disciplines began to take shape as late as the 2000s. In 2019, 16 universities were listed with media and/or journalism programmes (Pelle, 2019). The faculties still have a human resources issue: they predominantly employ teachers with degrees from other social sciences, as well as practitioners without degrees due to lack of sufficient teachers with degrees in journalism and media (Polyák et al., 2022). Consequently, teachers with different qualifications and competences are rarely doing research in journalism or media communication.

Along with other fields in culture and education successive Fidesz-KDNP governments (since 2010) have gradually increased state control of JMC education and research. In 2013, the number of state-funded university places was reduced. In 2012, the Prime Minister appointed chancellors to the universities, responsible for management and financial administration. An even more overwhelming control mechanism was installed in 2021, when most universities were taken over by foundations run by boards of trustees representing the governing party. In reaction to this there has been an increase in professional debate and the emergence of critical voices and research.

Journalism, communication and media studies are not separate disciplines in the structure of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), although in 2018 the Scientific Committee on Communication and Media Studies was established as a platform to coordinate communication and media studies and related disciplines such as sociology, political science, anthropology and psychology. In 2019, the government deprived the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA) of its network of research institutes and reorganised it into a new institution, the Eötvös Lóránd Research Network.

The Hungarian case demonstrates the importance of the field of media and communication studies from a political perspective. All authoritarian and dictatorial regimes have made attempts to control the institutional structures and content of research. In Hungary, research centres close to government have been strengthened or newly established over the past decade to analyse the domestic media from perspectives favoured by Fidesz and to counterbalance critical voices. Their experts regularly appear in the pro-government media and participate in centralised government communication. Polarisation of pro-government and opposition attitudes is characteristic of the whole of Hungarian society, also dividing scholarly communities.

Academic research on JMC in Hungary is dominated by communication studies. Media research projects (especially those related to journalism research) are rare, both in national grants and in large EU research grants. The only possibility for funding large, basic research projects is through the National Research, Devel-

opment and Innovation Office. The Research Centre for Social Sciences has funded smaller national journalism and media research projects in different universities over the past two decades. Hungarian scholars also participate in international research projects such as the Worlds of Journalism Study, EU Kids Online and some EU-funded Horizon 2020 projects. Polyák et al. (2022) say:

The Hungarian media authority, the Media Council of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH) operates the Institute for Media Studies, which provides support for the Media Council by analysing among others the media regulation, the history of journalism, and the phenomena of new media. The authority is constantly under fire from the professional as well as the academic field, mainly because of its dependence on the government parties and the resulting problematic procedures. (p. 219)

Private companies carry out audience measurement for television, print and online media. Audience measurement for radio is provided by the NMHH. Some self-regulatory organisations and various associations also carry out surveys and research that provide information on the media market. The largest media research NGO, MerteK Media Monitor, provides media law and media market analysis, engages with the industry through journalism research and content analysis of the different media outlets and regularly conducts media consumption surveys.

The official scientific research database is the Hungarian Scientific Works Repository (MTMT) where Hungarian scholars record their studies. The Repository of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences contains more than 137,000 scientific articles, books and chapters, 79% of them open access. Three main communication and media studies journals are published in Hungary: *Médiakutató*, *Jel-Kép* and *KOME* (in English). There are two more in the field of media law: *Infokommunikáció és Jog (Info-communication and Law)*, and *In Medias Res*.

Critical media and communication research in Estonia began with research on Estonian journalism history in the second half of the 1950s. In 1954, the first journalism curriculum was launched at the Faculty of History and Languages as part of Estonian philology studies. As journalism (along with the other social sciences) was regarded in the Soviet Union as an ideological subject, no adequate research in contemporary journalism was possible. Therefore, the 'founding father' of journalism, professor Juhan Peegel (1919–2007), chose the only possible option, the history of the Estonian press from the first periodical published in Estonian in 1766 to the end of the 19th century. Research on the history of national journalism and the profession as a whole was an attempt to maintain the professional values of Estonian journalism and create the tradition of its research. Journalism history remained the main research area throughout the Soviet period, especially after the launch of the Department of Journalism in 1976 at Tartu University. Several books were published and research projects carried in the early years of renewed Independence in the 1990s. The research developed from his-

torical descriptions to analysis and comparisons, while broadening the scope of approaches and methods. An important milestone in journalism history research was a collective monograph on the historical development of the Baltic media and society from the 17th century to 1993, titled “Towards a Civic Society. The Baltic Media’s Long Road to Freedom: Perspectives on History, Ethnicity and Journalism” (1993). This was the first comprehensive study of Baltic journalisms in English, and simultaneously the fruit of the first collaboration between media scholars in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Another immediate result of this collaboration was the foundation of the Baltic Association for Media Research (BAMR). Since the second decade of the 21st century, studies of Estonian journalism history have been reduced due to a lack of funding.

Sociological media studies emerged at Tartu University in the mid-1960s. During the late 1960s, sociological media research was carried out by the Laboratory of Sociology at the University of Tartu. In 1965, Tartu local newspaper *Edasi* carried out a readership survey. In 1975, the Laboratory was closed by the authorities, but the audience research tradition remained. Between the 1970s and 2007, the research unit at Estonian Radio and Television conducted regular monitoring of audience structure, interests and expectations. In 1988, the first journalists’ survey was carried out by Tartu University researchers, followed by several surveys of newspaper readership and content analysis in the subsequent years.

The first decade of renewed Independence was a new beginning for research in the humanities and social sciences, including the fields of media and communication. Western scholarly literature became widely available, membership of international scholarly organisations became possible and contacts and cooperation with foreign counterparts began. This was also the time when a certain sociological turn towards socio-cultural analysis and comparison took place in Estonian journalism and media research. New issues were included on the research agenda, such as the professionalisation of journalism, the sociology of news, various text and document analyses, discourses of censorship, journalism and media ethics, media policy and media literacy. The first articles by Estonian media scholars began to appear in international journals as well as in edited collections published internationally.

The 1990s was also the time when competition-based research funding was set up. Due to the new science policy of the 1990s, well prepared young researchers started their careers and were able to compete successfully for EU research grants when these became accessible in 2004. The JMC studies academic research agenda is therefore largely dependent on EU funding.

Currently in Estonia, the main data and knowledge collecting and producing actors in JMC are academic research units, groups and single researchers at the University of Tartu and Tallinn University. The number of individuals involved in journalism and media research in Estonia is around 40. At Tallinn University, the interdisciplinary Centre of Excellence in Media Innovation and Digital Culture

(MEDIT) was established in 2015. MEDIT focuses on the processes of cultural change and innovation that accompany digital media and experiments with new and innovative forms of digital media. The Baltic Film, Media and Arts School at Tallinn University carries out projects related to film skills, digital communication and media literacy.

The change in funding conditions in 2013, which increased the size of grants but simultaneously reduced the number of them, put the humanities and social sciences in an unfavourable situation as funding logic favours the medical, natural and technological sciences; the field of social sciences has never been a priority in Estonia. For instance, media audience studies at Tartu University have not received national funding since the last large project ended in 2014. Neither exhaustive nor regular monitoring takes place anymore.

Outside academia, some research companies and NGOs (such as PRAXIS) collect data and provide limited analysis of various sectors of journalism and the media. The Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority collects data on broadcasting and broadcasting licences; the Estonian Data Protection Inspectorate collects cases relating to freedom of information and provides a limited amount of analysis. The Development Monitoring Institute published an important report on Estonia's freedom of information in August 2022. Statistics Estonia and commercial research enterprises (e.g., Kantar EMOR) and media organisations gather data on media usage. However, the information collected by commercial actors is either paid or not available to the public or researchers. There are currently no specific legal provisions requiring the disclosure of ownership information. Nonetheless, general information related to entrepreneurship is electronically available in the Business Register.

Estonia does not have national journals that specialise in journalism and media. There is one Estonian-language non-peer reviewed yearbook, published by the Estonian Academic Journalism Association, which first appeared in 2010. Two journals indexed in WoS – *Trames* and *Acta Historica Tallinensia* – sometimes publish articles on journalism and media. The Baltic Film, Media and Arts School at Tallinn University publishes the interdisciplinary open access journal *Baltic Screen Media Review* twice a year, which is the only journal in the Baltic Sea region that focuses on all forms of audiovisual culture emerging from the region.

As in Estonia, the roots of Latvia's media research go back to the establishment of university level journalism education. The first attempt to begin teaching journalism in Latvia was made in 1940, when on the initiative of the Latvian Press Association, the Institute of Journalism was prepared to start providing courses in the autumn. However, in June 1940 the Soviet Union annexed the Baltic countries and this plan never realised. As a result of the ensuing Sovietisation, Latvia's national journalism was destroyed in the same way as Estonia's.

In the post-World War II decades and up to 1991, Latvia was part of the Soviet Union. At that time in the Soviet Union, journalism studies were possible only

in Communist Party Colleges and in Russian. Estonia and Latvia were, however, exceptions. According to Plokste (2009), a journalism study programme was started at the Faculty of Philology at the State University of Latvia in 1945 to demonstrate the achievements of education and culture in Soviet Latvia. In 1947, the Department of Journalism and Editing was established. The new dean of the Faculty, Andrejs Upts, a writer who became professor at the sovietised university, took responsibility for this task, although he also endeavoured to give future journalists a good philological education. Admission ceased for ideological reasons in 1951 and the last graduation took place in 1955. The education and training of Latvian journalists continued at the Communist Party School until 1969, when the Journalism Department at the State University of Latvia was reopened.

Under the pressure of Russification between the 1970s and 1980s, the Journalism Department admitted equal numbers of Russian- and Latvian-speaking students, enrolled in alternate years. Little space was left for the Latvian language and culture in the curricula, which had to follow Moscow State University study plans. Only in 1988 did it become possible to develop new curricula based on national language and culture. In 1991, communication science was added as a BA programme and in 1992 the Department was named the Department of Communication and Journalism. In 2000, the Faculty of Social Sciences was established, and the Department became a part of this faculty (Plokste, 2009). Since then, the Faculty of Social Sciences has been one of the leading institutions in the field of JMC research. The only academic journals dealing with media issues were published at the University of Latvia: *Daudzveidība (Diversity)* focused on media and democracy, *Agora* was a collection of research papers from various projects and *Domino* published student research works. None of these periodicals was peer reviewed and they only published a couple of issues each due to a lack of funding and contributions. The longest-running publication devoting space to media and communication issues is the peer reviewed *Acta Universitatis Latviensis Communication Volume* (Rožukalne et al., 2022).

Study programmes and departments of communication emerged in other universities in Latvia starting at the end of the 1990s, for example Riga Stradiņš University, the Turība Applied Business University and Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences. Media and journalism researchers work in various departments in two regional higher education institutions, Liepāja University and Rēzekne Academy of Technologies. The Centre for Media Studies at Stockholm School of Economics in Riga focuses on media business and investigative journalism. The Baltic Centre for Media Excellence is a hub for smart journalism in the Baltics, the countries of the Eastern Partnership and beyond. The Centre carries out media training and consultancy, facilitates advances in media literacy and digital activism and publishes various reports. The research in these institutions is not coordinated and there is no clear specialisation among them.

Along with universities some institutions for sociological research or political study (for example, the Baltic Institute for Social Sciences) as well as NGOs (for example, Providus and Delna) have contributed to research on media and journalism, carrying out projects on possible risks to civil society and deliberative communication (e.g., minorities and social integration, hidden political advertising, etc.). Commercial research companies (TNS/KANTAR Latvia, Gemius Latvia, SKDS, Latvijas Fakti, etc.) are involved in regular surveys of media audiences and public opinion.

The story told above demonstrates that for various reasons in Latvian academic institutions the teaching of journalism, media and communication has received far more state attention and funding than research, which suffers from a shortage of human resources. At the beginning of the 21st century, there still were no doctoral level media and communication programmes in Latvian universities, nor any doctoral level researchers with a Latvian degree. The first few Latvians who gained doctoral degrees in media and communication did so in other countries. Currently, the National Network of Science, at the Academy of Science, which issues expert accreditation from the Latvian Council of Science to researchers based on their applications, counts 13 experts in the field of journalism, media and communication. A cursory look at the bibliographies (including the Mediadecom bibliographic database) shows that 15 names appear more than five times as authors (over the past 20 years). The lack of qualified researchers has also prevented Latvian media and communication scholars from gaining the status of leading partner in important research programmes such as Horizon 2020, Cost Action and others. At the national level, most media studies projects are small-scale initiatives carried out by individual researchers, as no regular, targeted and well-organised funding system has been established for the field. These unfavourable conditions for the development of journalism and media research as a scholarly discipline have a detrimental effect on the national and international competitiveness of Latvian media scholars.

The early history of the institutionalisation of JMC research in Czechia (then part of Czechoslovakia) begins with the establishment of the Free School of Political Studies in Prague, in the 1928–1929 academic year as the first institution specifically for educating journalists. The courses were suspended during World War II and continued from 1946 to 1950 at the College of Political and Social Science, which replaced the Free School. The first university level positions for journalism lecturers came at Charles University in Prague in 1946 and at Palacký University in Olomouc in 1947, before the former Czechoslovakia became the part of the Soviet bloc in 1948 (Jiráček & Köpplová, 2009). Journalism was, according to Soviet doctrine, the promoter of communist ideology, and journalism education had to fulfil this task. Journalism education began at the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University in Prague at the beginning of the 1953–1954 academic year. The watchful eye of the authorities was, however, not as strict as in Estonia and Latvia, and a certain emancipation of journalism education became possible. In 1968 the

Faculty of Social Sciences and Journalism, which valued journalism's cultural and literary traditions, was established. However, in the aftermath of the Prague Spring, in 1968, the faculty was closed in 1972 and a new Faculty of Journalism that operated in close cooperation with the Communist Party and journalists' union was established. The intellectual background of study here was Marxist-Leninist theory of the role of journalism in socialist society, blended with criticism of Western concepts (Jiráček & Köpplová, 2009). Education that was based on ideological dogmas, did not need a scientific approach, and any ideology-free research was consequently not developed.

The political and societal transformations of the 1990s caused a critical change in the concept of journalistic education. Along with journalism, media studies and communication were added to the journalists' education, and in 1993 the Department of Mass Communication (later Media Studies) and the Department of Journalism were founded, which were later merged to become the Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism at Charles University. Journalism programmes were also established in other universities, for example Palacký University in Olomouc in 1992, Masaryk University in Brno in 1995 (initially within the sociology programme) and the Technical University in Ostrava in 2006 (Jiráček & Köpplová, 2009). There is also the Department of Media Studies, at the private Metropolitan University Prague, which continues the tradition of the Charles University's Institute in terms of staff and themes.

During the period of the 1990s to 2000s, journalism and media research largely described transformations in media markets, ownership changes and public service broadcasting issues. The small number of qualified scholars and doctoral students were able to cover a limited range of topics, while the selection of topics was more a reflection of the authors' and media organisations' individual interests than any systematic research strategy. Consequently, many important areas remained uncovered. In 2008, two years after the first national professional journal, *Mediální studia* (Media Studies), was founded, the editors revealed that they were facing a shortage of potentially publishable articles (Waschková Čísařová et al., 2022). However, the position of the journal has strengthened over the past decade along with the gradual advancement of both academic research and the qualifications of the researchers. Apart from the one and only specialist journal, media-related research articles also appear in *Sociologický časopis* (*Journal of Sociology*), and *Sociální studia* (*Social Studies*).

During the first two decades of the 21st century, the main departments of journalism and media studies gradually developed a certain degree of specialisation. The Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism at Charles University in Prague has a strong tradition of research in media history, media literacy, and changes in the Czech media system. The tradition of the literary-historical approach, descriptions and theoretical essays continued for some time. Together with an increase in the number of young researchers with doctoral degrees join-

ing academia, the role of empirical research began to grow and the scope of research broadened to include media policy, political communication, issues of professional journalism, television series, etc. In the past decade, the Department of Media Studies and Journalism at Masaryk University in Brno has established itself with interdisciplinary audience studies, especially in relation to the internet and new media. Apart from the department's researchers, there are also researchers in the Interdisciplinary Research Team on Internet and Society. Researchers also work on history, journalistic professional roles, local journalism and cultural research. The emphasis is mainly on empirical research based on sociology and psychology. The Department of Media and Cultural Studies and Journalism at Palacký University in Olomouc is more theoretical at its core. Only a few examples of empirical research can be found. Historical research is strongly represented, but audience research is missing.

Relevant data for journalism and media research is also gathered by the media industry, especially on audience use of various media. While these data were initially accessible, they have been gradually monetised and become inaccessible for public and research use. As research grants are small, it is not always possible to purchase the necessary data from media organisations.

The Foundation of Independent Journalism (an NGO), established in 2016, often publishes various reports on media performance and journalistic issues. The public service broadcaster Czech Television publishes annual reports on viewership, measures the popularity of its broadcasts and publishes reports by external evaluators on broadcast quality. Media organisations sporadically produce descriptions of market conditions and analysis of media ownership, but any noticeable cooperation between academia and the media industry is missing.

The capacity for academic research is limited because of the scarcity of funding. Two main grant agencies provide funding for journalism and media research. The Czech Science Foundation, established in 1993, awards grants in the social sciences, among them media research. The Czech Republic Technology Agency, founded in 2009, offered a new grant programme for social sciences in 2017, but this is oriented towards applied research. Journalism and media researchers can apply to both agencies for grants. However, the success rate is relatively low for projects in the social sciences and humanities (20–30%), and in particular journalism and media. There are no special calls for media-related projects, as journalism and media studies are not officially recognised as specific disciplines.

The beginning of the Slovak JMC research goes hand-in-hand with Czechia, as both had the same history as the two parts of Czechoslovakia until 1993, when the two independent states were established. The institutionalisation of journalism education started at the Free School of Political Science in Prague in 1928, which stopped during World War II, and continued in 1946–1950, which repeats the same story as early Czech journalism education. The Slovak history of JMC re-

search experienced several fatal ruptures that did not allow the field a continuous development and left consequences palpable to the present day.

Academic journalism education in Slovakia was established in 1952 at the Department of Journalism at Comenius University in Bratislava. In 1953, the Methodological Research Cabinet was founded for research into radio broadcasting. The Cabinet operated until 1996. As the early education of former Czechoslovakian journalists had a mainly practical orientation it did not produce research. In the 1950s and 1960s, the content of journalism studies at Bratislava University was closely related to the study of Slovak culture, language and literature, as a balance to the compulsory ideological bias. Thanks to professor Mieroslav Hysko, in addition to more practical specialisation on radio, TV and press, the journalism curriculum offered courses on national and international politics, economics, culture and sport. In parallel, the Journalism Study Institute (established in 1955) was engaged in scientific research in journalism throughout several decades (in the 1990s under the name of the National Centre of Media Communication), until it ceased activities in 2000 (Vatrál, 2009).

Deviation from the official framework of academic education resulted in staff being criminalised for 'contra-revolutionary' activities during the military occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 by the Warsaw Pact armies. Nine out of eleven teachers had to leave the University. In the aftermath the study programme was filled with courses on Marxism-Leninism theory, mass media tools and propaganda, the contemporary politics of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, etc. The role of the journalist was reduced to the role of Communist Party propagandist. Comenius University expanded journalism teaching and research in 1975 with the opening of three Departments: theory and history of journalism; periodical press and news agency journalism; television and radio journalism. In addition, the Cabinet of theory and history of journalism was established. In 1992 the departments were merged into the Department of Journalism (Vatrál, 2009).

Until the Velvet Revolution in 1989, which removed the communist regime in Czechoslovakia and abolished censorship, research had to follow official ideological doctrines, although certain deviations were possible. The Journalism Study Institute was engaged in sociological media research, theoretical and methodological issues and interdisciplinary research in journalism and the mass media. The Institute also founded the oldest academic journal in the field, *Otázky žurnalistiky* (*Issues of Journalism*) in 1958, which continues to appear as a quarterly publication published by the Department of Journalism at Comenius University.

Since 1989, alongside the transition to a democratic society, the media and the whole field of research underwent significant change. Freedom of the media and of business led to the emergence of a new media landscape with independent newspapers, radio and television stations. This also broadened the area of research to include media market issues, media culture, media and democracy, political communication, etc. Cooperation with foreign scholars began and broadened

in scope. New centres of JMC education and research started appearing, such as the Department of Journalism at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (1995), the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (1997), the Department of Journalism at the Catholic University in Ružomberok (2000), and some private universities, such as the Faculty of Mass Media at the Pan European University in Bratislava (2007). Altogether six Slovak universities and colleges offer academic programmes in journalism and media studies. The University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava publishes the biannual open-access and WoS indexed journal *Communication Today* in English (since 2010), and since 2018 Media Literacy and Academic Research.

Structurally, journalism and media studies are generally parts of the faculties of humanities/arts, philosophy, or sociology, and their research traditions are influenced by the theories and approaches of these disciplines. JMC research has never been a priority in the development strategies of Slovakian universities, nor in science policy at national level. There is no national organisation to coordinate research activities, except the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, and the Slovak Accreditation Agency. The Ministry of Education has established three agencies that provide research grants: the Agency for Research and Development Support (APVV), the Scientific Grant Agency at the Ministry of Education and the Slovak Academy of Sciences (VEGA), and the Ministry of Education Cultural and Education Grant Agency. None has special calls for JMC research projects, these applications compete with all other disciplines. JMC scholars receive some national grants every year (from €10,000 to €250,000) with media literacy projects and issues related to disinformation being prioritised. Slovakian JCM scholars have yet not succeeded in applying for EU grants or establishing a firm footprint in international networks.

The overall tradition of JMC research in Slovakia is brief as the universities engaged in this research are only about 20–30 years old (apart from Comenius University). An established tradition of JMC is still to be developed. Without any purposeful research policy that would support the disciplinary development of JMC, achievements remain modest. The Mediadelcom bibliography shows that the proportion of international publications within the past 20 years is only 18% of all publications (including research reports). The proportion of Slovakian publications represented in high-level indexation (Web of Science, SCOPUS, Social Science Citation Index) is also low at 21%.⁵

The JMC research history in Romania is the briefest among the reviewed 14 countries. As an independent sector of research, JMC studies appeared only in the 1990s, after the period of state socialism in Romania had ended. As in several other countries, the emergence of JMC research is connected with the foundation of journalism education. In Romania, a journalism programme was initially creat-

⁵ The Slovakian bibliographic database: <https://datadoi.ee/handle/33/524>

ed at the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences at the University of Bucharest. During the socialist period, academic professional education did not exist, other than the journalism programme at the Stefan Gheorghiu Academy, a Romanian Communist Party ‘university’ established in the early 1970s, “at which the emphasis was far more ideological than professional” (Gross, 1999, p.149).

Along with the diversification and expansion of media markets in the 1990s, academic journalism and media studies became very popular in Romania. According to Avadani (2022), the peak was in 2008–2009, when as many as 40 journalism and communication programmes existed. In 2022, 31 accredited journalism programmes were still active, as well as 10 advertising and seven digital media programmes all over the country. A further 39 programmes were devoted to communication and public relations. Journalism and media pathways were available in Hungarian, German and English. The most prominent programmes are offered by the University of Bucharest and the University of Babes-Bolyai. Universities also set up JMC research centres (at the University of Bucharest, the University of Craiova). There are also three national doctoral schools dedicated to JMC studies (one at Bucharest University and two at Babes-Bolyai University). Doctoral theses and the proceedings of doctoral school activities form an important body of the research and new knowledge in the field of JMC.

Romania participates in large international comparative projects such as Media Pluralism Monitor and the Worlds of Journalism Study (all three waves of the survey from 2007 to 2023). Romania is also part of the Digital News Report study (by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism), and Global Kids Online. Several faculties and departments are involved in international consortia that carry out media research projects, although no Romanian university has achieved the role of project leader internationally. At the same time, national JMC projects are rare and poorly funded, as supporting JMC research is neither a priority in the state’s development plans nor in the interest of funding bodies. The national science funding policy is based on the National Plan for Research, Development and Innovation, which has four major funding programmes, two of which are available for the humanities and social sciences. The areas chosen for funding are development of the national research and development system, and exploratory and frontier research. Over the last three rounds of competitive calls (2016, 2019 and 2021) only one project (about new media research) received funding of approximately € 55,000.

The Romanian state is only indirectly related to JMC research through public institutions that publicise their regular activity reports. The national telecom regulator (the National Authority for Management and Regulation in Communications, ANCOM) issues biannual reports on Romania’s connectivity capability. The national broadcast regulator, (the National Audiovisual Council, CNA) issues reports on broadcasters, including the type of licence and ownership information. The ANCOM and CNA reports use standardised methodology and provide con-

sistent data year after year. National and multinational companies active in Romania or with an interest in the local market also provide data through their own research. Some NGOs also gather and analyse various data about media and journalistic practices. International government or transnational organisations are also active in generating and processing data about media and democracy, such as the European Commission, the US State Department, OECD and the Council of Europe. As a result, there is a large volume of raw data, descriptive reports and analytical studies, although they are scattered and disconnected, which makes using them in research difficult.

An important database is the National Bibliography of publications (including doctoral theses) of the National Library. By 2021, the National Library had published 11 volumes online, covering 2009–2014. The National Bibliography is searchable by keywords. Eight Romanian academic journals publish JMC research results, of which three specialise in JMC. The academic journals are all peer-reviewed and indexed in various scientific databases. Six out of seven are published by the universities. *Revista Transilvania*, published by the University Lucian Blaga in Sibiu, is indexed in SCOPUS and some less prominent databases. The Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences of the University of Bucharest publishes the *Romanian Journal of Journalism and Communication (RJJC)*. Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj publishes two journals dedicated to media and communication (*the Journal of Media Research* and *Studia Ephemerides*). Although they do not rank among the top journals, some are bilingual or even multilingual. For example, *Saeculum* (published by Sibiu University) publishes articles in four languages, Romanian, English, German and French. *Revista de Studii Media* (from Hyperion University in Bucharest) has published in Romanian, English and French since 2018.

Academic articles on journalism and media are also published in the journals of other fields, such as political science, education and sociology. For example, *Social Sciences and Education Research Review (SSERR)* is an international, biannual, print and online academic journal published by the Center for Scientific Research in Communication Sciences, Media and Public Opinion and the Department of Communication, Journalism and Education Sciences at the Faculty of Letters at the University of Craiova. *The Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations* is an interdisciplinary journal published by the Faculty of Communication and Public Relations' Centre of Communication Research, at the National School for Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest. The journal focuses on communication and media studies and public relations research. The journal is indexed in Web of Science, SCOPUS, EBSCO and some other international databases.

Having no clear-cut science policy that would create sustainable conditions for the development of JMC as a scientific discipline, the current picture of the field shows studies of narrow topics, mirroring the interests of the respective

researchers rather than a broader vision or the strategic preoccupation of a research hub. The lack of coordination and research strategy results in numerous gaps in coverage of JMC. Public service media are mainly represented by their own activity reports. Media-related competencies and the conditions for content production in the Romanian media have barely gained any attention. There is no policy for promoting media literacy or initiatives to measuring or educate media-related competences in consumers. No consistent studies exist on multiplatform journalism, foreign correspondents or digital journalism. However, topics related to disinformation and the impact of digital technologies on the media and communications have been on the rise over the last decade. Topics such as the legal environment, market evolution and media competences are studied in more depth outside academic circles by the business or non-governmental sectors. Romanian data in the Mediadelcom bibliographic database⁶ shows that Romania has in the past two decades produced the same number of relevant research publications (274) as Sweden (279), a much smaller country. In Web of Science, the referenced articles make up 13% of all publications.

As in the other countries, the institutionalisation of JMC in Bulgaria started from that of journalism. The first organisations of journalists (the Society of Journalists of the Capital (1907) and the Union of Professional Country Journalists (1924)) organised courses for working journalists and even awarded scholarships for study trips to London, Paris and Rome (Manliherová et al., 2009). University level journalism education began in the 1952–1953 academic year with the establishment of journalism as a major at Sofia University's Faculty of Philology. Later, this became an independent Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication with five departments at St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University. In the 1990s, some other universities began to offer journalism education, as well as public relations and book publishing programmes. Currently, 11 Bulgarian universities (out of 52) offer higher education in journalism (BA, MA and PhD programmes), of which 7 are public⁷ and 4 private.⁸ JMC is also part of the curricula in several BA and MA programs in the humanities. Supplementary training programs for journalists include NGOs with external funding, for example the Centre for Media Development.

Academic JMC programs and units with more than 100 academics in full-time positions receive regular (although not generous) basic funding for research, and on a competitive basis they can also vie for additional funding from various sources. There are approximately 100–120 academics in JMC studies in full-time positions in 11 universities. The funding scheme includes grants from universities

⁶ The Romanian bibliographic database: <https://datadoi.ee/handle/33/523>

⁷ St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University, St. Cyril & Metodius Veliko Turnovo University, St. Neophyte Rilsky Blagoevgrad University, St. Paisiy Hilendarski Plovdiv University, Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, University of National and World Economy

⁸ New Bulgarian University, Varna Free University, Burgas Free University, the American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad

and from the Ministry of Education and Science's National Scientific Research Fund. For media research, funds are allocated on a competitive basis with a total value of around 250,000 Euros. The funding and the number of funded projects vary. The duration of each project is from two to three years. Between 1999 and 2012 The National Scientific Research Fund financed a project called The Electronic Media Environment in the Republic of Bulgaria in Conditions of Transition and Digitisation: 1999–2012, which produced three volumes of detailed analysis of the radio and television audiences in Bulgaria. The Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at the St. Kliment Ohridsky Sofia University received a grant from the National Scientific Research Fund in 2021 and produced a scientific bibliography of research during the 1990–2022 period in media and communication and in numerous related fields (advertising, marketing, public relations, propaganda, visual culture, book history, etc.) that includes 6,480 titles (published in 2022).⁹ Funding for media research has also been secured from other sources, for example, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Open Society Institute and others. Since Bulgaria joined the COST framework in 1999, Bulgarian JMC scholars have participated in COST Actions, although not yet as action leaders.¹⁰ Bulgarian JMC scholars also participate in Horizon framework projects.

Over the past 20 years, (according to the Mediadecom bibliographic database)¹¹ journalism and media research interest in the country has largely focused on aspects of legal and ethical regulation of journalism. Specific interest, especially in media literacy issues, has also increased recently, mainly due to the efforts of NGOs and academia. A national representative survey of the Bulgarian Center for Safe Internet from 2016 analyses the digital media competence of Bulgarian children between the ages of nine and 17 years (Raycheva et al., 2022). The office of the global company Nielsen in Bulgaria provides analysis and audience measurement, media consumption data and data on the use of the internet in Bulgaria.¹² The annual reports of the public service broadcasting television BNT and radio BNR are also valuable public sources for research. Media data collection, surveys and in-depth analysis in Bulgaria are also conducted by transnational observation organisations (e.g. Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders, etc.), comparative international surveys (e.g. Balkan Media Watch, Eurostat, Media Pluralism Monitor, the Worlds of Journalism Study, etc.), public bodies (e.g. National Statistical Institute, Council for Electronic Media, Communications Regulation Commission), the media industry, sociological agencies and professional associations.

All five peer-reviewed online journals publishing the results of JMC research are open access. *Медии и комуникации на 21. век (Media and Communication in*

⁹ https://research.uni-sofia.bg/bitstream/10506/2540/1/Bibliografia_FJMC_v.5_Interactive.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/06/Bulgaria-1.pdf>

¹¹ <https://datadoi.ee/handle/33/512>

¹² <https://en.nielsen-admosphere.bg/>

the 21st Century)¹³, publishes articles in Bulgarian, English and Russian. The journal is referenced and indexed in 12 international databases, the most prominent of which is ERIHPLUS. The journal *Медии и обществени комуникации* (*Media and Public Communication*) appears in Bulgarian and English¹⁴ and is indexed in 8 databases, the most prominent being Google Scholar. *Newmedia21.eu Медии на 21 век* (*Newmedia21.eu Media of the 21st Century*) appears in Bulgarian¹⁵ and is indexed in less prominent international databases. *Postmodernism Problems* appears in English and Bulgarian versions (indexed in ERIHPLUS and Google and less prominent databases).¹⁶ Like *Postmodernism Problems*, *Риторика и комуникации* (*Rhetorics and Communication*)¹⁷ is more broadly focused than on media and communication alone, publishing articles in English, Bulgarian and Russian (referenced in ERIHPLUS and some less prominent databases).

Analysis of research production covering the central aspects of the field of JMC (the four domains of the Mediadecom project) shows the gradual increase in relevant publications, especially in the 2010s.¹⁸ However, the number of strictly academic publications (journal articles, books, chapters in edited volumes) is rather modest (182 out of 229 entries in Mediadecom bibliography). JMC research and publishing are mainly domestically oriented (reported and published in Bulgarian). The proportion of international academic publications in Mediadecom's Bulgarian JMC database is 26%. In Web of Science referenced articles are 3% of all publications.

The institutionalisation of JMC in Bulgaria started about 70 years ago, with some distinct qualities of journalism studies and media studies developing over time. Bulgaria has universities and other institutions that are involved in JMC research, there is a community of over a hundred scholars in the field, specialised journals regularly appear and research activities are supported by central funding on a competitive basis. The international visibility of Bulgarian research is limited, as most of the publications are in Bulgarian and the proportion of Bulgaria's input in the high-ranking European journals is minimal. Perspectives for the development of national research seem to be broadening, as in 2023 the National Research Fund awarded the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University a substantial grant to establish a Centre for Media Studies.

¹³ <http://journals.uni-vt.bg/mc/bul/>

¹⁴ <https://media-journal.info/>

¹⁵ <https://www.newmedia21.eu>

¹⁶ <https://pmpjournal.org/index.php/pmp>

¹⁷ <https://rhetoric.bg/>

¹⁸ The Bulgarian database: <https://datadoi.ee/handle/33/512>

SOME FINAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE DIACHRONIC EXERCISE

A birds-eye retrospective of JMC research in the selected 14 EU countries allows us to point out some universal trends in the capability of monitoring changes in journalism and news media. As the processes of societal-political transformation, of which the media are part, occur at various speeds across different economic and cultural environments, variations can be found in even these common traits. One of them is the gradual growth in the number of institutions engaged in JMC research and teaching. The more research institutions and scholars, the better is the capability of monitoring JMC. This is especially true in the CEE countries, where many new departments and centres were established in the 1990s. However, so far, their success in research and teaching differs, as institutionalisation is still insufficient to develop a sustainable research policy in these countries.

Another remarkable development connected with structural enlargement is the noticeable broadening of the national and international networks over the past two decades, to which the European research funding policy has given a boost. The selected 14 countries have participated in various EU Framework 7 projects and are participating in COST networks, as well as in Horizon projects. They are also included in the international reports on press freedom (such as the Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders), democracy (V-Dem), media pluralism (Media Pluralism Monitor) and many others.

The Mediadelcom bibliographic database demonstrates the overall increase and gradual internationalisation of publishing research results (see Figure 8). As revealed in the countries' descriptions, the number of journals published in the field of JMC in these countries has also increased over the past two decades.

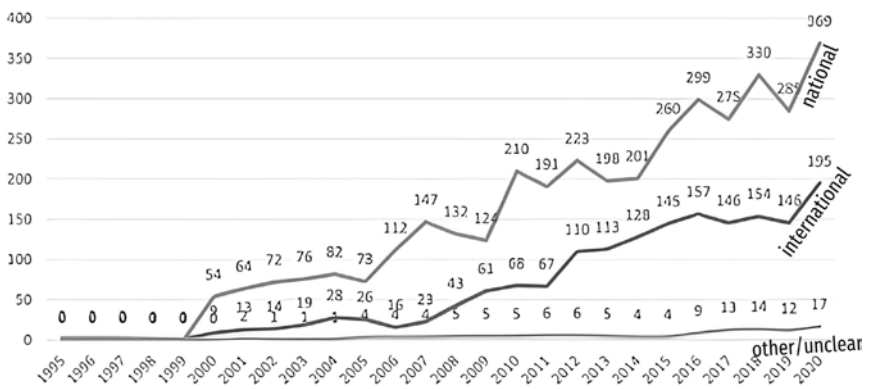


Figure 8. Dynamics of the number of national and international publications in 14 EU countries during the 2000–2020 period.

The Bibliography also shows some dynamics in scholars' focus on diverse JMC-related topics. Although topics within the domain of journalism prevail in all countries throughout the two decades, interest in other topics increased during the second decade. For example, more research was done on media usage and legal and ethical issues than in the first decade. A detailed review of the research done in the four domains can be found in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Gender-related issues seem to have received little attention in JMC studies and monitoring. Public broadcasters often have a gender equality policy, and in their reports, among other issues, also focus on women's representation in TV programmes as well as other gender diversity issues. The representation of women, gender stereotypes and the proportion of women in executive level roles are also quite frequent topics of JMC research. Increasingly, harassment of female journalists appears as a research focus. In our sample, the domain of journalism is mainly represented in studies that deal with gender issues. Germany, Sweden, Italy and Croatia stand out as performing such studies. However, overall, the existing research appears to be fragmented, with systematic study of female journalists' status in newsrooms, their working conditions and economic situations, the glass ceiling problem, etc., rarely addressed in most of the examined countries. Sweden seems to be an exception here. Gender aspects of media production and the situation for woman in the newsroom have been studied extensively by Swedish scholars such as Maria Edström and Monica Djerf-Pierre at JMG, University of Gothenburg (e.g., see Djerf-Pierre, 2005). Even though too few researchers focus on these issues, there is a general awareness of gender inequality and the importance of including the gender variable in media research. Worlds of Journalism Studies (WJS) surveys contain information on gender balance, the position of women in the newsroom, career status, etc. WJS reports are one of the few sources on gender issues in journalism for example for Hungary, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Italy, Slovakia and Romania in our sample. Media Pluralism Monitor country reports describe gender equality issues, but to a limited extent, as this is not the focus of these reports. However, some of them are quite rich in relevant information, such as, for example, the Bulgarian report of 2023 (Orlin et al., 2023).

When comparing countries' monitoring capability, it is essential to consider whether JMC studies are acknowledged as autonomous disciplines in a particular country. Disciplinary recognition is especially important in connection with research funding schemes, as in countries where JMC studies do not have autonomous discipline status, there is no designated central funding for JMC research. On the other hand, the proportion of JMC funding depends on the policy and practice of general research and development (R&D) funding in a country. It becomes very clear that of the 14 countries examined, the countries that show high JMC research capacity – Austria, Germany and Sweden – invest the most in R&D (see Figure 9). R&D expenditure as a proportion of GDP has also increased within the five years of 2015 to 2020 in all the examined countries except two, Bulgaria and Romania, where expenditure has even somewhat decreased. The greatest increase has oc-

curred in Poland (0.39%), with a remarkable share of higher education sector R&D expenditure (35%) (see Figure 10). Indirectly, this growth also reflects the positive impact of the increased funding for Polish academic JMC research in this five-year period, and the country's CMM. Academic research in JMC is closely connected with higher education in the field, as in most universities researchers also teach various JMC courses. When examining European comparative statistics, the same countries that spend more on education are more successful in research. The contrast between the wealthier and poorer countries is enormous. While in 2020, the expenditure per inhabitant in the higher education sector was €375.72 in Sweden, the comparable expenditure in Bulgaria was €4.58.¹⁹ In our sample, only Germany, Austria and Sweden spent more per inhabitant than the EU average (€165.65 in 2020), Estonia being the closest at €121.50. In all 10 other countries expenditure was remarkably less than €100. Although these statistics do not directly describe the situation in the field of JMC, they reflect the countries' potential to carry out consistent and sustainable research.

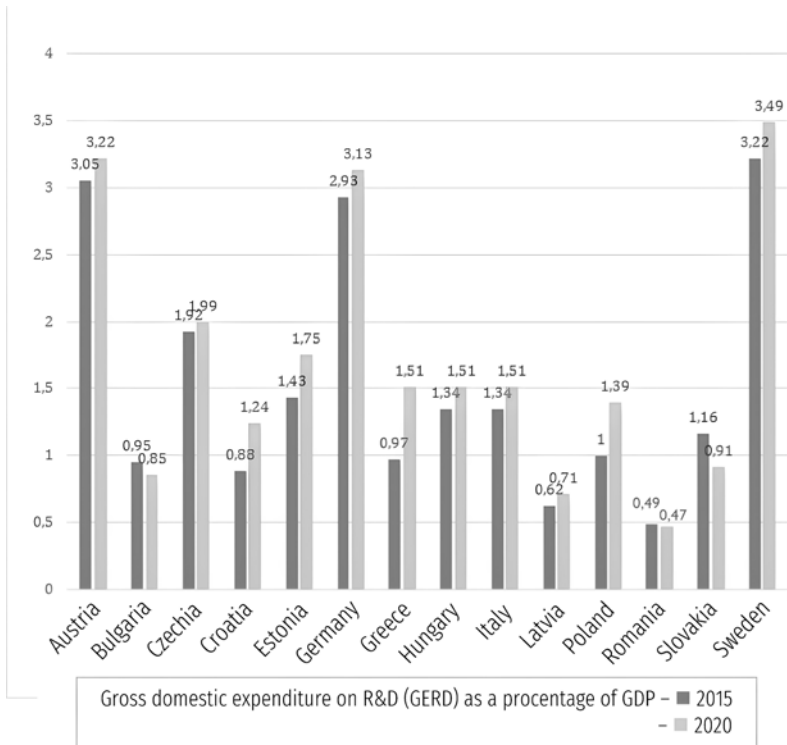


Figure 9. Gross domestic expenditure on R&D in the 14 EU Mediadecom countries in 2015 and 2020 (% of GDP).

Source: OECD (2024), *Gross domestic spending on R&D (indicator)*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/d8b068b4-en>

¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/rd_e_gerdtot/default/table?lang=en

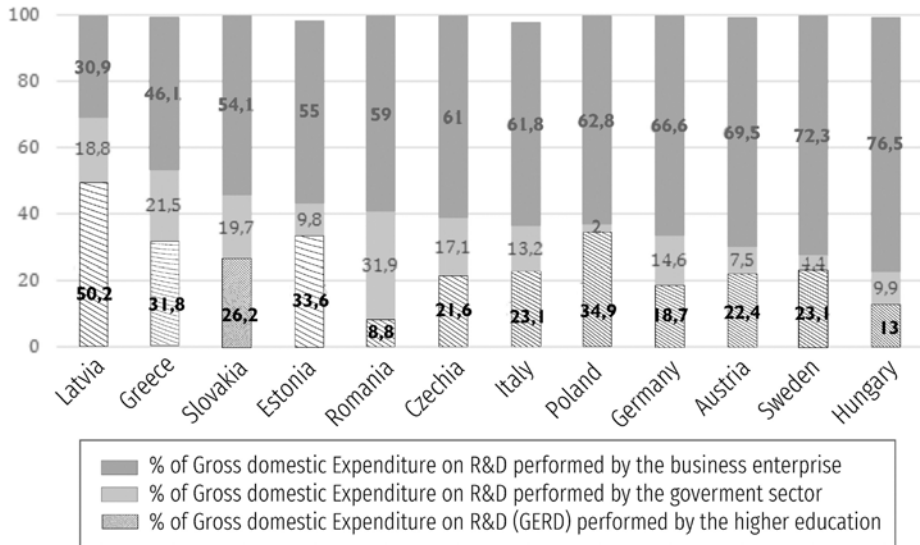


Figure 10. Proportion of gross domestic expenditure on R&D in business, government and higher education sectors in 2020 in the 14 EU Mediadecom countries.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=R%26D_expenditure&oldid=551418#R.26D_expenditure_by_sector_of_performance

Another relevant indicator for assessing CMM is the number of the researchers in JMC. OECD statistics shows the notable increase of this number in all the examined countries, except Romania (the data was missing for Bulgaria) (see Figure 11). Again, the proportion of full-time researchers is the highest in Sweden (equivalent per 1,000 total employment is 15.8 in 2020), followed by Austria and Germany. This proportion has grown remarkably in Croatia within the five-year period (from 8.4 to 10.5), which even surpasses the level of Germany (10). These statistics correlate the results we gained comparing the CMM of the 14 countries. Best practice countries were Germany, Austria and Sweden, while Bulgaria and Romania show a modest capability to monitor sources of ROs for deliberative communication.

Important factors influencing countries' CMM are the conditions of the development of disciplinary identity and status of JMC, as well as continuity of development. In most of our selected countries, JMC research started with the establishment of academic journalism education in universities. Germany has the longest JMC research tradition (since 1916), whereas Greece is a latecomer establishing departments of communication and media as late as the beginning of the 1990s.

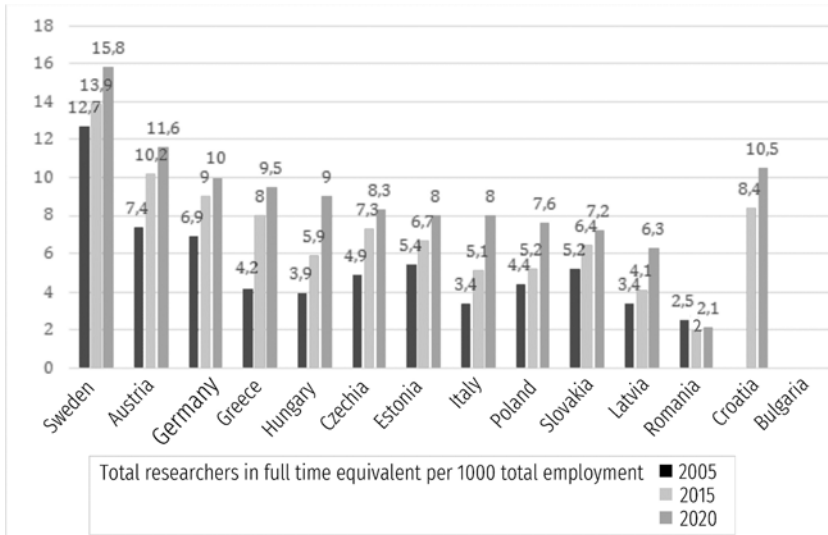


Figure 11. Researchers in the 14 Mediadelcom countries in full-time equivalent positions per 1,000 total employment in 2005, 2015 and 2020. Source: OECD (2024), *Researchers (indicator)*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/20ddfb0f-en>

Research traditions in JMC studies largely depend on whether journalism education was established at faculties of arts and humanities or social sciences. For example, for decades journalism research in Estonia followed the tradition and approaches of humanities, especially history, research, as the study programme of journalism and later the Department of Journalism belonged to the Faculty of Humanities at Tartu University. Gradually, sociological media studies (initially as audience research) began to develop, and in 1992, when the Faculty of Social Sciences was launched, the Department became a unit of this new faculty. Since then, both traditions have developed close to each other, and some degree of integration has occurred. In Germany, the two traditions exist independently and are represented by *Medienwissenschaft* and *Kommunikationswissenschaft*. Both are recognised as autonomous disciplines that are represented by distinct learned societies and specialised journals. In Croatia, JMC studies generally developed under the auspices of sociology and political communication and follow their research paradigms. In Poland, communications and media were recognised as autonomous disciplines in 2011 and awarded regular funding. Since then, the scope of research and publishing, as well as the number of researchers and academic journals, has rapidly expanded. The situation differs in other CEE countries, where JMC studies are embedded in information and communication sciences, or more generally in the social sciences, and do not stand out as independent subjects but must compete with other disciplines for funding and acknowledgement. The disciplinary status of JMC studies also depends on the length of the research tradition. The established disciplines have had more time to develop their institu-

tional structures, educate researchers, lobby for funding and build up their reputation, even if their development has not always been stable.

In only two countries in our selection – Austria and Sweden – has the development of JMC studies been relatively stable throughout the decades of their existence. All the other countries have experienced longer or shorter ruptures, mainly caused by various world events. World War II and the Soviet annexation entirely destroyed journalism as a field and profession in Estonia and Latvia, and under the post-war Soviet occupation, research was limited and controlled. In Germany, JMC research experienced two periods of political control and ideological pressure: under the National Socialist regime and then after World War II in the GDR (East Germany). Journalism education and research in Hungary was disrupted by the 1956 uprising and for decades afterwards. The tragic end of the Prague Spring in 1968 and its aftermath was fatal for Czech and Slovak journalism education and scholarship. Greece lived through a period of military dictatorship between 1967 and 1974, with censorship and other restrictions to scholarly activities.

The rapid democratic transition in the 1990s that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union was a radical turning point in the fields of JMC and their research in most CEE countries. Several of those countries, especially those which had been parts of the Soviet Union (Estonia and Latvia) or where the communist regime had taken a stronger grip on society (Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia) practically started from zero as continuity had been broken five decades earlier. Western scholarly literature and journals had not been available for those decades (unlike, for example, in the former Yugoslavia which included Croatia, and to some extent in Poland), and access to international conferences had been limited to the extreme. In Romania, journalism, sociology and psychology had been eradicated from academic domains in 1977. The 1990s were a time of institutionalisation and restructuring of JMC education and, simultaneously, research. A major problem was the lack of teachers and researchers with JMC degrees, often with scholars from other fields filling this gap. Consequently, JMC research was developed from the perspectives of other disciplines, which was not conducive to the formation of a disciplinary identity for JMC studies. By the beginning of the 21st century, doctoral degree programmes in JMC had been launched in many universities, and the first graduates began to return from their studies abroad, which gave the discipline a firmer foothold. Access to international scholarly journals was important for two reasons. First, they introduced the research done elsewhere around the globe and inspired CEE scholars to explore and adopt new theories, methods and approaches. These journals also motivated CEE scholars to improve the quality of their research and publications to meet the requirements of international scholarly publishing. Marton Demeter is correct in arguing that CEE scholarship is not visible on the European scale (Demeter, 2020; Háló & Demeter, 2023). However, it is debatable that this visibility was achievable in such a short time as the 35 years that the less wealthy CEE

countries have had to develop their JMC studies, compared to their counterparts in Western Europe.

CONCLUSION

The task of this chapter was to analyse and compare the development of the conditions for CMM in the 14 EU countries selected for the Mediadelcom project. To depict development, a diachronic perspective is necessary, since common trends, as well as the uniqueness of each country, come to the fore in historical comparison. Furthermore, ROs to deliberative communication and the CMM for detecting them do not appear overnight but are the result of lengthy developments. In this chapter, we viewed the decisive aspects for assessing the potential of CMM: the evolution of JMC research towards autonomous and acknowledged disciplinary field(s), the institutionalisation of the research environment (including funding mechanisms) and the agents of governing and conducting JMC research. The main sources for this overview are two outcomes of the Mediadelcom research: the reports on participating countries (the Case Studies, see Chapter 1) and the bibliographic database of academic publications, research reports and various data sources. The chapter is based on secondary sources (without doing any empirical research) and therefore represents the approach we call diachronic qualitative meta-analysis.

The results indicate that adequate institutionalisation, continuity of research without fateful disruptions, the availability and sufficiency of domestic funding supported by international funding and the existence of an optimum number of qualified scholars are the main conditions for successfully diagnosing potential media-related ROs to deliberative communication. In our sample of 14 countries, these conditions co-exist in only three, Austria, Germany and Sweden.

Another important result is the impact of EU funding policy on the CMM of the 9 CEE countries in our sample. In a situation where domestic funding is scarce and is extremely difficult to obtain in competition with the hard sciences, participation in EU funded international projects and COST actions is an invaluable way for less wealthy countries to advance their JMC research. Here, Estonia is a good example of how EU funding has contributed particularly to JMC scholarship (among other topics, research on the digital competencies of children and young people, media accountability, the media–democracy relationship, and indeed, diagnosing ROs for deliberative communication).

Although this chapter does not go deeply into the details, it gives a holistic view of the development of the conditions of CMM in the 14 Mediadelcom countries using diachronic qualitative meta-analysis.

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