

From Media Systems to Media Cultures

In From Media Systems to Media Cultures: Understanding Socialist Television, Sabina Mihelj and Simon Huxtable delve into the fascinating world of television under communism, using it to test a new framework for comparative media analysis. To understand the societal consequences of mass communication, the authors argue that we need to move beyond the analysis of media systems and instead focus on the role of the media in shaping cultural ideals and narratives, everyday practices, and routines. Drawing on a wealth of original data derived from archival sources, programmes and schedule analysis, and oral history interviews, the authors show how communist authorities managed to harness the power of television to shape new habits and rituals yet failed to inspire a deeper belief in communist ideals. Their analysis in this book contains important implications for the understanding of mass communication in non-democratic settings and provides tools for the analysis of media cultures globally.

Sabina Mihelj is Professor of Media and Cultural Analysis at the Centre for Research in Communication and Culture at Loughborough University. She has written extensively on issues of media and nationalism, comparative media research, television studies, Eastern and Central European media, and Cold War media and culture. Her books include Media Nations: Communicating Belonging in the Modern World (2011) and Central and Eastern European Media in Comparative Perspective: Politics, Economy and Culture (2012). Her research was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Economic and Social Research Council, the British Academy, and the Leverhulme Trust.

Simon Huxtable is Visiting Fellow in Media and Cultural History at Loughborough University. His research focuses on the social and cultural history of late socialism. His research has been published in journals including Contemporary European History, Cahiers du Monde russe, and Media, Culture and Society, and in a number of edited volumes. He is currently writing a monograph on the Soviet press and the public sphere after 1945, based on his doctoral research. His latest project focuses on the notion of the 'Socialist Way of Life' in the USSR and GDR.



Communication, Society and Politics

Editors

W. Lance Bennett, University of Washington Robert M. Entman, The George Washington University

Politics and relations among individuals in societies across the world are being transformed by new technologies for targeting individuals and sophisticated methods for shaping personalized messages. The new technologies challenge boundaries of many kinds – between news, information, entertainment, and advertising; between media, with the arrival of the World Wide Web; and even between nations. Communication, Society and Politics probes the political and social impacts of these new communication systems in national, comparative, and global perspective.

Other Books in the Series

Erik Albæk, Arjen van Dalen, Nael Jebril, and Claes de Vreese, *Political Journalism in Comparative Perspective*

Eva Anduiza, Michael James Jensen, and Laia Jorba, eds., Digital Media and Political Engagement Worldwide: A Comparative Study

C. Edwin Baker, Media Concentration and Democracy: Why Ownership Matters C. Edwin Baker, Media, Markets, and Democracy

W. Lance Bennett and Robert M. Entman, eds., *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*

Rodney Benson, Shaping Immigration News: A French-American Comparison Bruce Bimber, Information and American Democracy: Technology in the Evolution of Political Power

Bruce Bimber, Andrew Flanagin, and Cynthia Stohl, Collective Action in Organizations: Interaction and Engagement in an Era of Technological Change

Lynn S. Clark and Regina Marchi, Young People and the Future of News Murray Edelman, The Politics of Misinformation

Frank Esser and Barbara Pfetsch, eds., Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases, and Challenges

Theories, Cases, and Challenges

Myra Marx Ferree, William Anthony Gamson, Jürgen Gerhards, and Dieter

Rucht, Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States

Hernan Galperin, New Television, Old Politics: The Transition to Digital TV in the United States and Britain

Tim Groeling, When Politicians Attack: Party Cohesion in the Media

(continued after the Index)



From Media Systems to Media Cultures

Understanding Socialist Television

SABINA MIHELJ

Loughborough University

SIMON HUXTABLE

Loughborough University





CAMBRIDGEUNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108422604 DOI: 10.1017/9781108525039

© Sabina Mihelj and Simon Huxtable 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Mihelj, Sabina, author. | Huxtable, Simon, 1980— author.

TITLE: From media systems to media cultures: understanding socialist television /
Sabina Mihelj, Loughborough University; Simon Huxtable, Loughborough

University.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. | Series: Communication, society and politics

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2018003690 | ISBN 9781108422604 (hardback)
SUBJECTS: LCSH: Communism and mass media. | Mass media – Political aspects. | Mass media – Economic aspects. | Mass media and culture. | BISAC: POLITICAL SCIENCE / Government / International.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC HX550.M35 M54 2018 | DDC 335.4-dc23 LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018003690

ISBN 978-1-108-42260-4 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.



Contents

List	t of Figures	<i>page</i> vi
List	t of Tables	viii
Ack	nowledgements	ix
List	of Abbreviations of Archival Sources	xii
I	Introduction	I
	PART I CONCEPTS AND CONTEXTS	
2	Comparing Media Cultures	25
3	State Socialist Television in Historical Context	58
4	Television and Varieties of Modernity	92
	PART II THE SPACES OF STATE SOCIALIST TELEVI	SION
5	Publicness	117
6	Privacy	146
7	Transnationalism	177
	PART III THE TIMES OF STATE SOCIALIST TELEVI	SION
8	Everyday Time	207
9	History	233
10	Extraordinary Time	261
ΙI	Conclusions	294
Met	thodological Appendix	322
References		330
Index		359



Figures

	1 , 0 , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	ge 65
3.2	Passersby watching the early TV broadcasts on the streets of	
	Belgrade, 23 August 1958.	75
3.3	Growth of broadcast hours in a sample week, 1960–1990.	79
4.1	Berlin TV tower, 1970.	104
5.1	Programme structures of selected broadcasters globally,	
	1971–1972.	123
5.2	Programme structures in five state socialist countries,	
	1960–1990.	132
5.3	Trends in the proportion of entertainment in five state	
	socialist countries, 1960–1990.	133
6.1	Interviewees from Serbia in front of the TV set in their kitchen.	155
6.2	Hungarian family watching television, c. 1981.	155
6.3	Members of the Petrović family from the Yugoslav series	
	Theatre in the House.	166
6.4	Stefan Karwowski with his wife, Magda, from the Polish	
	series The Forty-Year-Old Man.	168
7 . I	Trends in the share of imported programming in total	
	broadcast content, 1960–1990.	183
7.2	Trends in the share of foreign serial fiction imported from	
	Western countries, 1961–1990.	189
7.3	Trends in the share of foreign programming imported from	
	Western countries, 1960–1990.	190
8.1	Sample weekday schedules from Yugoslavia and the Soviet	
	Union.	216
9.1	Scene from the Yugoslav serial <i>The Outcasts</i> (1974).	24 I
9.2	Share of historical drama in domestically produced serial	
	fiction	245



	List of Figures	vii
9.3	Tankmen Olgierd and Gustlik with their dog Szarik, from	
, ,	the Polish serial Four Tankmen and a Dog.	254
10.1	Labour Day parade followed by TV cameras in Budapest,	
	Hungary, 1974.	266
10.2	Sample festive schedules, Romania and Yugoslavia.	268
10.3	Sample media disruption schedule: Brezhnev's death, Soviet	
	Union.	28т



Tables

3.1	Diffusion of TV sets: trends in the number of inhabitants	
	per TV set, 1960–1990	page 78
3.2	State socialist television systems in Eastern Europe: three	
	models	86
6.1	Plots and settings of serial fiction	161
7.1	Estimated share of imported programming and	
	serial fiction	181
7.2	Origin of imported programming and serial fiction	186
9.1	Key events and periods represented in historical serial	
	fiction	248
10.1	Major public holidays in state socialist countries	263
10.2	Five cases of media disruptions: an overview	279
А.1	Life-story interviews: sample structure	323



Acknowledgements

While working on this book, we have accrued many debts. First of all, a comparative project of this kind would not have happened without substantial institutional support. This book represents the culmination of a research project entitled Screening Socialism: Popular Television and Everyday Life in Socialist Eastern Europe (2013-2016), which was generously funded by the Leverhulme Trust. Despite frequent expressions of commitment to interdisciplinarity and blue-skies research in contemporary academia, funding bodies that consistently and systematically fund interdisciplinary research are few and far between. The distinct mission of the Leverhulme Trust sets it apart from many other funding bodies in this respect, and we are immensely grateful that the reviewers and the panel found it worthwhile to invest in what must have seemed, at the time, a rather risky project on a relatively obscure topic. From the very start, Loughborough University and the Centre for Research in Communication and Culture have provided an inspiring and supportive home for our research, and we are indebted to many colleagues, old and new, who have supported us with criticisms, suggestions, and encouragement.

We are especially indebted to the many colleagues who participated in the *Screening Socialism* project and helped us make it a success. These include, first of all, Alice Bardan and Sylwia Szostak, who played a major role in acquiring the materials for two of the five countries we investigate in the book. Many other researchers assisted us with acquiring some of the materials, transcribing and translating interview data, or supporting the project in other ways: Alex Boican, Magdalena Bugajska, Marijana Grbeša, Emily Harmer, Polina Kliuchnikova, Ivan Kozachenko, Antonios Kyriopoulos, Aleksandra Milovanović, Cristina Preutu, David Smith, and Mila Turaljić. Finally, advisory board members Anne



x

Cambridge University Press 978-1-108-42260-4 — From Media Systems to Media Cultures Sabina Mihelj , Simon Huxtable Frontmatter More Information

Acknowledgements

Gorsuch, Ann Grey, Thomas Lindenberger, and Michael Pickering offered invaluable advice on different aspects of our research as well as provided comments on our publication plans and drafts.

The launch of the Screening Socialism project happily coincided with the formation of the European (Post) Socialist Television History Network, led by Dana Mustata, which helped us establish and sustain an ongoing conversation with several colleagues with expertise in state socialist television history, including Cristine Evans, Ferenc Hammer, Anikó Imre, Lars Lundgren, Alexandru Matei, Mari Pajala, Cristina Preutu, and Irena Reifova. We would also like to express our gratitude to the following, who have, with their valuable criticism, suggestions, and encouragement, supported the development of the Screening Socialism project and this book in a variety of ways: Catherine Baker, Jérôme Bourdon, Paulina Bren, Deborah Chambers, Christoph Classen, Nevena Daković, David Deacon, John Downey, Kirsten Drotner, Igor Duda, Astrid Erll, Andreas Fickers, Heather Gumbert, Karol Jakubowicz, Nadia Kaneva, Emily Keightley, Judith Keilbach, Gholam Khiabany, Yuliya Komska, Stephen Lovell, Kati Lustyik, Julia Obertreis, Susan Reid, José Ricardo Carvalheiro, Ann Rigney, Kristin Roth-Ey, James Schwoch, Joes Segal, Marsha Siefert, James Stanyer, Liz Stokoe, Petr Szczepanik, Ana Tominc, Ekaterina Vikulina, Rolf Werenskjord, Odd Arne Westad, Liesbet Van Zoonen, and Barbie Zelizer.

Like any book reliant on historical sources, ours would not have been possible without the support of numerous archivists working in both national and local archives and libraries as well as broadcast archives across Eastern Europe and beyond. Many of them have gone well beyond their call of duty to accommodate our many requests. We are also indebted to the 171 interviewees who agreed to share their memories of television with us and thereby enabled us to reconstruct the experience of life with the small screen from the perspective of audiences. In particular, we would like to acknowledge those individuals who helped facilitate interviews with friends and family members and extended hospitality to the book's authors and other researchers.

Many of the arguments presented in this book were previously aired at conferences and symposia organized by national and international associations, and we have benefited greatly from the comments received and questions asked by the participants. These include the European Communication Research and Education Association conferences in Istanbul in 2012, in Lisbon in 2014, and in Prague in 2016; the European Network for Cinema and Media Studies conferences in



Acknowledgements

хi

Prague in 2013, in Milan in 2014, and in Łodż in 2015; the International Communication Association Communication History pre-conferences in Seattle in 2014 and in San Diego in 2017; the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies conventions in San Antonio in 2014 and in Washington, DC, in 2016; and the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies conference in Cambridge in 2015. We have also had the fortune of receiving invitations to many thematically more focused international conferences and workshops, including the workshop 'Radio - das Medium der Ideologie' in Konstanz in 2013, the conference 'Television in Europe beyond the Iron Curtain' in Erlangen-Nürnberg in 2013, the 'Third Annual Screen Industries in East-Central Europe Conference' in Olomouc in 2013, the inaugural meeting of the European (Post) Socialist Television History Network in Stockholm in 2013, the conference 'Cold War and Entertainment Television' in Paris in 2014, the conference 'Media and the Cold War, 1975-1991' in Volda in 2014, the workshop 'Transnational Media Relationships during the Cold War' in Potsdam in 2014, the conference 'The Pleasures of Backwardness' in Berkeley in 2015, the 'Symposium on Late Socialism' in Tallinn in 2015, the COST Action ISTME workshop 'The Audiovisual Production of Transcultural Memory in Europe' in Dubrovnik in 2015, the workshop 'Comparative Studies of Communism' in Sofia in 2015, the conference 'Material Cultures of Television' in Hull in 2016, and the workshop 'Cold War Mobilities and Immobilities' in Budapest in 2017. Finally, we have also presented our work at departmental seminars and similar events organized in the United Kingdom, including at the University of Cambridge, Loughborough University, and the University of London.

The support of Cambridge University Press has been impressive throughout, particularly the assistance of Sara Doskow and her team, and the editors of the Communication, Society and Politics series, Lance Bennett and Robert Entman. We are also grateful to the three anonymous reviewers who commented on the book project at various stages of its evolution.

Finally, we owe special thanks to our partners and children, who have gracefully endured all the side effects of our passion for state socialist television: Clara, Emma, Jovan, and Chrysi.



Abbreviations of Archival Sources

AHRTV Arhiv Hrvatske radio televizije/ Archive of Croatian

Radiotelevision, Zagreb, Croatia

AJ Arhiv Jugoslavije / Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade,

Serbia

AMDTR Arhiva Media și Documentare, Televiziunea

Română/ Romanian Television Media Archive,

Bucharest, Romania

ANR Arhivele Naționale României / The National

Archives of Romania, Bucharest, Romania

DRA Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv / German Broadcasting

Archive, Potsdam- Babelsberg, Germany

FFN Fototeka Filmoteki Narodowej / Photo Collection of

the National Film Archive, Warsaw, Poland

Fortepan Online Photo Archive, Hungary

GARF Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rosiiskoi Federatsii / State

Archive of the Russian Federation

HDA Hrvatski državni arhiv / Croatian State Archives,

Zagreb, Croatia

NAC Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe/ National Digital

Archives, Poland

NARA National Archives and Records Administration,

Washington, DC, USA

RGALI Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i

iskusstvo / Russian State Archive of Literature and

Art



List of Abbreviations of Archival Sources

xiii

RGANI Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii /

Russian State Archive of Contemporary History

RTS-CIJMPA Radio televizija Srbija, Centar za istraživanje javnog mnenja, programa i auditorijuma / Radio Television

of Serbia, Center for Public Opinion, Programme and

Audience Research, Belgrade, Serbia

RTS-PATVB Radio televizija Srbije, Programski arhiv Televizije

Beograd / Radio Television of Serbia, Programme Archives of Television Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia

SAPMO-BArch Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisation-

en der DDR im Bundesarchiv / Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the

Federal Archives, Berlin, Germany

TsAOPIM Tsentr khraneniia dokumentov obshchestvenno-

politicheskoi istorii Moskvy – Fondy byvshego Tsentral'nogo arkhiva obshchestvenno-politicheskoi istorii Moskvy / Center for Preservation of Records of Socio-Political History of Moscow – Holdings from the former Central Archive of Social-Political

History of Moscow, Moscow, Russia

TNS OBOP Dział Dokumentacji Aktowej, Ośrodek Badania

Opinii Publicznej / Archive of Reports, Center for Public Opinion and Broadcasting Research,

Warsaw, Poland.

