PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING AND MEDIA SYSTEMS IN TROUBLED EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES

Edited by
Eva Połońska
and Charlie Beckett

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Introduction

Eva Połońska and Charlie Beckett

What's Happening with Our Democracies?

Democracy is in trouble, goes the recent message from political theory, from left to right (Crouch 2004; Rancière 2006; Hay 2007; Krugman 2012; Helleiner 2010; Offe 2006; Huntington 2004). The wave of 'post-democracy' debate that emerged in Europe in the early twenty first century believes the democratic moment is long gone for the democracies of Western Europe and North America. This is also true for non-Western countries that until recently have aspired to establish their democratic credentials.

Is there evidence of a global democratic backslide? Unfortunately, the answer is yes. Back in 1974, 30% of the countries (46) of the world were democratic. The figure rose to 60% with 114–119 countries considered as electoral democracies three decades later in 2006. In the period that followed, between 2006 and 2015, democracy experienced stagnation

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and decline (Diamond 2015). The V-Dem Annual report of 2017 also confirms that the average level of democracy in the world seems to have regressed to where it was some 10 or 15 years ago. Even if this change falls within the confidence levels, the report says, the trend in the data is 'worrisome'. At the same time, the decline is moderate and there is still much more democracy in the world today than before the end of the Cold War (V-Dem Report 2017).

What, then, are the symptoms of ailing democracy? As the post-democratic argument would have it, it is not the number of democratic countries but the quality of democracy that is in question. The traditional mass democracy, which was based on strong parties and the collective organization of social interests, is slowly dissolving, as globalization, deregulation, the loss of collective organizational capacity in society have eroded democracy from within. Formal processes and institutions of democracy are rapidly becoming a façade that have lost their democratic substance (Crouch 2004, p. 22). The long list of other indicators includes rising inequality, class antagonism, the lack of collective identity and a capacity for concerted action amongst the underprivileged, the influence of private money on political campaigns, the powerful position of global companies, the proliferation of lobbyists simultaneously with the erosion of collective organizations of the working classes and of workers' interests have won the balance of power and the transfer of political decisions to private actors and anonymous markets enhances business interests, medialization and manipulation of politics further endangers democratic politics (Krugman 2012; Offe 2006; Huntington 2004).

Although defenders of democracy are cautious about proclaiming a crisis, pointing instead to 'trendless fluctuations in system support' (Norris 2011, p. 241), or the need for empirical research to find evidence that the quality of democracy has declined (Merkel 2014), it is not at all clear in well-established democracies today who governs, who participates, and whose interests are represented.

How does this new post-democratic power situation affect communications and the media? It has resulted in decreasing trust in political authorities, rising dissatisfaction among democrats, weakening performance of democratic institutions, including the media, and the overall destruction of democratic gains of the twentieth century (Dalton 2008; Pharr and Putnam 2000, p. 25). Overall, the Schumpeterian minimalist concept of 'electoral democracy' is still practised and upheld, yet, constitutional liberalism and the rule of law have deteriorated.

The components of liberal democracy that encompass control over government decisions by elected officers, free and fair elections, civil liberties such as freedom of expression and access to alternative sources of information, freedom to form associations that seek to influence the government by competing in elections and by other peaceful means (Dahl 1989, p. 233) are now at stake.

The Rise of Populism

The crisis of representation, decreasing trust in democratic institutions and democracy in general, and the declining voter turn-out at elections—trends particularly evident among the young (Foa and Mounk 2017), have made space for another phenomenon that is troubling our democracies, namely the rise of populism. Voters increasingly endorse populist candidates and anti-regime parties. After the election of the Fidesz government in Hungary in 2010 and the Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland in 2015, the shocks of Brexit and Trump in 2016, not to mention elections in major European states including Britain, the Netherlands, France and Germany in 2017, populists have reinforced their influence on mainstream politics.

Populists and autocrats have been accused by Freedom House as a 'dual threat to global democracy' (2017). The Freedom in the World Report observed that populist and nationalist forces continued making significant gains in democratic states throughout 2016, marking the 11th consecutive year of decline in global freedom. There were setbacks in political rights, civil liberties, or both, in a number of countries rated 'free' by the Report. Some examples from Europe include France, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Spain and the Czech Republic.

The arrival of populism in mainstream politics is problematic for liberal democracy for several reasons. Firstly, populism stands at odds with pluralism, the core liberal democratic ideal (Mudde 2017). Pluralism sees society and the people as internally divided in multiple groups. It values and respects societal divisions and works through compromise as its natural ally and main instrument of politics. Pluralism is on a constant quest for compromise, concessions and for the middle ground. Yet, with the arrival of populists in governments pluralist negotiations are discarded by populists as 'special interests', compromise is rejected as defeat. Moral terms that determine the rules of the game for populists perceive compromise with the elite as having a corrupting influence on the people, as

turning the pure into impure. Although pluralism continues to inform ideological programmes of most political parties, it is increasingly challenged by populism across the world.

Secondly, populism does not respect the rule of law and institutions of liberal democracy. Research shows that, once in government, populists tend to embark on a process of radical constitutional and institutional reforms (Stavrakakis et al. 2016). Although populists offer a wide array of social reforms in order to fight poverty and exclusion, they tend to subvert the institutions and the values of liberal pluralistic democracy (Hawkins 2010; Panizza 2009). In Europe, populists' assault on the mechanisms of checks and balances among state institutions, the independence of the judiciary, as well as the political rights of the opposition, and enlisting the state in the service of partisan politics, have become the way forward in an increasing number of countries. 'Backsliding' and reverting to semi-authoritarian practices, has become the new norm. This volume looks at several European countries that already have populist governments in place. It looks at how their policies affect media industries, policies, practices and output.

It has been argued that populism lacks its own normative ideas about society, its organisation and purpose, or that it offers a 'thin' or 'thin-centred' ideology at best (Abts and Rummens 2007; Mudde 2004; Stanley 2008). Some scholars openly reject the term ideology and define populism as a communication style (Jagers and Walgrave 2007), discourse (Lowndes 2008; Panizza 2005), political argument (Bimes and Mulroy 2004), political appeal (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009), political style (Moffitt 2016; Moffitt and Tormey 2014), or rhetoric (de la Torre 2010). Whatever its name, however, media, communication, discourse, the use of new media environment, all lie at the heart of populism.

Media in Troubled Democracies

Media have emerged both as victims and as instruments of this democratic degeneration. More and more politicized, in many cases outright colonized by political parties, media organisations across Europe have found themselves either directly involved in political struggles or have been turned into mere communication devices of major political players.

A vibrant democracy needs free, independent and pluralistic media. A free press is assumed to be an essential feature of democracy. A free press

operates as a check on politics and as a link between the citizens and their political representatives: 'it is an instrument for holding governments accountable, and for citizens to get informed, communicate their wishes and participate in the political decision-making' (Voltmer 2004). The democratic media relates to the freedom of speech and information, media pluralism, access to the media by minorities and the independence of the media (McConnell and Becker 2002). The word 'independent' refers to independence from governmental, political or economic control, or from control of materials and infrastructure essential for the production and dissemination of media products and programmes. What is meant by *pluralistic* media is the end of monopolies of any kind and the existence of the greatest possible number of newspapers, periodicals and broadcasting stations, reflecting the widest possible range of opinions within a community.

The ideal media environment in consolidated democracy consists of two sectors, namely, a market- and non-market-led sector. Within the market-led or private sector, programmers are free to provide content of their choice, advertisers can present their goods to target audiences, and audiences are informed and entertained to the extent that the market allows. The non-market or public service sector provides balance and ensures that the needs of minorities are also met. It creates a forum in which a common discourse emerges and which allows people to function within a society (McConnell and Becker 2002, p. 4). For both sectors to co-exist, there must be legal and institutional, as well as socio-cultural, support in place. For example, the market sector must be protected from government interference, and audiences against media abuse. Legal support must produce defamation laws, anti-trust legislation, laws limiting ownership concentration, licensing laws, rules on harmful content and advertising. Citizens must be guaranteed the right to information and various voices in society must be guaranteed freedom of expression and the right to communicate. The socio-cultural base for the free media must include training for journalists and politicians on the functioning of free press and open society, as well as a general education system that encourages values of pluralism and tolerance within society (Jakubowicz 2001, 2007).

The above features belong to an ideal model of democracy and the media's role in it. In practice, we have witnessed an erosion of those values. Therefore this book examines the media in their capacity to provide space for uninhibited public debate and free speech, which was later

extended to the demand for a free press (Keane 1991). It looks at how the media provide a platform for contradictory voices to compete for public recognition without the interference of the state, how disputes are negotiated between the state, societal groups and the media. We examine whether the media act as a democratic quasi-institution, taking on the role of 'watchdog' or 'Fourth estate' that keeps political authorities accountable by monitoring their activities and investigating possible abuses of political power (Curran 1993). We explore the media's role as information provider. In a political system where political power is allocated on the basis of popular decision-making, the competence of the citizens to make informed choices is of utmost importance, as the quality of democratic decision-making is closely linked to the quality of information provided by the media (Voltmer 2004, p. 4).

In sum, this volume examines whether and how the combined set of arguments that established the normative justification of the political role of the media in Western democracies—diversity, information for enlightened citizenship, and public watchdog and government accountability—still protect the objectives and interests of the individual *vis-à-vis* the state in the new, post-democratic environment.

Public Service Broadcasting and the Need to Rethink 'Public Service'

As one of the most important cultural institutions in Europe in the second half of the twentieth century, public service broadcasting (PSB), more recently public service media (PSM), have played an central role in creating, maintaining and communicating important values in society, and in creating and maintaining a national culture. Not only have broadcasters informed, educated and entertained the public as part of their remit; in addition, they have provided their audience with a common set of references. The nation has gathered around programmes and events broadcasted on radio and TV, and in bringing the nation together, the broadcasting institutions have played a key role in the national public sphere.

Due to the processes of economic and cultural globalization and the digitalization of the broadcast media, broadcasters are facing serious challenges to their legitimacy as publicly funded media institutions (Lowe and Hujanen 2003; Lowe and Jauert 2005; Lowe and Bardoel

2007; Lowe and Steemers 2012; Carlsson 2013). The principle of universalism is based on four dimensions: (1) access and reach, (2) genres and services, (3) relevance and impact, and (4) financing, with attendant obligations. Providing a universal service is a legal requirement for PSM that has crucial importance for the potential of the enterprise to cultivate enlightenment, encourage social cohesion, and provide a fair, full and equitable range of media services. How practical is this aspect of the PSM mission in our increasingly diversified and divided societies and in our troubled democracies today?

PSB is no stranger to crisis. In fact, the theme of the crisis of PSB is already forty years old. From the 1980s its supposed decline, fall and then, survival have been endlessly discussed. Yet, this crisis may seem more acute today, as it is also a crisis of general-interest channels, thus commercial channels also: PSBs face not only their long-standing commercial competitors and cable, but increasingly, web-based and over-the-top platforms as well. From a political point of view, budget cuts and political interventions are on the agenda. Production processes are transitioning more rapidly than ever. Indeed, it might be said that the foundations of the traditional public service concept are crumbling. Public service ideals must be re-defined, as must the agents which can best serve them, their mode of financing and their relationship with the state. Such platforms are increasingly transmedia, and the word 'broadcasting' in PSB is now no less problematic than 'public service.'

Digitalization is another challenge to PSB institutions, in that one of the original and most powerful arguments for PSB, namely the scarcity argument, has been weakened. When the PSB institutions were founded, they had the privilege of being the only broadcasters in the analogue terrestrial network. As the network is now digitalized, it no longer exists alone. A number of channels can be distributed through the network and as a consequence, the PSBs have to be legitimized by different means (Roppen et al. 2010). Digitalization also leads to greater fragmentation of the audience, as the technology allows for content to be consumed on a number of platforms, whenever it suits the consumer (on-demand media consumption). Because PSB institutions were meant to provide the audience with a common set of references and to promote national culture, this media development brings with it the necessity to make a new set of arguments regarding the maintenance of a publicly funded national media. This need is all the more pressing, given the ongoing processes of economic and cultural globalization that we are currently

undergoing. With an increasingly transnational media market, and with the national culture of nation states playing a less significant role in the face of the globalized culture industry, the legitimacy of PSB is being challenged on many levels.

Audiences are not immune to the changes in the media environment. While older audiences still rely on linear broadcasting in most countries, younger people increasingly prefer online services. The universalism challenge, so integral to the PSB mandate, is especially pointed in efforts to reach and serve younger audiences. The core challenge is how to develop the PSM remit and transform public service in media for all audiences—and not only as 'audiences' per se. PSM must deal more effectively with identity differences and shared needs among people in multicultural societies. Moreover, while the national purview of PSM is still extremely important, international sources of media content proliferate, demand is increasingly variable, and regional pressures are growing within nations. All of this, as the costs for providing PSM are rising and revenue has become insecure. Trust in public institutions has declined in many countries and traditional media institutions are often viewed with suspicion and criticised for being too politicised.

This book provides an account of the most recent political, economic and technological developments in PSM in Europe and its periphery, hoping to provide food for thought for further debate and re-examination of PSB. Traditional public service broadcasters ideally designed to serve citizens rather than consumers to inform the national conversations in well-informed democracies face the multiple challenges of commercialization (since the 1980s), later digitalization (since the 1990s) and most recently politicisation. The question of their survival in this context has been posed again and again. The need for a redefinition now seems unavoidable.

About This Book

This book provides the most recent overview of media systems in Europe. It explores the new political, economic and technological environments and the challenges they pose to democracies and informed citizens. It also explores the new illiberal environment that has quickly embraced certain European states and its impact on media systems. It considers the sources and possible consequences of these challenges for media industries and media professionals.

Part I of the book pays special attention to the role of PSM that used to be the single most important social, cultural, and journalistic institution of the twentieth century. In the recent years, PSM has been under attack politically, ideologically, and technologically both in Europe and beyond. Today, PSM is in retreat and in most populist and semi-authoritarian states, it is used for state propaganda purposes.

The book begins with a defence of the **contribution of PSM to democracy,** in the form of a report by Steven Cushion, prepared for the European Broadcasting Union and kindly shared with us. This chapter examines the questions that PSM face about their continued role and relevance against the backdrop of a fast-changing and increasingly commercialised media landscape. It examines the evidence about news produced by PSM and considers the implications for democracy in two ways. First, it draws on the latest academic scholarship to examine the evidence about whether PSM produce news that is distinctive from their market-driven rivals. Second, it considers how informative PSM coverage is compared to their commercial competitors. The chapter assesses the latest research to establish whether public or commercial media systems offer the most effective way of raising public knowledge about politics and public affairs.

Carles Llorens gives an overview of the involvement of the **European Union** in the domain of PSB. He argues that although the EU has not challenged PSM in recent years, a new conflict focused on media freedoms and PSM is brewing, especially in the case the EU's newest members. In these countries, government threats and new laws are endangering the European PSM tradition of independence and neutrality. He argues that the issue of PSM independence is now among Europe's most pressing issues. The chapter outlines the EU's fight to preserve media independence in new EU Member States and the new battleground of the EU Commission since 2016. He argues that the fight could be conducted by the EU on two levels. First, exerting political pressure through the threat of applying article 7 of EU Treaty as freedom of information is a fundamental right. Second, preserving the independence of audiovisual regulators, which could be an indirect way to preserve free and independent PSM. He suggests that enacting these principles in the Audiovisual Media Service Directive could be a definitive solution in the long term.

Western Europe remains dedicated to public service television and its democratic purpose, providing stimuli for local and national

conversations, as well as for collective experiences. However, in an era characterised by shifting technological, cultural and political attitudes, the purpose of PSM is also changing. Our volume outlines the multi-level shifts in Western European societies: high levels of public disengagement from traditional political parties, falling levels of trust in major public institutions and citizens' willingness to identify with social groups beyond the level of the nation state. It reflects on the extent to which Western European PSM continue to represent the interests of societies. It considers the evolving role of the state and policy in addressing the political, social and cultural shifts in societies, and their changing responsibility in terms of funding, regulation, appointments and objectives.

Raymond Kuhn provides an overview of the long and chequered relationship between the state and PSM in **France**. Until the 1980s, the state exercised a monopoly in broadcasting that was particularly strongly enforced in the supply of television programming. Following the introduction of commercial channels and the privatisation of TF1 in the 1980s, a more competitive environment was established, with competition between public and private providers for audiences and advertising revenue. Competition has been enhanced in the 2000s with the transition to digital and the entry into the marketplace of new players such as Netflix. The state's relationship with PSM has evolved over this period, but some areas in which it continues to play an important role include funding (see recent debates about the licence fee and advertising), regulation (via a regulatory authority), appointments (sometimes directly, more frequently indirectly) and objectives (contractual discussions with the Ministry of Culture and Communication). This chapter addresses key aspects of change and continuity in the relationship between the state and PSM since 1945, assessing the extent of both political and economic liberalisation during this period. A second objective of the chapter is to address some contemporary issues involving PSM in the digital age, such as market share, funding, values and structural organisation. Some questions related to PSM (such as their contribution in a varied and extensive media market) are not new in themselves, nor are they confined to the French experience. However, their pertinence has increased in the digital environment, with the result that arguably the most important challenges now facing PSM in France are more economic than political.

Karen Donders, Hilde Van den Bulck and Tim Raats explore the governance and functioning of public broadcasters in **Belgium.** Belgium is a federal state and as part of the unique structures in place, extensive

policy competences rest with the distinct language communities. Among others, cultural and media policies are the autonomous responsibility of the French-, Dutch- and German-speaking communities. Whereas PSB commenced under the auspices of the Belgian state, its regionalisation became a fact throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The aim of the chapter is to sketch the governance and functioning of PSB in a divided country where not only policies, but also markets and audiences are very much separate. It pays attention to the importance of public broadcasters as institutions contributing to the cultural awareness of the Flemish (Dutch-speaking) community in particular and, at the same time, the downsides of a separated PSB regime in an already divided country.

In **Southern Europe** PSM are also confronted with challenges against the backdrop of a changing political landscape, ongoing economic problems and major social and cultural transformations in the region. PSM is still characterised by clientelism and instrumentalisation, as was the case demonstrated by Hallin and Mancini in the early 2000s. Politicised editorial appointments and manipulation remain common practice and have been further impeded by nationalist struggles and identity practices of regional governments. This chapter explores the decades-long debate about the political interference in PSM in Southern Europe to reveal that the intended autonomy and independence of PSM in the region remains a goal yet to be fulfilled.

Alessandro D'Arma embarks on the task of exploring the PSM **in Italy.** In the comparative literature the Italian RAI is often taken as a paradigmatic case of a highly (party) politicized public service broadcaster. Political interference has arguably been a constant feature of RAI's sixty-year-long history, although the forms in which this phenomenon has manifested itself have changed considerably over time. After briefly contextualising historically and comparatively the case of PSM in Italy, the chapter sets out to discuss recent developments, including the effects of recent reforms to RAI's governance and funding regimes. It then places these developments and the current debate over the role and future of RAI against the backdrop of a changing political landscape, the country's ongoing economic problems and major social and cultural transformations.

Petros Iosifidis and Stylianos Papathanassopoulos look at the state of PSB **in Greece.** While most Southern European public broadcasting systems are to some degree subject to political influence and dependence, in the case of Greece, public broadcaster ERT is, after four decades of

deregulation and the break-up of its broadcasting monopoly, still considered by many as 'state' rather than a 'public' broadcaster. This wide public perception stems from ERT's one-time role as a mouthpiece of government propaganda. As both radio and TV broadcasting were launched under dictatorships (the late 1930s Metaxas dictatorship and the mid-1960s Colonels rule respectively), they have been regarded as 'arms of the state.' Post-dictatorship politics and the restoration of Parliament in 1974 saw the Conservatives (New Democracy) and Socialists (PASOK) dominating the political scene, accusing each other of exercising too much government control over state broadcasting media. Today's left-wing SYRIZA government also attempts to influence ERT's output, which is at odds with the digital, deregulated electronic media landscape and consequent abundance of channels.

This situation has arisen largely from the political tensions in Greek society since the Second World War. These tensions, combined with the absence of a strong civil society and the market, have made the state an autonomous and dominant factor in Greek society that has to take on additional politico-ideological function. The state plays an active role in the formation of the Greek economy and policy and it is relatively autonomous from society. This makes the system less self-regulatory than countries with developed capitalism, such as northern EU states, Britain or the US. Lack of self-regulation spurs the state to intervene in the politico-ideological sphere and thus diffuse its repressive mechanisms. It is in this context that the chapter explains the rise of power of the media, and the decline of power of journalists and, of course, of ERT itself.

Ana Fernández Viso and Isabel Fernández Alonso discuss political instrumentalisation of, and interference in, PSM in **Spain.** State intervention in the media systems of Southern European democracies has been characterised by a logic of clientelism and instrumentalisation of PSM, as concluded, among other authors, by Hallin and Mancini (2004). With the aim of increasing the autonomy and the independence of PSM in Spain, after more than two decades of complaints and denounciations of political interference in the mid-2000s, the Spanish State and several regional governments, such as the Catalonia, adopted encouraging legislative changes affecting the governance models of their PSM. However, in the context of the economic and social crisis that broke out in 2008 and of the increasing political tensions associated with Catalan nationalism, regulatory counter-reforms were passed in 2012 that enabled parliamentary majorities underpinning the Spanish and the

Catalan governments to appoint the members of the PSM governing bodies. The chapter examines these highly politicized editorial appointments and numerous complaints of political manipulation practices present in both cases. It also explores an ongoing debate about the need to prevent the political interference in PSM for them to fulfil their democratic role.

Davor Marko looks at the transformation of PSB in the **Western Balkans.** Being an active part and actor of the 'third wave of democratization,' media have been entitled to amore prominent role in the process of democratization. Transforming the former state radio-television systems into public service broadcasters was meant to be among the most significant aspects of democratization in Western Balkan countries, a process that was complementary to the EU accession. Public broadcasters were normatively positioned in these societies as result of 'westernization' of media policies and compliance of these countries with Western standards and principles. The basic assumption, hindering the process of PSB transformation, was that free and independent media would be liberated from regime control and economic interest. However, in reality, the processes of social and political transformation have proven very slow and come burdened with the firmly established relations at the local level. This chapter examines the most prominent aspects of PSB transformation in Western Balkan countries, taking into consideration local context, factors influencing the process, and the most salient and contentious aspects and outcomes of PSB transformation, such as their independence, governance, funding model and content quality (including plurality and production excellence).

PSM in **Central and Eastern Europe** face problems of their own. Many power holders increasingly exert pressure on PSM management and editors in an effort to make them support their policies. Public service broadcasters struggle to uphold freedom, pluralism and independence. Hence, despite the democratic rhetoric that leaders typically employ, they tend to follow the authoritarian model of media-government relationship. Identity politics have also entered the region's media policies and so the aim to reclaim the 'nationality' of domestic media outlets has become a familiar ambition. Although politicisation of media, PSM included, is nothing new in Central Europe, the recent legislative changes and the ultra-nationalist narrative are radically changing the region's political, social and media spheres. Central Europe is rapidly turning away from its chosen democratic path towards illiberal

democracy. We explore the impact of this illiberal turn in the region's media industries.

Stanislaw Mocek gives an overview of the public debate over the role and purpose of the PSM **in Poland**. The chapter maps the most representative viewpoints and opinions given by political elites, media professionals and academic experts. It draws mainly on the parliamentary debate on PSM legislation that took place at the end of 2015 after the arrival of Law and Justice party (PiS) on the Polish political scene. The public service broadcaster proved to be the crucial element of the new administration whose plans envisaged turning it into 'national media', with the sole purpose of serving the government's agenda for 'good change.' Faced with the legislative machinations around the Constitutional Tribunal, as well as PSM, the EU launched the rule of law mechanism against Poland. This chapter explains the context of the debate over the media as well as its outcomes. It argues that alternatives to the government's proposal of 'national media' in the form of citizen broadcasting, although stoutly promoted by the opposition, have never materialised in post-communist Poland.

Eva Połońska-Kimunguyi examines changes introduced in PSM under the PiS government **in Poland** where PSM is, yet again, struggling to uphold freedom, pluralism and independence. In December 2015, the Polish Parliament passed a new law that entrusted the government with the power to appoint members of the management board of the public service broadcaster. Politicisation of PSM is not new in the region, but the recent changes have radically shaken up the Polish political, social and media spheres. They have also received harsh criticism from the Polish media and the European Commission, as well as representatives of European media associations. This chapter gives an overview of Poland's current political arrangements and examines the performance of the Polish public service broadcaster, its values, market share and sources of funding under the new PiS government. It examines the legal framework that sets out the principles of, and funding arrangements for, independent PSB, as well evaluating its implementation and associated outcomes. It also assesses the broadcaster's performance and its relationship with the Polish state, economy and society. The paper adds empirical evidence to the understanding of political, legal and social processes driving the democratic transition. The chapter concludes that Polish populism combined with a large dose of hyper-nationalism have taken the country away from democratic transition towards illiberal democracy.

Part II of the book ventures into media systems and Europe's periphery, where media continue to be utilised by the state in its quest for power. We explore the media systems in countries as diverse as Ukraine, Russia and Turkey that seem to be permanently locked in a 'grey zone' between democracy and authoritarianism. It examines the severe and systemic restrictions on their media and explains the corporatisation of the media with its links to big business and ruling parties that have all but eclipsed the independent press and freedom of expression, which are necessary conditions for a healthy democracy.

Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska provides a comprehensive overview of three decades of media democratic transitions in entire **Central and Eastern Europe**. Twenty-one post-communist countries in Europe embarked on democratic transformation after the collapse of their respective regimes between 1989 and 1991. Many factors contributed to transformations, such as geographical location, historical experiences and their respective levels of economic and cultural development. Although the concept of CEE emerged from the ruins of European post-communist/post-socialist states, the region is not a monolith with regards to democratic consolidation and European integration. It is quite a varied region with different political standards and levels of economic development. The media systems find themselves operating between a rock and a hard place, or rather between political pressure, leading to politicisation, and economic pressure, leading to commercialisation. These are the two negative tendencies that result in the low quality of the media in CEE countries. Three decades after the collapse of communism, four models of media and politics in the region have emerged in Central Europe: the Hybrid Liberal, the Politicized Media, the Media in Transition and the Authoritarian model.

Gábor Polyák looks at the media and politics in illiberal **Hungary**. This chapter examines some of the typical methods that illiberal regimes, such as that of Hungary in recent years, employ and combine into a sustainable state censorship system. These systems are neither hold-overs nor re-makes of the preceding totalitarian control systems. Limitations are imposed simultaneously on media pluralism, on freedom of opinion, and on freedom of information, both in the legacy, and in the online, media. In Hungary, Viktor Orban's second arrival to power in 2010 gave him a constitutional majority in Parliament, which he has used to an extent unprecedented in the EU, although it is will have many familiar aspect to those schooled in the world of the Soviet Union and the

Eastern Bloc. His establishment of ruling party domination has relied heavily on the use of media laws, coupled with control of the both the regulatory bodies and the media market. The chapter gives and overview of the major objectives of these policies and the means employed to effect the ensuing transformation in the media landscape.

Lada Trifonova Price explores post-communist media and the impact of democratization in **Bulgaria and Romania.** The twenty first century has seen dramatic changes affecting media and journalism in third-wave democracies and the former communist states of Bulgaria and Romania are prime examples of the transformation. While the newly emerging democratic media of the late 1980s received extensive credit for aiding revolutions throughout the region, they were soon regarded as part of the new status quo: docile and ready to serve their new political and corporate maters. The arrival of new digital media has further impacted on the conflicting and ambivalent journalistic culture in the societies emerging from repressive communist regimes. Despite some positive developments, the media markets in Romania and Bulgaria have not benefitted from a decade of EU membership. The public continues to be disappointed with the quality of the media and journalism in both countries. This chapter aims to evaluate the impact of democratisation on media and journalism in Bulgaria and Romania in the context of continuously deteriorating press freedom and a complex cultural discourse of post-communist journalism that blends professional values and norms from the communist past with those adopted during the process of democratisation.

Natalia Ryabinska provides an examination of new obstacles to media democratization in post-communist countries by looking at the case of **Ukraine.** The chapter explains the protracted transformations of media systems in post-communist Eurasia. It discusses theoretical approaches to the study of media systems in the region, which, unlike the new advanced European democracies such as Estonia or Slovenia, never managed to implement quick and substantial economic and political changes. Adopting wholly democratic systems, they situated themselves in a "grey zone" between democracy and authoritarianism. The chapter focuses on Ukraine, the post-Soviet country whose transformation before late 2013 might be described as vicious vacillation between shallow democratization and autocratic reversal. The paper explores "grey-zone" scholarship in comparative politics, identifying the obstacles to successful media reform which appeared in Ukraine after the communist collapse.

In contrast to those studies of post-communist media systems that often blame the culture inherited from communist and pre-communist times for the unfinished media reforms, the chapter focuses primarily on institutional and structural effects of delayed democratisation on the media sector. In case of Ukraine this delayed democratization resulted in a specific structure of media ownership with the news media concentrated in the hands of politically engaged business tycoons. This media concentration happened against a backdrop of intentionally weakened and dependent agencies of horizontal accountability (including state media regulators), fuzzy and contradictory legislation governing the media, as well as informal institutions of political interference in the media.

Daphne Skillen deals with the difficult topic of media and normalised mendacity in **Russia.** Russia has been instrumental in creating our global post-truth age. The chapter discusses the phenomenon of Russia's 'normalisation of lying' as a political tool that helps it to resolve conflicts and reconcile irreconcilables. The Putin regime has been particularly adept at utilising lies and fake news to silence dissent and destabilise western values. The Ukraine crisis is a case in point: a 'colour revolution' prevented from seeping across the border into Russia by inflammatory lies about Ukraine as a fascist, neo-Nazi, bandit state. These methods have not come out of the blue: they have been exercised by Russia's rulers and ruled for centuries to adjust to autocratic and totalitarian rule. Has Russia succeeded in pushing Trump and other demagogic leaders to copy its methods? Certainly when Kellyanne Conway famously spoke of 'alternative facts' we can't but observe similarities to Orwellian contradictions in Russia's politics, such as its definition of itself as a 'managed democracy.'

Simon Waldman and Emre Caliskan take on the erosion of media freedom in **Turkey.** Their chapter examines the severe and systemic restrictions on Turkey's media. After offering a snapshot of the profession of journalism during the period of military tutelage, the chapter goes on to explain that even after the armed forces were removed from political life press censorship intensified, especially under the rule of the AKP. While the erosion of the military's political power is a necessary development for democracy in general, the free and open press, another important pillar, was manipulated, co-opted, and, in some cases, it was unmercifully attacked and subdued by the AKP government. This chapter explains the dynamics of how the Turkish government was able to firmly sequester the media by exploiting a system that connects the