

Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Gunnar Nygren (eds.). (2015). *Journalism in Change. Journalistic Culture in Poland, Russia and Sweden*. Frankfurt, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford and Warszawa: Peter Lang Publishing, pp. 333, ISBN: 978-3-631-64921-3.

The book *Journalism in Change*, edited by Gunnar Nygren and Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, presents the main results of a research project comparing journalists and their views in three countries: Sweden, Poland and Russia. The book is thus very much a part of the turn towards comparative studies (in media research in general and journalism studies in particular) we have seen in the past decade. The research interests here are, broadly, to study how global trends impact different national journalism culture, and to identify and explain salient differences and similarities in how journalists perceive several interrelated aspects of their work in a context of change and fluidity. It is a set of starting points that are at once generic and comprehensive, and I am pleased to say that overall the book lives up to its initial promise to cover the breadth of the journalistic working experience in the three selected countries.

To give an idea of the comprehensive scope of the book, the authors (all participants in the *Journalism in Change* project) set out to comparatively cover the demographic characteristics of journalists (gender, age, education, etc.; in Chapter 3, by Michał Głowacki); the changing working conditions of journalists — which includes covering structural changes in the organization of work and the labor market, aspects of working conditions in journalism that are increasingly acknowledged as important but still rarely studied (Chapter 4, by Jöran Hök); journalistic autonomy, particularly as it relates to the ongoing digital transformation of the journalistic workplace (Chapter 5, by Gunnar Nygren); journalistic ideals, values and norms — and the central issue of the persistent gap between ideal and reality (Chapter 6, by Maria Anikina); the relationship between journalistic work and the journalistic field and the external fields of politics and commerce, and the impact of these relationships on journalistic quality (Chapters 7 and 8, by Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska), and finally the impact on journalism of new interactive technologies and practices (Chapter 9, by Elena Johansson). In short, the authors set out to cover more or less every key aspect of journalistic work covered in classic as well as recent literature, and to do it across three countries. The sheer ambitious scope of the book is thus its major strength. The data presented here is so comprehensive as to be almost overwhelming at times, yet always anchored in careful, grounded analysis. It is no mean feat to present an edited collection where all chapters fit together well (the chapter authors make frequent references to results from earlier chapters, creating a solid sense of an ongoing argument) and all clearly contribute to the same overarching story — which, as the title of the book suggests, is one of gradual but irrevocable change to journalism as a profession across the three countries studied (and globally as well).

In this sense — i.e. the ongoing changes to journalism as a profession — the main results of the book are not all that surprising. This is not a critique per se — after all, such is the nature of the cumulative endeavor of academic research. Rather, this book adds additional weight to many observations made by previous research. For example, Michał Głowacki's chapter on demographic characteristics of journalists (which includes the forms of their employment) well illustrates the increased precarity of journalistic work, but with some interesting comparative results: in Poland and Sweden, it is the young journalists (under 35) who are to a greater extent employed on more precarious temporary contracts, whereas in Russia it is rather the older cadre of journalists which shows a higher degree of temporary employment. Jöran Hök's chapter on working conditions tells a well-known story of intensified production conditions, and the demands of multiplatform production — but also of the overall often positive attitude to multiplatform production and the opportunities it affords. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska's chapters on the influence of the spheres of politics and commerce (the latter conceptualized under the well-known heading of “commercialization”) also support previous research and present the results one would expect, as they demonstrate a strong perceived influence of politics in Russia, a somewhat weaker such influence in Poland, and a virtually non-existent political influence in Sweden. What is somewhat more surprising here is Dobek-Ostrowska's strong assertion that the negative effects of commercialization (e.g. dominance of soft news over hard, increase in sensationalism, focus on lifestyle/entertainment news) are much more pronounced in Poland and to a large extent can be explained by the extent of foreign media ownership — the latter assertion would for example contradict research by Stetka (2012), which holds that foreign media ownership has generally been beneficial to CEE nations as it has kept local moguls/tycoons from thoroughly instrumentalizing the media. However, the evidence presented here is strong and the case well-argued, so the debate on the role of foreign media ownership in post-Communist nations continues.

The book is far from just presenting the “same old story” of de-professionalization of journalism and commercialization of news media, however. There are also many results here that are more surprising, or that provide even more striking and powerful illustrations of well-known trends. In the latter category is Gunnar Nygren's (Chapter 5) finding of the increased functional integration of the business and editorial sides of news production across all three countries: the creation of various forms of lifestyle supplements and the increase of lifestyle journalism in general is clearly made possible by a much closer relationship between business and editorial than has previously been the norm (as discussed on pp. 146–148). This trend is well-known among professionals and industry commentators, but has so far escaped rigorous scholarly attention — making Nygren's observations on this point highly relevant, particularly as the phenomenon seems to cut across national borders.

I would also like to highlight Maria Anikina's (Chapter 6) findings on career alternatives for journalists — these results speak volumes about the transformation of journalism (at least in some countries) into an occupation that is seen as a stepping-stone to other occupations, rather than an occupation you stay in over the course of your career. In Poland and Russia, roughly between 35 and 50 per cent of younger journalists (under 35 years) agree or strongly agree with the statement "To work as a journalist is a step in my career to other areas" (Table 6.8, p. 161). In other age groups, the number is also high, (about 40 per cent of the older — over 51 years — journalists in Poland also agree with or strongly agree with this statement) — except in Sweden, where numbers are significantly lower (about 10 per cent of younger journalists and barely 3 per cent of older journalists, on the same measure).

The trend of journalism as a "stepping-stone" occupation is further highlighted by data in the same chapter on the willingness of working in PR, and from Dobek-Ostrowska's chapter on journalism on politics (Chapter 7). In the latter chapter we see that a surprisingly large proportion of journalists would consider politics as an alternative profession (as many as 50 per cent of Russian journalists would consider politics as an alternative profession, as would 45 per cent of Swedish journalists; see Figure 7.2, p. 185). If we add to this Nygren's previous research on journalism as an occupation people are increasingly "passing through" (Nygren, 2011; see also Nygren's conclusions in Chapter 5 in this volume, p. 151), then the results presented in this book present additional robust evidence for a key element in the de-professionalization of journalism. While the trend is not equally pronounced across countries (less marked in Sweden, slightly more so in Poland, and fairly clear in Russia), the tendency is clearly the same cross-nationally. This, I would say, is one of the key results presented in this book as it points to a radical structural change in how journalism-as-work is both organized and perceived by those who work in the field.

Finally, I would also like to draw attention to the findings in Elena Johansson's chapter about interactivity and social media use in journalism (Chapter 9). Again, the overall results are hardly surprising: Johansson finds the same conservative attitude to new media that many previous studies have indicated (e.g. Hermida, 2012), but also that social media are quite commonly used in an everyday working context and that they seem well on their way to becoming integrated as natural tools for professional journalists (see pp. 243–254). What is somewhat more surprising is that it is journalists in Sweden, arguably the country with the highest internet and broadband penetration as well as the highest proportion of regular internet users, who are the most skeptical and most conservative overall when it comes to using social media in their professional life. Whereas Polish and Russian journalists can be quite positive to the interactive potential afforded by various social media and think it can improve the quality of journalism, Swedish journalists are much more negative. This result also convincingly demonstrates the necessity of adopting a comparative perspective when studying changes in journalism;

it is all too easy to assume that results from one country (read: the US) readily apply to other nations. It is obviously the case that attitudes towards audience interactivity and social media as a professional tool differs significantly between countries, and not always in the way we would expect it to differ, either.

In summary, this book offers an important contribution to the ongoing study of how journalism as an occupation and professional field is changing in the face of technological and economic restructuring. Across all the empirical chapters, the results lend support to previous research on key topics, but also develop earlier research in important ways — notable here is the strong empirical evidence for the ongoing erosion of the boundaries between the business and editorial sides of journalism, as well as the more detailed study of the (gradual) transformation of journalism into a “stepping stone” occupation, or a step on your career ladder rather than a career in and of itself. The comparative design adds significant value to the book in two main ways: one, as the comparative perspective shows salient and often somewhat unexpected differences between the three countries, and two, Poland and Russia in particular are interesting cases in themselves as they are nations rarely studied in the international literature on journalism. For all these reasons, I would definitely recommend this book to anyone interested not just in journalism in these three countries but in journalism and its future in general.

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Elena Vartanova (2013). *Постсоветские трансформации российских СМИ и журналистики* [Post-Soviet Transformations of Russian Media and Journalism]. Moscow: MediaMir Publishing, pp. 278, ISBN: 978-5-91177-059-4.

The book *Post-Soviet Transformations of Russian Media and Journalism*, authored by Elena Vartanova, the dean of the Faculty of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University, one of the leading media scholars in Russia, has passed barely noticed by the international media research community, as many books in national languages do today. Meanwhile, the book, in our viewpoint, deserves attention not only of those who study post-Soviet media systems but also by comparative media researchers around the world, as it provides an example of how a multifaceted theoretical context creates a lens for assessing the post-communist transformations of a today's media system.

The structure of the book is classic in terms of going from theory to practice. The book includes five chapters; four of them speak of relevant theories (Chapter 1), the structure of the media market (Chapter 2), factors that shape the dynamics of media development (Chapter 3), and Russian media policy (Chapter 4). All the parts