

Short Term Scientific Mission - REPORT

Journalism Students, Media and Populism

During my my short-term scientific mission from May 22 to May 27th, 2016 I visited the De l'université Paris 8 / Laboratoire Communication et politique. I was hosted by Gaël Villeneuve. We are both the members of the COST Action IS1308 and Working Group 2 "Media and Populism".

The aim of the STSM was to develop an initial idea for a comparative study on the journalism students' perception of the media and journalists' roles in the populist political communication. We primarily discussed that idea with Gaël Villeneuve during the COST Action IS1308 meeting in Odense, Denmark in August 2015.

Since 2013 I have been participating in the *Journalistic Role Performance Around the Globe* project, launched by Claudia Mellado from School of Journalism at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile. One part of that project is a study on *Journalism Students Around the Globe*, coordinated by Folker Hanusch from Queensland University of Technology, Australia. The project aims in recognizing the working journalists's and journalism students' motivations, attitudes to their profession, and role perceptions. In Poland a survey was conducted among students from six public (state) universities and one private university in November and December 2014. It was the first study that has ever been conducted among Polish journalism students in relation to a study on journalists: since similar questions were asked in both groups one may compare the answers).

The findings showed the current Polish journalism students, are more focused on their own individual careers than on the organizational affairs, while being still concern about a social mission of the media. They have an idealistic approach to the media and high expectations towards journalists, but they do not identify themselves with all the roles they believe media should play. It seems that they assume that the elder generations will focus more on monitoring politicians, providing analyzis and comments on domestic and foreign issues and educating the citizens. In other words, although they claim that the media should be more than just news providers, they are not very interested in playing that roles. The findings support the previous observations that age and a social and political factors ('generation') affect the professional role conception among Polish

journalists.

These conclusions, alongside with a significant change of a demographic profile of populist political parties' voters in Poland in last 2 years (in 2014 only 25 per cent of the KNP voters were over 40 years old, while 43 per cent of the Kukiz's voters in 2015 were between 18 and 25 years old), inspired me to plan a new study on the journalism students. Previously populist parties' supporters were mostly people above 65 years old, with an elementary level of education and a low or middle level of income. Therefore, I would like to examine in depth journalism students perception of the way media cover political issues and actors, especially populist ones.

I am planning to cooperate on that project with Gaël Villeneuve who has been conducting a similar study on the French journalism students. He and his colleagues have conducted a survey among 189 students from six journalism schools in France. They are interested not only in students' declarations and attitudes but also their professional performance once they graduate from the university (the study will be conducted till 2020).

Although professional education is not a precondition to work as a journalist in many countries, recent years have seen an increasing number of journalists who hold university degrees. So called „graduatization” or „academization” of journalism has additionally attracted growing scholarly scrutiny based on the belief that journalism education molds the perception journalists have of the roles and function of the media. Thus, we agreed that this topic is of a high significance not only in Poland and France, but also in other European countries, especially these with a high level of political paralelism of the media system. The study concerning prospective journalists' attitudes and perceptions goes across the areas of interest of the COST Action Working Group 2 (media) and Working Group 3 (citizens) and may be perceived as an additional opportunity for strenghtening the existing network and fostering the collaboration between the COST Action IS1308 participants.

During my 5-day long stay at the De l'université Paris 8 / Laboratoire Communication et politique I presented the findings of the Polish study and I discussed them with Gaël Villeneuve and Ivan Chupin (Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Paris), as well as with students of the De l'université Paris 8 / Laboratoire Communication et politique. We recognized both main similarities and differences between media systems in Poland and France, traditional and contemporary models of jurnalism and professional role perception among journalists and journalism students. While discussing the prospective journalists we focused on their motivations, attitudes, and expectations and future professional plans. After discussing the existing knowledge (literature and findings of the studies), we considered methods that may be used in a study on journalism students' attitude toward populist political actors, populist style of communication, and the role of the media in the process of populist political communication.

We also discussed the methods of dissemination of the knowledge on the media, political communication and populism among young people. The 2-hour seminar with journalism students of the De l'université Paris 8 / Laboratoire Communication et politique showed that students are eager to talk about their national media and political environment and compare it to other European countries. They expressed their interest in relations between media and politics accross Europe. The experience of the STMS inspired me to develop a concept of the lectures/presentations/workshops on media and populist political communication that I would like to present during the next COST Action IS1308 meeting in Prague in November 2016.

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