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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The website of the Spring Meeting is at <http://www.soc.cas.cz/rc28/>. Many of the papers presented at the conference are available on the website for download

For an overview of some of the more recent RC28 meetings, see the new RC28 website at <http://hevra.haifa.ac.il/rc28/>.

### **Report on the Media and Politics Conference – Izmir, Turkey, November 2007**

On 15–17 November 2007 the Turkish city of Izmir hosted an international conference on Media and Politics, organised by Ege University, one of three local state universities. The objective of this gathering of social scientists from three continents was to examine the relationship between the spheres of the media and politics in twenty conference sessions that offered a faithful reflection of the prevailing trends in media

studies at the turn of the millennium and, more narrowly, those aspects of them that relate to the connection between the media and politics or, if you will, to the way one sphere influences the other. The papers presented at the conference looked at its subject matter from various geographic (e.g. local media-local politics, global media-global politics), empirical (e.g. content analysis, discourse analysis), and paradigmatic (e.g. political economy, gender studies) perspectives.

As representatives of the host city it was Turkish political delegates who opened the conference. The tone of the Opening Session was signalled when the national anthem was played to the accompaniment of a short film that could best be described as propagandist, with shots of the Turkish flag against a background of black-and-white scenes from the life and battles of the Turkish army. Opposition politicians, in somewhat emotive speeches, drew attention mainly to the threat of censorship from the ruling AKP (Party of Justice and Development) and criticised the work of specific media and journalists. In this connection demands were aired on the podium that the Turkish media behave with greater responsibility and that journalists be required to members of a united professional organisation. The papers presented by political representatives tabled the question of whether perhaps the conference ought not to be called 'Media in Politics' instead of 'Media and Politics'. Individual speakers assigned the media a role in society that they then evaluated positively or negatively in accordance with whether they were a member of an opposition or government party. However, in either case the perception of the media was regarded in a limited or even short-sighted manner as primarily a tool in the political contest.

The keynote speakers at the conference were Denis McQuail (professor emeritus, University of Amsterdam), Ralph Negrine

(University Of Sheffield, UK), and Alexis Heraclides (Panteion University, Greece). McQuail [see e.g. McQuail 1992, 1994, 1997, 2003, 2005; Graber, Norris and McQuail 1998; Blumler and McQuail 1968], one of the best-known scholars in media studies, presented a paper on 'Media and Politics: The Role of Research', which confirmed him as a representative of the field's normative stream. He suggested that the developing field of political communication research has made a useful contribution to the development of a normative framework for considering the larger role of media in society. He based this, however, on a larger unwritten theory concerning the social role of the media, and he put forth the main content of the hypothetical theory in terms of the following propositions: 1) The media system as a whole should make available a range of channels and platforms open to diverse political and other relevant voices in the society in terms of access that are fair and equitable; 2) The media, in addition to the above, need to uphold certain standards of content quality in their own contributions to the democratic political process; 3) The media should offer their own independent information, comment, and assessments on current political events, issues, candidates and campaigns; 4) The communication strategies and performance of political actors should also observe certain standards.

In a paper titled 'Politics and Political Communication in the Networked Society' Ralf Negrine [see, e.g., Negrine 1989, 1996, 1998] spoke about the growing role of the internet in political communication and referred directly to the 'networked communication of politics' as a sort of political communication immersed in ongoing historical and political debates. In a speech he noted that the potential of the internet can alter the way in which we think about political communication and can make the public aware of the need to consider how political groups use the internet to spread

their messages in an unmediated way, bypassing traditional media but also adding to what is out there.

Alexis Heraclides, a speaker from Greece, mainly criticised the Greek-Turkish animosity and the way it is reflected in the media in both countries, but somewhat unfortunately, and without relevant arguments, he assigned greater responsibility for this situation and a greater lack of objectivity to the media and journalists of the host country.

Among the most interesting papers presented in the English sections on Political Communication and Political Discourse/Ideology of Media was the paper on 'Media and Otherness: An Analysis of Press Coverage of Pamuk's Nobel Case', in which Emre Gökalp (University of Eskisehir, Turkey) presented the results of a discourse analysis of the ten most read Turkish dailies in October 2006. At that time Orhan Pamuk, whose books mainly address the topic of the relationship and conflicts between the European and the Ottoman worlds, had just won the Nobel Prize for Literature, only the second Muslim in the history of the Prize to do so. Considering Turkey's interest in joining the European Union, the topics Orhan deals with are among the most current and, in some contexts, most controversial issues. The writer, who in February 2006 told a journalist from the Swiss *Das Magazin* that one million Kurds had been murdered in Turkey and to date still no one speaks of it, was charged in Turkey with insulting Turkishness, the republic, and its institutions owing to the statements he made in that interview. Although the trial was eventually dismissed under pressure from abroad, the way in which the largest Turkish newspapers wrote about Orhan Pamuk's having won this prestigious award reflected that sense of 'insult to Turkishness'. The writer was described in the press mostly in the terms of a national traitor, kowtowing

to the western public, and the Stockholm Academy was portrayed as an institution in league with Turkey's enemies. Only exceptionally was Pamuk hailed by Turkish journalists as a writer of the highest qualities for which he was recognised by being awarded by the Nobel Prize.

Two papers, one titled 'Deserving and Undeserving Woman' (Yasmin Jiwani, Reisa Klein, Canada) and the other titled 'From the 1990s Up To Now: Nationalism in Film and TV Serials in Turkey' (Günseli Pişkin, Turkey), were based on similar paradigms. All three speakers focused on the gender aspects of media content, though each of the two studies the presentations were based on differed in geographical focus and in content. The Canadian studies used content analysis to compare various aspects of the portrayal of native American women and women refugees from Afghanistan after 2001 in selected media in North America; the Turkish paper looked mainly at criticism of the adoration of attributes ascribed to 'traditional men' and the depiction of violence in modern Turkish-produced audiovisual media.

Czech media studies were represented at the conference by Tomáš Trampota (Charles University, Prague) who presented a paper on 'Communicating the US Radar: Influencing the Public by Shaping Media Coverage'. Using materials from a content analysis of selected Czech national newspapers he spoke about the Czech government's media campaign for locating the American antimissile radar in the Czech Republic.

Despite some obvious organisational

difficulties (the lack of information for foreign visitors, an inability to adhere to the programme schedule for individual sessions), on the whole the conference must be assessed positively. As doctoral students in media studies, primarily influenced by the Anglo-American literature and research tradition, these authors particularly valued the opportunity to become acquainted with research in the field by Turkish, Latvian, and Greek colleagues, to name a few.

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## **Sociologické studie/Sociological Studies 2007**

SS 07:4

### **THE CZECH LABOUR MARKET: CHANGING STRUCTURES AND WORK ORIENTATIONS**

Edited by Jiří Večerník

**Authors: Vladimír Benáček, Zdeněk R. Nešpor,  
Martina Mysíková, Natálie Reichlová, Jiří Večerník**

This study looks at a selection of topics to provide a multidimensional picture of the changing Czech labour force and its 'state of mind' and to identify some key problems in this area. In the first chapter, the Czech labour market is observed in various perspectives. The authors begin by describing the specific phases of labour market development in the 1990s, proceed to observe the changing composition of the labour force, labour mobility, and vulnerable categories of people, describe individual policies, especially active labour market policies, and various forms of labour market flexibility, and close with a discussion of some problems of further development. In the second chapter, the authors draw on income surveys covering the period between 1988 and 2002 to illustrate the changes in inequality of earnings and household incomes, the main factors behind their disparities, and the connections between these two distributions. The third chapter looks at the gender wage gap in the Czech Republic. The fourth chapter examines the transformation strategies of Czech agriculture after 1989 in the light of several case studies. The fifth chapter focuses on the dynamics of grand entrepreneurship, examining its roots and further development. The sixth chapter investigates changing work values and job attitudes between 1997 and 2005. The appendices contain texts documenting the changes to occupational structures over time and cross-nationally in a comparison with EU countries.



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