

HOMOGENOUS, OR HETEROGENOUS? A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE CZECH JOURNALISTS GENERATIONS

Václav MORAVEC - Marína URBÁNIKOVÁ - Jaromír VOLEK

ABSTRACT:

The goal of this article is to explore the degree of homogeneity among three generations of Czech journalists working (or intending to work) in the Czech media. We have defined three generations as follows: pre-transitive, transitive and post-transitive. Using a secondary analysis of data from two independent studies, which focused on describing professional attitudes of Czech journalists and journalism students, we are trying to ascertain the existence of the so-called "generational effect". Quantitative analysis including cluster analysis indicates no major attitudinal differences between all compared generations, in spite of radical socio-political and media system changes after 1989. In general, the comparison of the selected attributes shows striking homogeneity in all three journalistic generations that especially share their professional and political values. The key to a weak differentiation between the generations in question is their distinctive similarity in their acceptance of liberal right-wing ideology and high socio-economic capital, which interconnects all hypothetically constructed professional groups. There are also some partial differences, especially the low level acceptance of the predominance of market logic by the youngest post-transitional generation in the news media.

KEY WORDS:

comparative research, journalistic generations, generation effect, professional role, values

1 Introduction

The past twenty five years, which led to a radical transformation of the Czech (Czechoslovak) media system, present a challenge to the research of the journalistic profession whose transformation has not yet been studied in the domestic context from the point of the generational perspective.



PhDr. Václav Moravec, PhD.
Faculty of Social Sciences
Charles University in Prague
Smetanovo nábřeží 995/6
102 00 Prague
Czech Republic
vaclav.moravec@email.cz

Václav Moravec is a senior lecturer at the Department of Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, where he teaches several courses focused on the role of electronic media in post-modern society and media convergence. He is the anchor of a weekly TV political show Otázky VM.



Mgr. et Mgr. Marína Urbániková
Faculty of Social Studies
Masaryk University
Joštova 10
602 00 Brno
Czech Republic
m.urbanikova@mail.muni.cz

Marína Urbániková is a lecturer and a PhD candidate at the Department of Media Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic, where she also obtained her M.A. Recipient of several grants from Masaryk University and from University Development Fund of the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. She is currently involved in a research project "Czech Journalists in Comparative Perspective: An Analysis of the Process of Professionalization, Professional Socialisation, and Journalistic Career" funded by Czech Science Foundation (GACR). Her research interests include journalism education, journalism students, journalists and their professionalization, media systems, and research methods.



PhDr. Jaromír Volek, PhD.
Faculty of Social Studies
Masaryk University
Joštova 10
602 00 Brno
Czech Republic
volek@fss.muni.cz

Jaromír Volek lectures media and communication theories at Masaryk University, Czech Republic. He has earned his PhD in sociology in 2000, and in 2004-2011 he was the Head of the Media Studies Programme at the Department of Media Studies and Journalism. His main research topics are critical analysis of media, media audiences, and journalists' professionalism. More recently, he directs a research project "Czech Journalists in Comparative Perspective: An Analysis of the Process of Professionalization, Professional Socialisation, and Journalistic Career" funded by Czech Science Foundation (GACR). He is also interested in media literacy research. He has currently finished (with Art Silverblatt) a book entitled Mediální gramotnost. Jak rozumět obsahům médií (Keys to media literacy). He is the author of several analytical papers on the media performance in the process of political communication – in national, presidential and EU election campaigns.

The main aim of our study is to compare the selected attitudes of three generations of Czech journalists, who currently work or intend to work in domestic media. Two older generations bear the unique transitional experience of the late 1980s and early 1990s when the social equilibrium was shattered and they were forced to seek a new balance between old and new patterns of (professional) behaviour to be able to survive – socially and economically. In this specific historical period, old (professional) values, which had been passed from generation to generation, were reassessed and new patterns of professional behaviour were born. This formative double experience with the functioning and values of the disintegrating old regime on one side and the world of nascent pluralist liberal democracy on the other¹ is not shared by the youngest generation of Czech journalists. Its generational memory has stored some other, though not so dramatic experience. However, it also contains a negative experience with traps, which threaten journalists, especially their professional autonomy that has been weakening by changes in the structure of the Czech media ownership in the past years.²

2 The Generational Perspective in the Research of Socio-professional Attributes of Czech Journalists

Although the systematic research on journalists as a socio-professional group has been going on for almost fifty years, the generational approach has been performed only marginally. One of the reasons why might be the fact we lack unequivocal consensus on the definition of the term generation.³ It usually stands for individuals belonging to the same age group whose members share social and political experience formed under the influence of the most distinctive events within one historical period. Each generation has its own inner cultural and social stratification but it is not homogeneous and it is often characterised by different reactions to new historical situations which form several generational units within one generation. Mannheim⁴ relates “the sociological phenomenon of generations to rhythms of birth and death”, or to recurrent waves which culminate in the period of early adulthood of the new generation by approaching the dominant culture and remodelling it subsequently to certain extent. Not all generations develop what we could call original or specific consciousness. It depends primarily on the dynamics of social change, whether it is a gradual transformation, or radical, abrupt historical turn which resembles e.g. the collapse of old regime in November 1989, or the transition to a regime of radically different organisation. Thus Mannheim differentiates within one generation the individuals who share common attitudes, opinions, experience, and the individuals who belong to it only on the basis of age. Only for the former he uses the term generational unit. In this respect, Faver⁵ uses the term generational effect, which links a cohort with its key historical experience. We therefore speak of generational effect in situations when those who belong to one generation react to a specific socio-political situation in the same way and differ from the reactions of other generations. The definition of a generation therefore includes two meanings: a) a specific cohort, b) a historical period. The ambiguous nature of this term brings up a key question: Do the differences between generations originate only from the experience they have gained in the course of the whole life cycle, or are they a result of one formative experience which is closely related to a specific historical turning point?

1 VOLEK, J.: Czech Journalists After the Collapse of the Old Media System: Looking for New Professional Self-Image. In DOBEK-OSTROWSKA, B., GŁOWACKI, M., JAKUBOWICZ, K., SÜKÖSD, M. (eds.): *Comparative Media Systems. European and Global Perspectives*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010, p. 171-194.

2 HVÍŽDALA, K.: *Pasti české, slovenské i světové žurnalistiky: Historické a současné*. In *Communication Today*, 2013, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 95-103.

3 KERTZER, D.: *Generation as sociological problem*. In *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1983, Vol. 9, p. 125-149.

4 MANNHEIM, K.: *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1952, p. 290.

5 FAVER, C. A.: *Women, Careers, and Family: Generational and Life-cycle Effects on Achievement Orientation*. In *Journal of Family Issues*, 1981, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 91-112.

Hence our definition of generation includes a) age characteristics and b) common generational experience of “radical social change”, which has taken part in socialisation of given generation and is to be seen mainly in the form of their socio-professional capital. We will use the term generation in the sense of a cohort formed especially by an experience with a particular relatively bounded socio-political period and its long-term socio-professional consequences. Marshall⁶ approaches the notion of a generation in a similar way; he perceives a generation as a “sociological reality” which includes a cohort whose members share common experience of some historical events.

Having accepted the premise that every experienced radical social change makes its partakers to act and interpret the following events under the influence of this formative experience,⁷ we can see two distinctive generations in the Czech journalistic community, or better yet, two models as ideal types of the generational processing of two key socio-political events of the last fifty years: a) the process of the so called “Prague Spring” which culminated in a military intervention of the Warsaw Pact armies, b) the disintegration of the pre-November regime and the transition to a new media system. These two historical events should help us later to find the causes of some generational differences as the consequences of the Czech journalists’ socio-historical thrownness which has been affecting their careers and their private lives up to now. In this respect we distinguish:

- a. the oldest, pre-transitional generation of journalists born after the February 1948 (part of which came back to media in the 1990s, after a forced “time out”), who were determined by the generational experience of the Prague Spring. This generation was confronted with the existence of double professional culture after the November 1989 and it has been criticised for using the “grammar” or “language” of the old regime, which was not in accordance to the prevailing idea of “market without adjectives” or of “the invisible hand of the market which should be liberated of all regulations”.
- b. transitive generation of Czech journalists which, at the beginning of 1990s, entered the media as hastily as the new media system was being formed and its members quickly took the posts which, in media with uninterrupted historical continuity, are usually performed by journalists one generation older. What was characteristic for this generation’s processing of the period of transformation was certain dose of resentment towards “fathers’ generation” (whom they partly replaced in the media) but also certain amount of naive moralisation which they partly used for (self)-legitimation of their own professional position that was seldom supported by any first-rate education and work experience. Therefore, part of this rising generation had to cover up, more or less purposefully, the old practice with a new rhetoric, which was to be perceived especially in the first half of the 1990s in the form of some journalists’ “activist” enthusiasm, not dissimilar to the promotion of the communist ideas from 1950s. In the perspective of the last two decades, we can see this compensatory transitive enthusiasm, in accordance with Sztompka’s idea⁸ of post-communist generations, being fatally burdened by “communist trauma”.
- c. The third, post-transitive journalistic generation differs from the previous two by its lack of experience with radical social transformation. In Mannheim’s conception,⁹ this characteristic makes it a generation forming no specific, original consciousness but only further reproducing or diffusing (post) the November ethos which represents only a mediated experience for this generation. However, this journalistic generation seems to compensate for its lack of dramatic historical experience by its identification with the current socio-technical transformation. This can be perceived as its key generation experience in this situation – the permissive liberal society

6 MARSHALL, V. W.: *State of the Art Lecture: The Sociology of Aging*. Paper presented at Annual meeting of the Canadian Association of Gerontology, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, presented in November 1980.

7 MANNHEIM, K.: *The Problems of Generations*. In *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1952, p. 276-320.

8 SZTOMPKA, P.: *The Trauma of Social Change: A Case of Post-communist Societies*. In ALEXANDER, J., EYERMAN, R., GIESEN, B., SMELSER, N., SZTOMPKA, P. (eds): *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, p. 193.

9 SZTOMPKA, P.: *The Trauma of Social Change: A Case of Post-communist Societies*. In ALEXANDER, J., EYERMAN, R., GIESEN, B., SMELSER, N., SZTOMPKA, P. (eds): *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, p. 193.

does not provide it with a chance of finding a real enemy. Thus the professional identity feature is the identification with the user submissive communication technology providing experiences of infantile omnipotence. The initial mover is not the technology itself though. It is the urge to find some distinctive, profession-identity features, which would provide its users with social and economic advantages in the journalistic field. In this respect, it disposes this generation of more self-confidence than the older generations disposed of when they'd entered a new media system. It could also be argued that the more the youngest generation believes in itself, the less it believes in any other meta-narrative, or any other traditional ideology. What they believe in is the all-embracing idea of (neo)liberalism without adjectives, the ideology which enhances its approval of the logic of free market competition, the existence of which they choose not to violate by useless moralisation which is something their older colleagues tend to do.

We have put these three models of generations to the test of attitudinal similarities, or better yet, of professional convergence as is outlined by several international comparative studies. Deuze,¹⁰ for instance, sees this professional convergence as a result of more or less shared professional journalistic ideology. This regards journalism primarily as "public service" realised under the same professional rules, its goal being to reach the "holy grail" of journalism – objectivity. In other words, the global journalistic trend brings the convergence of professional practices. This gradual homogenisation reflects the process of westernisation or Americanisation of non-western journalistic fields and represents cultural hegemony that can be observed on the following three levels:¹¹

1. The cognitive level, on which professional routine attitudes are formed,
2. The values level, within which professional roles and ideologies are formed, including general foundation of professional objectivity,
3. The performative level related to craftsmanship on which the very methods and routines of journalism are formed.

We presume that this homogenisation is especially effective in the journalistic cultures that lack continuity in their evolution and are under radical ideological changes or pressures. This has affected Czechoslovak or Czech journalism in the past hundred years: it was alternately censored, occupied, nationalised, and privatised in the name of a new power or relevant ideology.

In our study we will compare only some selected professional attributes related to journalistic profession:

1. generational socio-demographic characteristics including family, cultural and economic capital,
2. general and professional values of journalists,
3. journalist's view on fulfilling institutional journalistic roles which was not measured consistently with the help of the variables used by Hanitzsch.¹² We focused mainly on generational notions of:
 - a) their rights and obligations to influence social events. There is a set of indicators that imply to what extent journalists (as a generation) see their calling to actively support certain values, or to stick strictly to objectivity and neutrality,
 - b) professional attitude they should adopt to institutional form of power, like to its criticism and control on the one hand and to dancing attendance on the power on the other. Compared to the variables used by Hanitzsch,¹³ we included indicators of trust in three power institutions – Senate, Parliament and Government,

¹⁰ DEUZE, M.: *What is journalism? Professional identity and ideology of journalists reconsidered*. In *Journalism*, 2005, Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 442-464.

¹¹ HANITZSCH, T.: *Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory*. In *Communication Theory*, 2007, Vol. 17, No. 4, p. 367-385.

¹² HANITZSCH, T.: *Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory*. In *Communication Theory*, 2007, Vol. 17, No. 4, p. 367-385.

¹³ HANITZSCH, T.: *Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory*. In *Communication Theory*, 2007, Vol. 17, No. 4, p. 367-385.

c) their attitude to market and consumer role of media. With the commercialisation of media growing ever stronger, this criterion is becoming more and more significant indicator of the transformation of journalistic role – being shifted from professional imperative to serve the public to acceptance of the owner's aim to make profit through selling ever-bigger part of the audience to advertisers.

Considering the above stated theoretical basis we have formulated the following research questions:

RQ1. Do the analysed generations form clearly defined generational types?

RQ2. What are the most significant similarities and differences of the compared journalistic generations?

These main hypotheses have been set:

H1. We assume that it is the youngest, post-transitive generation of journalism students who dispose of the highest socio-economical capital.

H2. We assume that it is the post-transitive generation which demonstrates the highest rate of media interventionism.

H3. We assume that it is the post-transitive generation which shows the lowest acceptance of the market imperatives.

3 Research Sample(s)

The data collection for the compared groups was carried out separately with a gap of 11 years. First representative survey was accomplished in the period of June-September 2003. To define the probability sample we proceed in three basic steps. At first, we used a database of domestic print and audio-visual media that operate on a nationwide and regional basis. The basic criterion of choice was a marked share of the specific media on actual journalistic production for a wide audience. The basic sample included 109 units (editorial offices) characterised by the domination of news/public affair outcome. In the second step, selected editor's offices were asked to fill in a screening questionnaire that included information about the basic socio-demographic characteristic of journalists in the office. Thus we obtained the basic sample of 2,585 journalists. In the third step we constructed a probability sample – using a method of statistical projection – which represented the basic sample as a whole. Altogether, 406 journalists were surveyed who at the time of the research, more or less directly participated in shaping the editorial agenda, and in this sense they were responsible for its content.

Table 1 The Sample of Journalists According to Selected Socio-demographic Characteristics

Sex	%	N	Age	%	N	Education	%	N
Male	60 %	243	18-29	37 %	149	Tertiary	48 %	192
Female	40 %	163	30-39	30 %	122	Secondary	50 %	206
			40-49	20 %	81	Primary	2 %	8
			50-59	11 %	46			
			60 +	2 %	8			
TOTAL	100 %	406		100 %	406		100 %	406

Source: own processing

The second compared group consisted of students of the two largest domestic departments of journalism at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles University (Prague) and the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University (Brno). The data was collected from December 2013 to March 2014. The questionnaire was completed by 416 respondents from each of the five years of studies but only the students who indicated they want to work as journalists after graduation were included in the sample, which was 61 % of all respondents.

Table 2 The Sample of Journalism Students According to University and Sex

Sex	Masaryk University		Charles University		Sample
	Students surveyed	Students who have declared their interest in working as journalists	Students surveyed	Students who have declared their interest in working as journalists	
Male	65 (27 %)	39 (30 %)	67 (39 %)	51 (42 %)	90 (36 %)
Female	178 (73 %)	92 (70 %)	105 (61 %)	70 (58 %)	162 (64 %)
Total	243 (100 %)	131 (100 %)	172 (100 %)	121 (100 %)	252 (100 %)

Source: own processing

The respondents included in the comparison were divided according to their year of birth into: pre-transitive generation born between the years 1949 to 1969, with the median age of 43 years at the time of data collection, transition generation born between 1970 to 1985 with a median age of 27 years and the youngest and most numerous post-transition generation born after 1989 with the median age of 21 years (Table 3).

Table 3 The Structure of the Sample from the Viewpoint of Sex

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
Male	62 % (126)	58 % (118)	35 % (87)
Female	38 % (77)	42 % (85)	65 % (162)

Source: own processing

4 Analysis

4.1 Is the General Rise of Living Standards Blocking the Studies of Journalism for the Applicants with Low Family Economic and Educational Capital?

A distinguished feature of each professional generation is its economic and educational level. As we can see in Table 4, post-transitive generation shows a significantly higher satisfaction with the economic potential of their families. The declared assessment implies that almost two thirds of journalism students' families managed the post-November economic restructuring and the general rise of unemployment more than successfully.

Table 4 Evaluation of the Economic Standard of the Compared Generations

	How would you assess the financial situation of the family you grew up in?		
	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
We could afford all we needed	27 %	33 %	68 %
We had just the basic things	55 %	54 %	29 %
Parents' income was sometimes not sufficient and we had to tighten our belts	18 %	11 %	3 %
Parents' income was often not sufficient and we had to borrow money	0 %	2 %	0 %

Source: own processing

In comparison to the economic background of their older colleagues, we can see among the members of the post-transitive generation a striking growth of economic satisfaction, which is particularly surprising in the Czech Republic where the declaration of dissatisfaction is almost a "patriotic duty". The situation is partly explained in Table 5 showing that the youngest journalistic generation has the highest number of university

educated parents. We can therefore deduce that their parents belonged to a generation of university graduates the labour market demanded most in the first post-November decade.

Table 5 Educational Index¹⁴

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
High index	48 %	43 %	60 %
Middle index	40 %	45 %	34 %
Low index	12 %	12 %	6 %

Source: own processing

The Educational-economic index of the families in which these generations grew up (see Table 6) indicates that the youngest cohort of students belongs to the higher socio-economic class than their journalistic colleagues from the two older generations.

Table 6 Educational-economic Index¹⁵ of the Respondents According to Generations

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
High index	44 %	59 %	75 %
Middle index	49 %	38 %	23 %
Low index	6 %	3 %	2 %

Source: own processing

A plausible hypothesis transpires that current studies of journalism are open primarily to the applicants from socially and economically better situated families than it used to be before November 1989, when the possibility to study was filtered through very different criteria. A similar finding of a significant number of journalist's middle class origins can be found even abroad. For instance, British journalism students are more likely to come from middle class families.¹⁶

4.2 From Centre-right Eco-liberalism to Right-wing Liberalism Which Prefers Environment to Economic Prosperity

The value system constitutes a fundamental, even though not much reflected assumption conditioning the choice and acceptance of basic types of professional roles. Our assumption of weak generational value differences comes from the historical experience of domestic journalistic community that was, after the establishment of the Czechoslovak independent state (1918), repeatedly formed by strong external power-ideological interventions. Almost each new generation of Czech (Czechoslovak) journalists brought "contemptible values" of the previous generation which they tried to transform. However, partly unconsciously, they accepted a role similar to the role they tried to discursively deny.

14 The index was created as a simple sum of the values arbitrarily assigned to the highest educational attainment of father and mother of the respondents: primary (or incomplete primary) education = 1 p., secondary education without graduation = 2 p., secondary education with graduation = 3 p., tertiary education = 4 p. The index works within 2 to 8 p.; the respondents were subsequently divided according to the value of the index into three categories: high index (7-8 p.), medium index (5-6 p.), low index (2-4 p.).

15 The index was made up of two sub-indexes: (a) "educational" (Table 5), and (b) "economic" which reflects subjective evaluation of the financial situation of the family the respondent grew up in (Table 4). The categories of responses were arbitrarily assigned following values: (1) we could afford all we needed = 8 p., (2) we had all the basic things = 6 p., (3) parents' income was sometimes not sufficient and we had to tighten our belts = 4 p., (4) parents' income was often not sufficient and we had to borrow money = 2 p. The index works within 4 to 16 p.; the respondents were subsequently divided according to the value of the index into three categories: high index (13-16 p.), medium index (9-12 p.), low index (4-8 p.).

16 More than 60 % of British journalism students came from so called "white collar" families, that is from a middle or higher technical, clerical or management education, which represent only a bit more than a third (37 %) in the whole British society. Similarly, there are only 8 % of students whose parents are not qualified, while in the whole British society there is almost a quarter (24 %) of such individuals. HANNA, M., SANDERS, K., BALL, A.: *What British Journalism Students Think About Ethics and Journalism*. In *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, 2006, Vol. 61, No. 1, p. 20-32.

Let us start with the comparison of the degree of identification with general political ideologies. In Table 7 we can see minor differences but only within the same side of scale, where (a) all three generations refuse (with varied intensity) socialist values, and (b) accept liberal values. Here we can also see the most noticeable difference between the student cohort and the two others.

Table 7 Identification with Political-ideological Orientation?

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
Conservative	41 %	42 %	39 %
Socialist	33 %	23 %	18 %
Liberal	65 %	61 %	90 %

Source: own processing

It is probable that this considerable identification with liberal values is caused not only by a general tendency of the youngest generation to prefer values of freedom, but also by majority acceptance of liberal right-wing version of the post-November social order, as Table 8 implies.

Table 8 Declaration of political orientation according to generations

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
Right-wing	51 %	61 %	69 %
Left-wing	18 %	10 %	15 %
Centre	29 %	29 %	16 %

Source: own processing

A striking approval of right-liberal values is also confirmed by an attitudinal consistent rejection of the role of the state, and by a preference of a competitive environment (Table 9). It is possible that the moderate detachment of the student generation from the role of civil society is motivated by the fact that the journalists-beginners perceive this historically constitutive component of western liberal democracy as leftist, while their preference of healthy natural environment to the emphasis on economic prosperity is not perceived as contradicting their liberal-rightist values.

Table 9 Degree of approval with the following statements

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
It is the state who is mainly responsible for the welfare of citizens	6 %	2 %	14 %
Competition is good, it guides people to maximum performance	84 %	89 %	85 %
The quality of civic society, like activities of "apolitical" organisations and associations, have key importance in development of a society	78 %	83 %	65 %
Economic prosperity is the most important for a society, even if it can cause environmental degradation	33 %	33 %	27 %

Source: own processing

4.3 From the Cautious Social and Value Activism within the Limits of Profession Illusio to the Criticism of Power and the Rejection of the Commercialisation of Journalist's Role

Our analysis includes a question whether, and possibly to what extent, there is a correspondence between the general value set of described journalist generations and the accepted professional role. We presume that the weak tradition of journalistic autonomy leads to recurrent tendentious clinging to the given socio-politically determined illusio, in the bounds of which are defined the actual definitions of journalistic role.

To carry out a professional role, one needs to accept or even identify with the canonised attributes of journalistic professionalism,¹⁷ which in fact represent a professional ideology. To say it with Bourdieu,¹⁸ it is a complex of specific rules that as a whole constitutes a doxa of the field which is as strong as the illusio itself. That means as strong as the faith in the value of what is being played for in the journalistic field.¹⁹ The illusio therefore stands for the professional ethos, for the calling, or a higher meaning of the existence of professional rules, represented by practices realised in the given field. In the first post-November decade, the field illusio was fed mainly with the transformational ethos, which was based especially on liberal right-wing values which support journalist's autonomy. This, in general terms, is related to the extent to which the actions proceed within the field independent of the powers operating from the outside (from other fields) – primarily from a political field. There is another question, nevertheless, a question that is becoming more and more important: how is the journalist's autonomy boosted or weakened by the relation to an economy field?

The professional role is perceived as a set of complementing attitudes to the performance of the journalistic career, which are formed within the journalistic field. The theory and research distinguish several kinds of these roles. Cohen²⁰ created basic dichotomic typology as early as in the 1960s – he speaks of "neutral" and "participator" journalistic roles. This differentiation was in a way adopted by the initiatory quantitative representative research of Johnston, Slawski and Bowman.²¹ This was followed up with the most systematic national and de facto longitudinal study carried by two American journalists, Weaver and Wilhoit,²² which gradually developed the Cohen typology into three role types: "disseminator", "interpreter", and "adversarial".²³ The first type corresponds with Johnston's "neutral", although it accents more the speed of informing as broad public as possible. The second is close to Johnston's "participator", yet it emphasizes the interpretative role of a journalist. The last one stands for a role which prefers a critical view on government representatives and the world of commerce.

Apart from these most cited studies, we can encounter a range of terminological variations of the introduced types together with their elaboration. Bridges,²⁴ for instance, divided managing editors into basic types and three subtypes. She described the first type of journalist as a "reader oriented business person" whose professional value orientation reflects especially the commercial pressure under which journalists or managing editors find themselves increasingly. This approach attaches considerable importance to a study of reader's public behaviour and the advertisers' needs. A similarly designated study was conducted by Volek,²⁵ who shows how strong professional conflict some editors experience at deciding whether to address readers according to their own conception, or based on the marketing analysis of audience behaviour.

With a fair amount of simplification, we can differentiate journalists who see their calling in the role of a "mirror" reflecting reality, and journalists who believe their key task to be an "interpretation" of the reflection caught in the mirror. The detailed analysis then shows that only a very small part of journalists fits into the "pure types" and that they are much more plurally oriented than any scale could capture.

No change, in this respect, brings Hanitzsch's²⁶ relatively newest conception focused on the comparison of journalistic cultures, which distinguishes, apart from the epistemological professional procedures (objectivism, empiricism) and ethical ideologies (relativism, idealism), also so called institutional roles,

17 Professionalization as a professional ideology helps to reproduce and stabilise the functioning of journalistic field and protect professional behaviour from a laicisation of the field.

18 BOURDIEU, P.: *The Force of Law: Toward a Sociology of the Juridical Field*. In *The Hastings Law Journal*, 1987, Vol. 38, No. 5, p. 805-854.

19 BENSON, R.: *News Media as a "Journalistic Field": What Bourdieu Adds to New Institutionalism, and Vice Versa*. In *Political Communication*, 1996, Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 187-202.

20 COHEN, B. C.: *The Press and Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 1-288.

21 JOHNSTON, W. C., SLAWSKI, E. W., BOWMAN, W. W.: *The News People. A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976, p. 1-240.

22 WEAVER, D. H., WILHOIT, G.: *The American Journalist: A Portrait of U.S. News People and Their Work*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 1-216.

23 WEAVER, D. H., WILHOIT, G.: *The American Journalist in the 1990s: U.S. News People at the End of an Era*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996, p. 1-320.

24 BRIDGES, J. A.: *Daily Newspaper Managing Editors' Perceptions of News Media Functions*. In *Journalism Quarterly*, 1991, Vol. 68, No. 4, p. 719-728.

25 VOLEK, J.: *Quality Press or Economic Success? Commercialization of Press According to Czech Editors*. In *Observatorio*, 2009, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 40-61.

26 HANITZSCH, T.: *Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory*. In *Communication Theory*, 2007, Vol. 17, No. 4, p. 367-385.

that differentiate journalists on the basis of their idea to what extent they should (a) “socially intervene” (interventionism), (b) criticise/support official power (power distance), and (c) share market orientation of the media (market orientation). As we have suggested, our generational comparison works with modified attributes of this role typology.

4.3.1 The First Attribute: A Neutral Description, or a Social Intervention?

The interventional role reflects to what extent journalists follow their “mission”, or better yet, their objective to push through certain values during their career. According to Hanitzsch,²⁷ the interventional role is embodied by a journalist who is highly motivated to influence social affairs, compared to a journalist who is totally devoted to the imperatives of objectivity and neutrality.

Our “index of interventionism” was created on a basis of the attitude analysis of the weight given to four aspects of journalist role being performed (altruism, carrying and defending of values, forming of political decisions, influencing of public).

The index shows a high measure of objectivist professional attitude which represents the basic media coverage canon and is taught as the first precondition of being a professional journalist (Table 10). In other words, only one third of respondents acknowledge the interventional role, the generational differences are quite negligible in this case.

Table 10 *Interventional Role Index According to Generations*²⁸

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
Yes	33 %	25 %	32 %
Not crystallised	60 %	61 %	61 %
No	7 %	15 %	8 %

Source: own processing

If we look at two of the pursued role indicators (Table 11), we can see a substantial difference between the perceived weight of the value-educational role and the altruist-advocate role. It would be too risky and harsh to come to any radical conclusions on the account of such fragmentary data. Rather we find it probable that the distinctively lower identification with both attributes (though higher than a half) is not primarily the result of their lower threshold of social sensitivity and their lesser willingness to change the world for the better, but more or less a result of a mechanistic adoption of school dogmas which lead to such a conception of objectivity (as a strategic defence ritual) that delegitimises in the students’ minds any idea supporting the good and “only” makes them informational robots within the limits of the professional rules.

A less probable but undoubtedly plausible assumption is that this objectifying attitudinal distance also partly comes from a stronger aversion to leftist or socialist values than the aversion of the older generations. The latter are quite surprisingly more idealistic in their attitudes than their younger colleagues. In other words, we can suppose that both older cohorts have deeper and more personal experience with the despotism of (old) regime and this experiential “generational effect” co-formed their decision to become a journalist with the aim to “help to change the world for the better”. This romantic conception of the work of a journalist as a protector of the weak uncovering the evil of the world could, especially with the transitive generation,

27 HANITZSCH, T.: *Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory*. In *Communication Theory*, 2007, Vol. 17, No. 4, p. 367-385.

28 The index was created/formed as simple sum of the values of the measure of importance, which the respondents set to the chosen attributes of a journalistic role (certainly important = 4 p., rather important = 3 p., rather unimportant = 2 p., definitely unimportant = 1p.). With journalists, it was about the possibility to: help people, promote some values and ideas, influence political decisions, have impact on the public. The index works within 4 to 16 points. The respondents were subsequently divided according to the value of the index into three categories: yes (4-7p.), not crystallised (8-11p.), no (12-16 p.). With students, it was about the possibility to: offer the public the analysis and interpretation of complex problems, promote certain values and ideas, and plead for the weak and unprivileged. The index works within 4 to 12 points, the respondents were subsequently divided according to the value of the index into three categories: yes (3-5 p.), not crystallised (6-8 p.), no (9-12 p.).

which entered media after the collapse of the totalitarian regime, play important role in the process of identification with journalistic profession.

Table 11 *Weight of Selected Interventional Attributes According to Generations*

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
Promote some values and ideas	85 %	73 %	56 %
Help people, protect the weak, and fight injustice	91 %	90 %	64 %

Source: own processing

4.3.2 The Second Attribute: With the Power, or against It?

The question of the relation of journalists to power introduces the second professional role attribute. In this case, we again created an index constituted by six attitudinal variables which indicate the respondent’s notion of both, the rights of the state to take action against media, and their rights to criticise the state bureaucracy. To these traditionally measured variables we added the degree of confidence in the prominent state institutions (Parliament, Senate, Government).

In other words, this attribute exposing the journalists’ relationships to the dominant power includes the aspect of journalistic role as a social practice that “challenges the state or economical power to a duel” (there is an apparent analogy to Weaver and Wilhoit’s “adversarial”), and the extent of journalist’s loyalty to the power elite, or to institutional forms of power.

The second summative index (Table 12) shows some more significant generational differences. Although we can see presumable denial of loyalty to the power elite, a considerable distinction can be seen between the attitudes of the transitive generation, and the youngest, post-transitive one. Abstracting away from the rather mythologised image of the youth and their critical tendencies, which can be mistaken though, like the above-mentioned image of their higher social sensitivity, then, in the case of the transitive generation, we might speculate about the existence of a generational effect. It is this cohort which has participated in developing the current shape of the liberal-democratic regime, and it might be that its lower amount of distance towards the power is linked to a certain dose of the sense of responsibility and unacknowledged worries about the existing regime they have been helping to build. This is a commitment, a generational bond, which the youngest generation does not have. It is still waiting whether it will find not only its patron, but mainly its generational legitimising metanarrative.

Table 12 *Index of Relation to Political Power*²⁹

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
Yes (loyal)	0 %	1 %	1 %
Not crystallised	49 %	61 %	35 %
No	51 %	38 %	64 %

Source: own processing

29 For journalists, the index was created as a simple sum of the values of the measure of agreement (1 = agree to 7 = strongly disagree) with the following statements: journalists should have – if requested – full and immediate access to all official documents, unless the material is confidential due to national security; State should have the right to prohibit the publication of a report that could seriously jeopardise national security; and of confidence (1 = strongly trust to 7 = strongly distrust) to the following institutions: the Chamber of Deputies, the Government, the Senate, the courts. The index works within 6 to 42 points. The respondents were then divided according to the value of the index into three categories: yes (loyal to power) (6-17 p.), neutral (18-29 p.) no (critics/opponents) (30-42 p.). For students of journalism index was created as a simple sum of the values of the measure of importance ascribed to the following journalistic roles in society: to be a watchdog of government and public officials (1 = definitely unimportant to 4 = definitely important), to assist in promoting government policies (1 = definitely important to 4 = definitely unimportant); and of acceptance of the following methods for gathering information: the use of confidential government documents without authorisation (1 = definitely no to 4 = definitely yes). The index works within 3-12 p. The respondents were then divided according to the value of the index into three categories: yes (3-5 p.), neutral (6-8 p.), no (9-12 p.).

4.3.3 The Third Attribute: From an Uneasy Acceptance of Market Principles to Their Rejection

The third role attribute indicates the journalists' readiness to subordinate the principles of their work to commercial orientation and, as a consequence, to address audiences as consumers rather than citizens. The relevance of this attribute is granted especially by a gradual suppression of professional ethos that has always been, in respectable media at the continent, associated with the accomplishing of "the ideal of public service". Thus, the so called "utopian" vision of journalism as an independent fourth estate is dying away; this vision highlights personal engagement rather than institutional-economic requirements of media³⁰ whose commercialisation is trivialising the social and cultural function of journalists as social actors forming a public debate on the state of the community. Instead, journalists are accepting the role of information broker and self-affirm their professional market role referring to the democracy of the so called rating aesthetics. In other words, they are increasingly being defined through the logic of private rather than public interest. Some studies imply that this process of de-professionalization and de-intellectualisation³¹ of the journalist vocation causes distress to journalists, and as a matter of fact it creates a state of cognitive dissonance³² in some of them. In this context, the given role attribute proves to be ever stronger indicator of the fact the journalist's role has shifted from a professional imperative to serve the public to the acceptance of the owner's will to generate profit through selling ever growing number of audience to advertisers. For this analysis, the index is made of five attitude variables that show the journalists' willingness to accept the market principle of media operation, which brings their commercialisation and entertainmentisation of the content that is heading towards the effective semi-tabloidization even of the quality press. The "market orientation index" (Table 13), or the extent of approval of the commercialisation of the journalistic role, shows a noticeable generational difference. While about a half of journalists belonging to both older generations have resigned themselves to the commercial attributes of journalistic work, in the case of the youngest generation we can see the weakest identification with the role of market logic. It is probable that especially the transitive generation has perceived the market aspects of media operation as a part of the general process of the transformation of Czech society with which it has identified, although not a small part of the more experienced (pre-transitive) journalists realised a rapid commercialisation of media could bring some unintended consequences to the population with poor media literacy. The youngest generation's strong distance from the market logic of media operation is probably the result of (a) a weak or non-existent identification with the market ethos of the transformational 1990s which saw the building of a market society as one of the form of ideological cutting off from the old regime and ascribed to marketization of social life much greater weight/value than the generation that was born into the free market competition and finds it comfortable (see the contentment with their living standard), (b) its perception of commercial logic as their "father's ideology", against which, with the absence of real enemy, it is possible to make a stand in a permissive society (at the expense of their middle class parents). We can speak of a generational effect in this respect.

Table 13 Index of Willingness to Accept the Market Logic of Media Performance³³ According to Generations

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
Yes (market orientation)	53 %	57 %	10 %
Not crystallised	41 %	33 %	59 %
No	6 %	10 %	31 %

Source: own processing

30 HARDT, H.: *Newsworkers, Technology, and Journalism History*. In Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 1990, Vol. 7, No. 4, p. 346-365.

31 VOLEK, J.: Between Quality/Tabloid Press Strategies: Czech Journalism Twenty Years after the Collapse of the Centralized Non-market Media System. In DOBEK-OSTROWSKA, B., GŁOWACKI, M. (eds): *Making Democracy in 20 Years: Media and Politics in Central Europe*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2011, p. 249-273.

32 VOLEK, J.: *Quality Press or Economic Success? Commercialization of Press According to Czech Editors*. In *Observatorio*, 2009, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 40-61.

33 The index was created as simple sum of the values of the measure of importance, which the respondents set to the selected market attributes of the journalistic work. With journalists, it was about the importance set to the need to attract an audience (certainly important = 1 p., rather important = 2 p., rather unimportant = 3 p., definitely unimportant = 4 p.); and about their wish to have (if they could)

5 Discussion

As we have stated above, the generational analysis has been applied only marginally in the research of journalistic profession. There are several reasons for this. Apart from the above-mentioned problem with the definition of generation as a sociological category, we can bring another two. The methodology of comparative studies is very sensitive to keeping comparable conditions of measurement, which is something difficult to achieve in a research in vivo. In the case of generational comparison, this difficulty is true twice as much since it is tricky to identify and define the intervening historical variables. The other reason, which is most likely more fundamental, arises from the fact that so called western societies have experienced more or less continual evolution and have not been, in the past four decades when the research of journalistic profession has been intensively evolving, hit by a substantial systemic turbulence like the break-up of the Soviet empire or the socio-economic transformation of their satellites, which has also noticeably affected the domain of media.³⁴

The lack of generational perspective in the journalistic research in the so called post-communist, or better still, (post)transitive societies is primarily due to the delays of the first studies, which appeared as late as in the second decade after the disintegration of old media systems: e.g. Russian Journalist,³⁵ Czech Journalist (2002-2004),³⁶ Polish Journalist in comparison to the Russian and Swedish.³⁷ Unlike the Euro-American political historical continuity which does not pose generational questions as urgently, the experience of the so called post soviet satellites and their transformation brings a positive research challenge – a quarter of a century after the decline of the old regime and the old media system.

Up to now, the challenge has been accepted only by a qualitative study by Svetlana Pasti³⁸ who classifies two generationally different professional cultures of St. Petersburg journalists, or, if you like, two types of professional roles which are represented by two types of professional subcultures. Pasti differentiates between the "old journalist generation" that practiced their profession before 1990, and a "new generation", which entered media after 1990. According to Pasti, (a) the first group sees journalism as a cooperation with power – in our terminology we might speak of weak distance from the institutional forms of power, (b) the new generation understands/takes the performance of journalistic role as a PR serving the benefit of the influential groups in politics and business. In our terminology, we could say it accepts the market principles or commercialisation and marketization of the journalist profession. Both generations, she claims, equally consider the journalistic profession a propagandistic instrument of power elite, especially during the election campaign.

However interesting a comparison of these results with our study would be, we are prevented of doing it mainly due to the qualitative nature of her study which includes only 30 St. Petersburg journalists and we cannot, in this respect, speak of a sample that represents two real generational cohorts. The professional roles of Russian journalists are probably somewhat richer and more structured. And almost the same is true in case of our study, although also the latter brings, in certain aspects, quite surprising intergenerational professional homogeneity.

a more educated audience (yes = 4 p., no = 1 p.). The index works within 2 to 8 p. The respondents were subsequently divided according to the value of the index into three categories: yes (market orientation) (2-3 p.), not crystallised (4-6 p.), no (7-8 p.). With students, it was about the importance set to the following professional imperatives: to bring information which is of interest to the widest possible audience (1 = definitely important to 4 = definitely unimportant), to bring entertainment to the audience (1 = definitely important to 4 = definitely unimportant); and about agreeing that the need to gain as large an audience as possible is a threat to the freedom of journalistic work (1 = disagree, 4 = agree). The index works within 3 to 12 points; the respondents were subsequently divided according to the value of the index into three categories: yes (market orientation) (3-5 p.), not crystallised (6-9 p.), no (10-12 p.).

34 The only striking post-war socio-political turbulence was probably the dramatic civil disobedience in the form of student and racial riots of the late 1960s. There is no doubt that this historical period formed a new, left-wing journalist generation focused on social criticism. However, their members, similarly as their student leaders, ended up in a trap of the mechanism of repressive tolerance which was described by Herbert Marcuse (1969).

35 JUSKEVITS, S.: *The Russian Journalist at the End of the 1990s: A Case Study of the St Petersburg Media*. [online]. [2015-04-01]. Available at: <http://tutkielmat.uta.fi/pdf/lisuri00006.pdf>. (reprinted in PASTI, S.: *A Russian Journalist in Context of Change: Media of St Petersburg*. Tampere: University of Tampere, 2004.)

36 VOLEK, J., JIRÁK, J.: *Professional Self-image of the Czech Journalists: Selected Attributes*. In Czech and Slovak Media Studies / Mediální studia, 2008, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 358-375.

37 ANIKINA, M., DOBEK-OSTROWSKA, B., HÖK, J., NYGREN, G.: *Journalism in Russia, Poland and Sweden – Traditions, Cultures, and Research*. Huddinge: Journalistik, Södertörns högskola, 2012, p. 1-96.

38 PASTI, S.: *Two Generations of Contemporary Russian Journalists*. In European Journal of Communication, 2005, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 89-115.

This fact is implied not only by the presented frequency analysis but also by our attempt to test, with the aid of a cluster analysis, whether it is possible, on the basis of the given variables, identify three defined generational types. As Tables 13 and 14 show, at best we can isolate two groups (cluster I. + II., and cluster III.), differentiated especially by value orientation in general and by political orientation in particular.

Table 14 Three Cluster Solution: Economic, Educational, and Values Role Variables

	I.	II.	III.	Total
High economic-educational index	.99	.00	.70	.61
Middle economic-educational index	.00	.92	.25	.35
Low economic-educational index	.00	.07	.04	.03
Pro state	.04	.08	.17	.08
Pro competition	.91	.94	.55	.86
Pro civil society	.74	.76	.72	.74
Pro environment	.35	.26	.24	.30
Conservative	.46	.39	.15	.38
Socialist	.10	.15	.77	.23
Liberal	.74	.70	.54	.70
Left-wing	.00	.03	.82	.15
Right-wing	.87	.77	.00	.69
Religious	.27	.32	.20	.27
Professional role: intervention yes	.29	.24	.46	.30
Professional role: intervention no	.10	.08	.08	.09
Professional role: loyalty to power yes	.00	.01	.01	.01
Professional role: loyalty to power no	.47	.53	.50	.50
Professional role: acceptance of market principles yes	.32	.44	.32	.36
Professional role: acceptance of market principles no	.28	.17	.31	.25

Source: own processing

Clusters I. and II. share their right-wing liberal (conservative) values and approval of competition and market, while cluster III. demonstrates its left-wing socialist value orientation and partly also an inclination to interventional professional role. The single clusters do not differentiate the other variables, especially not the professional role variables.

If we divide the described clusters by the compared generations (Table 15), it becomes apparent that the absolute majority of the journalists belonging to the transitive and post-transitive generation occupy the right-wing liberal conservative cluster, while almost half (49 %) of the oldest, pre-transitive generation journalists incline to the second cluster, which differs from the first one only in a lower educational-economic capital. The third left-wing and role interventional cluster shows the lowest score among all generations, although the pre-transitive generation journalists acknowledge it most.

Table 15 Clusters According to Generations

	Pre-transitive generation	Transitive generation	Post-transitive generation
I. Cluster	29 %	51 %	64 %
II. Cluster	49 %	35 %	21 %
III. Cluster	22 %	14 %	15 %

Source: own processing

With the numbers spread as they are, we cannot conclude that there is any value transfer between a transitive and post-transitive generation. The fact that the journalists of these two generations seem to be slightly closer to each other can be the result of their age (age median 27 vs. 21) but also of their deeper internalisation of (neo) liberal foundation of post-November development.

Nevertheless, the question of attitude homogeneity, which both the frequency analysis and the cluster analysis show, is more important. The main cause of this attitude correspondence is probably the sharing of liberal right-wing values by the majority throughout all generations, which, in our opinion, also relates to the minimal professional role differentiation. It seems that the dominant professional ideology based on liberal professional rules of “Anglo-Saxon” journalism, accepted in the 1990s, has affected not only the self-concept of the two older generations of Czech journalists³⁹ but also of the youngest one.

This trend has been further strengthened by a shift in teaching journalist novices, a shift from “education” to “training”. As in the teaching of a craft, journalism skills are developed under control of journalists, the owners of keys to professional rules. This leads to attitudinal professional homogeneity caused by immersing journalism tuition into the logic and demands of media industry functioning, which are received as a universal knowledge without any consideration for social, political and cultural context.⁴⁰

In other words, a close co-operation of university departments and media industry, whose demands has increasingly becoming a part of the curricula, has undoubtedly influenced the intergenerational homogeneity of the journalist profession. And, to some extent, it is also a product of skill oriented university schooling, which adopts professional algorithms more as a specific rhetoric forms than as a challenge to epistemological reflection and to the development of journalistic methods of representation and analysis.

To illustrate this trend, we use one key example of professional socialisation as a form of intellectual and professional homogeneity – journalistic objectivity. For students, it represents a criterion, on the basis of which they are evaluated by teachers, editors, and even by audience. The teaching of the technology on how to achieve objectivity resembles strategic defence of professional ritual.⁴¹ We can see an immixture of industrial journalistic practice with a tertiary model of journalist training according to the rules of instrumental rationality with the emphasis on the legitimisation of practiced irresponsibility. It is grounded on the imperatives of rationalisation and commodification of journalistic production, which has been increasingly shaped into a rationalised infotainment.

The consequence of this trend is a professional model of algorithmized achieving of objectivity resembling the nature of web browser programmed to mechanically perform certain applied rules. Likewise, journalists, or the students of journalism, are taught tactics to identify the most relevant opinion, to communicate it, to enhance its relevance – the set of professional practices, which are invisible to the audience. We witness an institutionalised and homogenised concept of journalistic role with a nature of a professional totem of its kind, which should reinforce not only professional discipline but also the audience respect for the journalists.

With this in mind, we have come across certain type of authority, which is a part of a larger spectrum of the governmentalization of modern society.⁴² The presented generational correspondence between the totally different generations is, on a general level, comprehensible in this very sense. It is an agreement that serves the power, the same power to which all three generations refuse to serve. Nevertheless, at the same time, they are unable to escape from the disciplinary trap of a governmentalized professional socialisation.

39 VOLEK, J., JIRÁK, J.: *Professional Self-image of the Czech Journalists: Selected Attributes*. In Czech and Slovak Media Studies / Mediální studia, 2008, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 358-375.

40 Liessmann observes that the reduction of the education goals to the flexibility and efficiency applicable on the market leads to the suspension of any individuality, which used to be the addressee and the partaker of education. He warns against this trend and claims it is in direct contrast to the original purpose of using technologies (including communication technologies) as instruments to human emancipation. The consequence of this process, which does not concern only the journalistic education, is convincingly described in his latest book. LIESSMANN, K.: *Geisterstunde: Die Praxis der Unbildung. Eine Streitschrift*. Wien: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 2014, p. 120-143.

41 TUCHMAN, G.: *Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity*. In American Journal of Sociology, 1972, Vol. 77, No. 4, p. 660-679.

42 FOUCAULT, M.: Governmentality. In BURCHELL, G., GORDON, C., MILLER, P. (eds.): *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 87-105.

Conclusion

The aim of our text was to identify possible similarities and differences between three generations of Czech journalists who are currently working or are soon going to work in the Czech media. Our analysis shows that despite the large amount of generational similarities we cannot speak about three clearly differentiated professional cohorts. The key to the weak differentiation among the studied generations is their distinctive congruence in the domain of values. The acceptance of liberal right-wing ideology interconnects all hypothetically constructed professional groups. The measure of its acceptance is the highest in the case of the youngest generation and it is probably a manifestation of its higher socio-economic capital – in comparison with the older journalists' families. In this respect, we accept the hypothesis H1.

The extent of the concurrence is especially strong in the value orientation and professional role attributes, including very balanced identification with the “interventional professional role”. Even though we formally have to reject the hypothetical supposition (H2), it will be the youngest generation who represents it the most, the differences are so minimal that even here we could rather speak of a generational congruence. The only exception is a weak acceptance of the invasion of the commercial logic into journalistic profession in the case of the youngest, post-transitive generation, which makes it noticeably different from its older colleagues. In this sense, we accept the hypothesis H3.

Generational processes represent a heart of social metabolism, which includes manifestations brought by social change, transfer of values, social mobility, cultural and social integration, and suchlike. For a generational research is therefore a key condition to clearly define and place generational processes into specific historical contexts. In other words, a generational analysis requires the integration of the findings of the cohort, age and historical research. In this respect is our attempt only the first step, a secondary analysis of data from the studies which have not been primarily focused on generational comparison.

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