# In search of the invisble (audiences)

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**Abstract:**
The paper presents an overview over research that considers invisible audiences. Fundamentally we understand media audiences as 'people who receive, co-create, interpret, understand and appropriate media messages' (Reifová and Pavlíčková, 2013:130). Within this realm, we identify and define invisible audiences in a twofold way. Firstly we consider research on audience groups that have been marginalized by both mainstream media and mainstream audience studies such as post-socialist audiences, working class audiences and very young audiences. Secondly we consider audience groups that are literally invisible including practices of lurking in social media environments as well as unintended audiences. The literature review of research of the past ten years on invisible audiences identifies important gaps for both forms of invisible audiences. In conclusion, we suggest more extensive research on the diverse groups of invisible audiences on a more structural level, i.e. questions of certain social, political as well as cultural groups are rendered invisible. Furthermore we suggest that studies consider practices of invisible audiences on the micro, experiential level from the perspective of members of invisible audiences.

**Keywords:** audience studies, (in)visibility, post-communist audiences, (very) young audiences, online lurking, unintended audiences

## Introduction

The paper presents an overview over research that considers invisible audiences. Fundamentally we understand media audiences as 'people who receive, co-create, interpret, understand and appropriate media messages' (Reifová and Pavlíčková, 2013:130). In the context of audience research, we understand invisibility as mechanisms of exclusion. The article, hence, aims not so much to contribute to a theoretical discussion of visibility vis-à-vis invisibility, but to shed light on audiences that have largely been invisible in previous research, mainly because they have been of less interest economically and in general socially ignored. Within this realm, we identify and define invisible audiences in a twofold way. Firstly we consider research on audience groups that have been marginalized by both mainstream media and mainstream audience studies emerging from the literature review. Secondly we consider audience groups that are literally invisible including practices of lurking in social media environments as well as unintended audiences. The literature review of research of the past ten years on invisible audiences identifies important gaps for both forms of invisible audiences. In conclusion, we suggest more extensive research on the diverse groups of invisible audiences on a more structural level, i.e. questions of certain social, political as well as cultural groups are rendered invisible. Furthermore we suggest that studies consider practices of invisible audiences on the micro, experiential level from the perspective of members of invisible audiences.

## Invisibility in Audience Studies

Visibility and invisibility linked to media has been discussed in terms of mediation and more concretely as framing, gatekeeping and agenda setting. Research following these traditions addresses questions of how journalists and media institutions make choice and give voice and visibility to specific topics and actors while excluding others. Often these logics of exclusion are based on news values as perceived social importance for specific target groups. Hence, visibility is foundational to the organization of the media industry (Bucher 2012). Thompson (2005) takes a step back and distinguishes between non-mediated and mediated visibility in order to discuss the rise of the later in modernity. Visibility in nowadays – he suggests – is fundamentally mediated and affected by the specific properties of the medium. In contrast to direct, face-to-face interaction mediated visibility is expanded temporally and spatially. While Bucher and Thompson focus specifically on the process of mediation in relation to media technologies as mediating forces, we are here concerned with audiences groups and their visibility as part of this mediation process. We suggest to distinguish here between visibility in and through the media that is based on Carpentier's (2011) distinction between participation in and through the media. This distinction shifts at on the one hand inclusion of specific groups of audiences through mediated representation

in mainstream media and on the other at the influence and participation of audience groups in the production process.

As argued initially, mediated visibility is based on exclusion and invisibility of certain aspects or groups. Hence, our focus is here on research that concerns invisible and marginalized groups both in terms of invisibility in and through the media. Furthermore we distinguish between ignored and in that sense invisible audiences and actual invisible audiences such as unexpected and undisclosed audiences.

## Methods

Prior to a more systematic database search members of the Invisible audiences and gaps cluster were invited to do an open collection of literature on 'forgotten'/ invisible audiences based on their previous research interests. This allowed identifying the following subthemes that were later explored in a more detailed fashion: 'geo-political identities/audiences', 'LGBT and queer identities/audiences', 'diasporic identities/audiences', 'disability identities/audiences', 'working-class identities/audiences', 'elderly identities/audiences', 'very young audiences', 'internationally comparative qualitative audience studies', 'lurking in online environments/unintended audiences in online environments' and 'offliners/deniers/dropouts'. The keywords that were guiding the literature search were developed during common brainstorming during CEDAR workshops and are based on more general empirical and theoretical engagements with audience studies that identified gaps in the current body of research.

The second stage of literature collection involved more extended and systematic, though not guided by any strict and narrow parameters, search across key international journals in media and communication studies.[1]

Only research papers published from 2005 to 2015 were included in the sample. For all publications relevant keywords were added, including information on the type of article (review, empirical, theoretical, and comparative) and country/countries of its empirical focus, plus a note on the search and methodology was made. After reading the abstracts emerging themes, dominant methods and approaches, as well as gaps were identified.

In the following discussion we present three case studies of different types of invisible audiences – we start with two examples of what we call ignored or marginalised (very young and post-communist) audiences and after that introduce another form of invisible audiences, something we have termed here literally invisible (online lurking and unintended) audiences. The groups of invisible audiences discussed emerged as the most relevant in the systematically reviewed research. Based on the keyword search we identified 120 articles that address invisible audiences in way or the other. Articles that address invisible audiences are a minority in the audience studies literature. Whereas very young audiences are a currently growing field of research, post-communist as well as literally invisible audiences (online lurking and unintended audiences) are addressed by very few researchers. Hence, the number of articles and extend to which we review literature differs between the three case studies.

## Invisible very young audiences

Looking at the literature it quickly became clear that there is quite a large body of studies looking in to children and media in general (see for example Drotner 2000, Hall 1999, Livingstone 2007, Fibæk and Ling). The search also showed however that the younger the children, the less research on their involvement with media as audiences. In the next level of analysis, we therefore defined a group of children the age of 0-11 years old and repeated the literature search on this group in particular.

The analysis of this body of literature of what we then labelled 'very young audiences' we see four overall themes. Firstly, a number of research projects have examined children, media and learning. Secondly, a strand of literature is concerned with the risks of using different media platforms. The third theme we can observe in the literature is looking at the positive side of media use, analysing how it might for example improve children's imagination. And lastly we have a number of studies looking generally how children are using different media platforms. Only a few studies fall out of these groups of studies, looking at how specific television show, or how the very young audiences have perceived a specific book. An emerging theme is studying newer technology that has spread widely and quickly such as the IPad and smartphones, in the context of home and family, but also the effect on learning environments.

## *How young children learn from media*

This strand of studies has mostly been concerned with television or other types of screen viewing and within this theme looks at how media can help learning processes in schools (see for example Caronia 2009). An example is also Piotrowski's (2014) study that showed that when the narrative demands are reduced, children learn more. Mark Warschauer (2008) has carried out a multi-site case study and examined literacy practices in 10 US American schools with one-to-one computing programs where all students had access to laptop computers throughout the school day. He found important changes noted in the processes, sources, and products of literacy were along the lines often touted by educational reformers but seldom realized in schools.

Another theme for learning studies has been how toddlers for example can learn or imitate. As Krcmar (2010) notes, research conducted by corporations traditionally is geared toward product development and discovering what infants, babies, and toddlers will watch, rather than what will provide any positive learning outcomes. Within this theme some studies compare the effect of learning from video and offline imitation. Vandewater et al. (2010) demonstrated a simple, one-step action (ringing a bell hidden inside a puppet) to a sample of twelve-, fifteen-, and eighteen-month-old infants, either live or on video. Both immediately, and after a twenty-four hour delay, infants in all three age groups were less likely to imitate the action if they had seen it on video than if they had seen it live, exhibiting a clear indication of the video deficit. In similar ways Hayne, Herbert, and Simcock (2003)

tested somewhat older infants (twenty-four and thirty months old) on their ability to imitate a three-step action. Although infants in both age groups imitated the action more when they saw it on video than when they had not seen it at all, their performance was better in the live condition than in the video condition (Fibaek, Bertel and Ling 2014). Some studies have looked into how much comprehension that takes place, and a small number of studies have examined the effect of actual television programs on language acquisition in babies and toddlers. This is due in part to the fact that, until recently, few programs have targeted preverbal children. However, programs such as *Baby Einstein* and *Teletubbies* target this very age group. For example, *Teletubbies* was used as stimulus material in a recent experimental study by Krcmar et al. (2007). An emerging theme might be how children learn from Ipads. For example the study by Hutchison, Beschorner, and Schmidt-Crawford (2012) The goal of this investigation was to explore how a fourth grade teacher could integrate iPads into her literacy instruction to simultaneously teach print-based and digital literacy goals and what it meant for the learning processes that the children were going though.

### Children and risk

This type of literature looks at how media might harm children, for example via exposure to online advertising or to television ads or to product placement and has been heavily focused on the risk of watching television and later on being online. Online risks studies are focused on cyber bullying and sexual harassment (Soldatova and Zotova 2012; Davis 2012; Livingstone and Haddon 2008). Soldatova and Zotova (2012) have studied Russian schoolchildren's perceptions of difficult online situations regarding cyberbullying and online sexual content, and their strategies of coping. Staksrud et al.'s article examines whether the use of social network sites services increases the risks that children and young people encounter by analysing data from a random stratified sample of approximately 1000 internet-using children aged 9–16 years in each of 25 European countries (Staksrud, Ólafsson, and Livingstone 2013).

A study that introduced both a more granular measure of media multitasking and a new comparative measure of media use versus time spent in face-to-face communication is Pea et al. and their online survey of 3,461 North American girls ages 8–12 in the summer of 2010 through *Discovery Girls* magazine in order to examine the relationships between social well-being and young girls' media use—including video, video games, music listening, reading/homework, e-mailing/posting on social media sites, texting/instant messaging, and talking on phones/video chatting—and face-to-face communication (2012) . In Norway, Brandtzæg et al. (2009) studied whether children's experience of cyber-bullying differs according to technological platforms and socio-demographic variables. Results from two Norwegian studies show that cyber bullying most often occurs via e-mail, and that girls and frequent users of the Internet are more likely to encounter cyber bullying (Brandtzæg et al. 2009).

Wartella and Robb (2007) uses data from two Kaiser Family Foundation surveys of the parents of American children 6 months to 6 years over the past 4 years (2003, 2006) to provide evidence that electronic media are an increasingly important part of the lives of the very young, especially via television designed for babies and toddlers. They examine the use of electronic media by children under three and are concerned with what impact such early viewing might have on children's development. Many of these research projects are based on quantitative surveys and they are often comparative, especially following the major EU-funded project EU-kids online.[2]

Within the advertising strand of research Beentjes & Janssen investigates the extent to which the assumption that children are tuned in to gender stereotyping in advertising is correct. The study focused on ninety-six children in the age of 8 to 12 years in the Netherlands and on portrayals of characters in advertising pictures and conclude that children individually indicated which picture of a pair they considered as (a) most similar to reality, (b) most realistic as an advertisement, and (c) most likeable (Beentjes and Janssen 2009).

Risk of watching television is also a common theme within research on children as audiences. Rozane De Cock (2012) questioned a sample of more than a 1000 Flemish children ages 11 and 12 about their news consumption during an 'average newscast' period without extraordinary situations such as child abduction, terrorist attacks, or severe murder cases, as is predominantly the case in previous studies. Their data indicate that the frequently recommended active parental mediation style does not result in more successful mitigating effects on fear or sadness. Korhonen & Lahikainen (2008) interviewed children aged 5 to 6 in Finland in 1993 (101 children) and 2003 (109 children) and showed that nearly 80 per cent of children reported TV-induced fears both in 1993 and in 2003.

## *Positive effects of media use by children*

This type of research is rarer and is often quite narrow in focus. Examples count research into children and storytelling (Belton 2000 and 2001), the effect of social behaviour, making friends or how media might change attitudes towards 'the other'. These type of studies are often experimental, for example Miller's research (Miller 2010) examines a participatory youth media project – the Durban Plymouth Story Exchange. The project attempted to use the creation and exchange of audio recordings between young people in Durban, South Africa and Plymouth, UK to encourage self-reflection, self-expression and cultural learning. In a similar way, but in India, Payal Arora is looking at story (re)productions by children in rural India. The intention was to foster online representations of the rural voice through the lens of the child (Arora 2008). Common for this type of research is the involvement of the researcher in the process and the wish to foster development in poorer areas.

### General media use by children

This strand of research is often focused on television. For example a comprehensive study by Rideout and Hamel (2006) examined media use by children aged six months through six years and found that 70 per cent of those younger than one and 91 per cent of those aged two to three watch television at least several times per week. Schmitt (2001) has found that at six months of age, children direct their eyes toward the screen only 11 per cent of the time, although this is true when looks are averaged across content types. In their study of very young children and attention to television, Valkenburg and Vroone (2004) found that six-month-olds attended to *Teletubbies* more than they did to *The Lion King* or to news, presumably because the program is designed for them.

In Australia, Helen Skouteris & Katherine McHardy (2009) investigated time use in Australian preschool children, paying close attention to the types of television programs and videos/DVDs they watch. Ninety-two mothers of preschool children completed five activity diaries, for three typical weekdays and two weekend days. On average, children spent around just over 1 hour per weekday watching television and 30 minutes watching videos/DVDs (Skouteris and McHardy 2009).

Lastly a fourth strand of studies, although there are very few of these, include research with a focus on popular music or what it means to read *Harry Potter* (Das 2013). Woods (2008) use questionnaires with 39 British children aged 8 to 11 years, and more in-depth interviews with 14 of these children, to explore their viewing habits and perceptions of the show *Big Brother*. Another is Davies's (2004) exploration of children seeking verisimilitude in media representations when he researched their responses to *Mr Gumpy*.

What we generally see is that the very young audiences are marginalised in the audience literature, which has generally been concerned with children a bit older. Especially babies and toddlers have been ignored and are almost invisible. The little literature that does exist is often experimental, rarely comparative and often lacks a historical perspective on children and media use. The studies are often carried out within areas such as developmental psychology and this has only very recently been an object of study within the media studies tradition and audience studies in particular. As we shall see in the following this is also the case when looking at two other groups of invisible audiences that we have selected for this article. In the next section we take a closer look at the post-communist audiences.


### Invisible post-communist audiences

Another telling example of marginalized form of invisible audiences (i.e. little studied audience groups) is post-Communist audiences of Central and Eastern Europe. This is a highly different type of ignored audiences from the one discussed earlier as it does not deal with a specific socio-demographic group of audiences but a much broader – geopolitical – category of audiences, though both left on the margins of mainstream audience research.

It is macro(system)-level institutional and political economy approaches that have long dominated the study of post-Communist media transformations and (apart from market-driven need for audience statistics) little attention has been paid to the study of post-Communist media audiences – see, for instance, the content of more recent comparative studies on Central and Eastern European media by Dobek-Ostrowska and Głowacki (2008), Dobek-Ostrowska, et al. (2010), Downey and Mihelj (2012), Głowacki, et al. (2014), Gross and Jakubowicz (2013), Jakubowicz and Sükösd (2008).

Recently Reifová and Pavlíčková have concluded, 'media audiences – people who receive, co-create, interpret, understand and appropriate media messages – were rendered almost invisible in the post-socialist study of media' (2013:130). For Reifová and Pavlíčková, it is the 'tyranny of structuralism', preoccupation with the study of the macromedia structures that explains the ignorance of the study of media audiences in Central and Eastern European media scholarship. In her own historical audience research into uses and readings viewers of socialist Czechoslovak state television make out of its 1970s and 1980s popular programming (drama serials), Reifová has demonstrated that media audiences of the non-democratic regime have not abandoned the exercise of what she calls 'hermeneutical agency'[3] – the phenomenon neglected in the existing inquiry into (post-)totalitarian audiences of Central and Eastern Europe that, as Reifová points out, has, instead, long been preoccupied with the study of the power of structures. The study of people's agency, to quote Reifová, 'does not fit into the post-socialist grand narrative, which assumes the totally stupefying effects of the domineering socialist structures at its centre' (2015: 81).

Mainly because of the research into audiences and users of the internet recently interest in post-Communist media audiences has risen (see, for instance, Pavlíčková and Reifová 2014 for recent collection of papers presented at the annual Central and East European Media Conference CEECOM in Prague in 2012), and yet still little has been done when it comes to the inquiry into post-Communist media from the perspective of their audiences and audience research continues to have a novel, and rather marginal, status within itself a rather new one discipline of Central and Eastern European media studies.

It is especially comparative cross-national studies into post-Communist media audiences that are missing (with few exceptions such as pan-Baltic studies into identities of Latvian and Estonian Russian-speaking minority audiences), something that could help us identify commonalities, as much as particularities of what we call here 'post-Communist media audiences', the category that may misleadingly suggest the existence of some uniform group of Central and Eastern European media audiences. Instead, it is country specific case study research (often available only in national languages) that dominates the current (emerging) field of studies of post-Communist media audiences. Likewise, there is a need for comparative work to be done *vis-à-vis* media audiences outside the post-Communist world such as Peruško, et al. (2013) study that shows that as regards media use neither all post-Communist countries are similar nor are they all as different from what we like to call 'the West'[4] – it challenges dichotomous Cold War East-versus-West thinking long

dominating (post-)Communist media studies (for further discussion see Mihelj, 2012, 2014, 2015, Mustata, 2012, 2014).

Recently we have witnessed fast-growing scholarly interest in popular cultural forms of (post-)Communist broadcasting, a type of programming little studied so far, and their audiences (see, for instance, Goddard, 2013, Havens, et al., 2012, special issues of the Journal of Popular Film and Television (2012) and the VIEW: Journal of European Television History and Culture (2014)). Yet, historical research into media audiences of the Communist era that could provide us with much needed insights into dis/continuities of post-Communist audiences does not occupy any prominent role in Central and Eastern European media scholarship today – like the field of historical research of media audiences itself also the study of Communist media audiences is still in its early stage of development (Mihelj and Bourdon, 2015).

The unexpected and undisclosed audiences we subsequently turn are examples of different type of audience invisibility discussed so far – though like first two cases of very young audiences and post-Communist audiences also much ignored by mainstream audience research, they are what we define here as actual invisible audiences. Unlike very young audiences and post-Communist audiences, they have been most often excluded from the usual agenda of the studies investigating media audiences, these audiences are literally invisible.

## Online lurking and unintended audiences

Most of the studies and articles reviewed concerning online lurking and unintended audiences are conducted within the field of social psychology. Hence dominant methods have been experiments and observations in order to study effects of online lurking and unintended audiences. Generally online lurking and unintended audiences constitute the invisibility of audiences in online spheres. The two concepts have however shifting angles when it comes to invisibility. Online lurking is much more concerned with the perspective of the lurking person, while research concerned with unintended audiences is much more interested in the relationship between producers of media text and the potential audiences that the author did not consider initially.

In general there is very little research on online lurking. Hence, several articles engage with the notion in an exploratory way and aim at initial definitions of the phenomenon. Nonnecke and Preece as well as Nonnecke, Andrews and Preece aim to provide an initial definition and exploration of lurkers, i.e. people that join online communities, but not actively contribute to discussions, however they are taking part in the posted content. Nonnecke and Preece as well as Nonnecke, Andreas and Preece furthermore aim to investigate the intentions and motivations of online lurkers further. They suggest that lurkers and posters are very different from each other especially when it comes to the perceived benefits of the online communities. Lurkers are comparatively less optimistic than people that actively contribute content to online discussions, for example.

In the context of online lurking, Han et al. discuss in two different articles lurking as an active process of participation. They take the example of an online forum of a breast cancer support group as an example to investigate different forms of participating in online fora. Besides posters and non-users a major group are lurkers. Furthermore, they ask for the social-psychological disparate outcomes based on the different types of participation. The main finding suggests that different forms of participation were based on sociodemographic characteristics, and that lurkers had a higher level of perceived well-being compared to actively contributing members of the group.

Similarly Morris, Cheong and McMillian attempt a typology of user-generated content participants. The authors distinguish between posters, lurkers and networkers and identify difference in demographics, personality types and consumer characteristics of the three types. Tobin et al. investigate the role of lurking and ostracism in two experimental studies. In the first experiments some of the participants were not allowed to post content on Facebook for 48 hours. Those who were not allowed to post content showed lower levels of belonging and meaningful existence. In the second study, some of the participants' Facebook profiles were manipulated in a way that they did not get any feedback on their postings. Similarly to the first study, participants that were deprived of feedback showed lower levels of self-esteem, belonging, control and meaningful existence.

Unintended audiences, similarly to online lurkers, have not been studies extensively. Only one article explicitly dealt with unintended audiences in the context of television productions that were produced initially for Western audiences, but later spread globally. Pack (2001) engages with questions of the self and the other in that contexts and shows how subaltern audiences renegotiate and reassign the roles of self and other during the engagement with First World television.

A related area is the growing field exploring non-usage, avoiders and quitters of specific platforms, content and technologies. This field considers non-participation as equally important in order to understand current media cultures (Kaun & Schwarzenegger 2014). Rather than conceptualizing non-participation as a problem that needs to be overcome, it is argued that the choice of not to participate is an active choice as well. We have, however, decided to exclude the research here as the groups that are leaving certain platforms cannot be considered as 'people who receive, co-create, interpret, understand and appropriate media messages' (Reifová and Pavlíčková, 2013:130). We, however, acknowledge that the topics of non-participation, lurking and unintended audiences share the perspective of usage including the choice against active contributions.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have shed light on audiences that have largely been invisible in previous research, mainly because they have been of less interest economically and in general socially ignored. The aim was to identify overall themes and thus gaps in the existing research. Looking at different types of invisible audiences in this paper has shown that it might be fruitful to distinguish between *actual invisible* audiences and *ignored or*

*marginalised* audiences. Thus we have seen that very young children and post-communist audiences can be seen groups of audiences defined either by age or geographic, which have both been ignored or marginalised in the excising research. However the unintended or lurking audiences are invisible in a two-fold way: both as cases of study, but also as actual audiences.

The very young audiences are in the former group – as they are not invisible but rather marginalised compared to the literature on older children and teens. In the literature of very young audiences we saw four overall themes. Firstly, a number of research projects have examined children, media and learning. Secondly, a strand of literature is concerned with the risks of using different media platforms. The third theme we could observe in the literature is looking at the positive side of media use, analysing how it might for example improve children's imagination. And lastly we have a number of studies looking generally at how children are using different media platforms. In recent years, the focus have naturally shifted to a concern with the effects on new media, but little research looks at the relations between new and 'old' media in the home environment, and also often fails to conceptualise young children as specific audiences. The studies are often found within technology studies or psychology and thus a more sociological and media communicational approach to studying very young children as audiences might be fruitful. Overall we can conclude the many of the studies are concerned with analysing effects of media as objects, whereas the media as messages and what children do with these messages have been ignored. It seems natural to assume that it might not be the IPads or the computer per se that is either risky or fruitful for the development of children, but instead what they are consuming and how they process this in relation to everything else they have to process in their everyday lives.

Within the realm of the post-communist audiences especially comparative cross-national studies are missing and likewise there is a need for comparative work to be done *vis-à-vis* media audiences outside the post-Communist world. This is likely to be because audience research continues to have a novel, and rather marginal, status within itself a rather new one discipline of Central and Eastern European media studies.

Most of the studies and articles reviewed concerning online lurking and unintended audiences are conducted within the field of social psychology. Hence dominant methods have been experiments and observations in order to study effects of online lurking and unintended audiences.

When looking at the literature on lurking and unintended audiences it becomes clear that not only is there very little research, we also see a lack of historical contextualization in the studies. Instead we find what can be seen as the initial work in an upcoming field of audience studies, where the focus so far has been on developing initial theory and also attempting to define the different groups of unintended and lurking audiences. This is shared to some extent with the literature on very young audiences, as much of this also comes from the field of developmental psychology and social psychology. The children have been observed or have participated in experiments and also here we see the lack of

historical contextualisation. The cause could be found in the fact that the body of literature is rather small which makes it difficult to make historical comparisons.

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Jānis Juzefovičs received his PhD in Media and Communication from the University of Westminster in 2014. His doctoral thesis focused on the study of responses of the Latvian-speaking majority and large Russian-speaking minority audiences towards Latvian public service television's role as contributing to the nation-building project in the post-Communist era in this ex-Soviet Baltic country. His research interests focus on the study of post-Communist media audience.  Contact: janis.juzefovics@gmail.com.

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## Notes:

[1] *International Journal of Communication*, *Television and New Media*, *Media Culture & Society*, *European Journal of Communication*, *Popular Communication*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Continuum*, *Communication Culture and Critique*, *Global Media and Communication*, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *Participations*, as well as scholarly databases (Sage Journals, Routledge/Taylor & Francis, Google Scholar). In addition, a number of relevant major national and regional journals (*OBS* (Portugal), *Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft* (Germany), *MedieKultur* (Denmark), *Central European Journal of Communication* (Poland), *Javnost/The Public* (Slovenia), *Media Transformations* (Lithuania), *Mediální studia* (Czech Republic), *Medijske studije* (Croatia)) were searched through.

[2] http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/Home.aspx

[3] For Reifová, it is 'viewers' capability to read the socialist serials autonomously and generate interpretations and uses which significantly deviated from the intended propagandist meanings' (2015:81).

[4] Peruško et al. advocate the inquiry into media practices of audiences as an additional variable for the conceptualization of various media systems – as they rightly argue, such approach 'would connect the micro and the macro level of the media system, the individual and aggregate activity with the structure of the media system' (2013:151).