

The issue of media ownership and its impact on journalism: some theoretical and empirical notes from Slovakia

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**European impacts on the development of the media systems
in Central- and Eastern Europe”
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New media owners in Slovakia in recent years

+

WJS/corruption and media



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New media owners in Slovakia



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HN – Babiš

HOSPODÁRSKE NOVINY
DENNÍK PRE MODERNÉ SLOVENSKO

**HN HOSPODÁRSKE
NOVINY**



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PENTA – SME - N



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Peter Vajda a Prvá slovenská investičná skupina počas celej histórie umožňovali vedeniu denníka SME rozhodovať sa slobodne. No aj spôsob, akým sa Penta ukrytá za dcérsku firmu agentúry SITA dostala k akciám Petit Pressu, nás utvrdil v tom, že pre nich nesmieme pracovať, aj keby mali vo vydavateľstve len menšinový podiel.



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Number of articles by changing owner of SME

	Days	num/100 days			
	num	Sme	NC	Pravda	HN
2004-08	1827	9,47	3,78	6,08	5,91
2009-13	1826	9,53	2,14	6,02	4,55

Number of articles by changing owner of PRAVDA

	Days	num/100 days			
	num	Sme	NC	Pravda	HN
2004-05	731	9,85	4,65	7,25	7,39
2006-10	1826	9,31	2,79	5,31	4,33
2011-13	1096	9,58	2,10	6,48	5,29

Pravda

Number of articles by changing owner of NOVY CAS

	Days	num/100 days			
	num	Sme	NC	Pravda	HN
2004-6/2010	2374	9,35	3,41	5,77	5,35
7/2010-2013	1279	9,77	2,11	6,57	5,00



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Pravda

Number of articles by Government (corruption not marginal)

	Days	num/100 days				
		Sme	NC	Pravda	HN	All
1.1.2004-3.7.2006	915	9,62	4,26	7,32	6,89	7,02
4.7.2006.-7.7.2010	1465	9,22	2,80	4,78	4,37	5,29
8.7.2010-3.4.2012	636	10,22	2,99	8,49	6,45	7,04
4.4.2012-31.12.2013	636	9,75	1,26	4,72	3,77	4,87



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Political and economic factors are clearly the most important denominators of cross-national differences in the journalists' perceptions of influences. Furthermore, perceived political influences are clearly related to objective indicators of **political freedom and ownership structures across the investigated countries.**

Economic influences seem to have a stronger impact in private and state-owned media than in public newsrooms, but they are not related to a country's economic freedom.



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Suphachalasai (2005):
media competition
appears to serve as more
important tool to combat
corruption than press
freedom.



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Freille et al. (2007) also suggest that political and economic freedoms are more relevant in generating positive outcomes in the fight against corruption than are legal restrictions on media freedom.

An ex: HU



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T9 Ownership of medium

1 Purely private ownership

2 Purely public ownership

3 Purely state ownership

4 Mixed ownership but mostly private

5 Mixed ownership but mostly public

6 Mixed ownership but mostly state-owned



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T-9 indicator

„these are certainly not more important than others just because you think they are. This ownership classification is important when you study foreign vs. domestic ownership, but they are not important per se.“



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it does not matter so much whether
it is Purely private ownership OR
Mixed ownership but mostly private,
etc

(although it **may matter when it is
non-profit based such as the
Guardian**, which is, however, again
a special category of ownership)



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not so much about "owned" by state
but rather funded by Parliament
(state) or established by law..

and/or municipalities (BTW, is this
seen as public or state owned?)



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but what matters more whether

it is **FOREIGN,**

mixed or

DOMESTIC (and here whether it is either exclusively focused at media business or media business is just a sort of side-business).



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And

**whether it is either exclusively
focused at media business or
media business is just a sort of
side-business**



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Foreign ownership is especially important to Slovakia and several other countries, while it is of little relevance to Germany, the US and others



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RESEARCH



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CZthe results show the influence of media owners and business owners supports the freedom of journalists in selecting their own stories. More influence of business people is associated with more freedom of journalists in aspects emphasized in the stories and in the frequency the journalists participate in newsroom coordination.

In SA,...., the results suggest that the influence of media owners seems to lessen journalists' freedom to select news and to emphasize certain news aspects, and coordination. Moreover, the perceived level of influence of business people in SA did not statistically significantly relate to all three aspects of journalists' freedom."



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UEA. 2013. Media outlets and their moguls:
why concentrated individual
or family ownership is bad for editorial
independence.



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Ociepka, Beata; Justyna Woźna
(2009). Niemiecki wydawca, polski
czytelnik.

Prasa niemieckich wydawców w
debacie publicznej

(German Publishers, Polish Reader.
Press of German Publishers in a
Public Debate). Wrocław:
Wydawnictwo ATUT



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higher wages

better/modern
equipment/technology

advanced marketing

better and more frequent
journalistic training

etc.



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But also

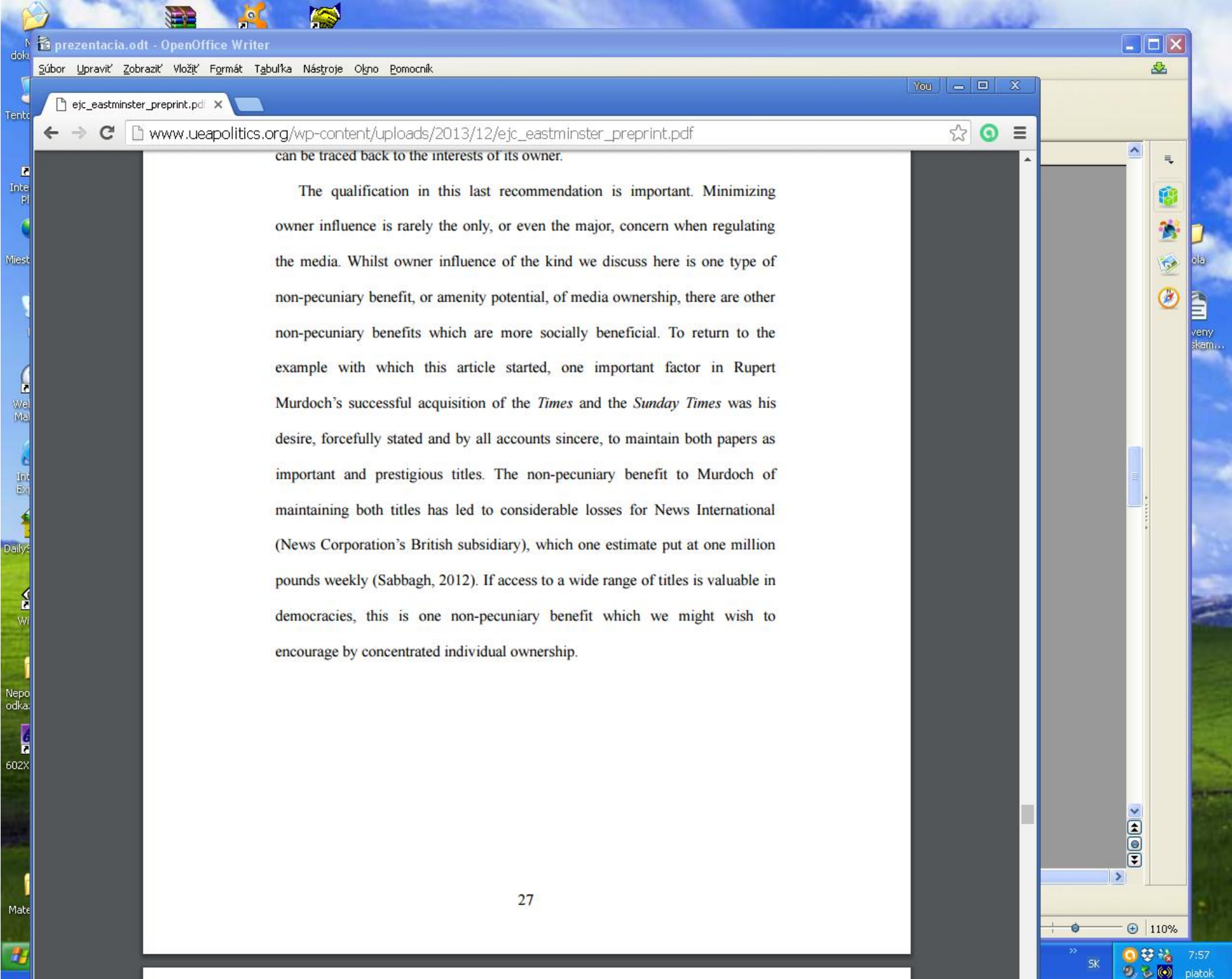
Destruction or limited a
local advertising market
for local media

etc.



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can be traced back to the interests of its owner.

The qualification in this last recommendation is important. Minimizing owner influence is rarely the only, or even the major, concern when regulating the media. Whilst owner influence of the kind we discuss here is one type of non-pecuniary benefit, or amenity potential, of media ownership, there are other non-pecuniary benefits which are more socially beneficial. To return to the example with which this article started, one important factor in Rupert Murdoch's successful acquisition of the *Times* and the *Sunday Times* was his desire, forcefully stated and by all accounts sincere, to maintain both papers as important and prestigious titles. The non-pecuniary benefit to Murdoch of maintaining both titles has led to considerable losses for News International (News Corporation's British subsidiary), which one estimate put at one million pounds weekly (Sabbagh, 2012). If access to a wide range of titles is valuable in democracies, this is one non-pecuniary benefit which we might wish to encourage by concentrated individual ownership.

LESSON LEARNED....?



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