1. Introduction

The structure of the dissertation

I divided my dissertation into five major parts, five chapters.

In **Chapter One** I outline the scientific problem, identify the research objectives, establish the hypotheses, and provide a detailed description of the research methodology.

Chapter Two deals with the major phases of communication as a field of social studies; with the seven most significant traditions of communication theories and their general and theoretical models; the communication in public life, including the issue of the impact of mass communication, the fundamental theses of media research, and the theories in the field of influence and internalisation.

Chapter Three focuses on the historical background of the Serbian-Albanian ethnic conflict. Special emphasis is given to the era of nation-state formation, the shaping of identities, and on the changes in the religious-ethnic dimensions of the Balkans region. This chapter also provides an insight into the direct antecedents of the Yugoslav war, which led to the final stage of the war the Kosovo crisis.

Chapter Four contains my analyses and evaluations of the articles published in opinion-leader Hungarian press about the Kosovo crisis. Since the crisis was a long-lasting process the analysis is divided into two major parts: the first part deals with the period of time between 30th July 1998 and 21st October 1998, which was dominated by articles about the diplomatic efforts and Hungarian connections, while the second part deals with the period of air campaign launched in March 1999. Besides a qualitative analysis a detailed quantitative analysis also covers both analysed periods of time.

In **Chapter Five** I provide a detailed analysis of the ethnic riots, generating serious casualties, which broke out in March 2004 as a final episode of the Kosovo crisis and which erupted almost exactly five years after the bombing raids had begun. This chapter also includes detailed qualitative and quantitative analyses.

2. The formulation of the scientific problem

With the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the Soviet Union the bipolar world order ceased to exist. The European security was no longer dependent on the rivalry of two superpowers. Of course, the changed circumstances have generated new problems. Although the dangers of the Cold War era disappeared, a number of new, previously unknown threats, challenges popped up. The social and political changes in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 put an end to the general risk of an attack on NATO's European frontline. However, the termination of the previous threats did not result in complete security, as new threats and new risks emerged which are significantly different from the conventional ones, which, of course, complicate both their solution and their management. The lack of stability in Central and Eastern Europe should be mentioned in the first place, which fact can be traced back to serious economic, social and political difficulties apart from ethnic-national conflicts and territorial disputes. These conflicts contributed to the emergence of various crises and induced armed conflicts in several places. The Kosovo crisis was a vivid example of this phenomenon. The problem cannot be considered resolved as national or ethnic tensions may easily erupt any time and can even lead to the outbreak of an armed conflict.

The 1999 Kosovo crisis was a very interesting event for several reasons, in international, European as well as domestic politics. On the one hand there was the risk of escalation and of humanitarian disaster; on the other hand it presented a significant challenge to NATO, facing the enlargement, which had not been involved in an armed conflict in Europe since its establishment. For Hungary, preparing for its accession to NATO, the Kosovo crisis was a particularly complex test item, because the events started and escalated after the accession-supporting referendum, and before the formal accession. Neither the Hungarian population nor the policy-makers were indifferent to the question whether the country takes part in the involvement in the Kosovo events as a NATO member state or without membership. Will NATO guarantee the security of Hungary, or as a neighbouring country will we get entangled in the crisis? There were several open issues during that period, and a very sensitive part of that was to secure the support of both the European and of the Hungarian public, as this crisis was escalating in the immediate neighbourhood, so communication and press had a key role. That time the media in Hungary had the constitutional principle of freedom of the press, provided by law, worked in the news market conditions, but it was in fact the first time that it found itself facing a political-military situation threatening both Europe and our country. That

is why I found the analysis of the articles published by national newspapers and opinion leaders extremely important.

In the past nearly two decades a tendency was observed in Europe: different nations redrew their borders on ethnic, linguistic or cultural basis, thus re-defining themselves. The ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious identity has become an increasing political weight.

In the case of Yugoslavia, which broke up in 1991, it was no accident that different historical-cultural background and religious affiliations became priority. In the case of Kosovo, the last stage of the series of crises, the negotiations between the leadership in Belgrade and the Kosovo Albanians went on for nearly ten years and in spite of several restarts, always without success. Searching for the cause of the failure it becomes obvious that knowing the cultural-historical background is necessary and inevitable and one should not get stuck in the analysis of the present political decisions. The historical past with conflicts inherited from the past centuries may be decisive for considering a particular issue, may affect the assessment of a question or decision-making.

3. Research objectives

During my research I dealt with the historical background of the Serbian-Albanian ethnic conflict, with the changes of the ethnic and religious geographic structure-pattern in the Balkans region, having often played a key role in great-power politics. I tried to identify how much the 19th-century nation-state formation and the self-definition of some nations carried the seeds of future ethnic tensions, as in the age of dynastic politics neither open clashes nor linguistic nor ethnic conflicts could be observed.

In addition, I would like to emphasize that my research is not focused on the Kosovo crisis but on its Hungarian press coverage.

Of course, it is unavoidable to present the historical background in one chapter as its knowledge is an integral contribution to the elaboration of the research topic. However, the bulk of my research focuses on media analysis through which I tried to find out the news value of a crisis situation or an armed conflict in the immediate neighbourhood of Hungary, according to current journalistic culture.

The hypothesis and starting point of my research was the examination of the objectivity and impartiality of the opinion leadership in Hungarian press. My preliminary concept was that in such an extreme crisis situation no responsible media can act in any other way. Of course, the

idea of the influencing and manipulative intent was not possible to avoid, since nowadays it is commonly believed that the media manipulates the public.

In this context I searched for the answer to several questions:

1. How is the current government able to manage such a crisis situation, an armed conflict in our immediate neighbourhood?

2. Does it conceal and release information with delays, which affects the press news or is the flow of information always appropriate on their part?

3. In case of manipulating, who is the manipulator: the media or the information-provider?

4. How does the press try to influence the general public? Does it generate panic, stress, or does it possibly hide substantive information? Does it deliberately mislead the public?

5. Is the real and factual information-communication dominant, or on the contrary, the intention of influencing is stronger?

6. To what extent was the political orientation of the four national newspapers determining?

7. What was the impact of the several decades of media use on the public opinion? How did this so-called "time-dimension" influence the current media consumption and the reception of the various mechanisms of action?

More insight can be obtained in the answers to these questions beyond the direct analysis if we know the effect of different media theories, their representatives, researchers, and the most significant paradigm shifts. I held it essential to give a detailed description of various stages of the communication activities and the developmental processes in order to present what larger unit mass communication is embedded in. Through my dissertation I wish to prove that the media world and its mechanisms of action comprise an extremely complex, multifaceted, and intertwined field of social sciences.

The main part of my thesis is, of course, media analysis. The protracted, several-month long crisis induced a vast amount of press material; therefore I considered it appropriate to choose the parts that were the most important from Hungarian aspects. My analysis is based on the articles about the Kosovo crisis published by four most-read Hungarian daily newspapers, the most influential opinion leaders: Népszabadság, Magyar Hírlap, Magyar Nemzet and Népszava. The backbone of my analysis of articles covering the period until the March bombings since that was the most exciting period of time from Hungarian aspects. That allowed to track the most prominent parts of the aspects mentioned above, because that time the Alliance was making efforts to achieve results in a peaceful way through diplomatic negotiations. And finally I dealt with the week-long "unrests" in Kosovo in 2004, which erupted almost exactly on the day of the fifth anniversary of the March 1999 bombings.

4. Hypotheses

1. The current government – with the support of the opposition – supported by the press, managed the special situation generated by the Kosovo crisis in the foreign policy with providing timely and correct information, thus contributing to avoiding panic among the population in Hungary.

2. In such a delicate international situation also affecting our neighbours, because of the NATO-accession process the opinion-leader press cannot generate tension among the population. Daily papers with different political background have to inform their readers appropriately and have to strive to calm the public opinion.

3. In more than 500 articles that I examined and analysed on the basis of various aspects the military actions and the comment on them can be regarded as a reliable reflection of a given era. They can be approached as documents of an age, accessible and processable by historians. The analysis of the mechanisms and tools of mass media, based on documents from various sources may carry complex interconnections.

5. The research methods

Historical analysis, logical concept analysis, hermeneutical and linguistic analysis, semantic analyzer, quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

Of course, I applied historical analysis for the historical chapters while for press analysis I applied logical concept analysis, hermeneutic and linguistic analysis, semantic analyzer, and a quantitative and qualitative content analysis research as research methods.

In a few words I would like to summarize why I regarded it important to use the above methods. The content analysis is important because it is objective, and perhaps nowhere has it gained wider usage than in the research of international crises and conflicts. Pursuant to this procedure, on the basis of the repetitive features of the analysed texts and articles with the use of systematic and objective procedures conclusions could be drawn that are not openly said but can be clearly seen from the structure of edition and encoding of the message. The systematic examination of news releases and newspaper articles may also reveal information that is implicitly hidden in the encoding. With the use of this methodology some hidden "surplus" information can be extracted from all the analysed texts. Of course, not only the explicit information included in the text may be important – the implicit content can also be explored. In addition to the scientific nature it must also be remembered that in everyday life

we all perform instinctive content analysis. Just think, when we read the newspaper, watch television, listening to the radio; we categorize the messages and information, breaking them down into favourable or unfavourable to us.

Apart from identifying the political orientation and the readership composition of the examined opinion leader newspapers I found it also important to analyse the circulation of the daily newspapers. This clearly showed that Népszabadság reached the readers to the highest extent, and the other three dailies' combined readership did not reach the circulation number produced by Népszabadság. From this simple figure it logically followed that the reviews and news published by the newspaper reached much more people, so by the law of large numbers they could have greater influence on public opinion. Especially, when considering Lazarsfeld's two-step theory, according to which information from different media has just a two-step influence on people's thinking as they listen primarily to those opinion leaders who live in their neighbourhood: families, workplace, and prestigious friends. Therefore, to that effect, the effect of interpersonal communication can be much larger and more influencing than that of the mass media. The only exception is the case when the person regarded as an opinion leader receives information from a given medium thus the news, reported by that particular medium may be more intense and get to a readership far beyond the average readership. But I did not ignore the fact either, that all four daily newspapers target a specific readership according to their values and political attitudes. Each daily paper has its own readership whose influencing is not considered manipulation in the classical sense of the word, but rather a kind of strengthening of already established opinions. This is because a given readership can only identify with the information which is the same as their attitude and avoid the discordant situations and information. They also avoid any situation which differs from their ethos and philosophy because such a move would tie up too much cognitive energy, which may not be acceptable for everyone is an average life situation. As most of the news items published by the four major dailies which I examined arrived from various news agencies to the editorial rooms of the papers they had vast amounts of news. However, it is the choice of the editor of a given medium what to choose, from what "to make the news" is only up to them. A political newspaper primarily determines what you are thinking about and not how you think.

Through the news selection and presentation the editors and journalists played an important role in shaping political reality. Regardless what was on the agenda or what was hidden. The readers learned not merely the news but also the importance attached to the often repeated news items included in certain contexts, carrying most of the information because of their

targeted role. The papers set up a certain order of importance, a kind of hierarchy of values: they considered some events important, while others were hidden. It did matter what was on the front pages of the papers, on which page the given article was continued, and in what extent it was published. It also mattered how catchy the title was, what font size and font thickness was used, how outstanding from among the other titles they were, and it was not the last aspect either, whether there was a photo as an illustration attached, and if so, how gimmicky techniques they were made in. In case of an armed conflict the vocabulary in use was also very important, therefore I examined the use of war rhetoric. Beyond the primary meaning of words and phrases what added meanings are suggested? The use of words and word combinations has a fairly significant weight in a given article, but of course it does also matter how we, readers, interpret. The big question is what happens when one starts to read articles in a newspaper. The hermeneutic (science of interpretation) tradition contemplates the communication process from the reader's point of view, even if investigating the entire process. The texts of various newspapers appear as separated from the sender and his / her intentions. When watching a film or reading a novel, one does not think of the writer's or the director's intention to express, but immediately places into one's own interpretation, trying to interpret. The same applies to newspaper articles as well. When one gets the "message", one is free to determine what it means for him / her. Of course, in the background there is one's all prior knowledge, awareness and experience. I managed to approach this problematic through text and reading. Since a text is a cohesive tissue of signs and words with multiple meanings, increasing the options for meanings, most texts are polysemantic, have a lot of meanings and comprise a constantly changing system, because the words over time, may receive different cultural interpretations in different societies. When reading one "makes alloys", putting a variety of items into a new unit. During reading the text receives a new connotation by the combination of its elements in the reader's mind storing there prior experience, knowledge, and opinion, therefore, the new connotation which is the result of a story or an article is the mixture of the elements, brought to the reading and combined with the elements in the text.

When encountering a new text, be it a novel or the latest issue of a daily newspaper, one can always use his / her previous experiences from similar texts. There are certain expectations when opening the newspaper about what it will contain. These expectations comprise a decisive determinant in how to accept and interpret what one reads.

6. Conclusion

The relationship between media and society has been in the focus of researchers since the expansion of mass press and newsreel. From the impact-model media simplified to the one-way relationship of public and media stimulus the research reached the acceptance analyses which have been trying to map the complex interconnection between the media and the public. Research – in a somewhat simplified way – can be classified into two "schools of thought": direct-effect models, assuming direct and large-scale impact of the media, and the limited-impact models school, assuming low and indirect media impact.

While the theories of the former school of thought conceived public as a homogenous mass, as a passive and uncritical recipient of messages, the latter group emphasized the active and critical role of audience, played in decoding the messages, its heterogeneity, and the different interpretation strategies of each individual. The direct-effect representatives prefer to highlight the "media-consumption" suggesting the vulnerability and passive attitude of recipients, while those who advocate limited impact stress the autonomy of the audience including its conscious choice.

In my opinion the extent and direction of various media on the thinking and behaviour of people are unpredictable. In my opinion the media influence is limited and can only be indirect. Media is only one of many factors influencing people. Various agents of socialization /school, family, circle of friends/ represent and solicit different views and influence the people together. They cannot be separated from the each other simply because the different social effects keep constantly forming the media too. The other main cause is that today's multi-channel, multi-coloured media market does not provide a single and unified media image. Only one is certain: the messages of various media have certain impact on certain part of the public at a certain time. The relationship between the media and the public is so complex that it has been convincingly described through any single model so far.

In conclusion it may be stated that the awareness of historical past and cultural traditions are necessary to analyze and understand local conflicts. The stubborn insistence of the Serbs to have Albanian-inhabited territory of Kosovo, or the desire of Kosovo Albanians for independence would have been almost impossible to understand without understanding the historical antecedents. The knowledge of history and of the different cultural roots and traditions is an inevitable element of producing a complete picture of the Serb-Albanian conflict.

7. New scientific findings

1. Through a comprehensive press analysis I proved that in a delicate situation for Hungary the cooperation between the factors determining the political course of the country and the most significant printed press was correct and that contributed to the decreasing of tensions in the field of foreign policy and internal affairs, to calming the population and preventing panic.

2. I proved that the analysed printed press – determining in Hungary – provided objective and fact-based information, understood their roles, and acted in harmony with their missions when they tried to supply objective and sufficiently useful information to their readers on the Kosovo crisis.

3. Another result of my research work is that the large amount of material (nearly 600 articles) that I analysed, systematised and processed in accordance with well-defined aspects can be regarded as documents of an era, as they contain important facts and figures which may serve as a base for further research activities.

8. Proposals and recommendations for the practical use of the dissertation

Regarding the practical use of the present dissertation in my opinion it may be a useful university course book, or a teaching aid. The findings can be useful in education, both in basic and master training. The historical section may provide a solid starting point for researchers dealing with other crises or conflicts. The chapter of the written/printed-media analysis may be continued with studies of different areas of electronic media by media researchers.

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2. Koszovó és a térség, változásokra készül. [Kosovo and the region – ready for changes]
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four domestic and one Vojvodina dailies.]
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4.   Kosovo's independence policy, a historical background of Serbian-Albanian ethnical
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8. Influence and reception analyses, 2014/1. Hadtudományi Szemle, 2014/7.évf.1.szám p.
152-157.

The professional and academic backgrounds of the doctoral candidate

Doctoral candidate Andrea Szak was admitted to the Faculty of Arts of Pázmány Péter Catholic University, programme in history in 1992; and in programme in communication in 1993. Upon the completion of her studies she graduated as a secondary school teacher of history in 1997, and as a communication expert in 1998.

In 1998-1999 she worked as a contract editor-reporter for the Hungarian Radio, and then she taught history and social studies in the Déri Miksa Electrical Industry vocational school as a secondary-school teacher. During this period, she also worked as a contract teacher of history in two other secondary schools, and a year later she worked for the Educational Research Directorate of the Zrínyi Communication and Service Office of the Ministry of Defence in the field of education and training as a communication-training organiser with managerial responsibilities. Subsequently she worked as a leader of communications training and communications consultant at the Mayor's Office of Budapest-Zugló, then as a communication consultant and a leader of communications training at the Zugló Holding Company. That time she was admitted to the Doctoral School of Military Sciences of the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University, where in addition to working, she started a three-year doctoral training as a part-time student, and upon the completion of studies she passed her final examinations. Simultaneously with the above jobs she taught communication culture at the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Studies, of the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University. Between 2007 and 2011 she taught communication culture, communication and media theory, and business communication subjects at the Philosophy and Cultural Studies Department of the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University. Since 2012 she has been teaching the above subjects at the Military History, and Military Culture Department of the National University of Public Service as an assistant professor.