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Master's Thesis

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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

Department of Media Studies

Media habits across three generations

Master's thesis

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Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on 29.07.2023 Cyntia Sármányová

References

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Abstract

Comparing media habits across generations is crucial for understanding how different cohorts interact with media. The elderly, middle, and young generations' media consumption patterns are compared in this master's thesis to give insight into the factors that shape these generations' behaviours. This study investigates differences in participation, content consumption, and platform choices through a secondary analysis of qualitative interviews conducted with participants from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The results emphasize how sociocultural circumstances, technological developments, and historical events have an impact on generational media preferences and habits. The study also investigates how political structures affect media access and availability. We may better comprehend generational dynamics and the complex interactions between socioeconomic conditions and power dynamics in shaping media habits thanks to the theoretical insights from this study. The practical applications of this research help media practitioners reach a variety of audiences in an effective manner through content production, marketing plans, and communication techniques. By analysing the way past media habits influence current and future patterns, the study also advances our understanding of the changing nature of media use. For academics interested in examining media generations, this pilot study provides a useful starting point.

Abstrakt

Porovnávanie mediálnych návykov medzi generáciami je kľúčové pre pochopenie toho, ako jednotlivé kohorty komunikujú s médiami. V tejto magisterskej práci sa porovnávajú vzorce spotreby médií staršej, strednej a mladej generácie, aby sa získali informácie o faktoroch, ktoré formujú správanie týchto generácií. Táto štúdia skúma rozdiely v účasti, spotrebe obsahu a výbere platformy prostredníctvom sekundárnej analýzy kvalitatívnych rozhovorov uskutočnených s účastníkmi z Českej republiky a Slovenska. Výsledky zdôrazňujú, ako sociokultúrne okolnosti, technologický vývoj a historické udalosti ovplyvňujú generačné mediálne preferencie a návyky. Štúdia tiež skúma, ako politické štruktúry ovplyvňujú prístup k médiám a ich dostupnosť. Vďaka teoretickým poznatkom z tejto štúdie môžeme lepšie pochopiť generačnú dynamiku a zložité interakcie medzi sociálno-ekonomickými podmienkami a dynamikou moci pri formovaní mediálnych návykov. Praktické využitie tohto výskumu pomáha mediálnym odborníkom efektívne osloviť rôzne publiká prostredníctvom tvorby obsahu, marketingových plánov a komunikačných techník. Analýzou spôsobu, akým mediálne návyky z minulosti ovplyvňujú súčasné a budúce vzorce, štúdia tiež posúva naše chápanie meniacej sa povahy používania médií. Pre akademikov, ktorí majú záujem skúmať mediálne generácie, poskytuje táto pilotná štúdia užitočný východiskový bod.

Keywords

media habits, generational cohorts, media consumption patterns, content preferences, platform preferences, historical events, technological advancements, socio-cultural contexts, political systems

Klíčová slova

mediálne návyky, generačné kohorty, vzorce spotreby médií, obsahové preferencie, preferencie platforiem, historické udalosti, technologické pokroky, sociokultúrne kontexty, politické systémy

Title

Media habits across three generations

Název práce

Mediálne návyky troch generácií

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1. Introduction

Comparing different media generations is crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of how each generation interacts with media (Gumpert, Cathcart, 1985). With the rapid evolution of media technologies and the diverse experiences of each generation, it becomes essential to analyse and compare their media consumption habits and preferences. By examining the differences in media engagement patterns, content consumption behaviours, and platform preferences across generations, we can uncover valuable insights into the factors that shape their media interactions (Kalmus, Masso, Lauristin, 2013).

In today's rapidly evolving media landscape, understanding the dynamics of media consumption and habits across different generations has become increasingly crucial. Generations, defined by shared birth years and distinct historical experiences, exhibit unique media engagement patterns and preferences shaped by the socio-cultural and technological contexts in which they grew up (Aroldi, 2011). Each generation has been exposed to different media platforms, technological advancements, and socio-political landscapes that have influenced their media consumption behaviours and content preferences (Aroldi, 2011).

Exploring media habits across generations allows us to gain insights into the relationship between individual experiences, societal changes, and media technologies. It helps us understand how generations navigate the media landscape, what drives their choices, and how they interact with various media platforms (Westcott, et al., 2018). By examining the media habits of different generations, we can uncover the multifaceted influences that contribute to the formation of media preferences, content consumption, and interaction patterns (Talbot, 2021). This research field covers various aspects, including media content, platforms, technologies, and social contexts, providing a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between generations and media.

The study of media habits across generations holds significant implications for media professionals, policymakers, and marketers seeking to understand and effectively engage diverse audiences (Carlton, et al., 2021). As media platforms and technologies continue to evolve rapidly, understanding generational differences in media consumption can inform content creation, marketing strategies, and communication approaches (Talbot, 2021). By recognizing different generations' distinct media preferences and consumption patterns, media professionals can tailor their content and delivery strategies to effectively reach and engage specific target audiences (Talbot, 2021).

Furthermore, studying media habits across generations enables us to explore how past media habits may shape present and future media practices (Ouellette, Wood, 1998). Previous media experiences and habits can influence individuals' media preferences, behaviours, and attitudes as they navigate the contemporary media landscape (Bolin, 2016). By examining the continuity or shifts in media habits across generations, we can gain insights into the evolving nature of media consumption and its broader societal implications. Understanding how past media habits influence present and future behaviours (LaRose, 2010) might help predict future media trends, anticipate audience preferences, and design media interventions that align with changing consumption patterns (Westcott, et al., 2018).

In summary, studying media habits across generations is essential for comprehending the complex relationship between generations and media. It provides valuable insights into different generations' diverse media preferences, consumption patterns, and interactions. Moreover, it offers practical implications for media professionals, policymakers, and marketers, enabling them to effectively engage and cater to the needs of specific generational cohorts. Additionally, analysing past media habits and their influence on present and future practices contributes to our understanding of the evolving nature of media consumption and its broader societal impact.

1.1. Research objectives

The primary objective of this research is to examine and compare the media habits of different generations and investigate the influences and similarities that shape their media consumption patterns. By analysing the media habits of the elderly, middle, and young generations, this study aims to understand the factors that contribute to the formation of these habits, including historical events, technological advancements, cultural contexts, and generational experiences. It is critical to address the absence of those born in the 1950s and 1980s to establish a clearer contrast between the generational cohorts examined in this research. In the context of generational analysis within a particular presumed family framework, these cohorts would typically be considered part of the broader family structure. However, for the purpose of this study, the focus will be specifically on the elderly generation (born in the late 1930s and the 1940s), the middle generation (born in the 1960s and the 1970s), and the young generation (born in the late 1990s and early 2000s), born and raised in the Czech Republic or Slovakia.

By considering the impact of political systems on media availability, regulation, and access, this study aims to uncover how political contexts have influenced the media habits of each generation. Through a comprehensive examination of media habits, the research seeks to explore how past media habits influence present and future media practices and whether there are commonalities in media consumption across the analysed generations. By achieving these objectives, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the intergenerational dynamics of media habits, contributing to our understanding of the complex relationship between generations, media, and sociocultural influences.

1.2. Research questions

The research questions in this study are designed to investigate the influence of past media habits on present and future media habits across different generations. By exploring these questions, we aim to better understand the complex dynamics and factors that shape media consumption patterns within and across generational cohorts.

The main research question guiding this study is: How do biographical and current contexts influence media habits? In other words, how do personal experiences and the current social environment affect the way individuals engage with media, and how does this, in turn, shape their ongoing and evolving media preferences and behaviours? This question is the central focus and highlights the broader influences of biographical factors, past media habits, and current contexts on individuals' media habits. By exploring these influences, the study aims to understand how they shape present media preferences and anticipate their impact on future media habits, consumption patterns, and preferences of different generations.

In addition to the main research question, another central focus of the study deals with how biographical and current contexts influence media habits, with a particular emphasis on analysing contrasts among different generations. Through this analysis, the study aims to uncover significant findings that contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between generations, socio-political systems, and media habits. This focus explores the influence of political systems on media habits across generations. By considering the impact of social contexts on media availability, regulation, and access, we seek to determine whether growing up in different political systems has shaped the media consumption patterns and preferences within each generation. This investigation allows us

to understand the role of historical and socio-political factors in shaping generational media habits.

Another question on which I would like to focus is: Are there similarities between the analysed generations regarding their media habits? This question focuses on identifying commonalities and similarities in media consumption patterns across the analysed generations. By comparing the media habits of the elderly, middle, and young generations, we aim to uncover any recurring patterns or shared preferences that transcend generational boundaries. This exploration provides insights into potential generational trends or overarching media habits that persist across different cohorts.

By addressing these research questions, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between generational experiences, societal contexts, and media consumption patterns. The findings will contribute to our knowledge of how past media habits influence present and future media practices, shedding light on the role of historical, cultural, and technological factors in shaping generational media habits. Ultimately, this research seeks to uncover the complex relationship between generational contexts, media engagement, and the continuity or evolution of media habits across different cohorts.

1.3. Scope and limitations

This qualitative study focuses on exploring the media habits of three generations: the elderly – people born in the 1930s and 1940s, the middle – individuals from the 1960s and 1970s, and the young – people from the late 1990s and early 2000s. The research will use individual interviews as the primary data collection method, and a secondary analysis of said interviews will be performed to gather relevant information. By conducting in-depth interviews, the study aims to capture rich and detailed insights into the participants' media consumption patterns, preferences, and interaction behaviours within each generational cohort. The research will be conducted within a specific geographic area, targeting participants who represent diverse backgrounds and experiences within each generation. The study will consider various media platforms, including traditional media (television, radio, newspapers) as well as digital media (online streaming, social media, digital news platforms), to gain a comprehensive understanding of media habits across generations.

While qualitative interviews offer valuable insights into participants' perspectives and experiences, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Firstly, the sample

selection was based on the method of convenience sampling, and its size is limited due to the in-depth nature of individual interviews, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings (George, 2022). However, the focus on the depth and richness of data will compensate for the smaller sample size, providing detailed insights into participants' media habits. Secondly, the study's geographic focus may limit the transferability of findings to other regions or cultural contexts. The participants' experiences and media habits may be influenced by local factors specific to the selected geographic area. Thirdly, the reliance on self-reported data through interviews introduces potential biases, such as selective memory or social desirability (Phellas, Bloch, Seale, 2011). Participants may provide responses that align with societal norms or their desired self-presentation. This study's qualitative approach offers special benefits that are not possible with quantitative research. This study intends to offer insightful information about the complexity of media habits across generations by putting a strong emphasis on in-depth exploration and understanding of participants' experiences. A qualitative study enables a deeper knowledge of the research problems at hand, in contrast to quantitative approaches, which aim to quantify and generalize findings. Because qualitative data is so rich, it allows researchers to delve deeply into participant viewpoints and uncover insightful information that might otherwise be missed in a strictly quantitative analysis. The purpose of this study is to get a thorough understanding of the underlying dynamics and complexity of media consumption across generations, not to seek statistical significance or generalize findings to a wider population. Despite these limitations, this qualitative study aims to provide valuable insights into the media habits of different generations. The in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives will contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between generational experiences, political contexts, and media consumption patterns. The findings will offer rich insights into the lived experiences and meanings attached to media habits, shedding light on the dynamics and influences that shape generational media behaviours. Furthermore, the study may serve as a foundation for future research to build upon the qualitative findings and explore additional factors and contexts that influence media habits across diverse generational cohorts.

1.4. Thesis structure

The introduction chapter provides an overview of the research, starting with the background and significance of the study. It explores the importance of understanding media habits across different generations. The research objectives are clearly stated, outlining the aim of analysing media habits, and exploring their influences. The research questions are introduced, including the main question regarding the influence of past media habits on present/future media habits and the subquestions, one of which is related to the impact of growing up in different political systems, while the other investigates the similarities between the generations. The scope and limitations of the study are discussed, outlining the geographic and generational focus, as well as potential restraints. Finally, the chapter concludes by providing an overview of the thesis structure and previewing the subsequent chapters.

In the theoretical framework part, I offer an in-depth examination of the key theories that underpin the study. It begins with an overview of Mannheim's "fresh contact" theory, which explores how generational experiences and social contexts shape individuals' perceptions and behaviours (Mannheim, 1952). Aroldi's model of generational identity-making is then discussed, highlighting the process by which individuals form their generational identities and how this influences their media habits (Aroldi, 2011). Later, Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory is introduced to explore the role of social and cultural influences on media consumption patterns within different generations (Maton, 2008). Additionally, models of habitual media use will be discussed, together with other relevant theories, offering a comprehensive theoretical foundation for understanding media habits across generations.

The methodology chapter outlines the research design and methods employed in the study. It begins by discussing the chosen research design, which in this case is qualitative, as a secondary analysis of individual interviews is conducted to gather rich data on participants' media habits. The sample selection and recruitment process are detailed, including considerations of age, generational cohort, and diversity. The data collection methods are explained, highlighting the use of interviews to dive into participants' experiences and perspectives. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, are addressed to ensure the ethical integrity of the study.

The next three chapters provide detailed examinations of media habits within each generational cohort. Each chapter begins with background information on the respective generation, considering historical events, cultural context, and technological advancements

that shaped their media experiences. An analysis of media consumption patterns and preferences is conducted, considering various forms of media, such as television, radio, print, and digital media. Factors influencing media habits, including generational experiences, social influences, and technological changes, are explored within each chapter. The findings are compared with the theoretical frameworks established in Chapter 2, highlighting areas of alignment or divergence.

Chapter 7 focuses on the comparison and analysis of media habits across the three generations. It identifies similarities and differences in media consumption patterns, preferences, and factors influencing media habits. The chapter explores the influence of past media habits on present and future media behaviours, considering the interplay of generational experiences and social contexts. Additionally, it investigates the role of political systems in shaping media habits, addressing the subquestion related to the impact of growing up in different political systems. The findings are critically examined considering the theoretical frameworks, providing a general understanding of media habits across generations.

The concluding chapter summarizes the key findings of the research, addressing the main research question on the influence of past media habits on present and future media habits. It highlights the interconnectedness between generational experiences, social contexts, and media consumption patterns. The theoretical implications of the findings are discussed, along with practical implications for media practitioners, policymakers, and educators. Recommendations for future research are provided, encouraging further exploration in specific areas. The chapter reinforces the significance of the study in understanding media habits across generations and emphasizes the contribution to the field of media studies.

2. Theoretical framework

By giving relevant theories and frameworks that will direct the analysis and interpretation of the research findings, the theoretical framework chapter establishes a conceptual foundation for the thesis. This chapter provides the study with an intellectual framework, enabling a deeper comprehension of the subject topic. The chapter on the theoretical framework lays the groundwork for the study and interpretation of the empirical data that follows, allowing for a thorough comprehension of the intricate interactions between media usage patterns, generational factors, and social circumstances.

2.1. Overview of Mannheim's theory about generations

Karl Mannheim's theory might be considered one of the base theories used for explaining social change (Pilcher, 1994). As Bristow (2015) explains, Mannheim's understanding of generations revolves around the idea of "fresh contacts," which refers to the interactions between young individuals and society's cultural heritage. These interactions are not one-sided but involve a mutual influence between the young generation and the prevailing social forces of their time. In other words, the ideas and knowledge transmitted during these contacts are not static but are continually shaped and reshaped over time. Mannheim (1952) wrote that the term "generation" refers to a specific identity that is shaped by historical and social processes. It represents a group of people of similar age who share common experiences and perspectives. While class location is influenced by economic and social factors, generation location is determined by the unique patterns of experiences and thoughts that emerge during the transition from one generation to the next (Mannheim, 1952). Mannheim differentiates between 2 types of "fresh contact": *"one based on a shift in social relations, and the other on vital factors (the change from one generation to another)."*[1] Explained in a less complex way, we can say that the first type occurs when there is a shift in social relations, such as when individuals move from one social group to another. The second type of fresh contact is more significant, and it occurs when there is a change from one generation to another, where a new participant enters the cultural process. This new participant brings a fresh perspective and attitude towards the cultural heritage inherited from their predecessors. It signifies a departure from previous generations and introduces novel ideas and approaches to the cultural context. Essentially, it emphasizes the transformative nature of generational shifts and the impact of new individuals on the evolution of culture and attitudes (Mannheim, 1952).

Even after many years, Mannheim's important theory still forms the core theoretical foundation for studying media generations (Gal-Ezer, 2014). According to Mannheim (1952), each generation has a unique relationship with the inherited social and cultural setting. In the context of media, this means that different generations have distinct experiences, attitudes, and behaviours when it comes to media consumption. For example, older generations may have experienced the introduction of television or radio, shaping their media preferences and habits during that era. Middle generations may have witnessed

[1] Mannheim, K. (1952). The sociological problem of generations. Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge, 306, 172.

the rise of the internet and digital media, influencing their media consumption patterns. Younger generations have grown up with pervasive access to smartphones, social media, and streaming platforms, leading to distinctive media behaviours.

Many studies regarding media generations have concentrated on investigating the media habits of a single generational cohort, therefore there has been limited analysis of inter-generational relationships, which explore the dynamics across multiple generations regarding several media types (Bolin, 2014).

Some noteworthy studies in this area include a review of the existing knowledge and gaps regarding Generation Y's use of social media, which evaluates its implications for individuals, firms, and society (Bolton et al., 2013). Another study, among many others, that focuses on middle-aged people and older age groups and seeks to understand how people use social media as they age should be addressed. It speaks to the lack of study on social media addiction in these age groups, as studies have primarily concentrated on children and young adults (Koçak, Erdoğan, Arslan, 2021). Szíjártó's study (2014), which primarily focuses on the younger generations, aims to explore the changing dynamics and complexities of the relationship between previous generations and the emerging new generations, highlighting the significant shifts in their socialization environments. The study presents quantitative research findings, focusing on the lifestyle characteristics of Hungarian youth aged 15-24 (Szíjártó, 2014).

Through this research, I intend to engage in a comprehensive examination that entails comparing diverse generations and different media types. By undertaking such a comparative analysis, I aim to contribute to the ever-growing field of intergenerational studies.

2.2. Explanation of Aroldi's model of generational identity-making

Aroldi's model is yet another significant theory around media generation research, which focuses on certain factors that can help establish a feeling of belonging to a specific generation (Aroldi, 2011). Social science's idea of media generations provides insights into how media shapes generational identity and self-perception (Trültzsch-Wijnen, 2020, p. 61). It suggests that individuals who identify with a specific generation are likely to exhibit similar media usage patterns, seek similar gratifications, and engage in common media-related practices and motives. According to Aroldi's (2011) findings, this goes beyond superficial assumptions based solely on technology usage and highlights the broader

sociocultural aspects of generational media experiences. This is what Aroldi investigates in his model of generational identity-making (2011), as exhibited in Figure 1.

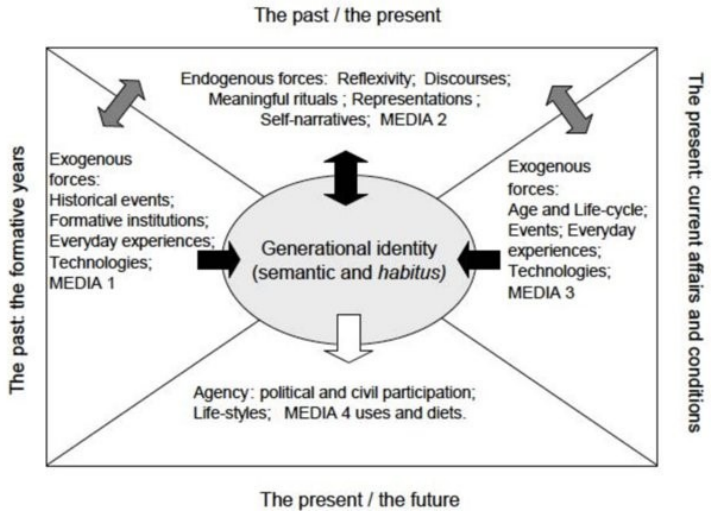

Figure 1: *Model of generational identity-making (Aroldi, 2011)*

According to the author's explanation, the left field stands for the past and consists of political and historical occurrences, as well as unevenly distributed resources and limitations. It includes significant events and cultural institutions that have an impact on daily life, particularly for young people. The social and historical events currently taking place in the right field are shared by people of the same age cohort. It takes into account factors like age, life stage, and common biographical circumstances that affect how people interpret their current experiences. In addition, Aroldi (2011) reflects on Corsten's studies (1999), based on which he determines, that there is a zone of reflexivity in which people belonging to a generation identify as a group and have a shared collective consciousness. This self-identification is created through contacts with people from different generations as well as the dominant semantic orders generated in discursive activities like traditions, stories, and self-representations. The bottom field symbolizes social agency, where political concerns are managed, lifestyles are adopted, and generational identities are reflected through brand and product preferences (Aroldi, 2011).

In conclusion, this model emphasizes how critical reflexivity and social agency help in establishing generational identity. It highlights how shared experiences, events in history, cultural institutions, and discursive practices determine how people view themselves and engage with other individuals (Aroldi, Colombo, 2020).

Aroldi and Colombo (2020) state that *"media and communication technologies participate in this "generational identity building" by simultaneously being part of both exogenous*

and endogenous forces, and by contributing to articulate each other through their contents and discourses."[2]

According to their conclusions, the media has a different impact on each generational model section. Media have historically played a role in the development of generational semantics by delivering cultural components like news, images, music, and brands that stick in people's minds and have an impact on their thought processes and attitudes (Aroldi, Colombo, 2020). Media in the present day serve as catalysts and ties, interacting with layered memories to extract fresh emotions or bring back old ones. In the area of reflexivity, media serves as an outlet for generational discourses, bringing people together and facilitating the arrival of common practices, traditions, and images. They offer free spaces for cross-generational conversation where participants can share their experiences, elect an authority figure, and discuss their shared identity. Additionally, a generation's worth of people make choices about media based on their social standing and personal tastes, resulting in unique media practices and consumption patterns (Aroldi, 2011).

2.3. Introduction to Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory

Understanding media activities as social practices is made easier by Pierre Bourdieu's theories, particularly his concepts of habitus. Habitus refers to the structured patterns and principles that shape people's behaviours and practices. It influences how individuals engage in various activities, such as eating, sports, expressing political opinions, and more (Bourdieu, 1996). Habitus is flexible and can be progressively changed in response to various situations. Habitus is not static and can change over time, strengthening preexisting expectations or changing them based on new experiences and events, despite being formed by social conditioning and historical factors (Edgerton, Roberts, 2014). Regarding media practices, this theory argues that media preferences and tastes are impacted by social factors and power dynamics rather than being entirely focused on personal preferences (Park, 2009).

[2] Aroldi, P., & Colombo, F. (2020). Media, generations, and the platform society. In Human Aspects of IT for the Aged Population. Healthy and Active Aging: 6th International Conference, ITAP 2020, Held as Part of the 22nd HCI International Conference, HCII 2020, Copenhagen, Denmark, July 19–24, 2020, Proceedings, Part II 22 (pp. 567-578). Springer International Publishing.

Costa (2013) explains Bourdieu's habitus as "*the evolving process through which individuals act think, perceive, and approach the world and their role in it. As such, habitus does not exist on its own. It connects the individual to the social environments in which he/she exists and performs, that is, the field, and where his/her practice is materialised and thus justified"*.[3] Therefore, habitus refers to the set of dispositions, beliefs, and behaviours that individuals acquire throughout their lives, and is influenced by various social and individual factors. Early socialization influences and particular life circumstances are supposed to contribute to a person's practical knowledge or practical sense, which serves as the foundation for their perceptions, ideas, and behaviours (Bourdieu, 2018). In addition, Bourdieu's theory of habitus highlights how a person's social field—the social context or environment they are placed in—influences their media-related behaviours (Willig, Waltorp, Hartley, 2015). In this field, there is a connection between individuals, who have the ability to influence each other through interactive practices (Costa, 2013). The idea of habitus explains why people use media in particular situations, judge media material in particular ways (such as differentiating between serious and tabloid media) and have certain media preferences. Additionally, it explains why people select the media gadgets they do and whether they consider media to be status indicators. These decisions and actions are perceived as being deeply ingrained in daily life and tied to people's pragmatic perceptions of media use (Trültzsch-Wijnen, 2020, p. 11.). Moreover, habitus influences individuals' media tastes and their ability to adapt to new media developments. It shapes how individuals integrate media into their daily lives and acquire media literacy, depending on their social background and the types of capital (e.g., cultural capital, economic capital) they possess (Bourdieu, 2018).

When it comes to the context of media processes, habitus can be viewed as the fundamental structure that directs the creation of media content (Park, 2009). Media material is not created arbitrarily or only by institutions; rather, it develops from customs shaped by the experiences of the past. Structured elements including legal, technical, and market considerations have an impact on these activities. The strategic decisions made by people who are directly involved in the creation of media material also have an impact on its existence (Park, 2009).

In general, Bourdieu's habitus concept offers a framework for comprehending how people's social histories, internalized tendencies, and practical sense impact their media habits,

[3] Costa, C. (2013). The habitus of digital scholars. Research in learning technology, 21.

preferences, and participation, therefore it is considered a significant theoretical concept for this research.

2.4. Overview of habitual media use

People develop and maintain persistent patterns for how they consume media. When some actions are consistently practiced in safe environments and are used to achieve a specific goal, like finding information or entertainment, they gradually become established habits (Ghersetti, Westlund, 2018). Wood, Quinn, and Kashy (2002) have discovered that media use is habitual, which means that people establish strong, reliable routines for regularly engaging with media. It develops into a pattern of action that is almost subconsciously carried out without much thinking. Media use that is habitual becomes a regular part of one's daily or weekly routine and implies a certain level of comfort and familiarity with particular media platforms, genres, or material. It is possible to observe a significant connection between generations and the media that was popular during their formative years (Westlund, Weibull, 2013). People who experienced the beginning of a certain media during their formative years are more likely to view it as an integral component of their cultural environment and to hold onto its definition and influence for the rest of their life (Aroldi, Colombo, 2007). Research suggests that people's media usage is shaped by their life cycle and generational connection. Younger generations have formed habits within the digital media landscape, while older generations tend to maintain the media habits they developed during the era of traditional media (Westlund, Weibull, 2013). Westlund and Weibull (2013) also highlight that factors, such as getting married, building a career, and entering retirement can influence the amount of time and money individuals have available for media consumption. This highlights the importance of considering life stages and socioeconomic factors when examining media usage patterns.

According to LaRose's research (2010), people's habits related to media use, such as regularly using certain media platforms or engaging in specific media activities, are not strongly influenced by the specific situations or contexts in which they occur. While having a stable environment can help in forming these media habits initially, once they are established, they can continue even if the person's situation or circumstances change. Therefore, media habits have a certain level of independence from the immediate context and can persist over time.

Based on Ouellette and Wood's study on habits (1998) we understand that future actions are greatly influenced by prior behaviour. Due to the familiarity and practice involved, when people develop well-established media habits, such as consistently engaging with particular platforms or consuming particular sorts of information, these actions become automatic and repeating. Future patterns of media intake are directly influenced by the frequency of prior media activity, which represents the strength of the habit. Contrarily, when people have less developed or irregular media habits, it takes active decision-making to start and maintain media interaction, particularly in unstable or challenging media environments. In these circumstances, past media behaviour, as well as individual attitudes and social conventions, may help determine future media consumption and choices (Ouellette, Wood, 1998).

2.5. Discussion of other relevant theories

A relevant theory that needs to be addressed to better understand the media habits of different generations is the uses and gratifications theory often credited to Katz and Blumler (Vinney, 2021). The theory emerged in the late 1950s as a way to understand how individuals engage with mass media based on their own experiences and perspectives (Blumler, 1979). Despite being the target of criticism throughout the years, the uses and gratifications theory remained one of the key theories of media consumption patterns (Ruggiero, 2000). The approach's significance resides in its ongoing evolution and adaptation to new media innovations and usage patterns, particularly in connection to how individuals are socialized through media (Trültzsch-Wijnen, 2020, p. 39). The theory implies that people make intentional choices about their media consumption based on their own motivations and the satisfaction they seek from media interactions (McQuail, 1984). When applied to different generations, the theory helps to uncover the motivations and gratifications that drive media habits within each generational cohort. It acknowledges that various generations have diverse sociocultural, historical, and technological circumstances that influence how they consume media and what they enjoy (McQuail, 2010, pp. 421-422). Researchers can learn more about the factors influencing media habits across generations by examining how each generation uses media to satisfy particular needs and gratifications. For example, the theory can shed light on why certain media platforms or content types are more appealing to one generation compared to another. It enables researchers to investigate the various desires and preferences of each generation's requirements and preferences using

various media platforms and technologies (Bondad-Brown, Rice, Pearce, 2012). For instance, older generations might choose to get their news and entertainment from more established media outlets (Rochyadi-Reetz, Maryani, Agustina, 2020), whereas younger generations might be more likely to utilize social media sites for certain reasons (Urista, Dong, Day, 2009).

In relation to the uses and gratifications theory there is another significant approach developed by Rubin and Windahl (1986), the dependency model. By considering media use and activity in the broader context of people's daily routines and lives, it advances past research (Trültzsch-Wijnen, 2020, p. 41). In order to understand both individual-level and societal-level aspects that affect the importance of media in people's daily lives, media dependency theory offers a multilevel and ecological framework for investigating media habits (Jung, 2017). It claims that people who have access to a variety of communication channels and actively use them have a tendency to depend less on a particular medium to meet their needs. Instead, they weigh the pros and cons of numerous media-based and interpersonal communication methods in order to satisfy their unique needs. This theory provides insightful information on the dynamic interaction between people, the media, and their social environment (Trültzsch-Wijnen, 2020, p. 41). Rubin and Windahl (1986) emphasized that media effects are influenced by a combination of sought gratifications and socially determined dependency. They claimed that individuals actively seek information or consistently connect with particular communication channels or messages, either for conscious objectives or as part of their habits, and that this leads to dependency on that medium or message. According to Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976), media dependency occurs when an individual's fulfilment of goals is dependent on the information provided by the media system. They differentiated between many types of dependencies:

"There are numerous ways in which people are dependent on media to satisfy information needs. For example, one form of dependency is based on the need to understand one's social world; another type of dependency arises from the need to act meaningfully and effectively in that world; still, a third type of dependency is based on the need for fantasy-escape from daily problems and tensions. The greater the need and consequently the stronger the dependency in such matters, the greater the likelihood that the information supplied will alter various forms of audience cognitions, feelings, and behaviour."[4]

[4] Ball-Rokeach, S. J., & DeFleur, M. L. (1976). A dependency model of mass-media effects. *Communication research*, *3*(1), p. 6.

Due to their emphasis on understanding the motivations, behaviours, and impacts of media usage, these theories offer useful frameworks for examining media habits across many generations. By using these approaches, researchers can learn more about how various generations' media habits and tastes are changing and how generational factors affect patterns of media use.

2.6. Exploring the interconnections of the theories

There are several reasons why the theories discussed relate to each other regarding the study of media habits of different generations. All these concepts stress how social and cultural factors influence people's activities, including how they consume media. They understand that people are not isolated beings but rather are shaped by their historical context, social institutions, and cultural standards. When it comes to the generational perspective, Mannheim's theory (1952) and Aroldi's model (2011) notably adopt this viewpoint, emphasizing the impact of generational transformations on people's experiences, attitudes, and behaviours. They realize that various generations interact with the social and cultural environment and the media in different ways. These approaches both highlight the mutual influence and interaction between generations and society. They understand that young people bring new viewpoints and attitudes to the cultural process, changing the cultural heritage passed down from earlier generations. This theory is consistent with Aroldi's paradigm, which emphasizes how media generations share comparable media usage habits, gratification preferences, and media-related behaviours. The use and gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler, Gurevitch, 1973) and Bourdieu's habitus theory (1996) both take into account how socioeconomic conditions and political dynamics affect people's media use. Bourdieu's habitus theory highlights that media tastes and preferences are impacted by social circumstances and power dynamics rather than being entirely dependent on human preferences. The uses and gratifications approach, in a comparable way, admits that people intentionally choose what kind of media they consume depending on their own motives and the gratification they seek, which might be influenced by societal circumstances.

The used theories take into account how media habits and behaviours change throughout time. They accept that people might develop media habits throughout their early years that last over time, influencing their media preferences and consumption patterns. The idea that media habits are created and maintained over time by repeating behaviours is consistent with Ouellette's and Wood's (1998) perspective.

The social and cultural settings of media consumption, the impact of generational dynamics, the importance of socioeconomic variables and power dynamics, and the long-term nature of media habits are all recurring topics in these theories. They offer complementary viewpoints that aid in understanding the complex relationships among individuals, generations, and media in society.

3. Methodology

The methodology chapter in this study outlines the research design, sample selection, data collection methods, secondary analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. Each subchapter focuses on a specific aspect of the research process, ensuring a thorough and systematic investigation. The research design provides an overview of the approach and framework used. Sample selection explains the process of identifying and recruiting participants. The secondary analysis highlights the data analysis process and techniques utilized in this study. Ethical considerations address the importance of ethical guidelines and participant protection.

3.1. Research design and sample selection

The current study consists of two separate research phases: the primary investigation completed for the "Empirical Audience Research" seminar which took place in the winter semester of 2022/2023 at Charles University, and the secondary investigation for the master's thesis. The initial study attempted to investigate how various generations use different forms of media. It involved all students of the seminar conducting three types of interviews: 1) individuals of their own age, 2) individuals of their parents' age, and 3) individuals of their grandparents' age. The goal was to learn more about the differences in media consumption among the different generations. All the interviews conducted at the seminar were transcribed, anonymized, and the data was then analysed using thematic coding based on shared considerations and the approach outlined by Strauss and Corbin (2004).

People from different generations made up the sample for the seminar phase. This sample was chosen with the intention of capturing a cross-generational viewpoint on media use. The interviews were conducted based on participants' age groups rather than specific family relations. The emphasis was on obtaining diverse insights into media habits across different age cohorts. Thematic coding was used to examine the interview data from the seminar

phase, using Strauss and Corbin's (2004) methodology. Themes, patterns, and insights relating to generational media usage were found using a coding grid. This analysis assisted in an initial understanding of the research topic, serving as a foundation for further exploration during the secondary analysis.

3.2. Secondary analysis

The secondary analysis, carried out according to the master's thesis methodology, concentrated on re-analysing the entire dataset gathered during the seminar phase. The study used thematic analysis to answer the research questions, guided by the theoretical ideas presented at the outset of the study. In order to gain new insights and examine the research topic in greater detail than the initial seminar analysis, this secondary analysis dug deeper into the dataset. This required a thorough examination of the analysis grid and the interview transcripts. I revisited the interviews and the analysis grid to find the most significant topics and codes for a deeper investigation of generational media usage patterns and behaviours, drawing on my research objectives and questions.

By going over the interviews again, I was able to fully comprehend the insightful experiences and observations that participants of all ages provided. Through this approach, I was able to develop a more complex knowledge of the data, revealing details and insights that may have gone unnoticed during the initial investigation. I was able to recognize repeating themes, significant events, and cultural trends through this re-examination, which provided insight into the study objectives and theoretical framework.

The re-analysis of the dataset during the secondary phase of this study represents a significant expansion of the initial seminar analysis. I aimed to add new thoughts and viewpoints to the discussion by reading the interviews again and going over the analysis grid again. By revealing connections and patterns that add to the body of information already known in this area, this deeper investigation helped to allow a more thorough understanding of the complicated nature and dynamics of generational media consumption. The secondary analysis phase's attention to detail ensures the validity and trustworthiness of the results. With new insights and a deeper understanding of generational media usage patterns and behaviours, this technique allowed us to gain insight into the depth of the data.

3.3. Ethical considerations

The rights and confidentiality of participants were protected throughout the study by strictly following ethical standards. Participants' interviews were recorded during the first seminar phase and anonymized to ensure the highest confidentiality. For the sake of the secondary analysis carried out in the master's thesis, the seminar participants voluntarily agreed to provide their data. Their willingness to share their insightful findings and rich experiences was extremely important in enhancing the general conclusions of this study. The study maintained a respectful and responsible approach to research by upholding these ethical principles. It fostered a sense of trust and mutual respect between the researchers and the participants, acknowledging the value and significance of their contributions. Our understanding of generational media usage habits and behaviours has advanced significantly as a result of the participants' willingness to share their data.

4. Media habits of the elderly generation

This chapter explores the media habits of the elderly generation born in the late 1930s and the 1940s, providing an in-depth analysis of their media consumption patterns, preferences, and the factors that influence their media habits. The chapter begins with background information on the elderly generation, highlighting the past media environment in which they grew up and focusing on their unique characteristics. Afterward, an analysis of their media consumption patterns and preferences sheds light on the types of media they engage with and the ways in which they incorporate media into their daily lives. Furthermore, this chapter examines the various factors that influence their media habits. Finally, a comparison with relevant theoretical frameworks provides a broader perspective on the findings and establishes connections between existing theories and the observed media habits of the elderly generation.

4.1. Background information on the elderly generation

The Czechoslovak society, as well as its media system, underwent an important shift in 1948. The relatively open media system that was developed after 1945 suffered major changes. Although there was no censorship in place yet, there were several restrictions that had a significant impact on the media (Bednařík, Cebe, 2008). During World War II, the country underwent a transition from a parliamentary democracy to a communist regime led

by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Charvát, Jirák, Köpplová, 2023). The shortage of newsprint, which limited the number of newspapers that could be published, was one of the most significant problems (Bednařík, Cebe, 2008). During World War II, the Nazi occupation brought accountability demands from the media and journalists engaged in pro-Nazi activity (Charvát, Jirák, Köpplová, 2023). Journalists who worked with the Nazis risked punishments like imprisonment or execution, and certain publications under the control of the communist Václav Kopecký's Ministry of Information were shut down or forced to change their titles (Bednařík, Cebe, 2008). It was expected that the media would act responsibly and in the public interest. Media research and education enjoyed a period of revival in the years following the end of the war. The study of media in the context of the current social circumstances has been developed. Journals and publications with a media focus gathered empirical data on subjects including radio listenership and media coverage. In order to overcome the lack of professionals in the area, journalism training programs were created (Charvát, Jirák, Köpplová, 2023). The socialist agenda was promoted by the state-controlled media under the communist dictatorship that came to power in 1948. The public's ideas and actions were thought to be shaped by the media through education and persuasion. To improve the efficiency of media communication, media research, and education have been institutionalized. These studies, though, were conducted with the objectives of the ruling party in mind and were shaped by Marxist-Leninist doctrine (Charvát, Jirák, Köpplová, 2023). Intellectuals and people in Czechoslovakia gradually gained their freedom before the Prague Spring, beginning to question communist ideologies and criticize the government's cultural policy. The Association of Czechoslovak Writers' Fourth Congress, held in 1967, was a notable occasion where talks emphasized the division between the Communist Party and the writers (Gulińska-Jurgiel, 2009). The process of democratization continued. Under Alexander Dubček, the Prague Spring of 1968 resulted in changes in Czechoslovakia, particularly press freedom. The movement was suppressed by the Soviet Union's invasion, which brought back an authoritarian government. The international community criticized Soviet activities, despite censorship and suppression of the media. The country remained under Soviet influence until the Velvet Revolution in 1989, leading to the establishment of a democratic Czechoslovakia (Kopsa, 2019).

During these years the country experienced strict censorship (Špirk, 2008). Founded in 1953, HSTD (Hlavní správa tiskového dohledu) operated as an independent division within the Ministry of the Interior and maintained close collaboration with the State Security

(StB). Controlling the media was among its duties. Newspapers, books, movies, broadcasts, and television shows were heavily censored by HSTD employees to ensure that political guidelines were followed. While some media outlets had greater liberty, such as the newspaper Rudé právo, which dominated in determining the media agenda, censorship was widespread and caused conflicts (Končelík, Večeřa, Orság, 2010, pp. 139-140.). However, restrictions gradually eased in the late 1960s, suggesting a shift towards openness. After the 1968 invasion, a period of normalization followed this relatively unrestricted period, but change started to happen again in the late 1980s with a shift away from major censorship measures. This ultimately resulted in increased freedom of speech, important historical occurrences, and the removal of repressive censorship techniques (Špirk, 2008).

4.2. Media consumption patterns of the elderly generation and the influencing factors

The media consumption behaviour of the elderly generation is intricately shaped by their unique experiences, historical context, and personal preferences. This subchapter looks further into how they use media, examining the key variables that shape their decisions and usage patterns. The elderly generation, made up of people who were born during or soon after World War II, went through formative years that were impacted by the events of the war and its aftermath. Their upbringing was characterized by difficult circumstances, limited resources, and few chances for personal development. Most of the respondents consider these times as extremely challenging, they remember how *"…The Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia. Dubček, the head of the Communist Party wanted to achieve "socialism with a human face". So, the Soviets came with their tanks. We didn't work for a few days, and we went to every protest in Bratislava."*

Newspapers were commonly mentioned as an important medium among the elderly, even though they were not necessarily their primary source of information. This is interesting because print media is frequently seen to be declining today (De Silva, 2023). The epidemic and the economic difficulties have only served to worsen the decline in newspaper consumption, which is being caused by decreasing readership and a shift in ad revenue to digital platforms. The sector faces enormous challenges requiring creative solutions to restore audience and financial stability (Adgate, 2021). This result raises doubt about the idea that print media's decline is a relatively recent phenomenon and raises the possibility

that newspaper consumption may have been driven more by accessibility than by popularity.

The radio also had a significant impact, changing from a means of obtaining important information in the past to largely providing entertainment in the present. The introduction of television reduced the radio's function as a news source, limiting it to a medium mostly used for entertainment purposes. It is noteworthy that although some elderly participants used the internet frequently, it was rarely used as a source of important information. Instead, the internet was mainly used for leisure or to keep in touch with friends and family.

The elderly generation was highly sceptical about digital technology, and many expressed unwillingness to learn how to use it because they thought it was too complicated. One respondent said that they *"could talk for hours about different books, but media? It is all Greek to me"*, many other people shared a similar opinion. With its ability to provide entertainment, relaxation, and information about world events, television quickly became the most popular media among this generation. The overwhelming volume of information accessible online can be partly blamed for why individuals opt for television. By presenting viewers with well-chosen news pieces, television, with its carefully controlled news broadcasts, makes it easier to find relevant data. On the other hand, navigating the internet may be difficult, especially in the age of social media and clickbait articles, when it is harder to find reliable news.

Geographical factors also played a role because the respondents were from Eastern Europe, and they all had different media-related experiences. Respondents who experienced censorship and political upheaval while living in communist-run nations often distrusted all sorts of media. This mistrust of media outlets in general may be the outcome of prior experiences with information control.

The large amount of free time enjoyed by elderly individuals is yet another factor influencing their media consumption habits. Since they have more free time, they inevitably turn to television as their main source of amusement and knowledge. Their choices and way of life are compatible with the convenience of passive viewing.

It's interesting that the change to a new political system had little effect on how the elderly generation consumed media. Participants reported that despite significant societal changes, their interactions with the media were generally stable. This finding implies that rather than external political changes, human experiences, and preferences are the primary determinants of media consumption habits.

In conclusion, the elderly generation's media consumption habits reveal a complex network of influences. The fact that they rely primarily on print, radio, and television for news and entertainment demonstrates the long-lasting effects of early media exposure. Their opinions had been formed by the war and the months that followed it while they were young, and their trust or mistrust of media sources was influenced by geography and politics. The issues presented by information overload online are highlighted by the elderly generation's preference for television over digital media despite technical developments. To engage and serve the interests of this large audience, media organizations, and scholars must fully comprehend these patterns of media consumption.

4.3. Comparison with the theoretical framework

In examining the analysis of media consumption patterns among the elderly generation and its alignment with the theories discussed in the second chapter, it becomes apparent that there are significant connections and parallels between the two. The analysis clarifies the distinctive media consumption habits of the elderly generation, while the theoretical framework offers a lens through which we can understand the underlying variables impacting media habits. We may comprehend the complex relationships between generations, society, and the media better by contrasting these two points of view.

The theoretical framework places a strong emphasis on the social and cultural influences that have an impact on how people use media. This idea is supported by research on the elderly population's media consumption patterns, which shows how their particular life experiences, cultural background, and personal preferences shape their media usage. Having experienced World War II and its aftermath, the elderly generation acquired media consumption habits that were influenced by challenging circumstances, a lack of resources, and a lack of possibilities for personal growth. As a result, even though they weren't their main source of information, newspapers were still very important to this age cohort. This data sheds doubt on the idea that print media have recently been on the decline, suggesting that accessibility rather than popularity influenced newspaper consumption among elderly individuals. Additionally, both Mannheim's theory and Aroldi's model take a generational viewpoint, emphasizing how generational changes affect people's experiences, attitudes, and behaviours. The analysis of media consumption patterns supports this viewpoint, demonstrating how different generations interact with the social and cultural environment and media in distinct ways. Historical events and their formative years have an impact on

the media habits of the elderly generation. With its ability to provide amusement, relaxation, and news about current events, television has become the most popular medium among the elderly. In contrast, this generation did not primarily rely on the internet, even though it was sometimes used for communication and entertainment. The contrast in media consumption and tastes indicates the impact of generational dynamics and historical events on media consumption behaviours.

The theoretical framework and the research on media consumption patterns are both heavily dependent on socioeconomic factors and power dynamics. Bourdieu's habitus theory emphasizes how, rather than being purely driven by individual choices, media tastes, and preferences are also influenced by social circumstances and power dynamics. This viewpoint is supported by research on how the elderly generation consumes media, which shows how geographic characteristics and earlier exposure to information control affect their trust or mistrust of media sources. Participants who lived through instability and oppression while living in communist countries showed a widespread distrust of media sources. This finding emphasizes how socioeconomic and political issues have an ongoing influence on people's media consumption patterns.

The perspective emphasized by Ouellette and Wood is also in line with the idea that media habits are formed and sustained over time through repeated actions. This hypothesis is supported by the study of the use of media among elderly individuals, which shows consistent media interactions despite significant societal changes. This shows that the main factors influencing media consumption habits are personal experiences and preferences rather than changes in the political environment.

In conclusion, there are substantial connections and alignments between the analysis of media consumption habits among the elderly generation and the theoretical framework. It emphasizes the impact of generational dynamics, the significance of socioeconomic conditions and power dynamics, the long-lasting nature of media habits across time, and the influence of social, cultural, and historical factors on media habits. This comparative analysis contributes to a more thorough understanding of social media habits by offering insightful information about the complicated connections between people, generations, and media use.

5. Media habits of the middle generation

This chapter examines the media usage patterns and preferences of the middle generation born in the 1960s and the 1970s, as well as the underlying influences that have shaped these behaviours. The chapter opens with a background on the middle generation, highlighting its distinctive traits and the media environment it grew up in. The precise media people use and how it affects their daily life are then highlighted through an examination of their consumption habits and preferences in media. Moreover, this chapter explores the social, cultural, and technological elements of the issues that affect people's media consumption. Finally, a comparative analysis with related theoretical frameworks reveals insightful information about the relationships between existing theories and the middle generation's observed media habits.

5.1. Background information on the middle generation

As a member of the Eastern Bloc, Czechoslovakia underwent major internal reform from 1948 to 1989. During this time, there were significant changes to the media's landscape and content, with a persistent focus on the media's role as a tool for education aimed to influence public views and behaviour (Charvát, Jirák, Köpplová, 2023). In particular, the years 1967–1969 saw a brief period of liberalization that culminated in the Prague Spring from January–August 1968, which was followed by the Warsaw Pact and its soldiers' invasion of the nation (Stibbe, McDermott, 2022). The invasion encountered minimal resistance, and Dubček and other Czechoslovak leaders were arrested and pressured to accept Soviet occupation (Kalvoda, 1980). Gustáv Husák took Dubček's position as first secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia after the invasion, and the government undid most of the reforms from the Prague Spring under the pretence of bringing political and economic life back to "normal." As the administration offered modest increases in living standards and consumer goods in exchange for passive acceptance of Soviet-dominated rule, censorship was resumed, and political apathy spread widely. Dissidents who resisted this arrangement were subject to violence, removal from their professions, and imprisonment (Peirce, 2009).

Following the "Normalization" era, the Communist government in Czechoslovakia continued to maintain strict control over the country's media environment. The government continued to closely monitor and censor any opposing viewpoints or facts that questioned

the dominant narrative, leading to continued censorship of the press and media outlets (Bednařík, Jirák, Köpplová, 2011, p. 335-336). However, the media became extremely important in facilitating and capturing the shift with the start of the Velvet Revolution in 1989 (Klvaňa, 2004). Journalists and media professionals were crucial in influencing public opinion and keeping those in authority accountable during this significant time (Rosenbaum, Duncan, 2011). There was a big emphasis on professional journalism education during these times, which also gave a path to a more open and accountable media system in Czechoslovakia (Charvát, Jirák, Köpplová, 2023). Public support for destroying the Communist system was encouraged by the media's active participation and commitment to the truth and democracy. It gave many voices and viewpoints a platform, promoting a lively conversation that challenged long-held historical narratives (Pisarek, 1989).

The media environment in the newly created country witnessed considerable changes after the Velvet Revolution. The nation's new constitution included measures for press freedom and media pluralism, guaranteeing that journalists and media outlets could operate independently and without concern for government censorship (Stoneman, 2015). As a result of the Velvet Revolution, the Communist Party lost power, and a transition to democracy began. Václav Havel, who had become a symbol of resistance during the Communist era, was elected as the president of Czechoslovakia in December 1989 (Kirschbaum, 2009). Czechoslovakia implemented a political and economic reform process over the following ten years. The nation embraced democratic principles, privatized state-owned businesses, and implemented market-oriented economic reforms (Šmíd, 2007). The peaceful division, often called the Velvet Divorce, of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993 marked the end of the Czechoslovak state (Wilde, 2019).

By the year 2000, with the rise of new technologies and online spaces, the media landscape of the country started to evolve into a diverse and vibrant industry, in which journalists had the opportunity to portray and publish relevant and accountable information, which was crucial in empowering citizens to be informed (Šmíd, 2005). The media's contribution to the change from authoritarianism to democracy in Czechoslovakia is evidence of the value of free speech and the crucial part that journalists play in defending democratic values (Klvaňa, 2004).

5.2. Media consumption patterns of the middle generation and the influencing factors

Due to their varied backgrounds, experiences, and status as a generation between the elderly and young generations, the middle generation exhibits unique media consumption tendencies. Based on the information acquired, this subchapter analyses their media consumption behaviour in order to understand their preferences and the factors that shape their media habits. Scepticism is a prevalent trait among the middle generation, stemming from their exposure to propaganda during their formative years in communist or socialist countries. This exposure has made them cautious about the information they consume, leading them to double-check facts and be cautious of fake news circulating in the media: *"My generation experienced both socialism and freedom. We are barely holding on with the technical trend and we feel the language barrier with the English-speaking world. We are capable of working with fake news because we are not trustworthy people because of the propaganda during socialism."*

The middle generation is influenced by both personal and historical-political events in their media intake. Personal occurrences like divorce, moving to a new country, losing a loved one, and having children have an impact on their media usage. In addition, significant historical-political occurrences like the Soviet occupation, the Velvet Revolution, the regime change of '89, 9/11, and the presidential elections have had a long-lasting effect on how they consume media, particularly regarding politics and conflicts.

In the past, the middle generation may have consumed a variety of media, but more recent changes, probably brought on by digital transformation, have made the internet their dominant medium. Although they recognize the benefits of digital technology and use it frequently, they assert that they are not as reliant on it as younger people are. It's interesting to note that, despite getting their news from digital and online sources, the majority of respondents have the most trust in television. Due to the increasing amount of false information, many express concerns about the internet. Instead, the middle generation makes use of the internet's readily available and frequently free tools to learn new skills. This generation can be characterized as a "transition" generation, bridging the gap between traditional and modern media. They still engage with traditional media while embracing new media forms, adapting to the changing times: *"...I guess now all the generations are using the internet in everyday life. For the elderly generations, they can google things and send emails with pictures. We are somewhere in between, but the internet*

became a key medium for us as well and for the young generation, they grew up with it, so the phone is basically glued to their hands."

The variety of media that the middle generation consumes reflects their various goals and tastes. They use different mediums for a variety of purposes. They do, however, share a common attitude that emphasizes the value of friendships and demonstrates a high capacity for preserving them. Interestingly, there is limited awareness of generational belonging among the middle generation. Although individuals may not have said that they belong to a certain generation, their responses reveal common viewpoints and actions, indicating an implicit relationship.

Their media involvement has been impacted by the political system change. In line with shifts in the sociopolitical environment, they have modified how they consume media. The middle generation is made up of people with a wide range of educational backgrounds, professions, leisure activities, and pop culture interests. Their varied backgrounds have a further impact on how they consume media, illustrating how complex their tastes and routines are.

In conclusion, the middle generation's media consumption habits are influenced by their different backgrounds, experiences, scepticism, and identity as a transitional generation. Their tastes show a balance between conventional and contemporary media, and their confidence in television as a trustworthy information source stands out. Their shared attitudes and behaviours highlight the power of their combined experiences.

5.3. Comparison with the theoretical frameworks

The middle generation's media habits can be better understood by comparing the middle generation's media consumption patterns and factors to theoretical frameworks. The theories discussed in the theoretical framework chapter shed light on the social and cultural factors that influence people's media activities, and their applicability to the middle generation becomes evident.

The importance of the impact of generational changes on people's experiences, attitudes, and behaviours is emphasized by Mannheim's theory and Aroldi's model. The middle generation's unique position as a transitional group between the elderly and young generations aligns with this viewpoint. While also observing and adjusting to the technical breakthroughs and societal changes brought about by the younger generation, they have been exposed to the cultural heritage of prior generations. They mix conventional and

modern media tastes in their media consumption, which reflects this duality. They grew up with traditional media like television, radio, and newspapers, but they have also embraced new media forms like the internet.

Bourdieu's habitus theory and the uses and gratifications theory both consider how power dynamics and socioeconomic conditions affect media use. The different origins of the middle generation, especially their time spent in communist or socialist countries, have influenced their scepticism and cautious approach to media consumption. They have an increased tendency to double-check information and are extremely conscious of the presence of fake news and misinformation in the digital age: *"We are sceptics because we grew up in an era of extensive propaganda".* The media consumption habits of the middle generation are influenced by both personal and historical-political events. Their media tastes and engagement, particularly with respect to politics and wars, have been affected by the big events they have encountered, including the Soviet occupation, the Velvet Revolution, and significant political elections. These enduring influences highlight how crucial it is to take into account their historical background when examining their media consumption patterns.

Overall, major connections may be seen when comparing the middle generation's media consumption patterns and characteristics to theoretical frameworks. The ideas offer a lens through which to see the complex relationships between people, generations, and media. Because they switch back and forth between traditional and contemporary media forms, the middle generation's distinct status as a transitional generation is clear from their media habits. The influence of socioeconomic circumstances on their media preferences is highlighted by their scepticism, which is molded by their past experiences, and their careful approach to media intake. The long-term consequences of historical and personal events on people's media habits are further highlighted by Ouellette's and Wood's perspective.

We learn more about the elements influencing the media consumption habits of the middle generation by referring to these theoretical frameworks. Their media preferences are influenced by a variety of social, cultural, and historical factors in addition to their own preferences. We are better able to comprehend the complexity and details of the middle generation’s media consumption thanks to the insights these theories have to offer.

6. Media habits of the young generation

This chapter examines the media preferences and consumption habits of the young generation, which includes those who were born in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as well as the underlying factors that have shaped their media habits. The first section of the chapter gives background information on the young generation, highlighting its unique traits and the media environment in which they grew up. An examination of their media consumption patterns and preferences reveals the particular platforms and material they use and the effects these have on their daily life. This chapter also looks at the social, cultural, and technological influences on the young generation's media consumption patterns. Finally, an evaluation using pertinent theoretical frameworks provides important insights into the relationships between established theories and the media habits seen in the young generation.

6.1. Background information on the young generation

In the Czech Republic, the early 2000s were a time of political and social transition. The EU's admission in 2004 (Richter, 2014) and the world financial crisis in 2008 (Terazi, Şenel, 2011), which both occurred in the country, both had a substantial impact on the media environment. With more media channels catering to certain interests and target audiences, the Czech Republic's media landscape has become even more diverse. With their extensive selection of entertainment, news, and cultural programming, private television networks like TV Nova and Prima TV became increasingly popular (Šmíd, 2007).

With the rise of new newspapers and magazines targeting certain readerships and specific audiences, print media also underwent diversification. The print sector did, however, experience economic difficulties, such as decreasing readership and competition from internet platforms (Šmíd, 2007). The media landscape saw enormous changes because of the development of the internet and digital technology. With the availability of immediate news updates and interactive platforms for public engagement, online news portals and social media platforms grew (Štětka, Šmahel, 2009). The problem of media ownership and concentration has been one of the major difficulties in the Czech media environment. Concerns regarding potential biases and conflicts of interest have arisen as a result of the market being dominated by a limited number of strong media corporations and individuals (Štětka, 2010).

The spread of disinformation and fake news became a growing concern in the Czech Republic, as it did globally (Smolík, 2020). The digital era provided an ideal ground for false narratives, propaganda, and conspiracy theories, which resulted in a chaotic information landscape and difficulties telling fact from fiction (Zlatkovský, Kočí, 2016).

Platforms for social media like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have been very influential in affecting public opinion and fostering citizen journalism (Hladík, Štětka, 2017). These platforms provided opportunities for individuals to share news, express opinions, and participate in public debates (Štětka, Šmahel, 2009). However, there were downsides to the democratization of information brought about by social media, such as the spread of hate speech and false information. For both individuals and platforms, finding a balance between free expression and ethical online behaviour has become a pressing concern (Hladík, Štětka, 2017).

Since the early 2000s, Slovakia's media environment has undergone significant change, with both positive and negative shifts affecting press freedom and media plurality. Slovakia's small size has an impact on its relatively concentrated media market. While larger media companies are more efficient, the significant presence of the state hampers competition and transparency (Šípoš, 2004). This is especially true for the television industry, where TV Markíza dominates with little opposition (RSF, 2023). The country's democracy and economic development are negatively impacted by concentrated media ownership due to insufficient legislation and weak public pressure (Šípoš, 2004). Both public and private media outlets are vulnerable to interests unrelated to journalism, threatening their editorial independence. The public broadcaster RTVS has faced funding issues and political influence, while newspapers and online outlets maintain a strong tradition of investigative journalism (RSF, 2023). Despite these difficulties, Slovakia's media environment has undergone some encouraging changes. In an effort to increase press freedom and address the 2018 murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak (Germanova, 2018), the government has acted. There have been steps taken to protect journalistic sources, boost media ownership transparency, and improve public information access (Freedom House, 2023). However, progress has been slow, and journalists continue to work in a hostile environment, facing attacks and harassment (RSF, 2023). The independent print media landscape in Slovakia is broad, and the nation is home to a number of publications. The prominent newspapers Denník N, SME, and Pravda have a long history of investigative reporting and support the diversity of viewpoints in the media (Školkay, 2008).

Furthermore, Slovakia has seen a rise in the use of social media sites, with Facebook being the most popular one (Statista Research Department, 2022). Social media gives people a platform to share information and express their opinions. However, concerns about the spread of disinformation and the influence of foreign actors on social and online media remain pertinent issues in the country (Szekeres, 2021).

6.2. Media consumption patterns of the young generation and the influencing factors

The young generation is characterized by its diverse interests, media events, and political awareness. Due to the quick distribution of knowledge in the modern digital age, they demonstrate a profound understanding of international social and political events. This generation identifies the influence of technology on their life, recognizing that their childhoods were relatively technology-free. They did, however, increasingly become more reliant on technology as it became more incorporated into their life. They are always online, demonstrating their continued presence and involvement with digital media: *"...we had the chance to witness the way the internet really came to life through the 2000s and 2010s. Our generation and the internet sort of grew up together. My family got access to the internet when I was in kindergarten, so I remember how slow and raw it used to be back then. I remember the beginnings of YouTube and later Facebook, but also how the world was before social media".*

The young generation has placed a strong emphasis on understanding the possible risks connected to the digital world. They expressed worries about fake news and the dangers the internet poses in general. They nevertheless watch a lot of material online despite these worries, demonstrating the importance of digital platforms in their daily life. Social media and online platforms have replaced television, which was formerly their dominant medium during their childhood. Online news sources, networking sites, and streaming services for music and movies have all become crucial components of their media environment.

Due to their constant use of smartphones and computers, the young generation is clearly dependent on digital technology. Many participants explain this by stating that they are students who need these devices for their educational needs. It's interesting to see that while being suspicious about fake news, individuals still rely significantly on digital sources to get their news. Digital media and social platforms serve both recreational and educational purposes for the young generation. They engage with these platforms for entertainment,

socializing, and learning new skills. However, their involvement in political issues is also notable. Despite knowing that media might have disadvantages such as spreading incorrect information and inventing narratives they value political engagement and acknowledge its value in this area: "*Following the news to create my own opinions on public matters is important to me. But I think the role of the media today in civil or political participation is a double-edged sword. On one hand, people have access to an almost unlimited amount of information and news about anything from a lot of different points of view, which is great for democracy and free speech. On the other hand, this might be confusing for a lot of people and such a maelstrom of information can create the phenomena we know as information obesity."*

The young generation's media consumption habits are influenced by many different things. They have grown up in a digital age when information is easily accessible at their fingertips, so the availability and accessibility of digital technologies play a vital role. Their significant usage of digital tools and platforms is also influenced by their academic endeavours. influenced by a complex interaction of sociological, and technological influences. Their interactions with information, entertainment, and social relationships have changed as a result of the widespread distribution of digital media in their lives. They continue to navigate and engage in the digital environment despite being aware of its shortcomings, maximizing its potential for individual development, social connectivity, and political participation.

In conclusion, the media consumption habits of the younger generation are a reflection of their exposure to digital media and the rapidly changing technological environment. Their preferred media outlets include social media and digital platforms, and they are aware of both the advantages and disadvantages of each. We can better understand how the young generation, media, and society interact by identifying the various factors that affect their media use.

6.3. Comparison with the theoretical framework

When compared to the theoretical frameworks covered in the second chapter, the analysis of the media consumption habits of the young generation reveals some surprising findings. Bourdieu's habitus theory and the uses and gratifications theory provide insightful viewpoints for comprehending the media habits and behaviours of the young generation.

In addition, Mannheim's theory and Aroldi's model offer more background information on the generational dynamics at work.

The uses and gratifications theory's principles are consistent with the media consumption patterns of the young generation. According to this view, people intentionally choose and use media to satisfy particular needs and desires based on their own goals and circumstances. The young generation intentionally chooses to connect with media for a variety of ambitions, including entertainment, socializing, and learning new skills, as seen by their constant online presence and reliance on digital media platforms. Their desire to follow the news in order to engage in civic and political life is evidence that they actively seek out information and use digital tools and platforms to keep informed and create their own opinions on public issues. This element is in line with the idea that people consciously select media to meet their informational needs and satisfy their desire for participation and self-expression.

Bourdieu's habitus theory sheds light on the variables affecting the young generation's media consumption trends. The idea places a strong emphasis on how social situations, power relationships, and cultural backgrounds influence people's tastes and preferences. Due to their upbringing in the digital age, when technology has entered every aspect of their life, the young generation is significantly more dependent on digital technology than previous generations. Their behaviours and preferences have changed because of having grown up with easy access to information and digital platforms, and they now rely heavily on these tools and platforms for many different parts of their lives. They continue to interact with the digital world despite being aware of its dangers and problems because of its widespread nature and the benefits it provides in terms of connection, information access, and self-expression.

Aroldi's model and Mannheim's theory both provide insight into the young generation's media consumption habits. These frameworks emphasize how generational changes affect people's experiences, attitudes, and behaviours. The young generation influences the cultural heritage that has been carried down from prior generations by bringing new ideas and attitudes to the process. Their media consumption behaviours, which are mostly centered on digital platforms and social media, show how well-adapted they are to the current media landscape and how important they are to the evolution of media consumption habits.

In conclusion, the study of the young generation's media consumption habits is consistent with the assumptions raised in the theoretical framework. The uses and gratifications theory

highlights how actively people choose and use media to satisfy their wants and gratifications, which is consistent with the young generation's purposeful and varied media use. The importance of social contexts and cultural backgrounds on their media preferences is made clear by Bourdieu's habitus theory, which also explains their heavy reliance on digital technology. Additionally, the generational dynamics at play and the transforming impact of the young generation on media consumption patterns are highlighted by Mannheim's theory and Aroldi's model. We learn more about the complex relationships between generations and media in modern society by analysing these theoretical frameworks in the context of the media habits of the young generation.

7. Cross-generational analysis

With an emphasis on the elderly generation, the middle generation, and the young generation, this chapter tries to conduct a cross-generational examination of media habits. This analysis seeks to find similarities and differences between these groups by contrasting and comparing their media consumption habits. The chapter also looks at how historical media experiences have influenced current media preferences and usage, noting the importance of previous media experiences on present and future behaviour. In addition, it explores the influence of political structures on the use of media, acknowledging the importance of socio-political environments on media consumption patterns. Through this investigation, a thorough understanding of cross-generational media habits and the reasons behind them will be constructed, giving media researchers and practitioners insightful information.

7.1. Comparison of media habits across the three generations

The comparison of media habits across the three generations provides valuable insights into the diverse patterns of media consumption shaped by historical context, personal experiences, and technological advancements. Each generation exhibits unique behaviours and preferences influenced by a range of factors.

The elderly generation's media consumption habits reflect their formative years, which were greatly influenced by World War II and its aftermath. These people, who were either born during the war or shortly after, had to deal with challenging circumstances, limited resources, and few opportunities for personal growth. Even though they are not the elderly generation's major source of information, newspapers still have value to them

despite print media's decreasing popularity. As television became more and more popular, the radio, which had formerly been a crucial information source, changed into a medium largely used for amusement. Their distinct experiences and difficulties have an impact on this generation's scepticism about digital technology and their choice of television as their primary source of entertainment and information. Geographical factors and prior experiences with information control also play a role in shaping their media consumption habits.

Between the elderly and young generations, the middle generation displays media consumption preferences affected by their different upbringings and life experiences. The middle generation is sceptical since they were exposed to propaganda when they were growing up in communist or socialist nations. Their media habits are influenced by this cautious attitude to information consumption, as they double-check information and remain careful about fake news. Significant societal movements, such as regime changes, and historical-political events have an impact on their media usage. Although the middle generation consumes media on a variety of platforms, the internet has emerged as their primary source of media. However, they continue to place a lot of trust in television as a reliable source of information. By adopting new forms while still participating in traditional media, this generation represents a shift between traditional and new media. The different origins and experiences of the middle generation further influence their media-consuming behaviours, showing the complexity and uniqueness of their choices.

Due to the rapid spread of information, the young generation, which is growing up in the digital age, demonstrates an in-depth understanding of global social and political events. Although they didn't grow up around a lot of technology, as it got more common in their lives, they started to rely on it to an increasing extent. They actively use cell phones and computers, are always online, and primarily consume material on social media and online platforms. Despite being aware of the dangers posed by the digital world, they frequently access internet content. Despite their awareness of the advantages of digital technology and its educational worth, they also continue to place a lot of faith in television.

7.2. Identification of similarities and differences

The three generations analysed in this study—the elderly generation, the middle generation, and the young generation—show both similarities and differences in their media

consumption patterns. While each generation has unique experiences and characteristics that shape their media habits, certain similarities can be identified.

The influence of historical events on different generations' media consumption patterns is one noticeable similarity. The elderly generation became dependent on traditional media platforms including print newspapers, radio, and television because of experiencing times of war, political unrest, and repression. The middle generation, which lived through the change from communism to democracy, also saw historical-political events affect their media tastes, showing a balanced use of both traditional and new media. The young generation, who were born and who socialized in the digital era, demonstrates a great reliance on online resources and digital platforms, which reflects the impact of technology on their media consumption patterns.

Scepticism and critical thinking emerge as another common characteristic among the generations. The elderly and middle generations, having experienced propaganda and information control during their formative years, approach media consumption with caution and a desire for fact-checking. The young generation, growing up in an era of fake news and disinformation, also expresses concerns about the trustworthiness of online information and finds it extremely crucial to engage in a critical evaluation of the sources they use to obtain relevant information.

All three generations still rely to different extents on television as a major source of news. The middle generation uses both television and digital media in equal measure, unlike the elderly generation, which views television as their main source of news and uses it for recreational purposes. Despite living a lifestyle that is heavily reliant on technology, the young generation still values television as a reliable information source.

However, there are also obvious differences in how people consume media. The elderly generation, influenced by their wartime experiences and limited access to resources, relies more on traditional media forms like newspapers and radio. The middle generation has a more varied pattern of media consumption, combining both traditional and contemporary media. The young generation, which has grown up with digital technology, is characterized by a strong preference for social media and digital platforms, which are integral to their everyday life.

Differences in media consumption habits are also influenced by geographic and cultural factors. The contexts for this study, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, have unique media landscapes and historical trajectories that influence the media habits of each generation. The media landscape is influenced by variables including media ownership concentration,

press freedom, and political transitions, all of which ultimately affect how various generations interact with the media.

In conclusion, the three generations exhibit different media consumption habits even if they share traits such as scepticism, critical thinking, and the importance of television that has persisted over time. These distinctions are impacted by historic events, scientific developments, sociocultural elements, and personal experiences. To effectively meet the varied media demands and tastes of each generation, media organizations, academics, and legislators must understand these patterns and causes. Organizations may navigate the shifting media environment and modify their strategies to satisfy the various requirements of each generation by identifying both the similarities and differences.

7.3. Discussion of the impact of past media habits on present/future media habits

In this subchapter, I focus on past media habits and their profound impact on present and future media consumption patterns. Media habits are habitual behaviours developed by regularly participating in media-related activities; as a result, people may easily engage in these behaviours when they activate goals that are connected to the media (Aarts, Dijksterhuis, 2000). The impact of a person's past media habits on their current and future media consumption has received substantial scholarly concern (Conner, Armitage, 1998). It is widely acknowledged that a person's prior media usage has a significant influence on their present and future actions (Sutton, 1994). When it comes to the media habits of the studied generations, it is possible to discover some notable findings. The three generations analysed in this subchapter have each been influenced by their past media habits, shaping their present and future media consumption patterns in distinct ways.

The elderly generation experienced pivotal historical events such as the Czechoslovak occupation and the Communist Party rule. Many of them developed a strong affinity for traditional media outlets because of having few media options as children, such as newspapers, radio programs, and a few TV stations. They still rely on newspapers and TV for their daily dose of news and entertainment despite the arrival of the digital age. Because of their early interactions, they have a strong connection to print media and broadcast television and they consider these sources still a reliable option. Their previous behaviour has had a long-lasting effect, shaping their present media preferences and activities. This

generation is a prime example of the constant influence of early media exposure and commitment to trusted sources.

The middle generation witnessed significant media transformations. They had to deal with censorship and limited media access when they were growing up in socialist Czechoslovakia. However, after the 1989 regime change, they experienced a new age of media variety and improved information access. Their media habits were further affected by the development of the internet, which gave them access to a wider selection of news and entertainment alternatives. They adjusted to the digital environment and got used to new media platforms and tools. Their use of media passively as background noise while multitasking is characterized by a significant reliance on TV and the internet. Their experiences with limited media access and the subsequent media revolution have equipped them to critically assess information sources and navigate the digital world effectively.

Rapid technological development was experienced by the young generation. They were raised in an era where social media and the internet had mostly replaced traditional media outlets. This change resulted in a consistent presence online, with numerous individuals revealing that they spend a lot of time on social networking sites. Compared to the elderly and middle generations, their early exposure to technology and the development of the internet have given them a fresh perspective on media. They appreciate the sense of connection and information that digital media offers, but they also recognize the dangers of addiction and false information. They embrace digital media completely yet some still value traditional forms of media, like watching TV. Their experiences will affect how they interact with media as this generation develops and adapts to new media technologies.

7.4. The impact of political systems on media habits

As many previous investigations show, the connection between media and politics is quite well-acknowledged (Ciaglia. 2013). The public should be aware of and take into account the enormous influence of both traditional media and online platforms on political dynamics, because, mass media, including print, electronic, and social media, have a significant role in influencing public opinion and political results (Jean-Noel, 2019). The mediatization of politics is one of the fundamental ideas that has gained importance in media studies. According to Schulz (2004), this idea refers to a situation of societal change that is connected to the media of communication and their growth. These changes impact numerous aspects of a person's life, helping them overcome challenges to communication

that arise naturally and even changing social institutions and adapting their core traits (Schulz, 2004). The management, regulation, and governance of public service broadcasting are particularly clear examples of this complex link between media and politics, demonstrating how the political hand may have a substantial impact on media operations and content (Ciaglia, 2013). However, when it comes to the impact of politics on media consumption patterns, the secondary analysis conducted in this research shows an interesting narrative that differs when it comes to different generations.

The elderly generation's media consumption appears to have been minimally affected by the change to a new political system. The interviewees indicated consistent engagement with the media despite considerable societal changes. This conclusion implies that rather than external political developments, human experiences, and personal preferences have a greater influence on media consumption habits. It appears that the elderly generation has developed deeply rooted media habits and tastes that are largely unaffected by political changes.

The middle generation, as opposed to the older generation, saw changes in their media consumption habits as a result of the political system shift. Their media preferences changed as the social environment transformed. This generation is diverse, made up of people with various educational backgrounds, occupations, hobbies, and interests. These varied roots have influenced complex and wide-ranging media habits and tastes. Due to their exposure to many information sources and involvement with developing media technologies, the middle generation is more flexible to changes in the media landscape.

Due to their regular use of smartphones and computers, the young generation is especially reliant on digital technology for their media consumption. Despite being aware of the risks associated with fake news, the young generation continues to engage extensively with social media and digital media platforms. The widespread presence of politics in media and the influence of politicians on social media (Jean-Noel, 2019) might both contribute to the young generation's increased reliance on digital sources. Political opinions and information are easily accessible to them thanks to the interaction between politics and social media. The young generation stands out among the generations for its exceptional involvement in issues of politics. They consume a lot of digital information, and they also respect political participation and understand its importance in forming their perspectives on societal issues. They recognize the dual nature of modern media, acknowledging its role in promoting democracy and free speech through big access to information and diverse perspectives. However, they also express concerns about potential risks that could result

from the huge amount of content available, such as information overload or *"information obesity"*.

8. Discussion

The main conclusions and findings from our cross-generational examination of media consumption patterns among the elderly, middle, and young generations are covered in this chapter. I explore how previous media habits affect current and future behaviours in this chapter as I respond to the research questions that served as a basis for my investigation. Additionally, I look at how politics affect media consumption habits and highlight both the similarities and differences between the generations. Later, the theoretical and practical implications of this study are explored. The chapter ends with suggestions for future research, where I recommend further issues which can potentially be investigated.

8.1. Answering the research questions

The results of the cross-generational analysis show that the investigated generations' media habits are highly influenced by biographical factors, such as formative years and historical events. The elderly generation, having experienced World War II and its aftermath, relies on traditional media like newspapers and television due to limited resources and geographical factors. They are sceptical of digital technology and prefer television as their main source of information and entertainment because of their previous media consumption. Due to exposure to propaganda, the middle generation that was raised in socialist or communist countries tends to approach information intake with caution. They maintain a media balance by consuming content on traditional and new media channels, with the internet increasingly acting as their main source. The young generation raised in the digital era strongly depends on it, regularly using computers and smartphones for social media and online platforms. Despite becoming competent with digital technology, many still view television as a trustworthy source of information. These results emphasize how each generation's media preferences are influenced by biographical circumstances.

According to the examination, political regimes affect media consumption habits differently depending on the generation. The elderly generation doesn't seem to be much impacted by political changes since they continue to watch the same media despite societal changes. Their media consumption preferences are more significantly shaped by their own tastes and life experiences. The transition from communism to democracy, however, causes

changes in media habits in the middle generation. Their media tastes show a more adaptable behaviour to media consumption as the social context changes. The young generation, heavily reliant on digital technology, is influenced by the presence of politics in online media, engaging extensively with social media platforms where political opinions and information are easily accessible. They use digital platforms for their information demands while being aware of the dangers connected with them. Political regimes affect media habits differently, and each generation reacts differently to sociopolitical developments.

The cross-generational analysis identifies both similarities and differences in media consumption patterns across the elderly, middle, and young generations. The fact that all three generations rely heavily on television as a source of news is one notable shared similarity. Scepticism and critical thinking also emerge as common characteristics among the generations, shaped by their historical experiences with propaganda and information control. Despite these similarities, there are considerable differences in media consumption patterns that are impacted by geographic, cultural, and historical conditions. Due to their formative years being spent during World War II, the elderly generation prefers traditional media like newspapers, TV, and radio, and the middle generation shows a more diverse pattern of media consumption, combining traditional and online media. The preference for social media and online platforms among the young generation, who have grown up with digital technology, is a sign of how technology has affected their media preferences. These results show that the generations studied have both common characteristics and distinctive media consumption habits.

In conclusion, this cross-generational investigation offers insightful information on the impact of past media habits on current and future patterns of media use. Each generation's media habits are influenced by a variety of sociopolitical contexts, historical events, and personal characteristics. The research demonstrates how each generation reacts differently to sociopolitical changes and emphasizes the influence of political systems on media consumption. The research also reveals similarities and differences in the media consumption patterns of the elderly, middle, and young generations, highlighting the influence of geographic, cultural, and historical factors on media habits.

8.2. Theoretical implications

The theoretical implications lie in advancing our understanding of generational dynamics and socio-economic and power dynamics in shaping media habits. The study adds to our theoretical understanding of generational dynamics and how they affect media preferences. The study supports ideas such as Mannheim's theory and Aroldi's model, which emphasize the role of generational transitions in forming people's experiences, attitudes, and behaviours, by looking at how various generations interact with the social and cultural environment and media. The research adds to the larger discourse on generational differences by deepening our understanding of how generational characteristics affect media consumption patterns. The study emphasizes the impact of socioeconomic circumstances and power dynamics on media habits, in line with ideas like Bourdieu's habitus theory and the uses and gratifications theory. The results highlight the significance of taking into account social situations, cultural contexts, and personal motivations in order to comprehend media choices and gratification preferences. This provides insights into the interaction between media consumption and socio-cultural dynamics and increases our understanding of how media tastes and preferences are influenced by larger societal issues and power structures.

8.3. Practical implications

In conclusion, the study's practical implications include guiding media industry practices, media literacy campaigns, and creating policies to consider the varied media habits of various generations. The study provides insightful information about how different generations consume media. Companies in the media sector and content creators could use this data to adapt their services to better suit the interests and requirements of various age groups. Media businesses may create more tailored strategies to engage and keep their viewers by understanding the platforms and content that appeal to each generation. The study emphasizes the necessity for media literacy initiatives that are customized to the particular requirements of various generations. Programs for media literacy can be created by educators and policymakers to address the opportunities and difficulties brought on by changing media environments. These programs can enable people to successfully navigate the complexity of contemporary media environments by empowering them with critical thinking abilities and media literacy competencies. Understanding the factors influencing

media consumption, such as historical context, cultural backgrounds, and technological advancements, can guide policymakers in developing inclusive and responsive policies promoting media diversity, access, and representation for all age groups. The research findings can guide policymakers in developing media policies and regulations that take into account the diverse media habits and preferences of different generations.

8.4. Recommendations for future research

While this study provides valuable insights into the media habits of different generations and the impact of various factors on their consumption patterns, there are still other relevant issues for further research that can expand our understanding of this complex phenomenon. Deeper insights into the development and evolution of media habits can be gained by conducting longitudinal studies that follow people throughout different periods of their lives. The long-term consequences of generational dynamics, cultural shifts, and technology improvements on people's media preferences and behaviours could be better understood by monitoring media consumption trends over time. Researchers can better understand the influences that determine media habits and their implications for people and society by looking at how these habits evolve and develop over the course of a person's lifetime. Comparative studies that look at media usage in various social, political, and cultural contexts can provide interesting cross-cultural insights. To have a deeper understanding of media use across different communities, it is important to examine how media consumption varies throughout other cultures and comprehend how political structures, economic circumstances, and cultural elements influence media habits. Comparative research can reveal patterns and distinctions in media usage, offering more insight into the influence of environmental and cultural factors. Future research on media habits should consider the intersectionality of people's identities, including elements like age, gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. It might be useful to identify and address any inequities and inequalities in media access and representation by looking at how these intersecting identities affect media preferences, actions, and experiences. Researchers can better understand how identity and media consumption interact by taking into account the varied experiences and viewpoints of people from various backgrounds.
These research subjects can provide insight into the changing character of media consumption, the impact of cultural and environmental elements, the complexity of personal identities, and the difficulties created by unequal access to digital technology.

Through continued research, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of media habits and contribute to the development of informed policies and interventions that promote fair and responsible media engagement.

Summary

This master's thesis examines media habits across generations, providing insightful information on the unique habits of the elderly, middle, and young generations. The study uses a secondary analysis of qualitative interviews to look at how different generations differ in terms of involvement, content consumption, and platform preferences. The research shows how their media tastes and behaviours are significantly influenced by sociocultural factors, technical developments, and historical events. The study also explores how political systems affect media availability and access.

This cross-generational research shows that biographical elements, including formative years and historical events, are crucial in determining each generation's media preferences. The elderly generation, shaped by the impact of World War II and its aftermath, relies on traditional media outlets like newspapers and television, attributed partly to limited resources and geographical factors. They have a significant preference for television as their major source of information and entertainment due to their very careful approach to digital technologies. In contrast, the middle generation, who has experienced the regime change, takes a balanced approach to media consumption, engaging with both traditional and growing platforms, with the internet eventually replacing other sources as their main source. While still respecting television for reliable information, the young generation, who are growing up in the digital era, is heavily dependent on technology, as seen by their passionate use of social media and online platforms.

The study also reveals how different political systems have an influence on media consumption patterns across the analysed generations. The middle generation shows better flexibility as their media habits change with the shifting social situation, whereas the elderly generation shows little change in their media choices despite political transformations. The fact that the young generation uses social media extensively and has easy access to political viewpoints and information shows how heavily politics influence how they consume digital content.

The study reveals both similarities and differences in these generations' media habits that are caused by geographical, cultural, and historical factors. Among the three generations, there are several significant similarities, including a strong dependence on television and a high level of scepticism. However, as a result of their different upbringing, their media consumption habits greatly differ. The middle generation displays a broader pattern of media consumption, drawing from a variety of sources, in contrast to the elderly generation,

whose preferences for traditional media are still influenced by their formative years spent during the aftermath of World War II. On the other hand, the young generation's preference for digital media demonstrates the significant effects of growing up in the digital age.

In conclusion, this study of media consumption across generations offers important new understandings of how past media habits affect present and future patterns of consumption within each generation. The study clarifies how sociopolitical situations, historical events, and individual characteristics affect media choices. The study also highlights how important it is to take political systems into account when analysing media habits and identifies both similarities and differences in how various generations consume media. The theoretical implications of this study improve our knowledge of generational dynamics and the complex relationships between socioeconomic and power dynamics in the formation of media habits. The practical implications provide insightful advice for media professionals, content producers, and policymakers on how to engage various audiences successfully. Finally, the suggestions for future research call for more investigation into the media habits of different generations, the effects of new technology, and the geographical variations in media consumption patterns worldwide. This research serves as a pilot study that creates openings for more studies into the topic of generational media habits, allowing for a greater comprehension of this changing environment.

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Master's thesis summary

SCHVÁLENO 25.3.23

Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism FSV UK Master Thesis Statement	
THIS SECTION IS FILLED OUT BY THE STUDENT:	
Surname and name of the graduate student: Sármányová Cyntia	**Stamp of the mailroom:** Univerzita Karlova Fakulta sociálních věd Došlo dne: - 7 -03- 2023 -1- Čj: 22 Příloh: Přiděleno:
The matriculation year of the graduate student: 2021	
Faculty e-mail of the graduate student: 29313105@fsv.cuni.cz	
Study programme/form of study: Media studies/full-time	
Thesis title in Czech: Mediálne návyky troch generácií	
Thesis title in English: Media habits across three generations	
Expected completion date (semester, academic year - model: WS 2022/2023) (The thesis may be defended no earlier than six months after the thesis is approved): SS 2022/2023	
Characteristics of the topic and its development so far (max. 1800 characters): With the rise of new media technologies, the gap between generations regarding their media habits is becoming wider which leaves more space for analysis. Therefore, research conducted in this area might be important to understand and further develop the topic of media habitus, and how it changes based on belonging to different generational units. Some significant work has been done in this field and many distinguished scholars have contributed to the research of media generations, however, few have tried to compare 3 generational units in the scope of one work. Karl Mannheim's fresh contact theory acts as a principal base when it comes to the change of media habits due to the arrival of modern technologies. Moreover, ever since Pierre Bourdieu discovered the habitus theory, it serves as a base in the social sciences field and can also be applied to media studies. Later, Aroldi found the model of generational identity-making, in which he combines different endogenous and exogenous forces as well as agencies, which together function as formative sources of generational identity. All of these above-mentioned theories are going to be included in my paper, and I will attempt to complement them with other key scholarly findings as well.	
Assumed aim of the thesis, or formulation of the problem, research question, or hypothesis (max. 1800 characters): This thesis aims to highlight the differences between three generations and their media habits. Among other theoretical frames, the work is mostly based on Aroldi's model of generational identity-making, and Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory, which I use to better understand the main research question regarding how past media habits can influence present/future media habits. A big part of the research is going to be dedicated to media habitus and whether it can be explained by growing up in different political systems, moreover the thesis will focus on the similarities regarding the examined generations and their use of media.	
The expected structure of the thesis (division into individual chapters and subchapters with a brief description of their content): The thesis is going to be divided into 3 main parts and more subchapters. In the first part, I will try to introduce all the significant theories and academic findings related to the topic of media habitus and the different generations. In this part, I would like to establish the theoretical framework of my research, which would make my work clearer and easily understandable. In the next big chapter, the introduction of the used methodology and the secondary analysis itself will take place. Here, I will try to document a detailed analysis of the individual interviews. In the last part, the results of the secondary analysis will be described with regard to the used theoretical framework, moreover, a conclusion will be drawn.	
Definition of the supporting material (e.g. title of the periodical and period analyzed):	

The supporting material is mainly going to be from the second half of the 20th century and the 21st century. Periodicals, books and articles from the field of social sciences, more importantly from media studies are going to be used, as well as online sources.

Methods (techniques) of material processing:
The thesis is going to be based on a theoretical part, where different scholarly works about this topic will be introduced. The empirical part consists of qualitative individual semi-structured interviews, which I conducted together with other students of Charles University. The interviews are going to be analyzed individually using an analysis grid based on different categories, which will help me highlight the main topics and problems of my work.

Basic literature (at least 5 most important titles on the topic and its method; for all titles a brief annotation of 2-5 lines is required):
Media Generations – Experience, Identity and Mediatised Social Change by Göran Bolin – This book tries to emphasize what kind of role media play in the formation of generational identity. It highlights that individual generations do not only acquire various media habits, but the way they see the world also differs.
Media Literacy and the Effect of Socialization by Christine Trültzsch-Wijnen – The book investigates the relationship between media and socialization, moreover, it introduces theories about media literacy and media competence. The book focuses on individuals and their media activity, and it tries to highlight how this activity can be explained.
Generational belonging between media audiences and ICT users by Piermarco Aroldi – The research tries to introduce the relationship between media and different generations, and it puts the emphasis on ICTs and their users. It also investigates the connection between media and the feeling of generational belonging.
Media Generations: Objective and subjective media landscapes and nostalgia among generations of media users by Göran Bolin – This article aims to provide information about 4 different generations and their perspectives of subjective and objective media landscapes. A connection between the media landscapes and nostalgia is introduced.
Kvalitativní výzkum by Jan Hendl – This book thoroughly introduces the qualitative research methods used mostly in the field of social sciences. Data collection, coding, interpretation and evaluation of results is highlighted throughout the chapters.
Media, Generations, and the Platform Society by Piermarco Aroldi – This chapter highlights the digitization of the media system, and it investigates how the present mediascape is involved is shaping generational belonging. The relation between social media platforms and collective memory is introduced.

Master's theses and dissertations on the topic (list of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral theses that have been defended on the topic at Charles University or other faculties or universities close to the topic in the last five years):

1. POKORNÁ, Veronika. *Technologie a rodičovství aneb pravidla slouží rodičům* [online]. Brno, 2022 [cit. 2023-03-03]. Dostupné z: https://is.muni.cz/th/vl9ed/. Diplomová práce. Masarykova univerzita, Filozofická fakulta. Vedoucí práce Roman ŠVAŘÍČEK.
2. ZAŠKOLNÁ, Jana. *Dopad pandemie koronaviru na mediální návyky studentů IKSŽ na FSV UK*. Praha, 2023. Diplomová práce. Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Katedra mediálních studií. Vedoucí práce Nečas, Vlastimil.
3. WOJNAROVÁ, Daniela. *Mezigenerační rozdíly mezi uživateli v oblasti užívání sociálních sítí*. Praha, 2021. Bakalářská práce. Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Katedra mediálních studií. Vedoucí práce Wolák, Radim.
4. MACHAČOVÁ, Magda. *Mediální zkušenost seniorů*. Praha, 2022. Bakalářská práce. Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Katedra marketingové komunikace a public relations. Vedoucí práce Hodboď, Vojtěch.
5. FORAL, Martin. *Mediální gramotnost českých seniorů (projektové řešení)* [online]. Brno, 2022 [cit. 2023-03-03]. Dostupné z: https://is.muni.cz/th/yd1is/. Diplomová práce. Masarykova univerzita, Fakulta sociálních studií. Vedoucí práce Iveta JANSOVÁ.

Date / Signature of the graduate student: 03.03.2023	Sakundyal

THIS SECTION IS FILLED OUT BY THE TEACHER:
Recommendations on the topic, structure, and technique of the material: The structure of the thesis has been developed by integrating my feedback on earlier versions. I have no further comments on the expected structure as it is submitted.
Possible recommendation of other titles of literature assigned to the topic: The student has mentioned the main literature in this field of research. She will do a more in-depth literature review during the work on her thesis. She is in close exchange with the teacher.
I confirm that I have consulted the above-mentioned thesis with its author and that the topic corresponds to my field of specialization and the area of professional work that I am doing at FSV UK. **I agree to be the supervisor of this work.** **07.03.2023** ..... **Surname and name of the teacher** **Trültzsch-Wijnen Christine** **Date / Signature of the teacher**

THESES MUST BE SUBMITTED **PRINTED, SIGNED,** AND IN **DUPLICATE** BY THE DEADLINE SPECIFIED IN THE INSTITUTE'S DIRECTOR'S DECREE, THROUGH THE OFFICE OF THE FSV UK. ACCEPTED THESES MUST BE **COLLECTED** FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF THE RELEVANT DEPARTMENT AND **BOUND INTO** A COPY OF THE THESIS.
THESES ARE APPROVED BY THE HEAD OF THE RELEVANT STUDY PROGRAMME.

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Figure 1 – Aroldi's model of generational identity-making -12-

List of Appendices

Appendix no. 1: Qualitative interview guide used for the individual interviews during the seminar (questionnaire)

Sociodemographic data:

1) In which year have you been born?
2) Where have you grown up and in how far did your place of residence change during the circle of your life?
3) What is your highest formal education?
4) What was/is your profession? Where there any changes during your life?
5) What are your hobbies/ main interests? Where there any changes during your life?

Exogenous forces of the past:

6) What was the time you were a child/ an adolescent/ a young adult?
   6a) What was it like being a child/ an adolescent/ a young adult?
   6b) How was your daily life?
   6c) What did you do every day?
7) What are the most crucial events in your life? (Could be marriage, birth of children etc. – but more important: social/political/historical events)
   7a) When looking back, what are for you the historical most important events of your life?
   7b) What were the biggest challenges or changes in your life?
   7c) What do you think is special for your generation?
   7d) What is different between your generation and older/younger generations?
8) What are the main media images that you remember in your life? (e.g., how were specific events displayed in the media? e.g., when the first plane crashed into the world trade centre on 9/11)
9) What are the most important media events that you remember? (e.g., historical events, but also a special film or a specific concert on TV)
10) What were the most important media when you were a child, and then when you were a teenager and a young adult? Why?
    9a) Has the change of the political system changed your way of dealing with media?

9b) Do you think that experiences of the past have influenced how you are dealing with media today?

11) If you are thinking about popular culture like music bands or films – was there anything that was special for you personally or for your generation?

Exogenous forces of the present:

12) What are now the most important media for you in today‘s life? Why?

13) Think about a normal day in your life. When are you using different media – for example when you get up in the morning, during the day, and in the evening?

14) When you are thinking about this everyday routine in using media. Has this always been similar, or has there been some changes during your life (e.g., with retirement, when children were leaving home etc.)?

15) Regarding your way of using media, do you feel that you have things in common with other people of your age?

15a) Do you feel that there is something special about how people of your age deal with media?

15b) Do you have the feeling that there are differences between people of your age and younger people?

15c) Do you have the feeling that there are differences between people of your age and older people?

General media use

16) Which media are you using if you want to inform yourself about what is going on in the world?

16a) Are these the same media that you used when you were younger?

16b) Which media do you trust the most? Why?

16c) Which media do you distrust the most? Why?

17) Which media are you using if you want to learn something new?

17 a) Are you using any kind of media, therefore?

17b) Has this changed during your life?

18) Which kind of media are you using for recreation from a busy day?

18a) Has this changed during your life?

19) Which kind of media are you using for entertainment?

19a) Has this changed during your life?

Agency

20) What would you find as most characteristic about your way of using media?

21) Is it important for you to have new or modern media devices?

22) Is civil or political participation important for you?

23) Do you find media useful for civil or political participation?

Appendix no. 2: Analysis grid

Interview-code, file name	Sociodemographic information	Hobies/main interests	General life of the past	Private events	Societal events	Evaluation own generation	Media images/events	Past media environment
Example	age, place of residence, formal education, profession		life as child/adolescent/young adult, daily routines of the past, challenges of life	crucial events of life – private	crucial events of life – societal (political, historical, social)	what is perceived as special of own generation, what is perceived as different in comparison with other generations, perceived similarities/ differences regarding the use of media	Remembered media images/media events (specific events etc.)	Media environment of the past (most important media, changes of media environment)

Popular culture	Media routines	Information	Learning	Recreation & entertainment	Participation	Personal characteristics	Other information/specific characteristics
Popular culture of the past (bands, films etc.)	Today's media routines (incl. changes of media routines during live, influences of past experiences on how people deal with media today)	Information by media: what media are used for information (incl. changes during life), which media are trusted/distrusted	Learning by media: what media are used for learning something new (inc. changes during life)		media used for political/societal participation	Personal characteristics in using media (incl. importance of new devices)	