Final Report - Visegrad Fellowship at the Open Society Archive Research stay period: 12 June 2017 - 07 July 2017 Submitted by: Anna Grutza, MA., MA.

"The place where cultural experience is located [...] is in the potential space between the individual and the environment (originally the object). "

D.W. Winnicott: The Capacity to Be Alone, in: Maturational Process and the Facilitating Environment, London, The Hogarth Press, 1958/65, pp. 29-36

General Research Outline: Theoretical Background

My scientific endeavour into the realms of information and propaganda during the Cold War in Poland has started with my Master thesis on "European Truth Games. The Voice of Radio Free Europe and the Struggle for Human Dignity and the Freedom of Speech" which I have written at the College of Europe and in which I have approached the work of Radio Free Europe through the lens of discoursanalysis. With the help of Michel Foucault's analytic toolbox and his conceptual triangle of "truth-discourse-power" I have concentrated on discursive entities and the "politics of truth" Radio Free Europe was engaging in. If one wants to speak with Foucault, "[e]ach society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth – that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true [...]."² Thus, truth has a fundamental role in power relations which are in themselves a matter of governance, that means "a way of attempting to give structure to the terrain of actions of others."³ Politics of truth allow the state to act upon the mind of its people and thus their way of doing things and their behaviour as political subjects.⁴ Therefore, haven taken these Foucauldian concepts into consideration, I have postulated that by countering the official Soviet information system and by becoming a mouthpiece of famous intellectuals and their appeal to "live within the truth"⁵, RFE did not

¹ Foucault, Michel, Power and Truth', in: The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, edited by Paul Rabinow and James Faubion, translated by Robert Hurley, Vol. 3, New York: The New Press, 2000, p. 131. ² Ibid.

³ Shiner, Larry, 'Reading Foucault: Anti-Method and the Genealogy of Power-Knowledge', in: History and Theory, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1982, p. 391

⁴ Ibid., p. 356.

⁵ Havel, Václav, 'Power of the Powerless', 1979, in: Stokes, Gale, From Stalinism to Pluralism. A Documentary History of Eastern Europe Since 1945, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 171.

only challenge the official truth politics but entered into the "truth games"⁶ for trustworthy information in Cold War.

However, in my PhD about "Europe's secret agents and the power of things: A transnational media history of actor-networks in Cold War" I have changed the focus of my research away from discursive entities towards immutable mobiles and the actor-network theory of Bruno Latour, still believing that there might be a way for combining both theoretical approaches.⁷ Although Latour's work makes at the first glance little reference to Michel Foucault's conceptual framework, there are however possible pathways which offer the opportunity of a parallel reading of both scholars: one is, as Andrea Seier has shown, the model of the dispostive, while the other is, in my view, Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality. In short, Foucault's analysis of modern government is centred around two major axes: On the one hand, as indicated above, the administration of life, what means all "systematic ways of thinking and acting that aim to shape, to regulate, or manage the comportment of others"⁸ in a variety of institutional settings, on the other hand, the art of government thought in clear contrast to a Machiavellian concept of sovereignty. This art of government encompasses – and this is the main point for my further analysis – a specific relationship between men and things, what means in Michel Foucault's words:

"What government has to do with is not territory but, rather, a sort of complex composed of men and things. The things, in this sense, with which government is to be concerned are in fact men, but men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those things that are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility [...]; men in their relation to those other things that are customs, habits, ways and thinking [...]; and finally men in their relation to those still other things that might be accidents and misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death, [...]."

For Foucault the relationship between men and things is however to be regarded as a consequence of the introduction of economy into political practice. Therefore, according to Foucault, who himself refers back to Guillaume de La Perrière's *Miroir Politque*, one of the earliest texts of anti-Machiavellian literature, government can be defined as "the right disposition of things"¹⁰. This correct disposition

⁷ That this would be indeed possible has been, for instance, already suggested by Andrea Seier: Seier, Andrea: Un/Verträglichkeiten: Latours Agenturen und Foucaults Dispositive, in: Tobias Conradi, Heike Derwanz, Florian Muhle (eds.), *Strukturentstehung durch Verflechtung : Akteur-Netzwerk-Theorie(n) und Automatismen*, München [u.a.] : Fink, 2011, p. 151-172

⁶ Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault', October 25th, 1982, in: Martin, L. H. et al., Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault. London: Tavistock, 1988, p. 15.

⁸ Inda, Jonathan Xavier (ed.): Anthropologies of Modernity: Foucault, Governmentality and Life Politics, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 1

⁹ Foucault, Michel: Governmentality, in: *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954 – 1984*, vol. 3: Power, James D. Faubion (ed.), New York, New York Press, 2000, pp. 208 – 209.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 208

aims at the welfare of the whole population and hence demands a relationship between men and things which is marked by a totally different finality, namely productivity and efficiency. While the aim of sovereignty was obedience to the laws and its instrument the law itself, "the finality of government resides in the things it manages and the pursuit of perfection [...]; and the instruments of government, instead of being the laws, now come to be a range of multiform tactics."¹¹ In short, not through law can a modern government reach its aims but through the right arrangement of things and the major concern of such a government is no longer a territorial but an object-oriented and thus by definition a relational one.

In this sense already Foucault centres his analysis of government around the question of connections and linkages between the human and the unhuman world. However, while Foucault's definition of governmentality evolves around the concepts of productivity and has to be seen as part of a historical revolution in terms of human technical expertise and industrialisation, Bruno Latour takes quite a different approach when defining an *object-oriented democracy* or *Dingpolitik*. In his essay From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public Latour postulates that the neologism Dingpolitik should replace the misguided term Realpolitik or realism. Criticizing political philosophy for its strong object-avoiding tendency Latour calls for a res publica¹² which acknowledges that matters indeed matter because "[e]ach object gathers around itself a different assembly of relevant parties. Each object triggers new occasions to passionately differ and dispute. [...] In other words, objects – taken as so many issues - bind all of us in ways that map out a public space profoundly different from what is usually recognized under the label of 'the political'."¹³ In addition to the motto of the actornetwork theory, namely "follow the actors", we should now as well go back to the things in order to map a totally different and yet still hidden political geography. And for this project even etymology seems to play in Latour's hands as the old world "thing", according to Latour, originally designated a type of archaic assembly. This old meaning of the word "thing" is still echoed by the Norwegian Storting (the "Big thing", what is today the Norwegian parliament) or the Icelandic Althing where the thingmen assemble.¹⁴ Here a good link can easily be made to the Polish roundtable talks. Thus, no matter what kind of relationship the word "thing" is establishing, it continuously remains a question

¹¹ Ibid., p. 211.

¹² At another occasion Latour brings up the question of etymology of *res publica* in more detail: "The venerable word 'Republic' is admirably suited to our task, if we agree to bring out the overtones of the underlying Latin word *res*, 'thing'. As been frequently noted, it is as if political ecology found again in the *res publica*, the 'public thing', the ancient etymology that has linked the word for thing and the word for judicial assembly since the dawn of time: *Ding* and *thing*, *res* and *reus*." Latour, Bruno: Politics of Nature. How to bring the Sciences into Democracy, Cambridge (Massachusetts) / London, Harvard University Press, 2004, p. 54. ¹³ Latour, Bruno: From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public, in: *Making Things Public*. *Atmospheres of Democracy*, Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds.), ZKM, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 2005, p.

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¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 22f.

of gathering. This spectrum of possible connotations alludes to the dissolution of the object-subject dichotomy put forward by the actor-network theory and gives equal weight to humans and non-humans to enter the political arena. And this is precisely the aim of the new project: Here, in the realms of the new *Dingpolitik*, politics are no longer restricted to humans but incorporate "the many issues to which they are attached"¹⁵ and are "no longer limited to properly speaking parliaments but extended to the many other assemblages in search of a rightful assembly."¹⁶

Research Interest at OSA: Expectations

Having briefly outlined my theoretical interest in the circulation of objects during Cold War, I can now define my general research interest at the Open Society Archive in Budapest. If things are to be included into our ways we conceive of politics - might this be in terms of the concept of governmentality or, as I aim to do, in terms of a Dingpolitik - what can we tell about the relationship of government, men and things during Cold War in Poland? Departing from the things in motion and their ability to gather, can one think of another way of describing the historical events which had let to a peaceful transition to democracy? In which relation did the Polish government stand in regard to the underground movements and the clandestine production of these presumably dangerous things in motion: manuscripts, paperwork, tapes, video-cassettes etc. Would it be possible to describe these clandestine work as new forms of assemblages in search of a rightful assembly, thus of a new formation of political representation? Can paperwork and manuscripts, these immutable mobiles, be agents of social and political change? Can one think of accepting the manuscript or, more generally, paperwork as a fully-fledged actor of a Polish refolution? Therefore, building on Latour's sociology of associations, my research project at OSA aimed to trace and make visible new forms of assemblages during the Cold War in Poland in the 1980s describing and mapping the circulation of things, that means, in particular, written or recorded material like manuscripts, Samizdat and Tamizdat material as well as underground publications. However, while being at OSA my analytical focus has slightly changed, so that I have started as well to analyse the various settings of "material gatherings" and "centres of information production" like Radio Free Europe under a different perspective, namely as laboratories of knowledge and power underlining the importance of technical artefacts, paperwork and innovations for the formation of new public spheres in Cold War history. In general, thanks to some important findings which I will describe hereinafter, my research focus has turned to the

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁶ Ibid.

meaning of paperwork for society and culture and specifically for Western modernity, social change and democracy.

What became now of interest for me are no longer truth politics in their discursive appearance but in their material foundation: objects and artefacts in their relation to men, their power to assemble and their role as "trustworthy agents"¹⁷. I shifted my attention to the very basis of RFE's information policy: the underground writings – the manuscript – and the scope of different agents involved in the whole production, distribution, trafficking, archiving and broadcasting process. I asked myself the question what role the manuscript did play in these transnational actor-networks. Which actors did it assemble around itself? Why were so many actors keen to enter the stage of paperwork and what role did technology play within these actor-networks?

Research Interest at OSA: Findings

Following Latour who states that "[i]nstead of using large-scale entities [...], we should start from the inscriptions and their mobilization and see how small entities become large ones"¹⁸, I came to OSA in order to find the traces of these immutable mobiles and related accounts which might help me to make these non-human actors speak because "[t]o be accounted for objects have to enter into accounts. If no trace is produced, they offer no information to the observer and will have no visible effect on other agents."¹⁹ Objects are in this respect very difficult to grasp because, as media, they have the tendency to vanish - to become silent or latent - while doing what they do. This is why, Latour would say, "specific tricks have to be invented to make them talk, that is, to offer descriptions of themselves, to produce scripts of what they are making others - humans or non-humans - do."20 Staying therefore on the micro-level of analysis, I have hoped to find documents and interviews which would help me to find these scripts and to map the actor-networks which were involved in the process described above. In general, I was most interested in RFE Publications based on Polish Underground Press (OSA: 300:55:9) which gave me a first insight into those sources which might be relevant for my research. I still had to figure out which traces I could follow, that means I still had to decide which underground movement or underground journal I could follow best thanks to the sources available. At the moment it seems most efficient for me to have a closer look on the Solidarity movement and

¹⁷ Shapin, Steven: A social history of truth. Civility and science in seventeenth-century England. [4. print]. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press (Science and its conceptual foundations), 2007, pp. xxvi-15

¹⁸ Latour, Bruno: Visualisation and Cognition. Drawing Things Together, in: n H. Kuklick (ed.), *Knowledge and Society Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present*, Jai Press vol. 6, p 26.

¹⁹ Latour, Bruno: Reassembling the social. An introduction to actor-network-theory. 1. publ. Oxford u.a.: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005, p. 79.

²⁰ Ibid.

its underground undertakings (here, for instance, the background reports for Poland made by Anna Sabbat-Swidlicka about "Solidarity underground: structure and activities" are very relevant material (HU OSA 300:55:9, Box 3: RFE Publications Based on Polish Underground Press\Background Reports 1981-1987). In general, the material concerning Solidarity is, of course, very rich and the interviews which I have found at OSA provide me with a substantial foundation for a further analysis in the sense of ANT. In addition, some minder findings circulate among the fact of scarcity of some most basic materials like paper or even ink in Poland.²¹ Other findings concern the thousand of tons of printed underground material²² and Polish government's reactions towards the underground movement and the confiscation of printing facilities or raw material.²³ Finally, there are documents which very well depict other places of knowledge production and gathering in Poland like the underground universities, the underground libraries or private collections of philately. The latter states quite well how abstruse the relationship between the Polish government and the potentially dangerous things could become:

"The security service in Poland has an additional problem and workload with which no secret police force in any communist country, and probably not in any police state in the world, has ever come into contact. Many people in Poland collect – oh horror! – unusual underground philatelic collections, including postage stamps, envelopes, postmarks, and everything published in the so-called second circulation, in other words, in the underground."²⁴

Nevertheless, I have not yet finished to sort out and analyse the data that I have collected, so that I have not yet decided upon the core of data upon which I want to base my analysis. At this point, I can only highlight some findings which have most intriguing caught my attention:

²¹ HU OSA 300:2:6, Box 59: Industry: Paper: 1970-1978 or HU OSA 300:2:6, Box 31: Consumption Services 1976-1979

²² See here RAD Polish Samizdat Extracts 5A 10 August 1984 "A National Industry": "If there is any area of production in which Poland is best in the world it must be that of underground publishing. If there is anything that Poles produce that sets them apart from other nations, it must be our newspapers and books. [...] "Here [in the provinces, A.G.], too, independent publications spout up like the springs of an oasis. It is impossible to circulate the amount of organizational and purely physical effort required to buy, print, and distribute those hundreds of kilograms, which add up to thousands of tons." In: HU OSA 300:55:9, Box 2: RFE Publications Based on Polish Underground Press.

²³ See, for instance, RAD Background Report 168 (Poland), 18 July 1983: Poland's underground press by Anna Sabbat-Swidlicka: "The main problem was the purely technical one of finding ink, paper, and printing equipment. The declaration of martial law had brought with it stringent control over the distribution and use of these potentially 'dangerous' items. The military commissars detailed to each factory, enterprise, and institution took a keen interested company printing supplies and machinery." In: HU OSA 300:55:9, Box 3: RFE Publications Based on Polish Underground Press\Background Reports 1981-1987

²⁴ "Subversive Philately" by Rowland Hillski from Verbum, no 7, 1984, in: HU OSA 300:55:9, Box 2: RFE Publications Based on Polish Underground Press.

First of all, although I could not find any documents related to the internal functioning and working procedures at RFE, for which, as I was kindly hinted at, I will have to search at Hoover, I was very thankful to be allowed to use those black and white pictures available at OSA which depict RFE staff at different stages of the "production process". Looking at these pictures I was right away reminded of Bruno Latour's account on laboratory life at the Salk Institute. Latour stays at the Salk Institute between October 1975 until August 1977. While being an "in-house philosopher", he however remaining an "inside" outside observer and is fascinated by the strange work proceedings of a tribe he only partly belongs to:

"One area of the laboratory (section B [...]) contains various items of apparatus, while others (section A) contains only books, dictionaries, and papers. Whereas in section B individuals work with apparatus in a variety of ways: they can be seen to be cutting, sewing, mixing, shaking, screwing, marking, and so on; individuals in section A work with written materials: either reading, writing, or typing. [...] In the other area ('the secretariat') there are typewriters and people controlling the flow of telephone calls and mail. [...] When the observer moves from the bench space to the office space, he is greeted with yet more writing. Xeroxed copies of articles, with words underlined and exclamation marks in the margins, are everywhere. Draft of articles in preparation intermingle with diagrams scribbled on scarp paper, letters from colleagues and reams of paper spewed out by the computer in the next room; pages cut and glued to other pages; excerpts from draft paragraphs change hands between colleagues while more advanced drafts pass from office to office being altered constantly, retyped, recorrected, and eventually crushed into the format of this or that journal."²⁵

While looking at the pictures taken at RFE – from the perspective of a person who did not witness herself the time when the machinery shown had been used – one could easily believe, like Latour had done before at the Salk Institute, to have actually entered into an environment which seemed to have arisen from a science-fiction fantasy in the form of a futuristic laboratory. For RFE this impression prevails even more if one considers the bewildering fact that half of the staff at RFE, predominantly men working with technology, were wearing white coats. Unfortunately, I could not find any account which would make these pictures and these technological devices speak nor do I have myself the technical expertise. Hence I will have to look for experts who might help me to open all or some of the technological black boxes in order to be able to make them, as Latour said, accountable.

Nonetheless, the striking analogy with a laboratory gave my research an unexpected direction. Being interested in the circulation and production of the manuscript and its archiving and proceeding by RFE and the actor-networks involved, I have initially not thought of the fact that these manuscripts

²⁵ Latour, Bruno/Woolger, Steve: Laboratory Life. The Construction of Scientific Facts, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, pp. 45-49.

were handled themselves as black boxes which could be opened at RFE thanks to the technology available, that means cut in pieces, altered, retyped, recorrected in order to end finally, , after having been juxtaposed, in a totally new format, e.g. a research paper, a background report, a broadcast script etc. This process was already for Latour one of the most crucial moments of laboratory life. It is this paperwork that for Latour becomes an indispensable characteristic and intrinsic pattern for the functioning of this "strange tribe" at the Salk Institute who spends hours with knowledge processing techniques like coding, marking, reading and writing. The impact of machines and computers should not be underestimated in regard to the whole production process, however, what counts most for Latour is the whole series of transformations from the rats being tested in the laboratory over the paperwork to the final curve which was printed out by a computer, into which a sheet of figures had been previously carefully input, and which will finally appear in the publications:

"By contrast with the expense and bulk of this apparatus, the end product is no more than a curve, a diagram, or table of figures written on a frail sheet of paper. It is this document, however, which is scrutinised by participants for its 'significance' and which is used as 'evidence' in part of an argument or in an article. Thus, the main upshot of the prolonged series of transformation is a document which, as will become clear, is a crucial resource in the construction of a 'substance'."²⁶

Thanks to the "inscription devices" some pieces of matter are transformed into written documents which still provide the 'signatures' of the transformation process and which contain a circulating reference to the actual original matter or substance. The very moment this final inscription is used in academic writing it enters at its final stage the spheres of debate, persuasion and discussion which are very closed to those of politics and political debate.

Furthermore, I was lucky to find among the surveys of underground press (OSA 300:55:9, Box: 3) one longer document which perfectly exemplified how a 'substance', in the meaning of a substantial, statistical fact, was 'produced' at RFE. Being followed by a diagram which depicts the share of new underground titles appearing from 1981 to 1985, this document states: "The share of new titles appearing in the underground press after 13 December 1981 expressed as a percentage of the total number currently appearing is as follows (although based solely on the 632 titles in the Radio Free Europe collection, the percentages derived from this source are taken to be largely representative of the picture in the underground press as a whole)."

Reflecting upon the question and meaning of documentation for society and modernity, the quest for facts and truth incorporated in documents, I have realized that staying on a micro-level RFE's internal work procedures were a Pandora's box and that making small steps was the best way to trace

²⁶ Ibid., p. 50.

the actor-networks inside the bureau²⁷, the secretary, the editorial department or the cutting room. All these separated areas are part of one huge "inscription engine" guaranteeing the stability of knowledge and society. The question of stability gets even more crucial in the context of Cold War and propaganda. Picking only up the example of Solzhenitsyn's work, it can easily be shown that, for instance, Samizdat writings were not a proof by itself but had to be made accountable by juxtaposition and double-checking. Ann Komaromi puts it as follows:

"Samizdat, as an extra-Gutenberg culture, destabilized the modern paradigm of print. [...] Samizdat helped reveal the epistemic instability that had been lurking around the edges of print since its beginning. In this way while samizdat exposed the Soviet regime's abuse of facts and tendentious framing of discussion in the pages of the main official newspaper *Pravda (Truth)*, it can also remind us of the epistemic uncertainty of all our communications and the function of social protocols that structure value and function. [...] The trustworthiness of the samizdat text had to be established through social protocols. Like the production and circulation of samizdat, these protocols had a specific character at this historical moment: they absolutely depended on the investment of Western readers."²⁸

Trustworthiness in times of Cold War became the true currency which had to be established via Western protocols which dependent above all on trustworthy agents and their identification.

Finally, staying in this context, I have asked myself what role the archive in general had played on both sides on the Iron Curtain. And thanks to several findings at OSA I am now able to identify already two of important archives which have been build in the 1980s in Poland: The Eastern Archive and the Solidarity Archive. The latter had been already established in 1984 with the aim to archive several dozen volumes containing Solidarity documents. The document states:

"This is the year 1984. The hero of Orwell's book so adjusted the past as to leave not a trace of truth. This is the year 1984. We begin the publication of the Solidarity archives, in order that the least trace of what was important in our past should not be lost. [...] It is a great strength of the Solidarity movement that it is not afraid of its past, that it makes it public at once. We want disclose everything, the light and the shadow."²⁹

²⁷ In regard to the bureau Latour states the following "A bureau is [...] a small laboratory in which many elements can be connected together just because their scale and nature has been averaged out : legal texts, specifications, standards, payrolls, maps, surveys [...]. [...] the "bureau" is something that can be empirically studied, and which explains [...] why some power is given to an average mind just by looking at files : domains which are far apart become literally inches apart ; domains which are convoluted and hidden, become flat ; thousands of occurrences can be looked at synoptically." See: Latour, Bruno: Visualisation and Cognition. Drawing Things Together, in: n H. Kuklick (ed.), *Knowledge and Society Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present*, Jai Press vol. 6, p 25.

²⁸ Komaromi, Ann: Uncensored. Samizdat novels and the quest for autonomy in Soviet dissidence. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2015, pp. 134ff.

²⁹ HU OSA 300:55:9, Box 2, RFE Publications Based on Polish Underground Press.

The Eastern Archive, however, was founded some years later in 1986 in Warsaw as an offshoot of the independent Warsaw journal Karta. The Archive described itself as an independent venture researching into the lives of Poles who had returned to Poland after many years of exile in the Soviet Union. In 1988, two years after its foundation, it managed to assemble some 130 personal accounts, over 450 hours of tape recordings, about 1,000 photographs, scores of maps and geographical descriptions, and extensive bibliography, and a number of objects brought out of the Soviet Union. These sums of material and the quest for documentation on both sides of the Iron Curtain (although Western Europe had the legal ground for starting such an adventure much earlier in time), have let me to question the role of documentation and of the document itself for modernity and democracy. What did it mean in this historical context of Cold War that Polish political actors were finally able to set up these archives mentioned above? And what did it mean that this had to be done before by Western actors like Radio Free Europe who additionally had a much better technological equipment to their disposition? Is their any relation between these discrepancy of legal and technological means of both sides and the dysfunction of the Soviet economy and thus, in Foucault's words, the dysfunction of the Soviet way to govern, that means to establish productive ways in the relationship between men and things? Unfortunately, all these questions have to remain pure speculations for the moment. What can be said as a final word here is maybe the following: "A man is never much more powerful than any other ---even from a throne; but a man whose eye dominates records through which some sort of connections are established with millions of others may be said to dominate. This domination, however, is not a given but a slow construction [...]. [...] By working on papers alone, on fragile inscriptions which are immensely less than the things from which they are extracted, it is still possible to dominate all things, and all people. "³⁰

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³⁰ Latour, Bruno: Visualisation and Cognition. Drawing Things Together, in: n H. Kuklick (ed.), *Knowledge and Society Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present*, Jai Press vol. 6, pp. 26-29.

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