

Examples of Reflection/Critical Thinking/Refraction

Reflection:

Overall, I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I am looking forward to returning home but will also be sad to leave. Living in Belgium for Winter Term has afforded me with many rewards and a few unexpected challenges. Being in a city with 1 million strangers and not being able to speak the language has been especially difficult for me.

Critical Thinking:

Pleon takes pride in the fact that they are a truly European company. They are successfully building their reputation and visibility in all European markets, not just London. And in doing so, they are localizing their resources. While the top multinational PR firms work out of a few hub cities – London, Berlin, Paris, Rome – Pleon understands and appreciates the fact that Europe is larger and more diverse than that.

Refraction:

But how can you take advantage of a market in *Eastern Europe*? How can you communicate in former Eastern Bloc countries, especially as a PR agency? Are there even any clients? Well, the Iron Curtain has dropped and these countries are quickly becoming, arguably, more ‘westernized’. And a major contributing factor in communicating within these Eastern European countries is their status in the European Union – the number one client for hopeful PR agencies.

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A very different approach to communication in Eastern Europe can be seen by the adoption of public service broadcasting (PSB) after 1989. In her paper, *The Regulation of Media Markets in Selected EU Accession States in Central and Eastern Europe*, Alison Harcourt describes PSBs as a way to, “contribute to the quality of public discourse, promote social integration, and emphasis news and education, as opposed to entertainment” (317). Karol Jakubowicz of the National Broadcasting Council of Poland states: “The successful introduction of public service broadcasting is so extraordinarily difficult to achieve that it could be regarded as a true test of post-Communist transformation...” (57). Jakubowicz describes how former Soviet Republics transformed and adopted a unique combination of media policies – a combination of the “mimetic” approach, which emphasis the social responsibility and watchdog powers of media, and the “atavistic” orientation, which was basically a top-down approach to national media that involves governments directing journalists. Jakubowicz insists that a country’s political culture is of utmost importance for the proper operation of PSB. She attributes the media policies in Eastern Europe to social and political circumstances, and she states that the general direction of media system transformation in post-Communist Europe is one of ‘westernization’ or ‘westification’ (61). “EU candidate countries from Central and

Eastern Europe are already being encouraged to switch to the new paradigm and focus their media policy on commercial and economic goals,” writes Jakubowicz (68). This is not surprising considering that accession countries in Central and Eastern Europe were consulted on their media policies by advisors from the United States and Western Europe (Harcourt, 316). “All the media laws [in Eastern European countries] reflect hybridization and adaptive borrowing from different Western models to some extent,” according to Harcourt (336). The print media policies are generally more aligned with U.S. regulations and have little restraints on ownership or circulation. Alternatively, broadcast media policies are comparable to those of Western European nations and remain within *acquis communautaire* (BBC New In-Depth, 2003).