

The State-socialist Mode of Production and the Political History of Production Culture

Petr Szczepanik

Recent studies of media industries, production cultures, and creative labor mainly approach contemporary Anglophone examples in a manner that suggests they provide universally applicable models. These studies therefore tend to disregard earlier historical precedents and alternative modes of production. One such alternative is provided by the screen industries of East-Central Europe. This region's production systems were influenced heavily by the state-socialist regimes that held power in the region after World War II and by the Cold War. In fact, they continue to be affected by cultural and economic policies that were implemented under state socialism. The media industries of East-Central Europe are still struggling to respond to the dissolution of the state-controlled economy and its organizational structures, and to their marginal geopolitical position, and have been unable to develop internationally competitive strategies. At the same time, Czech films and Polish films have attracted sizable audiences in their respective domestic markets, and production facilities located in the Czech Republic and Hungary have become important destinations for the run-away productions of American, Western European, and even Asian companies. Among the most prominent issues discussed in relation to the long and painful transformation of the film and television industries of East-Central Europe have been their failure to efficiently manage creative work and design medium- to long-term production strategies related to developing screenplays, establishing collaborative networks, and determining the roles that producers are expected to play. To gain a deeper understanding of these issues, it is necessary to reconsider state-socialist production systems, and to examine the consequences of their dissolution.¹

This chapter therefore aims to offer a model with which to compare the historical character of the various nationalized cinemas of East-Central Europe.

The example of Barrandov Studios in the Czech capital of Prague provides my case study. The chapter pays particular attention to the manner in which day-to-day creative activities were managed within a system that designated the state the sole official producer, and to organizational solutions that were introduced in an effort to strike a balance between centralized control and creative freedom. I also focus on the ways in which such a mode of production operated within the historical realities of this production community, and on how its activities responded to institutional interests. I begin by sketching what I call the “State-socialist Mode of Film Production”²—which comprises management hierarchies, the division of labor, and work practices—through the example of Czechoslovak cinema from 1945 to 1990,³ and the systemic variations that it exhibited to other film industries in the region. There follows a description of “dramaturgy”: a system of screenplay development and creative supervision that was typical of both the Czech and East German production systems, and which serves to highlight the revisionist dimensions of my model. A further three sections reveal some important aspects of the “production culture,” which is to say a set of lived realities as they were experienced by workers throughout the professional hierarchy.⁴ The combination of these two approaches—one organizational in perspective (top-down), the other cultural (bottom-up)—enables us to read official production documents against the grain and to show that they offer limited accounts of what actually took place. Consequently, this chapter is able to shed new light on how production communities “internalized and acted upon” regulatory environments and institutional interests.⁵

To date, English-language studies of the history of the East-Central European screen industries are low in number and have tended to employ approaches that perpetuate rather than challenge standard thinking. Scholars have for example concentrated on the shift from Stalinist centralization to post-Stalinist “limited autonomy” that nurtured the art cinema movements of the late 1950s and 1960s. In so doing, they have focused primarily on the changing relationships between the Communist authorities and prominent filmmakers: uneasy relationships that were not just shaped by directives, censorship, and control, but also by sophisticated negotiations of power that themselves involved rewards, punishment, paternalism, and corruption. Both historians and filmmakers have noted that in spite of their oppressive aspects, the nationalized film industries of East-Central Europe provided unprecedented material and professional support for those involved in the production of art cinema.⁶ In this respect, I would agree with Dina Jordanova that standard approaches to the topic have tended to overemphasize Cold War propaganda battles, censorship, and the pressure placed on creative personnel to conform to Party ideals,⁷ therefore leaving rather overlooked such important matters as popular culture, cultural policy institutions, and the geopolitical dimensions of media production. In addition to those issues raised by Jordanova, I would propose that the most important of these blind spots concern the day-to-day practices of production, distribution, and consumption. In particular, it needs stressing that little is known about the production practices and creative collaborations that occurred in state-socialist systems of production.

The State-socialist Mode of Production: Its Genesis and Transnational Roots

The state-socialist production systems of East-Central Europe were products of the centralization and nationalization that took place after 1945. They were supervised by a central administrative body, were the subject of Communist Party control, state censorship, and bureaucratic production plans and norms, and were required to issue permanent, as opposed to short-term, contracts of employment. At the same time, they were recipients of the material and symbolic benefits of modernization, which included the establishment of new studios, laboratories, distribution networks, film schools, clubs, and film festivals.

From an economic perspective, the state-socialist film industry of postwar Czechoslovakia was an integrated, partly self-supporting system, with production financed primarily by revenue generated from the domestic distribution of imported Western products. The studios operated according to long-term plans and fixed budgets; production personnel were strictly divided and received fixed salaries that did not hinge on the commercial or critical success of their films. Film production was organized to a top-down administrative model of management, wherein tasks were assigned to individual sectors based for the most part on quantitative indicators derived from levels of output, projected cost, and projected returns, and not based on demand or the market value of the product. Nevertheless, film production, domestic distribution, and exportation were the subjects of fairly strict control, which scrutinized screenplays and completed films. This bureaucratic model made it quite impossible to initiate flexible approaches to product differentiation, hampering the development of a full-fledged commercial cinema that might have coexisted with more propagandistic and artistic productions, and leading to what audiences saw as a perpetual product shortage.⁸

By drawing on an analytical model that was developed by Janet Staiger we can say that the strategic management of the Czechoslovak film industry—its equivalent to the major Hollywood studio heads and owners—was monopolized by the state, on account of the influence wielded in the state-owned studios by Communist Party and state representatives serving as general managers, as deputies, and on supervisory boards. The state was therefore responsible for drawing up a general strategy, as it determined the organizational structure and production directives to which the studios operated. As the sole producer of Czechoslovak films, the state controlled the flow of capital, the production infrastructure, the labor force, and long-term planning.

The first issue relating to tactical management that distinguishes the State-socialist Mode of Production from that of classical Hollywood concerns conception and execution. In East-Central European film industries, screenplay development was not separated from shooting and postproduction, as it was in Hollywood. Although the state-socialist studios followed Soviet-style directives and norms in an effort to ensure a strict division of labor, they actually afforded directors remarkable levels of authority and flexibility.⁹ However, the prominent managerial role enjoyed by the directors of East-Central European films, which extended to scripting and editing, was not restricted to this region. It was in

fact representative of an established continental European tradition,¹⁰ and what is more, this practice, which approximates what Staiger described as the director-unit system, was employed by the various small companies that comprised the Czechoslovak film industry during the interwar years.

After World War II, East-Central European film industries not only inherited the interwar models of their European counterparts and of their predecessors, but they also borrowed a number of organizational elements from Hollywood, on account of their radical versions of integration, centralization, and monopolization. The State-socialist Mode of Production was therefore a rather peculiar hybrid of local, regional, and global models. Czechoslovakia, for example, drew upon the cultural and economic politics of Nazi Germany. Whereas the centralized “*Dramaturgie*” facilitated ideological control, industrial centralization and Aryanization made postwar nationalization “easier.” After 1945, and especially after the Communist Party seized power in 1948, the Czechoslovak industry continued to develop according to local and international models. For example, local influences came from the Bata shoe factory, which was itself inspired by American notions of scientific management. International influences came from the Soviet studio system, which itself had in part been inspired by the structure of Hollywood. In terms of the mode of production and the work culture, these three organizational traditions—local, German, and Soviet—coexisted within the Czechoslovak state monopoly until 1990.

The bureaucratic centralization that characterized the state-socialist production systems was also the cause of quite specific shortcomings. After the Communist Party had strengthened its position across East-Central Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Soviet-bloc countries suffered from an acute shortage of new screenplays. In the absence of standardized procedures and organizational bodies designed to support the efficient development of scripts, Party ideologues were left with a paucity of what they deemed high-quality screenplays. Unlike the Hollywood story departments, which employed dozens of anonymous screenwriters to develop hundreds of screenplays each year, the state-socialist studios relied on freelancers who were supposed to deliver treatments or screenplays, which would then require the intervention of directors in order to ensure that they met basic structural and technical standards. All said: directors were not only contributing to most shooting scripts but also to the vast majority of screenplays—a figure of 45 percent before 1945 would rise to over 70 percent between 1945 and 1980.¹¹ Directors also tended to be the best-paid crew members, and boasted political connections to the upper echelons of the Party. As Maria Belodubrovskaya has suggested, the Soviet production system was not able to reconcile itself with the ideology of artistic individuality, especially in the case of directors and writers, who, despite the various oppressive measures they encountered, were able to maintain their elevated social standing and were ultimately unwilling to fully subjugate themselves to the industrial and ideological demands.¹² The paradoxical status of these “masters,” as they were called, endured in other state-socialist systems, albeit in diminished form.

This system of screenplay development proved to be unreliable and risky. Many of the screenplays that were written by freelancers failed to pass the multi-levelled system of approval, and even when they did, they were often altered by

dissatisfied directors, or would meet with the disapproval of management and Communist Party “apparatchiks.” But the bureaucratic strategic management could not control the everyday operations of screenplay development, shooting, and postproduction, because it could neither fully grasp the nature of this practice nor establish a way of regulating it. The studios needed to pay for hundreds of abandoned treatments and screenplays. Production plans required drastic streamlining. These circumstances precipitated a near-total collapse of production in the early 1950s, when centralization, pre-censorship, and ideological dogmatism reached a new peak, leaving the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and Poland each producing a handful of films each year, compared to the hundreds that were being made annually by American companies.

By the mid- to late 1950s, the East-Central European film industries of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany were undergoing a series of political and economic reforms that would soon spread to Hungary when a crack-down in that country ended. These developments led to the introduction or reintroduction into these countries’ systems of production of some forms of decentralization, including so-called creative, production, or dramaturgical units, groups, collectives, and associations. These bodies were expected to bridge the gap between lower and upper management, and to insure the steady supply of professional-quality screenplays.

Units as a New Middle Management: A Comparative Model

The few studies that have touched upon the film production systems of East-Central Europe usually mention “units”—semi-autonomous groups of writers, directors, production managers, and sometimes other personnel. These units were responsible for project development, managing creative labor, and nurturing new talent. Although scholars and filmmakers have emphasized the emancipatory roles of the units, they have stopped short of explaining their political functions, internal organizational principles, transnational dimensions, and historical variations. Indeed, even on those rare occasions that scholars have devoted significant attention to the units, they tended to reduce them to retreats from top-down political control, and to breeding grounds for the art film movements that swept across East-Central Europe after a trail had been blazed by the “Polish school” of the 1950s.¹³ As Dorota Ostrowska suggests in an otherwise informative overview of the Polish unit system, the units were “centered on a figure of an auteur filmmaker who was able to realize his or her artistic vision within ideological limits maintained through the complex system of bureaucratic checks and balances.”¹⁴ The most common misconceptions about the region’s units remain the claims that they were derived from the Polish model, and that they were overseen by a well-established director whose charges of junior directors and other personnel “shar[ed] an artistic vision.”¹⁵

The Polish units, which emerged as a part of the wholesale postwar reconstruction of the country’s film production infrastructure, were actually quite unique, and therefore different from the units of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany. For instance, in each of these countries, some units were not headed

by directors. Moreover, Czechoslovak units did not include junior directors or other crew members. The genealogies of the respective state-socialist production systems are also quite varied. Where the USSR boasted a history of avant-garde workshops that had flourished in the 1920s before being disbanded, Czechoslovak “production units” dated back to 1945 and Yugoslavia introduced its own form of decentralization in the early 1950s by way of workers’ self-management schemes. What is more, post-Stalinist units were established in Czechoslovakia in 1954, in Poland in 1955, in the GDR and the USSR in the late 1950s, in Hungary and Bulgaria in the 1960s, and in Romania in the 1970s. Crucially, these systems each went through distinct forms of internal development. Historical evidence shows that the state-socialist mode of production was not homogeneous: it demonstrated systemic national and temporal variations, and the units were not mere products of the post-Stalinist thaw. Rather, their emergence was a product of a combination of external factors, historical traditions, and nationalized film industries’ individual struggles to balance the control of production with regimes of innovation and product differentiation.

The units did not simply represent the state’s way of supporting art cinema and auteur filmmakers; they were first and foremost management structures that were integrated into the centralized organization in order to serve Party politics. The romantic or even utopian¹⁶ depiction of units as liberal seedbeds of autonomous creativity and communality must be balanced with a full recognition of their more pragmatic aspects. In this respect, they also provided a means by which to implement decentralized control, and to encourage pre- and self-censorship. This disciplinary logic of units, which was especially prominent during political crack-downs, has been all but ignored, as historians celebrate the contributions that they made to the “golden eras” of various national cinemas. An exception is Christina Stoianova, who notes in her unpublished PhD dissertation that the units “were a method of careful socialisation of the unruly, a breeding ground for conformism.” Stoianova goes on to argue that the units offered a softer yet ultimately more efficient way of ensuring that “the creative process was regulated from within, and by one’s most respected colleagues, not from an outside anonymous (and antagonistic) power as before.”¹⁷

Rather than being descended from artistic groups like the Soviet avant-garde workshops or the Polish START group,¹⁸ the early Czech units, which were founded between 1945 and 1948, were directly inspired by the pre-1945 local production companies, and by German production units or “*Herstellungsgruppen*”. The latter operated in the German-owned Prague company Prag-Film (1942–1945), where many Czech filmmakers had worked during World War II, and earlier in UFA, Terra, and the other 1930s’ German studios that had adapted the producer-unit system.¹⁹ The historical continuity between Nazi Germany’s studios and its state-controlled “*Dramaturgie*,” on the one hand, and the state-socialist mode of production, on the other, demands further examination.²⁰

Although the state-owned film industries of the former socialist countries resembled classical Hollywood studios in terms of their centralization and vertical integration, they lacked true producers in the Hollywood sense of the term. The

units were the closest equivalent to producers, although they lacked comparable financial and marketing clout. Apart from short periods of radical centralization in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the units were considered to be the most efficient way of ensuring that the green-lighting and execution of film projects reflected official Party ideology. During periods of political liberalization, units not only oversaw screenplay development, but were also responsible for recruiting casts and crews, shooting films, and supervising postproduction, and on occasion they even controlled the distribution of their films.

Finally, the units played important political and cultural roles inasmuch as they acted as power brokers, networkers, and intermediaries, or interfaces of the production culture. In these roles, they mediated between writers, professional screenwriters, and directors, and between the studios, the political establishment, and broader cultural trends, thereby making possible informal social networks, artistic innovation, and limited acts of political subversion. After the collapse of the Communist regimes in East-Central Europe, the virtual disappearance of the units was identified as a key factor in a general production crisis that itself was marked by the lack of either the systematic development of screenplays or semi-permanent collaborative networks.

The nationally specific versions of units that sprang up throughout the Soviet bloc nevertheless did share a set of common characteristics. Their respective development often overlapped as a result of political shifts emanating from the USSR. These included the isolationist and dogmatic Zhdanovism,²¹ the post-Stalinist thaw, the reprisals of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and mid-1980s perestroika. In contrast to periods of tighter political control, liberalization allowed for longer permanency and greater autonomy vis-à-vis central administration. The units typically acted as if they were the studio's clients inasmuch as they would book soundstages and borrow crew members. They would also be allocated a fixed budget, an office that might also serve as a social hub, and a permanent staff that could be supplemented by an advisory board composed of other filmmakers and intellectuals. A unit might also be extended a significant amount of autonomy when selecting and developing story ideas, recruiting crews, and supervising the production. The units created a collaborative environment and a sense of community derived from informal relationships developing within a bureaucratic organization. Literary advisors (called "dramaturgs" in Czechoslovakia and the GDR) attracted prominent writers and put them in touch with directors, while new talent gathered around mentors—usually a head of a unit. Some units even cultivated specific creative approaches or genres, thereby generating a measure of interunit competition. As a result, they were able to increase the number of screenplays that reached the screen, and in so doing contributed to cultural renaissances such as the Polish school and the Czech New Wave, examples of which were screened at international film festivals and on screens around the world. At the same time, the units helped to guide the careers of potentially unruly creative talents, by assigning them apposite projects and by determining how long they would work as assistants before being promoted to positions of greater responsibility, and by fulfilling the pre-censorship function of circumventing potentially subversive material. They also acted as mediators of changing Party politics, serving

for example as conduits through which the state flexed its muscles against the filmmaking community.

Numerous criteria must be taken into account if we are to compare the individual production systems of East-Central Europe. The units differed in terms of the degree of autonomy they were afforded, and their range of responsibilities, with some restricted to story development and others operating effectively as production companies. Internal operations also differed from unit to unit; some were highly bureaucratic, whereas others offered more informal working conditions and styles of leadership. In terms of their professional and generational composition, some units consisted of only a production manager, four to six dramaturgs, and a loose network of external partners; others, such as those in Poland, boasted dozens of in-house employees. The historical trajectories of the units also differed. Continuity characterized the wartime and interwar cinemas of Czechoslovakia and the GDR, but a radical break characterized Polish cinema during this period.

The basic difference between the units' statuses as management bodies derives from their relationships to the central administration and to film crews. By respecting the Czech-language terminology of the day, it is possible to distinguish three types of unit:

1. Dramaturgical units operated with the lowest degree of autonomy and the fewest responsibilities, and were restricted mainly to the development of screenplays. According to Edward Zajiček, a renowned Polish production manager who worked for a number of units, they "administratively extracted screenplays from the integral production process."²² Dramaturgical units were commonplace during draconian periods such as in the Czechoslovakia, Poland, and GDR of the late 1940s, early 1950s, late 1960s, and early 1970s. In these periods, the ideological content of films provoked more interest than style and form.
2. Creative units employed a comparatively broad range of personnel that included production managers, writers, and, sometimes, as in the case of Poland, directors and other professions as well. This type of unit was responsible for not only developing screenplays, but also other aspects of production such as the recruitment of casts and crews. They therefore came closest to the socialist utopian concept of a collective creativity and communality among artists, and to the Romantic notion of the units as incubators of art cinema movements and auteurs. Creative units were typically established during less draconian periods such as the Khrushchev thaw of the mid-1950s to mid-1960s and the glasnost years of the mid- to late 1980s.
3. Production units were highly autonomous, pragmatic entities that were similar to small independent production companies in the sense that they were responsible for an entire production, even though they were officially answerable to the central administration. Units of this sort emerged in Czechoslovakia in 1945 as part of the nationalization of production, and also sprang up after 1989 during the privatization of the Hungarian and Polish film industries (Tables 7.1 and 7.2).

Table 7.1 Historical typology of units in Czech feature-film production, 1945–1990

<i>Years active</i>	<i>Unit numbers and type</i>	<i>Description</i>
1945–1948	2–6 Production groups	Similar to small production companies; operating semi-independently within state-owned studios; high levels of creative autonomy; headed by production chiefs or directors
1948–1951	8–11 Creative collectives	Restricted “dramaturgical-”type units; dramaturgs and writers isolated from production and crews; staffed with dozens of inexperienced but politically loyal writers who were expected to reform film production
1951–1954	Central Collective Board with internal screenwriting department	Highly centralized dramaturgical body; supposedly collective decision-making yet often dominated by several strong personalities; modeled on Soviet studios’ screenplay departments and on the central Screenplay Studio
1954–1970	4–6 Creative groups	Decentralized system of dramaturgy; consisted of dramaturgs, production managers, and screenwriters who supervised the whole production process; informal and efficient management of creative teamwork
1970–1982	6–7 Dramaturgical groups	Re-centralized, restricted “dramaturgical” type; dramaturgs coordinating screenplay development; largely isolated from production; answerable to the Central Dramaturg
1982–1990	6 Dramaturgical-production groups	Partial autonomy and reconnection of dramaturgs and production process: units including dramaturgs and production managers
1990	Plans for 6 creative groups	Mostly directors appointed as unit heads; not fully realized

Note: The Slovak development was similar to that which took place in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia. Koliba Studios in Bratislava operated semi-independently from Prague, running two to three creative units from 1956, and two to four dramaturgical units between 1972 and 1990. See Václav Macek and Jelena Paštěková, *Dejiny slovenskej kinematografie* (Martin, Slovakia: Osveta, 1997).

The following overview of the units in selected Soviet-bloc countries shows common points of both development and differences. All of the countries went through periods of extreme centralization, when units were not operative and central dramaturgical boards acted as the principal supervisors of project development: in Czechoslovakia from 1951 to 1954, in Poland from 1951 to 1955, and in Hungary from 1948 to 1957. Dramaturgs and writers were the key players in the dramaturgical-type units that operated in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1951 and from 1970 to 1982, in Poland from 1949 to 1951 and from 1968 and 1972, and

Table 7.2 Other national types of unit in East-Central Europe

Country	Name of unit	Years active
USSR	Creative associations (<i>tvorcheskie ob'edineniia</i>)	1959–1990
GDR	<i>Künstlerische Arbeitsgruppen</i> (KAG)	1959–1966
	<i>Dramaturgengruppen</i>	1966–1990
Poland	Dramaturgical units (<i>zespoły dramaturgiczne</i>)	1949–1951
	Film units (<i>zespoły filmowe</i>)	1955–1968
	Dramaturgical units	1968–1972
	Renewed film units	1972–1989
Hungary	Units (<i>stúdiócsoport</i>)	1962–1963
	Studio units (<i>stúdiócsoport/stúdió</i>)	1964–1971
	“Studios” (<i>stúdió</i>)	1971–1987

Note: I have added the USSR to this list as a common reference point. For basic information on units in the GDR, Poland, Hungary, and the USSR, see Mariana Ivanova, “DEFA and East European Cinemas: Co-productions, Transnational Exchange and Artistic Collaborations,” PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2011; Ina-Lyn Reif, *Die Entstehung und Rezeption des DEFA-Spielfilms “Der verlorene Engel”* (Hamburg: Diplomica, 2009), 29–30; Zajiček, *Poza ekranem*; Balázs Varga, “Co-operation: The Organization of Studio Units in the Hungarian Film Industry of the 1950s and the 1960s,” in *Film Units*, 313–338; Anna Lawton, *Before the Fall: Soviet Cinema in the Gorbachev Years*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, 2007), 77–78.

in the GDR from 1966 to 1990. By contrast, directors and production managers usually led creative units and production units, which enjoyed greater economic and creative freedom and often forged individual identities through the development of in-house styles, genres, and topics, as well as through the generational affiliations of their members and international coproductions. While production units and creative units were more typical of Hungary and Poland, dramaturgical units proved to be more enduring in Czechoslovakia and GDR, for historically specific reasons that are detailed below.

Dramaturgy: The Practical Aesthetics and Politics of Filmmaking

The issue of dramaturgy allows us to compare the production systems of individual East-Central European nations, in terms of the dramaturgs’ roles in the system, the periods in which they held sway, and the extent of their influence. Dramaturgy is neither a neutral nor a monolithic concept. Rather, its referential meanings and political significance change between media, between regions, and across historical periods. What is more, it is not even a universally recognized discipline in the culture industry from which it emerged: legitimate theater. Theatrical dramaturgy boasts a long tradition in Germany, several East-Central European countries, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands, where, since the eighteenth century, dramaturgs were powerful yet largely anonymous figures. Serving as “critical and practical experts working in partnerships with directors and/or writers,” dramaturgs were the “primary thinkers about the political and social objectives of the theatre.”²³ Dramaturgy has traditionally suggested a close relationship between politics, theory, and creative practice. It is based on “working models that insist on a dynamic relationship between critical reflection and artistic practice,” and is

responsible for the most political aspects of cultural production, the selection of source material and authors.²⁴

While the term derives from Greek, and can be traced back to Bertolt Brecht, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and Aristotle, dramaturgy in the context of cinema developed in the 1930s. It was a product of nationalist cultural politics, including Joseph Goebbels' policy of "*Vorzensur*." This policy was institutionalized in 1934 when the Propaganda Minister himself anointed the critic and Nazi Party member Willi Krause as Germany's *Reichsfilmdramaturg*. The similar role of the chef-dramaturg was introduced in Czechoslovakia in 1949 and in the GDR in the early 1950s.²⁵ Dramaturgy became the most hotly debated issue relating to the postwar nationalization of the Czechoslovak film industry, because it was seen as an emblem of a new era of centrally planned, ideologically controlled film production. The nation's film press repeatedly discussed a dearth of appropriate screenplays, issues related to dramaturgical planning, and dramaturgical mistakes of the past. Dramaturgy was soon structured hierarchically into three levels: ministerial and Party-controlled bureaucratic dramaturgy, corporate central dramaturgy, and the practical dramaturgy of individual units. From the mid-1950s to the late 1960s, the two upper levels of the dramaturgical hierarchy were gradually weakened or even dissolved, only to see their powers reinstated when the Central Dramaturg was reformed in 1969 following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak and German film dramaturgs were quite different from Hollywood script editors and script doctors, and Soviet "*politredaktors*," inasmuch as their powers were much broader, encompassing:

1. Planning the unit, studio, or even national production in line with certain political and cultural agenda ("thematic plans," "dramaturgical plans"); providing ideological and aesthetic supervision to all or part of the production process; explaining and implementing directives for an individual production, a unit, or the entire studio.
2. Practical management of creative work at the units and to a limited extent film crews: searching for story material, scouting for authors, networking between writers and directors, and mediating conflicts between filmmakers and bureaucrats, studios and coproduction partners, and the production community and the general public.
3. Screenplay development: editing, reviewing, and approval.

By acknowledging the mediating and networking roles of dramaturgs, we are reminded of the more mundane and ambivalent aspects of the units' conduct that have been neglected by previous studies of East-Central European cinema. Even during Czechoslovak cinema's international high water mark of 1963–1969, the nation's unit heads were largely anonymous. Whereas cinephiles likely knew the names of their Polish counterparts—Kawalerowicz, Wajda, Zanussi—few would have heard of leading Czechoslovak dramaturgs and unit heads like Vladimír Bor, Ladislav Fikar, Jan Procházka, and Ota Hofman.

After 1948, dramaturgy served primarily as a channel through which the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party attempted to impose its ideological and aesthetic programs onto cinema. It is for this reason that

dramaturgy remained a prominent matter during high-level political disputes or when top-down political reorganization was taking place. Through dramaturgy, general proclamations and directives were interpreted and transformed into buzzwords that were used to classify, judge, or punish screenwriters and directors, and their projects. Such processes allowed Communist Party ideology to filter down from Central Committee meetings to writers' offices, film sets, and approval screenings. However, this was the same dramaturgy that facilitated the translation of post-Stalinist liberalization and modernist aesthetics into screenwriting, and which paired the Czech New Wave directors with progressive writers. It was also the same dramaturgy that became a principal object and instrument of reprisal following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, as the Central Dramaturg and restructured dramaturgical units drove the neo-Stalinist aesthetics and ideology that dominated Czechoslovak cinema across the 1970s. In the late 1950s and 1960s, dramaturgs enjoyed the broadest range of responsibilities and a prominent position within the production community. While they consistently enjoyed autonomy as gatekeepers, networkers, brokers, and negotiators, that autonomy did tend to diminish during the restrictive, isolated, bureaucratic dramaturgy of earlier and later periods.

The position of Czechoslovak dramaturgs was very different from that of the auteurs who headed units in Poland and Hungary. Czechoslovak dramaturgs often came to the film studios from other sectors of cultural production such as journalism, theater, music, radio, and later from television. Since dramaturgy was at the center of state and Party attention, it is unsurprising that some novice dramaturgs were close associates of Communist Party heavyweights. These newcomers were initially seen by veteran filmmakers as opportunistic interlopers, out-of-touch intellectuals, censors, or simply dilettantes; trust was built slowly. Dramaturgs, on the other hand, struggled to comprehend the world of professional filmmaking, and often expressed a mixture of fascination and disdain at some of the community's habits and values—phenomena that long-term insiders might have been too close to recognize.²⁶ Dramaturgy was the *modus operandi* of the Czech production system, as well as its officially sanctioned industrial reflexivity: dramaturgical boards prepared 1–5-year thematic and dramaturgical plans that described ideological preferences and outlined the main “ideas” of individual genres and source material. Dramaturgs were also required to write endless series of ideologically loaded exposés, reviews, and inspection protocols. But at unit level, dramaturgical practice also enabled the professional community to express its own political and cultural interests, albeit only at certain moments and in a limited way.

A History of a Production Culture under State Socialism: A Multi-temporal Model

The character of the individual unit systems of the State-socialist Mode of Production was not just a product of general political settings and corporate reflexivity (i.e., dramaturgy); they also resulted from their being embedded in micro-social worlds of specific professional communities and in what Caldwell

has called “worker reflexivity.”²⁷ These production cultures did not lie outside institutionalized industrial practice. Rather, they were expressions of social groups that helped the production system to function, and of those social groups’ attempts to make sense of their own experiences within that system. They were characterized by their own internal political dynamics and historical trajectories, factors that shape any instances of top-down reorganization. With these issues in mind, I would now like to sketch two key points that my recent research has uncovered, points that illustrate the tactics that workers employed to reinforce their sense of identity as they negotiated the institutional interests and organizational patterns that were outlined above.

When studying cinema as a historically specific, multilayered economic and cultural system, it is essential that we keep its individual “registers” in critical dialogue—in the sense of Caldwell’s “integrated cultural industrial analysis.”²⁸ It is also crucial that we distinguish between the different historical rhythms of these registers, especially the slower rate at which production communities develop in a sociocultural sense, and the faster rate at which they show the signs of economic, technological, and political change. When drawing such a distinction, we can make use of the Annales school’s multi-temporal and multidimensional model of historiography. Michèle Lagny has argued that Fernand Braudel’s concept of the *longue durée*—loosely translated as the long term—provides the most instructive temporal framework with which to approach reception and the “mentalities” of audience groups. This position is transferable to examinations of production communities if we approach them as social groups.²⁹ Although Braudel’s concept cannot be applied to film history in its original meaning—an almost motionless “geographical time” in which historical change is practically imperceptible—the concept of the *longue durée* is nonetheless a useful analogy with which to suggest that the collective mentalities of film workers develop at a significantly slower rate than the rapidly changing “history of events” that affect cinema as it intersects over time with the political.³⁰

After the rapid transformation that saw small-scale private production metamorphosize into a centralized and integrated state enterprise between 1945 and 1948, industrial reflexivity repeatedly concentrated on the mismatch between the mind-sets of veteran filmmakers and the demands of the new social order. Many editors, sound mixers, cameramen, and production managers enjoyed long careers lasting 20 or 30 years from the 1930s to the 1960s, without seeing their daily routines change in a significant way, despite the radical changes to institutional logic taking place around them. However, the mind-set of higher-level professions such as directors, screenwriters, and unit heads—those which in Hollywood parlance would be called “above-the-line talent”—changed quite quickly as the time they spent in a single position tended to be rather short, thereby making their careers comparatively unstable. The most abrupt changes, which match the rhythm of political events, occurred among studio executives, who were periodically replaced to conform to the twists and turns of the state and of Party politics.³¹ Temporal disjunctions and delays were also evident in creative practices and the films that emerged from these structures. For example, the lengthy and unpredictable process of screenplay development provoked repeated

frustration among bureaucrats, who called for swift changes in ideology, tone, themes, and style, and who criticized what Michèle Lagny dubbed the “sclerosis” of cinematic forms, which is to say the perceived temporal delay between the articulation of official ideology and its emergences as implicit ideology in filmic texts.³² It is, however, not enough to say that the daily routines and mentalities of the filmmaking community changed at a slower pace than politics. To fully understand production culture in terms of its political and historical development, we need to consider not just the historicity of the production community as a whole, but also the changing interrelations of subgroups; subgroups that boast distinct historical trajectories, and which adapt to new political regimes at different speeds.

The Micro-politics of Production Communities

The production community not only reacted to, and was affected by, the field of politics; it was also a political field in and of itself. By micro-politics of production communities, I mean the power relations within basic groups, such as those that take place between literary writers, directors, screenwriters, and dramaturgs during screenplay development, or between subgroups of film crews during shooting and postproduction. While everyday conflicts, fluctuating careers, and shifting positions within the professional hierarchy were interconnected with macro-politics, they also differed significantly from macro-political struggles.³³ Accordingly, it is imperative that we consider the manner in which the internal power dynamics that are a part of micro-systems of collective creative work influence institutional interests and goals, and how they precondition creative decisions and affect the audiovisual texts produced.

After 1948, official political life inside the film studios was organized into “basic Party cells” by the Communist Party, which amounted to grouping and regrouping workers according to their professional affiliations. Once active, professional guilds and unions became centralized and subject to Party politics. It was only in the mid-1960s that filmmakers temporarily regained their independent professional association: FITES (Svaz československých filmových a televizních umělců). Although the basic Party cells oversaw key hiring decisions, periodic political screenings, and evaluations of individual workers, they largely failed to represent workers’ interests vis-à-vis studio management and state and Party institutions. As a result, behind this seemingly transparent bureaucratic arrangement, informal coalitions, cliques, and allegiances flourished. From an historical perspective, micro-politics can be studied in terms of varying levels of compliance or resistance. In this respect, the field of film production was losing some of its autonomy to outside political forces³⁴ during periods of political repression, especially during Zhdanovism (1948–1953), when powerful political officials attempted directly to influence hiring and creative decision-making. The field regained some of its autonomy during periods of liberalization. This was especially so in the 1960s. During this time, the field’s own prioritization of issues such as informal professional reputation, securing large audiences, and success at international festivals superseded politically sanctioned rewards and political coercion. These dynamics

are illustrated by the case of a long-forgotten filmmaker whose professional history exemplifies important micro-political changes that occurred in the filmmaking community between 1945 and 1958.

The young Communist director Vladimír Vlček, nicknamed ironically “Volodya” (a Russianism that spotlighted his pro-Soviet stance), worked as an assistant for several German production companies during World War II, before relocating to Moscow soon after Czechoslovakia’s liberation, where he is said to have befriended a number of prominent Soviet filmmakers. After returning to Prague, Vlček was expected to implement Soviet methods of filmmaking and propaganda to Czechoslovak films. He was the first Czech filmmaker to be awarded the Soviet Stalin Prize for his directorial collaboration on the documentary *The New Czechoslovakia* (codir. Vasili Belayev, 1949), and in 1950 he was appointed as head of a special production unit that was assigned to collaborate with the Soviets. Vlček then started to shoot his own propagandistic features including *Tomorrow, People Will Be Dancing Everywhere* (1952), for which he won the Czechoslovak State Prize. Five years later, he codirected the first postwar Czechoslovak–Western co-production, *La Liberté surveillée* (1957), starring Marina Vlady. At this time, Vlček was dismissed by many of his colleagues as a careerist hack, who had exploited his connections to top Soviets, to the Czechoslovak Central Committee and the Ministry of Culture, and even to the Czechoslovak President. Vlček was indeed asking these figures to pressurize studio management to approve his projects, his festival visits, and his French and Soviet coproductions, and to generally afford him preferential treatment. In so doing, this director was able to bend official rules, secure the backing of his superiors, and gain a competitive advantage over his peers. Vlček’s reputation was built on a combination of social and symbolic capital that he had accrued outside the field of film production. It would provide less leverage after Stalin died.

In 1958, at the height of the first wave of post-Stalinist political and cultural liberalization, studio leadership finally lost patience with the unruly and unpopular Vlček. A special committee was formed to subject the filmmaker to a thorough, seven-hour-long cross-examination. As studio head Eduard Hofman explained, “The position of the Party in the studios is now a different one than it was before.” “Today, the situation is that the Minister of Culture and the Central Committee are asking for our opinion when you try to win their support,” added the general manager of the state enterprise, Jiří Marek. Vlček was denounced and ultimately fired not for his immorality and Machiavellian tendencies *per se*, but for using his political connections to push his own agenda at the studio through such tactics as having his powerful associates make threatening phone calls to studio executives. “There are 35 directors in the Barrandov studios, but only comrade Vlček is pushing his projects through such interventions,” noted Hofman, “Why don’t the others do that? . . . There are dozens of more skilled and talented filmmakers but they behave well.”³⁵ Vlček’s attempts later that year to secure job on a documentary proved unsuccessful, as he was rejected amid fears that he would “literary corrode the workers’ collective.”³⁶ In 1960, Vladimír “Volodya” Vlček was expelled from the Communist Party and could be found in exile in France.

The 60-page minutes of Vlček’s hearing show the field of film production reclaiming its autonomy from the field of political power.³⁷ The interference of

politicians was anathematic to the micro-political dynamics of post-Stalinist units, where informal reputation and trust trumped official endorsements and awards.

Disdain, Distinction, and Boundary Work: Guardians of Professionalism

Against the backdrop of the abruptly changing political and social conditions that characterized East-Central Europe from 1938 to 1990, the community of filmmakers quite understandably developed protective measures to safeguard its internal value systems. As a social group, filmmakers did not directly oppose political regimes, but their protectionist conduct could occasionally take on a subversive quality. To account for the changing social status of filmmakers in the context of political history, I will draw on three interrelated sociological concepts of disdain, distinction, and boundary work, which were adopted by Tejaswini Ganti in her ethnographic work on Bollywood. While Ganti showed how Mumbai-based filmmakers struggled to earn recognition from the state and society, the Czechoslovak professional community faced a different problem: it found itself at the epicenter of Communist cultural politics and was pushed to defend its residual autonomy.³⁸

The question of who was and who was not a legitimate filmmaker became more complex when the state monopoly was established in 1945, and certain groups of professionals, such as capitalists, Germans, and alleged Nazi collaborators, could legally be excluded from the community. During the first wave of Stalinist political purges that took place three years later, other groups of “internal enemies” were expelled, including alleged anti-Communists, members of the bourgeoisie, and cosmopolites. A highly formalized system of compulsory permanent employment, qualification/wage categories, training and reeducation facilities, periodic political screenings, and state prizes was introduced after 1948 to fortify borders and distinctions within this professional world. Ideologically, this strategy grew out of a deep-rooted suspicion of and disdain for filmmakers, who were seen as a politically unreliable group with dubious class origins: a phenomena known locally as the “film jungle.” These sentiments were shared not only by the Communist apparatchiks, but also by some filmmakers who sought to distinguish themselves from the reputations of their peers and their profession. In a confidential report on creative workers that was commissioned by the Central Committee before the coup of February 1948 in order to secretly infiltrate the film industry, the Communist director Vladimír Borský wrote:

Due to difficult living conditions, an unsecure future, and scarce working opportunities, film workers were permanently engaged in a struggle to survive, in jealousy, slander, and demeaning behavior while searching for jobs. There followed a necessary betrayal of moral values, which resulted in a constant sense of inferiority and an absolute loss of artistic and human self-confidence. These were the things that corrupted film artists.³⁹

If Borský, as an insider, blamed external conditions, the Communist leaders ascribed the supposed immorality of the “film jungle” to filmmakers themselves, especially to veteran practitioners.

After the coup of 1948, the new management implemented a range of measures to infiltrate dozens of young Communist “cadres” in the professional community, so as to reform the community from within. Between 1948 and 1950, approximately 100 young and often inexperienced writers and journalists, some of whom boasted connections to the political elite, were recruited to become members of a new generation of dramaturgical units (11 units in Prague, another 12 in the provinces), and to reform the system of screenplay development so that it might better reflect the aesthetics and ideology of socialist realism. The experiment ended in disaster when the groups were unable to deliver a steady supply of filmable screenplays on account of their purely dramaturgical units being wholly disconnected from production. Behind this top-down personnel politics, more informal practices of demarcation and distinction survived within individual professional groups. In a backlash against the new units, the influential “veteran” director Otakar Vávra and his allies accused these “dilettantes” of conspiracy, and in 1952 fired most of them. In the course of their campaign, the veterans summoned notions of traditional artistic mastery and of the sovereignty of directors over writers and dramaturgs, and emphasized that the specificities of filmmaking made it impossible to master this profession in a short space of time.⁴⁰

In addition to the young Communist intellectuals, in 1950 and 1951, dozens of laborers including metalworkers were placed on a year-long crash course to facilitate their entry into directing, photography, production management, and other positions. Each of the “students” was assigned a “patron,” usually a studio veteran, who was supposed to introduce them to the job and the film community. As shown in special reports compiled in 1953 and 1954, the students generated a sense of disillusionment in the community, with patrons usually neglecting their unwanted apprentices. The veteran professionals looked upon these newcomers with a deep sense of suspicion, especially after the novices became informants who would report on them. One of the dissatisfied students recalled that director Otakar Vávra had “claimed at a meeting that he couldn’t stand people in his workplace who don’t speak his language . . . and comrade Krejčík [veteran director Jirí Krejčík] declared that we are not good enough even for the position of the second assistant.” Another novice complained: “Barrandov seems like Babylon to me, I have never seen such an enterprise before.”⁴¹ Rejecting workers with political leverage on the basis that they did “not speak the language” would have been dangerous only one or two years earlier, but in 1953 it was possible to make such claims as the first steps were being taken to rebuild the relative autonomy of the field of film production, and the ideology of professionalism, aesthetic specificity, and artistry that had been suppressed under Zhdanov were once again becoming acceptable.

“Babylon” was an inertial production culture, operating at a slower pace than politics. It survived the Stalinist years and became a breeding ground for the renewed units that were established a year later, and which were headed by the same veteran managers and directors who from 1945 to 1948 had led the pre-Communist production units, and who were the most important producers and directors before 1945.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter outlined the State-socialist Mode of Production, which was based on the units that were responsible for tactical management of creative labor. National variations of the mode established units with varying degrees of authority in order to mediate between top-down cultural policy and everyday creative practice. At the same time, the units became sites of energetic informal networking and artistic innovation, often bordering on subversion. Despite this model of seemingly absolute top-down control and rationalized division of labor, many habitual practices survived under the state-socialist mode, among them the dominant position of film directors.

Dramaturgy can be understood as a sanctioned industrial theory, and dramaturgs as cultural mediators and networkers who played a vital yet paradoxical role in the processes of top-down ideological control and in the bottom-up subversive tactics that were developed in the units. The figure of the dramaturg problematizes existing historical account of the units, which have cast prominent auteurs as unit heads, and which have focused on the production of art cinema. A different kind of informal or “worker reflexivity” emerged out of the various micro-political conflicts that highlighted internal divisions within the production community, and their interrelations with macro-political developments. Like Ganti’s work on Bollywood, I hope that this account of the state-socialist systems’ cultural logic points to the ways in which film production generally, including that associated with Hollywood, is a historically and politically situated phenomenon.

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Notes

1. For the first book-length treatment of these subjects, see Marcin Adamczak, Piotr Marecki, and Marcin Malatyński, eds, *Film Units: Restart* (Kraków: Ha!art, 2012).
2. The complex Marxian concept of the “mode of production” has already been applied to state socialism in economic and social theories. Here I draw primarily on the compressed version developed by Janet Staiger, who focused on organizing film production, especially the division of labor. See David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); see also Ben Singer, “Mode of Production: Issues and Debates,” in *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, ed. Richard Abel (New York: Routledge, 2005), 633–635.
3. Although I refer to the whole history of the state-owned film industry (1945–1990), my primary focus here is on the period between the Communist putsch in 1948 and

- the ebbing of the so-called Czech New Wave in the aftermath of the Soviet-led invasion of 1968.
4. My perspective on production culture is limited in scope by working with archival documents and oral history instead of conducting ethnographic research. See John Thornton Caldwell, *Production Culture. Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).
 5. See Timothy Havens, Amanda Lotz, and Serra Tinic, "Critical Media Industry Studies: A Research Approach," *Communication, Culture and Critique* 2 (2009): 247.
 6. See, for example, Mira Liehm and Antonín J. Liehm, *The Most Important Art: Soviet and Eastern European Film after 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); David W. Paul, ed., *Politics, Art, and Commitment in the East European Cinema* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1983); see interviews with Czech filmmakers in Antonín J. Liehm, ed., *Closely Watched Films: The Czechoslovak Experience* (White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1974); Billy Budd Vermillion, "Art Cinema in Eastern Europe, 1956–1981," PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011.
 7. Dina Jordanova, *Cinema of the Other Europe: The Industry and Artistry of East Central Europe* (London: Wallflower Press, 2003), 20.
 8. For a political-economic theory of shortage as a systemic principle of the centrally planned economies of the Eastern Bloc countries, see János Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). For a contemporaneous discussion of the state-socialist film economy, see, for example, Radoslav Selucký, *Poznámky k návrhu na novou ekonomickou organizaci Československého filmu* (Prague: ČSF, 1966).
 9. For the prominent role directors played in the USSR, see Maria Belodubrovskaya, "Politically Incorrect: Filmmaking under Stalin and the Failure of Power," PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011.
 10. See Kristin Thompson, "Early Alternatives to the Hollywood Mode of Production: Implications for Europe's Avant-Gardes," *Film History* 5 (1993): 386–404.
 11. See Petr Szczepanik, "Wie viele Schritte bis zur Drehfassung? Eine politische Historiographie des Drehbuchs," *Montage AV* 22, no. 1 (2013): 99–132.
 12. Belodubrovskaya, "Politically Incorrect."
 13. See, for example, Liehm and Liehm, *The Most Important Art*, 293; Vermillion, *Art Cinema in Eastern Europe*, 80–85. This situation has begun to change; see Adamczak, Marecki, and Malatyński, *Film Units*.
 14. Dorota Ostrowska, "An Alternative Model of Film Production: Film Units in Poland after World War Two," in *A Companion to Eastern European Cinemas*, ed. Aniko Imre (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 461.
 15. Jordanova, *Cinema of the Other Europe*, 23. This claim is repeated in numerous studies.
 16. For an analysis of the notion that this utopian fantasy is rooted in Polish filmmakers' nostalgic claims about the state socialism, see Marcin Adamczak, "Film Units in the People's Republic of Poland," in *Film Units*, 252–267.
 17. Christina Stoianova, "The Eastern European Crisis of Self-knowledge (1948–1989): The Relationship between State and Society as Reflected in Eastern European Film—A Genre Approach," PhD dissertation, Concordia University, 1999, 358.
 18. The 1930s' Society for the Promotion of Film Art was referred to by several film historians as a model for the Polish units. See, for example, Marek Haltof, *Historical Dictionary of Polish Cinema* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 54.
 19. Staiger's account of the emergence of the producer-unit system in the early 1930s was criticized by Matthew Bernstein, who located the origins of what he calls unit production in the mid-1920s and claimed that it was linked historically to independent

- producers. See Matthew Bernstein, "Hollywood's Semi-independent Production," *Cinema Journal* 32, no. 3 (1993): 41–54. For a discussion of the links between Hollywood and Ufa, especially of the Ufa producer Erich Pommer, who, before returning to Germany, worked for Paramount at exactly the time when the studio introduced the unit production (according to Bernstein), see Klaus Kreimeier, *The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company, 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 170.
20. For an elaboration on these historical continuities, see Petr Szczepanik, "Between Units and Producers: Organization of Creative Work in Czechoslovak State Cinema, 1945–1990," in *Film Units*, 271–312.
 21. The term "Zhdanovism" relates to the period between 1948 and 1953 and is derived from the name of Andrei Zhdanov, the USSR Central Committee member responsible for Soviet cultural policy.
 22. Zajiček, *Poza ekranem*, 120.
 23. On the other hand, dramaturgy was not institutionalized in British and American theater and film until the 1970s, when it tended to be called "literary management." See Mary Luckhurst, *Dramaturgy: A Revolution in Theatre* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
 24. Luckhurst, *Dramaturgy*.
 25. David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933–1945* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 14.
 26. Narratives of difficult integration into the production community are often present in the recollections of dramaturgs. Here, I draw on research that I conducted at the Collection of Oral History, National Film Archive (NFA), Prague.
 27. For the conceptual dichotomy of corporate versus worker reflexivity, see Caldwell, *Production Culture*.
 28. The registers or research modes include "textual analysis of trade and worker artifacts," interviews with workers, ethnographic observation taken on production sites, and economic/industrial analysis. See Caldwell, *Production Culture*, 4.
 29. Michèle Lagny, *De l'histoire du cinéma: Méthode historique et histoire du cinéma* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992), 34, 181–236.
 30. Braudel regarded the history of events as the most superficial aspect of historical change, describing them as "surface disturbances, crests of foam that the tides of history carry on their strong backs." He encouraged the social sciences to adopt the concept of the *longue durée* as a common methodological ground that promised to reveal the multi-temporality of their subjects and enable comparisons to be drawn between their conclusions. See Fernand Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences: The *Longue Durée*," in *On History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 21.
 31. My sources include the minutes of political screenings and examples of recorded oral history, both of which are housed at the NFA.
 32. See Lagny, *De l'histoire du cinéma*, 113.
 33. In current ethnographically informed political science scholarship, micro-politics refers to the inner workings of politics, which is to say the everyday practices of decision-making that underpin political organizations. Micro-political studies focus on the organizational context and organizational culture that determine both the possibilities and the constraints of such decision-making at the level of smallest units of action, and on the ways in which they allow for groups to reach a consensus on, and to deviate from, formal rules and officially set goals. See Roland Willner, "Micro-politics: An Underestimated Field of Qualitative Research in Political Science," *German Policy Studies* 7, 3 (2011): 155–185. Political anthropologists have examined relatively

- autonomous micro-political processes in concrete local settings and the ways in which they “not only reflect larger political processes and national-level conflicts, but may contribute to them.” See John Gledhill, *Power and Its Disguises: Anthropological Perspectives on Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 128. For an example of ethnography of power struggles in the art world, see Maruška Svašek, “Styles, Struggles, and Careers: An Ethnography of the Czech Art World, 1948–1992,” PhD dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 1996.
34. I am referring here to Bourdieu’s sociological theory of the relative and changing autonomy of the field of cultural production vis-à-vis the field of power; see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).
 35. NFA, ÚŘ ČSF, k. R10/A1/3P/7K.
 36. NFA, ÚŘ ČSF, k. R9/B2/5P/6K.
 37. Ironically, both Marek and Hofman were themselves dismissed after a new political backlash from the Culture Minister and the Central Committee, which punished filmmakers for making overly critical films. It took two more years before the field of film production had regained its relative autonomy again, thereby paving the way for the Czech New Wave.
 38. Ganti used these concepts to explain the cultural processes of modernization, globalization, and gentrification in the Hindi film industry of the 1990s and 2000s. See Tejaswini Ganti, *Producing Bollywood: Inside the Contemporary Hindi Film Industry* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).
 39. National Archives, ÚV KSČ, f. 19/7.
 40. See Petr Szczepanik, “‘Veterans’ and ‘Dilettantes’: Film Production Culture vis-à-vis Top-down Political Changes, 1945–1962,” in *Sovietisation and Planning in the Film Industries of Soviet Bloc Countries: A Comparative Perspective on East Germany and Czechoslovakia, 1945–1960*, eds Pavel Skopal and Lars Karl (Berghahn Books, forthcoming 2013).
 41. NFA, f. ČSF, k. R4/A1/1P/7K.