

## SUMMARIES

### THE MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC

The National and Trans-National Influence Potential of the Mass Media  
in the Difficult Relationship between Czechs, Slovaks, and Germans

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In this introductory contribution, the authors explain the central questions which are treated in this special issue containing the papers presented to a conference of the German-Czech and German-Slovak Commission of Historians, and summarize the contributions in a nutshell. Their starting point is the observation that modern mass media, while trans-national in effect, always remain linked to a national context due to language and traditions. With this as a backdrop, individual case histories exemplifying the development of the mass media since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are presented. The focus is on the political potential of the media on one hand, with their importance for the fundamental politicization of European societies during the 19<sup>th</sup> century being assessed as well as their being exploited by the dictatorships of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, aspects characterising the development of inter-societal relations are examined, such as how the media shaped the pictures which Czechs, Germans, and Slovaks had of one another. Finally, the authors list deficits of the research situation with a special view to the particularities applying to East Central Europe where, during the last two decades, not only a rapid development of the mass media themselves has taken place, but media sciences have been recreated to a considerable degree.