

Electronic Bandit. VHS Market in Poland during the Transition Period

SUMMARY

Electronic Bandit is a PhD dissertation dedicated to the topic of VHS culture and VHS market in Poland during the transition period of late 1980s and early 1990s. The dissertation is divided into six main chapters. The first chapter, entitled *The Development of VHS Culture and VHS Market in the United States*, is a brief description of the invention of VCR and the emergence of VHS culture in the United States. The second chapter, *Transformations of Polish Cinemas in the 1980s*, is dedicated to the changes in Polish film production and film distribution in the 1980s. The third chapter, *VHS Tapes in the Times of Polish People's Republic*, tells a story of unofficial development of VHS culture in communist Poland. Next three chapters, entitled *Viewers and Movies in the Times of Transition Period*, *Video Stores in the Times of Transition Period*, *Distribution Companies in the Times of Transition Period*, tell a story of Polish VHS culture and VHS market from the perspectives of three different types of entities.

Main theses of the dissertation are:

- In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Polish film culture was centred not around cinemas, but around video stores;
- Polish video market was proportionally bigger than video markets in other post-communist countries and it grew faster than video markets in many western countries, such as Austria or Italy;
- Popularity of low-budget genre films on VHS tapes was caused in some extent by reglamentation during the times of Polish People's Republic;
- Importing and renting or selling VHS tapes allowed many people to learn the laws of demand and supply and allowed many viewers to emancipate from film culture controlled by the authorities;
- Polish VHS market can be perceived as an important part of the transition period.