

# Media and Communication Studies Intersections and Interventions



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THE RESEARCHING AND TEACHING COMMUNICATION SERIES

**MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
INTERVENTIONS AND INTERSECTIONS**

THE INTELLECTUAL WORK OF THE 2010 ECREA  
EUROPEAN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION  
DOCTORAL SUMMER SCHOOL

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## INTRODUCTION



PRESENTATIONS AT  
THE POSTER WORKSHOP

PHOTO: LEONARDO CUSTÓDIO





# Introduction:

## The intellectual work of the 2010 ECREA European media and communication doctoral Summer School in Ljubljana

Nico Carpentier and Ilija Tomanić Trivundža

### 1. THE SUMMER SCHOOL'S HISTORY

The Summer School was established in the early 1990s by a consortium of ten (Western) European universities, initiated by the Universities of Stendhal (Grenoble, France) and Westminster (UK). From then on, these participating universities have organised annual summer schools for Communication Studies PhD students, which lasted for one or two weeks and took place in a wide range of locations, including Grenoble, Lund, Barcelona, London, Helsinki and Tartu. In 2010, the Summer School moved for the first time to the Department of Media and Communication Studies of the University of Ljubljana. In that year, it ran from 15 to 27 August. Together with the University of Ljubljana, 22 participating universities and two national doctoral research schools participated in the consortium: Autonomous University of Barcelona (ES), Charles University (CZ), Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) (HU), Jönköping University (SE), London School of Economics and Political Science (UK), Lund University (SE), University of Amsterdam (UvA) (NL), University of Ankara (TR), University of Arts Berlin (DE), University of Bergen (NO), University of Bremen (DE), University of Erfurt (DE), University of Roskilde (DK), University of Sacred Heart Milano (IT), University of Stirling (UK), University of Tampere (FI), University of Tartu (EE), University of Westminster (UK), University on Helsinki (FI), University Stendhal, Grenoble 3 (FR), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (BE), Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) (LT), the Danish National Research School and the Finnish national research school. Additionally, the Slovene Communication Association provided a supplementary programme and organisational support to the 2010 Summer School.

## 2. THE PEDAGOGICAL AND DIDACTICAL APPROACH OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL

The Summer School is based on a number of principles, of which the **student-orientedness** is the most important one. The PhD projects of the participating students are at the centre of the Summer School, and its main aim is to enhance the academic quality of each individual project. In contrast to many other summer schools, the lecturers' main task is not to lecture, but to provide support to the participants in their PhD trajectories.

The Summer School provides this support through **structured, high-quality and multi-voiced feedback** on the work of each individual PhD student, combined with numerous opportunities for informal dialogues. The feedback consists of a series of extensively elaborated analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the individual PhD projects, which allow PhD students to structurally improve the quality of their academic work. Although the feedback is provided by experts in the field of Communication and Media Studies, these authoritative voices never become authoritarian and the autonomy of the participants is never questioned. Moreover, feedback is always multi-voiced: Different lecturers and participants always contribute to the analysis of a specific PhD project, enhancing the richness of the feedback and allowing a diversity of perspectives to become articulated, without imposing any specific perspective.

The Summer School combines **a constructive-supportive nature with a critical perspective**. During the feedback sessions, the evaluation consists of a balanced overview of the qualities and problems of a PhD project, in combination with suggested solutions for these problems. Moreover, the workshops and the lectures have as objective to support the future academic careers of the participants by allowing them to acquire very necessary academic skills. The atmosphere of the Summer School is fundamentally non-competitive, as the talents of all participants will be acknowledged, and participants and lecturers act as peers, cherishing academic collegiality and collaborative work.

The Summer School also expresses the utmost respect for **academic diversity**. We recognise the existence of a plurality of schools, approaches, theories, paradigms, methods, and cultures in academia, which makes the Summer School choose for conversation and dialogue, and not for conversion and conflict. Its commitment to diversity in approaches can only be made possible through an evenly strong commitment to academic

rigueur, thoroughness, responsibility, honesty, fairness and quality.

Finally, the Summer School aims to **stimulate connectedness**. First of all, the Summer School is aimed at the construction of long-term academic networks, enabling future collaborations at the international/European level. We recognise the necessary nature of intellectual exchange for academia and the importance of transcending frontiers. But the Summer School also wants to remain respectful towards the localised context in which it operates, at the urban and national level of the city, avoiding disconnections with civil society, business and state.

In order to realise these principles, the eleven-day 2010 Summer School was based on a combination of lectures, training workshops, student-workshops and working visits. The core format of the Summer School is based on the so-called student-workshops, which are oriented towards providing the PhD students with the structured, high-quality and multi-voiced feedback that was mentioned above. For this purpose, the following specific procedure was used. After their application is approved, participating PhD students each send in their 10-page papers. On the basis of the papers, the PhD students are then divided into three groups or flows, and each student is attributed a lecturer-respondent and a student-respondent. Moreover, a so-called flow-manager (a member of the academic Summer School staff) is also attributed to each of the flows. These flow-managers coordinate the activities of the student-workshops' flows for the entire duration of the Summer School. During the student-workshops, each PhD student presents his or her project, which is then commented upon by the student-respondent, the lecturer-respondent and the flow-manager, and finally discussed by all participants. At the end of the series of student-workshops, a joint workshop is organised, where the diversity of paradigmatic, theoretical and methodological approaches is discussed, combined with the intellectual lessons learned at the Summer School.

In addition, the training workshops are a crucial pedagogical tool for the Summer School. These workshops provide the PhD students with more practical training on issues related to making posters, publishing, abstract-writing, comparative research, action research, ideological analysis, interdisciplinary approaches, the use of blogging for teaching and the use of theory in research. They were combined with a number of lectures, which focussed on specific theories or concepts. Finally, the working visits (and the on-site lectures) gave the participants more insights in Slovenia's media structures, politics, cultures and histories.

### 3. THE PEOPLE / THE HALL OF FAME

At the 2010 Summer School, 51 PhD students participated.

The first flow group consisted of Ates Gursimsek, Gamze Goker, Jan Oehlmann, Jindra Ticha, Jowan Mahmud, Krista Lepik, Leonardo Custódio, Lucie Kocourkova, Marco Anderle, María Isabel Villa, Miriam Stehling, Paula de Souza Paes, Shohreh Bolouri, Sigrid Kannengiesser, Silvia Tarassi, Tim Riley and Viktorija Rusinaite.

Eirik Stavelin, Fergal Quinn, Gennady Salmiyanov, Hong Thu Vu, Igor Vobič, Jo Bogaerts, Johanna Moeller, Julia Pohle, Lina Auskalniene, Lucia Vesnic-Alujevic, Maximillian Hänska-Ahy, Oğuzhan Taş, Panu Uotila, Sally Broughton Micova, Sarah El-Richani, Torgeir Uberg Nærland and Virpi Salojärvi were the second flow group.

Albert Elduque i Busquets, Anja Hawlitschek, Bernhard G. Schorr, Bilge Narin, Céline Battaia, Ehsan Bakhshandeh, Evrim Yörük, Irina Khaldarova, Joke Beyl, Julia Gantenberg, Juliette De Maeyer, Linda Elen Olsen, Margot Buchanan, Morana Fudurić, Ranjana Das, Serhan Mersin and Tim Blumer formed the third group.

All of their abstracts, and a selection of six chapters based on their work, are included in this publication.

The 2010 Summer School also had 22 international and 4 Slovene academic lecturers: Anastasia Kavada, Andreas Hepp, Andrej Škerlep, Annette Hill, Bart Cammaerts, Bertrand Cabedoche, Beybin Kejanlioglu, Breda Luthar, Denis McQuail, Ebba Sundin, Fausto Colombo, François Heinderyckx, Hannu Nieminen, Heiner Stahl, Ilija Tomanić Trivundža, Irena Reifová, Kees Brants, Manuel Parés i Maicas, Maria Heller, Michael Bruun Andersen, Nico Carpentier, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Richard Kilborn, Risto Kunelius, Tanja Oblak Črnič and Tobias Olsson.

The programme also included working visits to the computer laboratory and educational centre Kiberpipa (<http://www.kiberpipa.org>), Slovenia's main non-academic research institute for social and political studies Mirovni inštitut (<http://www.mirovni-institut.si>), and the Slovene Ethnographic museum (<http://www.etno-muzej.si>) which all provided an in-depth perspective on Slovenia. These visits were accompanied by lectures on the promotion of critical open code programming and net art

(Klemen Robnik), on the Slovene mediascape (Ilija Tomanić Trivundža) and on collective identities (Aleš Debeljak). Supplementary activities organised by the Slovene Communication Association also included a round table on the future of communication studies with Denis McQuail and Hanno Hardt.

Ilija Tomanić Trivundža was the local director of the Summer School, supported by the international director and ECREA liaison, Nico Carpentier. Tobias Olsson, Hannu Nieminen, Richard Kilborn, Ebba Sundin, Bart Cammaerts and Nico Carpentier acted as the Summer School's flow-managers.

#### 4. THE EVALUATION

The 2010 Summer School was again characterised by a high level of student (and lecturer) satisfaction. During the evaluation workshop at the end of the Summer School and in the (written) individual evaluations, the participants expressed their enthusiasm about their Summer School experience. The following citations from the individual feedback forms provide us with a good overview of the most common reactions to the general (evaluative) questions:

*Student workshops were excellent and useful.*

*It was a great opportunity to connect and discuss my project with other students. Great!!!*

*I have only congratulations for the IP organisers. I was impressed by the overall efficiency, accessibility and friendliness of the organisers.*

*Although the timetable was tight and exhausting, the learning outcomes were great.*

*Thank you for this wonderful experience.*

*Stick to the flows, workshops and lectures as didactic methods.*

*The organisation was top-notch. Really great. I will recommend this Summer School to everyone!*

The Summer School remains a rewarding but very intensive experience because of its duration, which is a reoccurring topic in the evaluations. These evaluations have also produced quite some critical advice for future improvements of the Summer School format. Mostly the advice focused on providing lectures that are not so closely tied to specific research cases but to broader theoretical or methodological aspects, and workshops that are more practically oriented. Improved time management of the lecturers and particularly allocating more time for discussion following the lectures and during student feedback workshops was also (and repeatedly) emphasised.

## 5. THE SUMMER SCHOOL BOOK

A significant part of the intellectual work of the 2010 Summer School is included in this book, which takes a liminal position in the field of academic books, oscillating between conference proceedings and a reader, and containing chapters about work in progress and completed research. It remains a reviewed book, but the review process is aimed at improvement and inclusion (without ever giving up on quality), and less at merciless critique and selection.

The main part of the book has five sections, which all address the overarching topic of the book in their own specific ways. The title, *Media and Communication Studies Interventions and Intersections*<sup>1</sup>, first of all refers to the double coding that all academic texts have, as they not only aim to speak *about* social reality but also speak *to* fellow academics (and sometimes other publics). Through their logics, their orderings, their sense-making frameworks, their priorities, and sometimes their explicit intentions, these texts are always interventions in our field. Secondly, academic works is often – and maybe always – characterised by intersectionality. This intersectionality is sometimes generated by an interdisciplinary approach, where different disciplines (or fields) overlap. But in other cases this intersectionality is established within a discipline (or field), where different focal points, for instance at the level of the object of analysis, paradigms or methodologies, enter into a dialogue. Intersectionality occurs in yet another way, and that is when the different components of academic work encounter each other. The meeting of theory and analysis, through the mediation of methodology, is not without friction. As a concept, intersectionality captures how different components (often social catego-

<sup>1</sup> The title is inspired by the work of one of the Summer School participants, Sigrid Kannengiesser.

ries) interact in multiple ways, and this interaction affects all components. When applied to academic work in general, this concept captures how different disciplines, fields, objects, paradigms, methodologies, theories and analyses interact, and enrich each other in the process.

In the first part, *Reflections on the field*, more explicit analytical interventions can be found. Denis McQuail's article discusses the future of Communication Studies, also analysing its limitations and failures. Andreas Hepp takes on the debate of media-centeredness, and the question of the social/media relations through the concept of mediatisation. Heiner Stahl discusses a much under-researched subfield, sound studies, showing the need to more concerted research actions in this field.

The second part, *Cross-fertilisations*, looks at more specific interrelationships. Sally Broughton Micova studies the interconnection between Europeanisation studies and media systems analyses. Ranjana Das investigates how audience reception studies and media literacy shed their light on the notion and process of interpretation. Ilija Tomanić Trivundža's article aims to expand framing research by combining it with visual communication.

In *Media meets the political*, the third part, one specific type of meeting is treated more in-depth. Irena Reifová's article looks at how political communication and popular culture meet, returning to the concept of mediatisation. Fausto Columbo, together with Matteo Vergani, provides an overview of the relationship between media, participation and democracy. Jo Bogaerts looks at contestations of the truth claims of journalism, showing its political nature. The last two chapters of this section, by Bertrand Cabedoche and by Manuel Parés i Maicas zoom in on a key political concept, citizenship, and its close connection to the media sphere.

In the fourth part, entitled *Impulses from new media studies*, we have a look at how one component of the field of Media and Communication studies can enrich the entire field, but also warns us against the creation of new myths. Tobias Olsson and Åsa Olsson's article analyses the appropriation of new technologies by teachers, deconstructing the dichotomy between teachers and pupils. Francois Heinderyckx looks at the role of new media in election campaigns, and how bottom-up, grassroots initiatives can be unsettling for traditional political leadership. Tim Blumer analyses how shy people relate to new media, looking at how computer-mediated communication (CMC) impacts on human communication and interaction.



María Isabel Villa focuses on how cross-media broadcasting transformed television production and Jindra Ticha's article contains a clear warning sign against the naïve celebration of the newness of new media.

The last section of part, *Method meets theory meets praxis*, looks at the intersections of the key components of academic research, but also thematises the role research can play as intervention. Beybin Kejanlioglu's article investigates the role of theory, and the different ways it can become articulated in (PhD) research projects. Nico Carpentier's article is an attempt to translate high theory into research practice, transforming discourse theory into discourse-theoretical analysis. Finally, both Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt's and Ebba Sundin's articles deal with action research, which is in itself an interventionist strategy that is based on the intersection of research and other fields of the social.

The second part of the book contains the abstracts of the projects of all 51 PhD students that participated in the 2010 Summer School. Throughout the book, a series of pictures selected from the immense Summer School archive are also included. Ilija Tomanić-Trivundža produced the cover. Our special thanks to our photographers: Eirik Stavelin, Leonardo Custódio, Maximillian Hänska-Ahy and Ranjana Das.

## 6. A FINAL WORD OF THANKS

The Summer School is supported by a wide range of individuals and institutions. The (old and new) consortium partners, ECREA and the EC all provide invaluable support to this long-standing initiative. Lecturers and flow-managers have over the years invested a lot of energy in providing PhD support, organising workshops and lecturing. The PhD students themselves have shown an eagerness which can only be admired and applauded. Of course, most of the credit goes to the local organisers: the Department of Media and Communication Studies of the University of Ljubljana and especially to the Summer School local director, Ilija Tomanić Trivundža<sup>2</sup>, who made it all possible. Maja Turnšek Hančič, Sašo Slaček Brlek, Andreja Trdina, Dejan Jontes and Boris Mance also guaranteed the smoothness of the Summer School organisation, as was the case with the administration of the Faculty of Social Sciences.



Even this book illustrates the intensity of the ongoing collaborations, with its many contributors and editors<sup>3</sup>. Being produced within an almost impossible time frame, four months after the end of the Summer School, this book bears witness of the Summer School spirit, which every year creates a unique learning experience. For this, all involved are thanked (in many of the Summer School languages) for their intellectual investment and the (learning) pleasure they have generated: thanks to you all, merci pour vous tous, danke euch allen, bedankt aan iedereen, aitäh kõigile, paldies visiem, gracias a todos, gràcies a tots, tack till er alla, tak til jer alle, kiitos teille kaikille, grazie a tutti voi, kærar þakkir til ykkar allra, köszönöm mindnyájatoknak, takk til alle sammen, obrigado a todos, go raibh míle maith agaibh, shukran, ačiū jums, dziękuję bardzo Wam wszystkim, asante sana, hepinize teşekkürler, and najlepša hvala vsem.

## WEBSITES

The European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School

<http://www.comsummerschool.org/>

The Researching and Teaching Communication Book Series

<http://www.researchingcommunication.eu/>

The European Communication Research and Education Association

<http://www.ecrea.eu/>

The ECREA Young Scholars Network

<http://yecrea.eu/>

The Centre for Educational Programmes in Archimedes Foundation

<http://www.archimedes.ee/hkk/>

The University of Ljubljana

<http://www.uni-lj.si/en/>

The Faculty of Social Sciences

<http://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/>

The Slovene Communication Association

<http://www.kom-drustvo.si/>

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3 Also our thanks to our language editor, Kyrill Dissanayake, and designer, Vasja Lebarič, for their much appreciated work.



# PART ONE

## RESEARCH

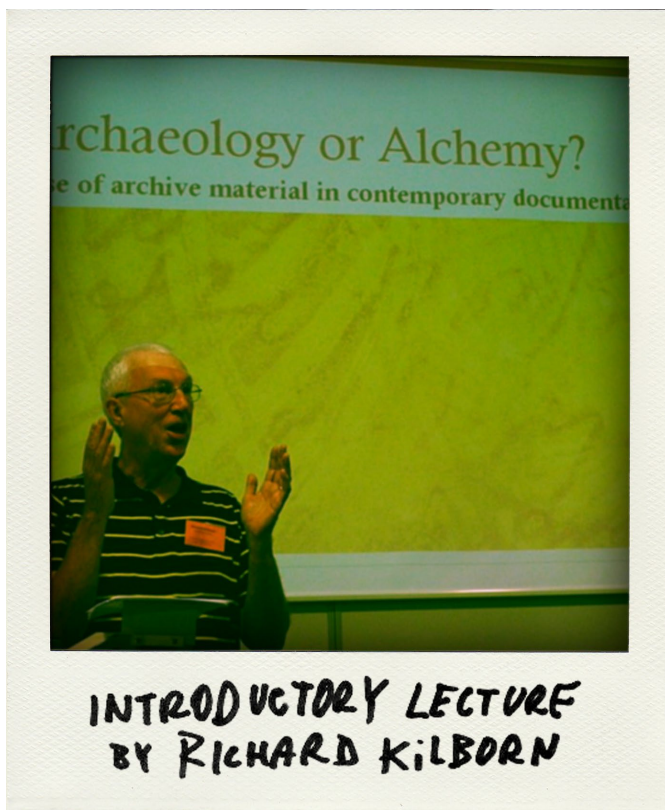


PHOTO: LEONARDO CUSTÓDIO



# SECTION ONE

## REFLECTIONS ON THE FIELD



STUDENT FEEDBACK  
WORKSHOP

PHOTO: EIRIK STAVELIN



# The future of communication studies: A contribution to the debate

Denis McQuail

These remarks do not express any preferred or fully worked out view of the future of communication studies, but are simply one personal perspective on a question that is often posed in response to the rapid expansion of the field in the last fifty years or so. The question reflects both the search for guidelines to follow and also doubts about the path of development that has been taken until now. Apart from that, it is natural for those engaged in a novel enterprise of this kind (construction of a field of study) to wonder about what they are doing, for what purpose and with what likely future course. My own view has been shaped by experience from within the field (in so far as there has been one), and during an earlier period when I played a limited and local part in its institutional development in Europe. This early experience, like those of my contemporaries, was without the benefit of any early education in the subject, since it did not exist. My own grounding was in history and sociology, arriving at the study of media effects as a practical task for investigation, amongst other possible social issues, applying a variety of established social science methods and approaches. At around that time there were signs that a separate discipline of communication might develop, based, for instance, on elements drawn from information theory, semiology, socio-linguistics, group dynamics and symbolic interactionism. However, nothing of an organised kind much emerged from this potential.

The question addressed makes certain assumptions, especially that there is a field that is now firmly established under the title of 'media and communication studies' (MCS), with a pre-history and an ongoing trajectory of development that can take more than one direction in the future - thus a present, past and future. To go further, it is necessary to say briefly what might be meant by the notion of a 'field of study'. Most essentially it is a set of institutionalised activities concerned with teaching, research and publication directed at some problem area or object. It is located within

the larger institutional context of education and research. A field in this sense is different from any one discipline and tends to be problem-centred, not theory-led. In this case the contributing disciplines have mainly been other social sciences and, later on, various branches of the humanities. This version of a field implies the existence of boundaries that are recognised and acknowledged, some sense of common identity amongst those engaged in the work and a degree of continuity and self-control. Beyond that, we should at least expect to find some core ideas or theories, some body of knowledge that is central to the field, some guiding purpose in respect of what has to be described or explained.

Most would agree that media and communication studies meets most of the criteria indicated for designation as a field. It is by now a normal component of many university programmes in many countries, a recipient of funding for research, with a large body of publications and its own associations and journals. Its main subject matter relates to all the activities and potential consequences of an expanding sphere of institutional activity in the wider society, especially in matters to do with public communication, media industries and many applications in related areas, such as public opinion, market research, public relations, advertising etc.. This entails attention to a wide spectrum of human behaviour and social organisation.

The field now plays a large (but not exclusive part) in providing training for media practitioners and also expert knowledge on many issues of public concern and policy relating to mass media, in particular those that arise within the larger society. These concerns have become more numerous, complex and insistent as communication has become more and more central to the working of modern societies and to the daily lives of citizens. Societies have since the late twentieth century been characterised in terms of 'information' or 'knowledge' societies, not only or even mainly because of media, but because of the development of computerisation and digitalisation of all forms of information. The production and flow of information for private and public purposes expands exponentially and the parameters and consequences of this explosion demand constant attention. There is a pressing need for ideas, concepts and methods of inquiry to cope with an unprecedented situation. The field of media and communication studies is not the only provider of assistance in the ways just mentioned. In respect of issues of public concern it should have a particular significance as an independent monitor and source of critical guidance and evidence, especially where powerful vested interests are involved. On the debit side, it could be said that, at least in some countries, the field has a lower status



than others within the academy and possibly in wider public perception. How well the field has performed in respect of meeting the imputed 'needs of society' for relevant knowledge is a matter for debate, returned to below. But the identity and scope of the field can undoubtedly be recognised in terms of the role outlined and we can more easily understand the trajectory of development up to this time from this perspective. The origins of the field lie in the early twentieth century and are closely linked to the invention of the new means of mass communication of press, film and radio. These in turn were linked to industrialisation and urbanisation and were caught up in the rise of mass political movements, and the use of propaganda in struggles for power between classes and nations. The beginnings of the field, even so, lie in social research rather than communication practice, and, in the absence of any dedicated field of study of communication, the task of examining the potential and effects of new mass media was taken on within existing fields, especially political science, social psychology and sociology. The initial focus was primarily on the actual, feared or intended effects of mass media. The motives for commissioning research were diverse, ranging from the self-interest of propagandists and authorities to the well-intentioned fears of self-appointed social guardians. Researchers themselves might seek to pursue knowledge of new phenomena for its own sake, but were rarely free to do so. Thus knowledge about communication was sought variously for the purposes of social criticism, public enlightenment and greater control. In varying degrees the activities were also linked to education for various communication professions and trades, such as journalism and public relations.

The result, initially at least, was a very fragmentary body of knowledge, gathered according to diverse concepts and perspectives, contained within other fields, and with little coherence. The single most unifying factor seemed to be the fact of *mass* communication as a key process, and the addition of television as a new medium with a seemingly enormous social and political potential in the middle of the century helped to concentrate attention. In fact, the 'field' in its early shadowy phase was not just fragmented, but seriously divided on fundamental issues. There were disciplinary disputes about theory and methods, especially within and between sociology and psychology, ideological disputes between critics of mass media as tools of oppression control; intellectual disputes between proponents of humanistic and literary approaches and proponents of quantitative and scientific ways of thinking and methods. There were also those who preferred to stay in the separate small worlds of scholarship that encompassed particular media or genres, such as film, newspapers, books or photography.

In the moment before the 'communications revolution' that began to be hailed by the last quarter of the century, there was no strong reason to expect that a unified or extensive field of communication studies such as now exists would emerge. Even now, it is not easy to find a general explanation, except as a matter of institutional convenience, at a time of rapid expansion of higher education in Europe, with an openness to new fields of study alongside the classic disciplines of the university and for the purposes of opening employment and economic opportunities. But this does not explain why communication studies, and one version at that, should be especially favoured, unless we look at larger changes in society, broadly conceived. The early, 'fragmented', field as described above was itself a response to what was going on in the 'real world' in respect of an expanding and increasingly salient and global sphere of public communication. It provided some means at least for society to make sense of what was going on in a rational and systematic way, drawing on the established roots of inquiry into mass media. In fact, most of the basic concepts, theories and methods that are now deployed by so many researchers were already developed at this point in time (c. 1980), even if since then many aspects of the media have changed significantly. So it really does seem as if the impending changes brought about by 'informatisation' played a determining role. These changes were associated with technological developments in telecommunications and computerisation and proved to be of a much more fundamental and far-reaching kind than those linked to the coming of any new medium, such as television, perhaps comparable only with the coming of printing in the fifteenth century. They were associated with changes in the nature of economic activities (post-industrial society) and the structure of social relations at every level from the interpersonal to the global. Just as important is the fact that the implications of change (albeit not fully known) will almost certainly have direct relevance for the exercise of power - political, military and economic - in national and international arenas.

So far this has been a very brief history, but set down as a potential guide to answering the question of where we go from here. First there is more to be said about where we are now and about the nature of the 'field'. No consensus version can be offered, not only because of the many variant forms, resulting from different national traditions and historical circumstances (see McQuail, 2009). My own version imagines a structure of the following kind. There is a core set of communication processes that are open to description, analysis and theorising. These processes relate primarily to the creation, diffusion, exchange and reception of all kinds of

knowledge/information that occupies the notional space in which social actors (individual and collective) act, providing clues about the 'reality' of perceived events and circumstances, plus guidance, motivation, feedback, etc. This core should take care of the discovery and validation of evidence about these processes. Central here in one conception or another is an idea of 'mediation', according to which the relations and actions of all social actors are in some way influenced by their symbolic environment. All manner of communications and media contribute to the processes indicated, from personal conversation to global internet flows. A central issue concerns the part played by all forms of media in acting as 'gatekeepers' to all forms of content, thus governing what is more or less visible, audible and 'certified' as in some sense valid or true. The structure and organisation of total communication content and flow can be described in different ways, but a key dimension for communication studies is the division between public and private spaces of communication.

Around this notional core (or idea of a core) can be envisaged a set of more specific topics or areas in which questions for research or inquiry arise. Most of these have conventional names and are easily identifiable and understood. They identify spheres of application of knowledge 'managed' by communication and media studies. Identifiable in this way, for instance, are: politics and public sphere matters; policy, law and regulation of media; questions of identity and collective memory; ideology and belief systems; public information and news; advertising, public relations and propaganda. The list might be a long one, but the category of sub-field should be clear. It may also be appropriate to group together and apart all applications of communication study that have to do directly with the operation of all media institutions and industry, in respect of structure, training, roles, intelligence, intrinsic characteristics, history and much else.

The 'central core' of the Media and Communication Studies (MCS) field in this view should not be much affected in the short to medium term by ongoing changes in media technology or systems or in particular real-world circumstances, but rather influenced by ideas and theories, existing or to be developed. Admittedly, most of the ideas pertaining to the core of the field as I have sketched out seem to relate to issues of potentially collective knowledge and public communication. However, this version is not closed to other contexts of communication and other key issue formulations (e.g. concerning interpersonal relations).

With these materials to hand we can at least approach the larger question

of future development in a more or less systematic manner. We might first revisit the question of the coherence or viability of a field that seems to have been rather accidentally put together in the last generation or so, in response to institutional need and circumstances rather than intellectual advance. A number of criticisms are heard, not always from disinterested sources. One proposition is that the field is still too biased towards *mass* communication, when the direction of communication change is towards 'demassified forms' and the original motive for attention to mass media has thus much diminished. It is true that the field was largely put together by people whose experience and ideas were shaped by mass phenomena. A newer generation brought up on a 'new media' environment might do things differently. Alternatively, a totally new reshaping of media and communication systems might render the accumulated thinking and evidence of the field obsolete. Second, it has often been regretted that the socially problematic issues of communication were not left to be handled within other disciplines, with more fundamental theoretical perspectives. It is certainly true that many of the key ideas deployed within MCS have their origins elsewhere. However, despite the evident value of other perspectives, the current reality is that a new complex of ideas has been generated and interrelated within MCS, with a large published literature specific to the field. It is not easy for researchers in other disciplines to be fully acquainted with this body of more specialised work. Third, complaints, mainly from within the field, say that it risks being captured by the institutions it studies and services and has lost the potential for fundamental criticism of communication trends in society. In this case it would be unable to fulfil the role of independent monitor and critic on behalf of society as mentioned above, and would also lose its independence as a science.

There is some justification for each critical view, although any such large and diverse enterprise is bound to be vulnerable to criticism and alternative choices. A short response would be to argue there is no discontinuity between mass communication and the multiplying new forms. The 'original discipline' model limits our capacity to handle communication phenomena within an established frame of attention and, most especially cannot provide an integrated approach across the frontiers of each disciplinary territory. The risk of institutional 'capture' is real but not obviously greater than if left to some other model of inquiry. The essential questions, however, are whether the imperfect field of MCS is likely to survive in its present form and what sort of alternative might be around in a generation from now. It is impossible to provide an objective evaluation of the achievements of the field in its present form, so one is confined to speculation.

My own judgment is that 'the field' has not failed and has not become obsolete. It is still slow and patchy in delivering answers to pressing questions, but is steadily increasing its capacity to formulate and investigate significant questions. It is better at formulating than at testing hypotheses, but that goes with its widening of attention to new matters. In particular, there is no evidence of any systematic avoidance of critical thinking or attention to issues that are sensitive for economic and political power, although the process of institutionalisation and 'normalisation' has probably and inevitably altered the balance between critical and 'administrative' theory and research in favour of the latter. Even so, much of the evidence produced supports critical views from within and outside the field, on social political issues of significance relating to the media. If there are obstacles to tackling controversial objectives and adopting unpopular or deviant perspectives, the causes lie in the surrounding context, not the field of communication studies.

The main reason for supposing that development along the current trajectory is likely to continue in much the same way derives from my own belief that the forces which stimulated and shaped the field originally are still at work and in much the same way. The transition of societal form and of the general structure of communication processes currently under way has hardly begun but is likely to be profound, albeit with uncertain outcomes and implications. The forces shaping change remain those of national and international economic and political power, with familiar imbalances and conflicts, with continuing adjustments and shifts. There is a strong case for believing that media and communication are increasingly central to the exercise of power of all kinds at all levels -political, economic, geopolitical and cultural.

By now, as a purely pragmatic observation, the field of MCS is probably best placed relative to other fields or single disciplines to recognise, assess and chart change on the widest front. Its core ideas and point of focus have been developed to recognise as well as react to changes of the most relevant kind for society at all levels. It has the benefit of providing a meeting point for diverse disciplinary and theoretical paradigms, theories and methods, having largely outgrown the phase of interdisciplinary rivalry. It is a field that attracts large numbers of young and talented researchers, attracted by its subject matter and the sense of being at a new frontier of inquiry. It has a strong international and cross-cultural reach, as befitting the main subject matter of study. Established disciplines may be better placed to deal with certain specific topics within the remit of the field in a

more fundamental way, but it is hard to see that any one discipline could take on the overall task without becoming transformed gradually into what we already have. There is no good reason for starting out again on the same search for a more suitable branch of study.

There are, of course, limitations and failures. The field has not managed to produce a coherent core of communication theory of its own, as opposed to an extensive but unorganised body of tested general propositions about many aspects of communication process and effects. Earlier efforts in this direction in the mid-twentieth century failed to produce any agreed corpus of ideas (or even a shared definition of communication), despite many interesting attempts, and it is probably too late to achieve anything of this kind, without the benefit of some towering intellectual figure of the kind that the academic system no longer really favours or fosters. As noted earlier, the field still relies on research designs and methods largely developed in the social sciences during the twentieth century and deployed in mass communication research, both quantitative and qualitative. This does not invalidate them, but there is less innovation than could be expected and little progress in dealing with a number of intractable problems that are in part responsible for the seemingly inconclusive outcome of a good deal of communication research, aside from matters of description.

An example of limitation is the tendency to fall back on text-based methods and models and the very limited ability to apply systematic analysis to visual and multimedia content and experiences. The problems are both conceptual and methodological. Many such difficulties may be inherent in the subject matter of the field, but we cannot escape from the fact that the accelerating transition from old to new media forms of production and reception of communication is a major intellectual challenge. There is a need for better 'medium theory' to cope with the range of new communication forms and for more fundamental research and theory if the field is to prosper. Perhaps it is time to revisit the roots of an incipient 'communication science' of earlier days and see what can be done to encourage fresh shoots. In the absence of this unlikely event, we can look to a more fruitful collaboration and cross-fertilisation of approaches, as witnessed between the social sciences and the humanities. There is still some resistance and suspicion on both sides, despite a general advance in the right direction. The view of the future of MCS offered here is positive and even optimistic, although it may not offer any inspiring vision nor be very helpful in recommending specific directions that need to be followed. There are simply too many possibilities and avenues of inquiry to be followed, well re-

flected in miniature in the wide range of projects presented at the Summer School in this and preceding years. Any of these may bear fruit in ways that are hard to predict in advance. Taken together the projects display a good deal of creativity, individuality, personal commitment and intelligence. The topics convey a sense of immediacy and relevance, not only to broad issues of power and social change but also to many local and seemingly transient concerns. It is to the credit of the field that it can encompass such a wide range of concerns and ideas within a shared framework of understanding, despite the obstacles mentioned above. At this point in time it is difficult to say much more about the future. Ultimately our object of study – human communication – is too extensive, complex and undetermined to fit into any single frame or programme of study.

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# Researching 'mediatised worlds': Non-mediacentric media and communication research as a challenge

Andreas Hepp

## 1. A PROBLEM: THE MEDIATION OF EVERYTHING

This chapter addresses both a theoretical as well as a practical problem in present media and communication research, namely 'the mediation of everything', as outlined by Sonia Livingstone<sup>1</sup>. While for a long time, within media and communication studies, the question of the 'effect' or 'influence' of media on other social spheres was dominant in all debates, we increasingly find research implying a general mediation of the social through technical media. As Livingstone (2009: 2) puts it:

*It seems that we have moved from a social analysis in which the mass media comprise one among many influential but independent institutions whose relations with the media can be usefully analysed to a social analysis in which everything is mediated, the consequence being that all influential institutions in society have themselves been transformed, reconstituted, by contemporary processes of mediation.*

As a consequence of this shift in approach, media and communication studies are confronted with a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, they gain an increasing relevance as questions of media communication are part of researching (nearly) 'everything'. On the other hand, they lose their specificity if their focus is no longer on mass communication as a separate field but rather on the 'mediation of everything'.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter was inspired by a long running discussion with Nick Couldry and Shaun Moores on the project of developing a 'non-mediacentric approach' within media and communication studies. I would like to thank both of them for the contributions they made on various occasions.

Within this context I will develop a threefold reflection and by this reformulate the thesis of the 'mediation of everything'. My fundamental argument is that the concept of mediatisation offers a promising integrative perspective to research the 'mediation of everything'. However, *as* we are confronted with what one might call 'mediatised worlds' it becomes necessary to develop a research perspective that investigates the construction of the 'centrality' of 'the media', or in other words non-mediacentric media and communication research. Finally, I will conclude with three more practical points relating to what might be relevant for such an approach. In so doing I would like to contribute to the current discussions about 'mediacentrism' within media and communication research, which goes back to reflections on the 'mediating' aspects of technology-based communication (cf. Martín-Barbero, 1993; Silverstone 1994). My main argument is that the multiple ways in which media and communication research needs to embrace a fundamentally non-mediacentric approach has to be differentiated, i.e. a non-mediacentric approach calls for a 'transmedial', 'dialectical' and 'culturally sensitive' kind of research.

## 2. 'MEDIATISED WORLDS': THE MOULDING FORCES OF THE MEDIA

When theorising 'mediatisation', a useful starting point is the conceptualisation put forward by Friedrich Krotz (2008). He conceptualises mediatisation – just as individualisation, globalisation and commercialisation – as 'meta processes'. A meta process is not an empirical process in the sense that we can investigate it, like – for example – a certain discourse or a person crossing the street. Meta processes are superior theoretical approaches to describing long-term processes of change. So a 'meta process' cannot be researched empirically as a single transformation phenomenon. Only the formulation of theories that account for such 'meta processes' allows us to structure the complexity of different empirical data in order to gain a deeper understanding of ongoing (long-term) processes of change. In this sense, Krotz (2008: 23) defines mediatisation as follows:

*By mediatization we mean the historical developments that took and take place as a result of change in (communication) media and the consequences of those changes. If we consider the history of communication through music, or the art of writing, we can describe the history of human beings as a history of newly emerging media and at the same time changing forms of communication. The new media do not, in general, substitute for one another [...].*

As such, mediatisation articulates the process of an increasing diffusion of technical communication media in different social and cultural spheres. In such a non-specific understanding, mediatisation is certainly related to the so-called medium theory, which distinguishes between oral cultures, scribal cultures, modern print cultures and current globalised electronic cultures (Meyrowitz, 1995; Schofield and Clark, 2009). Without discussing these debates relating to medium theory in much detail, they refer to the idea of an increasing mediatisation as not just a linear process of change but as a process with certain tipping points; the specificity of certain media is related to the specificity of a certain cultural change.

While this conceptualisation is an important starting point for an understanding of mediatisation in general, it is necessary to theorise the relation of media change and further processes of change in a more complex manner than medium theory does. This is precisely what a theory of mediatisation introduces. Mediatisation adopts the central idea of medium theory, namely that 'media change' and 'cultural change' are interrelated, but tries to capture this not merely from the perspective of the relation *from* media *to* cultural change. To be able to do this, two interrelated aspects of mediatisation need to be acknowledged, a quantitative one and a qualitative one.

Put simply, the quantitative aspects of mediatisation are marked by the word 'more'. Basically, it is obvious that throughout history the basic number of technological media available to us has increased, as have our different uses of these media. As such, mediatisation from this perspective should be understood as an ongoing process of increasing media and communication tools with (a) temporal, (b) spatial and (c) social dimensions (cf. Krotz, 2007).

On the temporal level, an increasing number of technological media are becoming ever more accessible for more people on a continuous basis. Currently, television, for example, has no closedown period anymore, but is an ongoing, never-ending flow of technologically mediated communication. The internet makes it possible to surf all the time, and so on.

On the spatial level, media are more and more accessible across different localities. The telephone, for example, is no longer a media technology related to a certain place of communication, either the office, private home or public telephone box. Personalised mobile communication is available across virtually all spaces. The same can be said for television, which has

again left the domain of the private home through the phenomenon of 'public viewing' (cf. Hartmann, 2008).

These examples inherently implicate the social level of mediatisation, which refers to more and more social contexts being marked by media use. Computer use, for example, is no longer something that is confined to the work context, it stretches over the very different social spheres of the private and public, work time and spare time, and so on.

Taking these three dimensions of the quantitative perspective on mediatisation together, it becomes apparent that this perspective encompasses more than a linear process of increase. With the increase of different media in general, we have a synergetic process that stimulates mediatisation additionally, for example in the way cross-media content production is more and more characterised by mediated communication. The quantitative perspective makes it obvious that we are confronted with a long-standing process of increasing media and communication technologies and usages which inevitably also implies a qualitative change.

As such, the qualitative aspects of mediatisation – how the spread of certain media is related to the specificity of cultural change – need to be considered as well. In a nutshell, these qualitative aspects of mediatisation focus on the crucial questions of how technological media 'structure' the way we communicate, how the way we communicate via media is reflected in technological change.

This consideration refers to Raymond Williams, who has argued that media are at the same time both 'technology and cultural form' (Williams, 1990). Technology refers to material procedures and formations that are used in acting – in our case: in communicating – to increase the possibilities of acting (Rammert, 2007: 17). In this sense, "*media of communication*" signifies "*technological systems with a certain functionality and potential for the spreading of information*" (Kubicek, 1997: 220) such as print. The expression 'media technological change' refers, then, to the change of these technological systems, which has gained a dynamic impulse by means of digitalisation (and the related miniaturisation) in recent decades. Thus, we can say that the qualitative aspect of mediatisation also focuses on the material character of media technological change, in the sense that media technologies have a 'materialised specificity', based on communicative actions and practices, but which at the same time also structures these communicative actions and practices (Gumbrecht and Pfeiffer, 1994).

What can be observed here is something I have called the 'moulding forces' of the media (cf. Hepp, 2009); media themselves exert a certain 'pressure' on the way we communicate. Television, for example, has the pressure to present ideas in a more linear mode and with a suitable visual presentation. Print, to take another example, makes it possible to develop more complex argumentation as it can be read more slowly and offers scope for complex ways of structuring text. And the mobile phone, as a last example, makes it possible to stay in ongoing communicative connectivity with a group of people while being on the move – and exerts a certain pressure to do this. All these examples, however, also illustrate that this is not a direct effect of the material structure of the media, but something that only becomes concrete in different ways of mediation – by certain forms of communication. As present forms of symbolic action increasingly integrate technological media, 'communicative change' and 'media change' together form mediatisation as a qualitative change that cannot be reduced to each other by arguing that one would determine the other.

Having said this, the concept of the 'moulding forces' of the media is based on the idea that there are different specificities of different media that we have to take into account while researching change. However, these specificities of different media are produced in human acting and without indicating 'one trajectory' or 'logic' of the media. We should thus not just focus on effects but also on the specificity of different media in multi-level transformative processes.

Relating this back to the social phenomenology formulated by Schütz and Luckmann (1989) and their concept of 'everyday life-world', we can say that the present 'life-worlds' are highly mediatised. In this sense we can speak of 'mediatised worlds' (see <http://www.mediatisedworlds.net>). The concept of mediatised worlds points to the fact that the articulation of meaning in an everyday life-world is unquestionably interwoven with processes of media communication. Within mediatised worlds the moulding forces of the media are a constitutive part of their social construction. This cannot, however, be equated with the idea that in a 'mediatised world' everything is communicated by technical media.

### 3. NON-MEDIACENTRISM: DECENTRING AND CONTEXTUALISING MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

While we see an increasing mediatisation of the everyday through media, David Morley recently reminded us to be careful of overestimating the centrality of the media in an unreflected way. In his latest book *Media, Modernity and Technology* (Morley, 2007) and in a separate article (Morley, 2009) he argues for an approach he calls 'non-mediacentric media studies', which he outlines as follows:

*Clearly enough, in the present context, we have to move beyond media studies' historically rather exclusive focus on television so as to also address the contemporary significance of a broader range of communication technologies. However, [...] we need to 'decentre' the media, in our analytical framework, so as to better understand the ways in which media processes and everyday life are interwoven with each other. [...] The key issue here, to put it paradoxically, is how we can generate a non-mediacentric form of media studies, how to understand the variety of ways in which new and old media accommodate to each other and coexist in symbiotic forms and also how to better grasp how we live with them as parts of our personal or household 'media ensemble' (Morley, 2007: 200).*

Within this quote Morley shares the argument outlined above, namely that the changes in media and communication over the last few decades also have implications for our understanding of media and communication studies. The idea that this discipline can focus exclusively on a single medium becomes more and more problematic when the internet makes it possible to distribute very different forms of 'media' along one technical infrastructure that transgresses into more and more aspects of everyday life. In this regard, media and communication research has to focus on what Morley calls whole 'media ensembles'. In other words, they have to develop a transmedial point of view. This transmedial perspective, however, should be at the same time non-mediacentric, it should 'decentre' as well as 'contextualise' the media.

In terms of decentring the media, the concept of the 'mediated centre' is particularly helpful (Couldry, 2003: 45). The mediated centre helps us to understand what the centring forces of the media are. In many ways, the mediated centre represents the myth that the media (as an acronym for the totality of mass media) offer a privileged access point to the centre of a society: 'the media' communicate what is 'going on' within a society and in the world (cf. also Couldry, 2006). This allows an understanding of

what 'media rituals' are – the different forms within a society by which the construction of the mediated centre takes place and by which the 'centrality' of the media is confirmed. So 'decentring the media' basically means: *analysing the process by which the media are constructed as central in present societies.*

However, the main problem in the context of mediatisation is that the concept of the mediated centre is mainly linked to an older approach in media and communication studies, i.e. not researching the present mediatised environment but the traditional mass media being 'centred' on a certain 'sender'. In an increasingly mediatised society, symbolised by a saturation of technical media enabling personal communication, the traditional mass media lose their dominant position. Therefore the construction of the mediated centre is also weakened. Nick Couldry (2009: 444f) himself recently addressed this, when he argued that *"instead of interpersonal media becoming divorced from centrally produced media flows and offering an alternative social 'centre' to that offered by the media, it is more likely that 'social' media and centrally produced media become ever more closely linked"*. The so-called social media of Web 2.0 are increasingly linked to 'traditional' mass media (and their digitalised descendants). For example, Wikipedia has become well known through articles in journals or newspapers, Facebook is used for marketing traditional media content, online discussions are distributed by television etc. It could therefore be argued that internet-based media do not necessarily work *against* the articulation of a 'mediated centre'. As Couldry (2009: 447) puts it: *"Instead of collapsing, 'the media' will become a site of a struggle for competing forces: market-based fragmentation vs continued pressures of centralization that draw on new media-related myths and rituals"*.

Nevertheless, it remains relevant to extend the concept of the mediated centre in the context of current processes of mediatisation. In a sense, an 'everyday mediacentrism' which constructs access to and usage of digital media as essential can also be observed. An example of this is what we might call a 'mobile phone centrism', meaning not only that the possession of a mobile phone is expected but also that one is in principle subsequently reachable anytime and everywhere. If someone resists this, she or he has to explicitly argue for such a position. Here we see smaller forms of media centrism at work, but again linking mass media discourses (for example: advertising) with everyday discourses (for example: communicating the expectation that friends and partners are always reachable).

Therefore, 'decentrism' means two things. On the one hand, it is the analysis of processes through which the possession and use of certain media are



constructed as central (that is, as important) in everyday life. On the other hand, it calls for more research of the processes through which media in their various forms are constructed as the main interfaces to the 'core resources' of a society. Very often, both come together, but not necessarily. As already mentioned, however, such research also has to be based on the attempt to contextualise 'the media'. As the discussion of the concept of mediatisation has already exposed, it makes no sense to conceptualise 'the media' as a somewhat unique force with a single logic, an appraisal that is additionally valuable in relation to a critique of the myth of 'the media' as the centre of society. In our research we are not confronted with a unique thing we might call 'the media'. Rather we are confronted with various different forms of technically mediated communication that always take place in their specific context. While there have been various stimulating reflections on such a contextualised form of media and communication research over the past quarter of a century (cf. for example Lull, 1987; Morley and Silverstone, 1991; Schröder, 1994; Ang, 1996), there is, however, one caveat. Contextualising the media in relation to non-media-centric media and communication research might also lead us to conclude that media are far less central than one might have expected at the beginning of this research. To explain this, two empirical studies focusing on 'media and migration' are highly relevant (Moores and Metykova, 2010; Hepp, et al., 2011).

Digital media, especially the internet, are often deemed to be at the core of present diasporas (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Everett, 2009). However, our own research on the communicative connectivity of the Moroccan, Turkish and Russian migrant communities in Germany points to a more balanced view (cf. Hepp et al., 2011). Media are also relevant for migrants to connect translocally. In this respect, internet-based media are increasingly appropriated in other ways through 'small media' (Dayan, 1999) – video, letters, telephone etc. – that enable personalised links within the migrant community and access to 'origin media'. Present migrants can thus be described as 'mediatised migrants': their life-worlds are 'mediatised worlds', which indicates that the present articulation of the status of 'being migrant' cannot be thought of beyond the media. This does not, however, mean that we can speak of a 'digital diaspora'. Through our contextualised qualitative research, including interviews, observations and network analyses, the co-articulation of a cultural migrant identity and communicative networking, which implies that a certain migrant identity does not have any particular communicative connectivity as an 'outcome', becomes apparent. Or vice versa, the communicative networking does not have the



'effect' of a specific cultural identity. Rather, the interrelation between cultural identity and communicative connectivity is exposed as a co-articulation in which the two are mutually reinforcing. And within these processes of co-articulation, *different* media of personal communication (telephone, mobile phone, e-mail, social web) and the media of mass communication (television, newspaper, WWW) go hand in hand with each specific 'moulding force'.

Contextualising the media might even go further, as outlined by Shaun Moores and Monika Metykova (2010). Based on qualitative interviews, they researched the environmental experiences of trans-European migrants. In their phenomenology they typified four fundamental environmental experiences. First, the initial experiences on arrival; second, the emerging senses of place; third, dealing with previously taken-for-granted experiences; and finally transportation and communication links. Without going into too much detail, just this very brief overview of their main analytical framework demonstrates a further contextualising of 'the media' as practices of place-making – media are only relevant for *one* form of environmental experiences. That is, Moores and Metykova (2010: 185) show that media offer migrants the opportunity to establish "*communication links [that] are stitched into day-to-day or week-to-week routines*". However, these links have their limits, as the first and main problem in migrant place-making is to handle the new physical surroundings.

#### 4. PERSPECTIVES: RESEARCHING MEDIATISATION IN A NON-MEDIA-CENTRIC WAY

Up to this point, two core arguments have been developed. First, if we consider the present media change, the concept of mediatisation seems to be a helpful starting point for empirical research, as long as this concept is not reduced to a certain idea of 'one media logic'. Second, if we understand our present 'life-worlds' as 'mediatised worlds', that is as being irreversibly interrelated with processes of media and communication, a non-mediacentric approach becomes very fruitful. But what might this mean practically? Reflecting on this question, there are three points I want to highlight:

1. *Transmediality of research*: If one accepts increasing mediatisation as one of the main present 'meta processes' of change, we can only capture this if we focus not on one medium but on 'media environ-

ments' or 'media ensembles' of an individual or a collective. Only by comparing the appropriation of different media in a cultural field can we obtain an idea of the 'moulding forces' specific media have or do not have.

2. *Dialectic of research*: When focusing on the different 'moulding forces' in a certain cultural field, we should do this in a dialectic way. This implies not approaching the media from the outset as the main force, but rather reflecting how processes of media change are related (or not related) to other processes of change. The decentring and contextualising moments of a non-mediacentric media and communication research are of particular importance here.
3. *Cultural sensitivity of research*: Such an approach is inevitably highly culturally sensitive. The cultural patterns of 'practice', 'discourse' and 'thinking' in the different context fields have to be acknowledged in order to capture the relevance (or irrelevance) of media in them. So any typology or generalisation should from the outset be the result of a grounded research process, and not a theoretical deduction.

In a nutshell, one might say that one of the main challenges of researching current 'mediatised worlds' is to investigate the everyday articulation of the relevance of media and communication without assuming this from the outset.

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# Listening to the sound of radio: Applying an auditory perspective to media and communication studies

Heiner Stahl

## 1. INTRODUCTION

When studying audiovisual sources, sound is everywhere. It is an essential aspect of media, of media products and their consumption. When watching films, news, soap operas or commercials, voices, tunes and melodies are guiding the audience and directing its attention to the content. While listening to music broadcasts, live concerts or music recordings, audibility and sound invite appropriation and consumption. The sensory regime exchanges visual and sonic information.

Looking into media products and the modes of their production, presentation and distribution, a distinction between visual, textual and auditory layers can be made. With respect to sound, a shift of perspective is necessary in order to detect additional lines of interpretation. In the field of media and communication studies, an approach concentrating on sound is as yet rarely chosen. The acoustic design of contemporary TV programmes becomes increasingly important. In terms of studying radio broadcasting music, voices and sound are so obviously part of the object of interest that it is rather surprising that researchers are not more interested in using sound to contextualise their stories.

This article will present some reflections on how to cope with sound, the sonic aura of broadcasts and auditory experience as dimensions of reading audiovisual sources. Looking into the organisation of broadcasters from this perspective provides supplementary insights into the historical and contemporary development of programmes as media products. It also informs us of what kind of processes of cultural transfer do actually take place, and what sort of cultural material is included and excluded from being transmitted and distributed.

Arjun Appadurai has introduced the term *mediascape* (2000: 33) to understand media as a landscape of competing sets of meaning, symbols, icons, images and language. Broadcasters are striving to preserve narratives and references provided by the visual and acoustic information of their content. An individual who consumes media might intentionally transform the content, adding different rituals and resources of imagination (Appadurai, 2000: 7). Appropriating the sound of radio means transforming its content by individual consumption. There is a potential for self-empowerment by using self-trained media competencies. This perspective helps to localise different settings and arenas within media. We are able to discover sound, noise and sonic environments as stored information and knowledge about the ways media products have been created, launched, transmitted and distributed.

A *soundscape* (Schafer, 1973) consists of acoustic events that mark the social, natural and technical conditions of an environment. Where sounds need to be amplified in order to be recognised, Schafer defines a 'lo-fi' soundscape (1973: 23). In a pre-industrial setting he presumes a 'hi-fi'-constellation. Applying Schafer's concept to analyse the audible dimension of broadcasting leads to an increasing acoustic awareness. Keeping this distinction in mind might help us in developing a broader understanding of the capacity of music, sound and vocal presentations in creating and sustaining narratives in broadcasting (see Lacey, 1996; Badenoch, 2007).

Referring to my PhD project on broadcasts targeting young audiences in 1960s Berlin (Stahl, 2010), I am tackling the challenges of working in broadcasting archives in order to consolidate the advantages that the auditory perspective can actually offer. The first point to keep in mind is that broadcasting archives are very disorganised institutions. The second aspect is the problem of securing access to the collections that are actually available. What radio and television do is that they historicise events when they are occurring and are being reported, and in this they display elements to structure our collective memorisation. This historical awareness in terms of broadcasting practices is not, however, linked to a conscious strategy to preserve and stock media products. This is the case in many countries that do not apply a comprehensive strategy to preserving audiovisual broadcasts and providing free public access. Information is a resource of knowledge that is just transmitted in the programme. Dealing lavishly with audiovisual material can destroy the traces of how our current media society has actually emerged and developed.



## 2. THE VISUAL SENSE DOMINATES THE AUDITORY SENSE

We do not talk about listening to films or TV programmes, but about watching them. Is this because of the prominence of the visual sense in contrast to the audible sense, to audition as a cultural practice? Certainly television formats are following a specific grammar. The camera angles, the selection of the takes, the cutting of statements, the anchormen/women's haircut and dress and the techniques of interviewing are aspects of reading pictures and images as texts. Radio plays, for their part, have their plots, in which multiple layers of aesthetic, cultural and social references and narratives are interwoven. Background sounds, voice and speech are its filaments (Segeberg, 2005: 10).

In a paper-printed lecture from a prominent scholar, repetition does help the audience understand the key arguments. But when listening to the lecture on the radio, the author's voice induces a different meaning to the same textual source. Is the meaning of a text more true when we read it or will we detect the same set of references, or maybe different ones, when listening to it? This is certainly a crucial question. The tone and inflection of speech might be boring and annoying, the voice cannot transport content, and the sound of the talk might be surrounded by deep drags on cigarettes or of papers being turned noisily. The grammar of such a lecture can significantly change its meaning. Hopefully those talks have been accurately recorded at the time, and are now available in the stocks of a broadcasting station's archive. Those recordings help us to reconfigure the plasticity of the production process. When focusing on voices, the ways artists, scholars or politicians speak, the suggestive power of audibility comes into play. When interviewing eyewitnesses of incidents live at the scene, sound imbues our notions of authenticity and newsworthiness.

Voice, speech and word diction are important aspects of framing sound in terms of a politically inspired perspective on media and communication. From this angle, music broadcasts are just somehow there within a programme, but not relevant enough to be taken consciously into the scope. If we recognise that the sound identity of a broadcasting station is the temporary result of selecting 'good' from 'bad' music, music policies are getting much more relevant. They can be analysed as overlapping spheres or arenas, in which the aesthetic and cultural tensions between classical music broadcasts, easy listening music and pop music charts are negotiated.

How should we examine such negotiations? Given that the playlists or correspondences between the broadcast station and the Composer Association regarding royalties are still available to study, these materials would certainly help. Other sources are compiled overviews of concerts and shows that are due to be scheduled for broadcast.

When comparing music policies and the negotiations of 'good sound' in two competing media systems, it is important to consider some critical questions in advance:

1. What kind of institutions and agents influence the settings of musical production?
2. In what sort of media environment does the musical production take place?
3. What means of politicising the cultural sphere are dominant? What other possible practices are contesting the existing notion of 'good' and 'bad' music?

I faced this problem myself when carrying out my doctoral project on Cold War broadcasting in East and West Berlin in the 1960s. Writing the entangled and border-crossing history of youth radio programmes in Germany, I became interested in the process of arranging broadcasts targeting an adolescent audience and started to examine what role music and sound did play in this respect. A second major area of the study was to explore the modes of listening to and consuming those media products.

As broadcasters did not conveniently apply audience research at that time, institutional knowledge was rather poor in terms of actually flagging target groups. For media people in the 1960s, 'reaching listeners' with a comprehensive programme in order to 'educate everybody' was much more important than clearly focusing on specific tastes and expectations. At least during that decade, the attitude of broadcast editors to their audience resembled a 'black box'. And as monthly and annual audience research data from that time is lacking, and the intervals between such studies were quite long, evidentially the empirical ground is weak and less reliable than it is supposed to be.

In order to conduct this kind of research I would opt for a three-step approach. At first, it is recommended to find out whether the broadcasts were actually recorded and if they are still available in the archive of the station. At best, several broadcasts have been recorded per year, and if

not, examining the recordings that are there for a certain period is another way of approaching the object of interest. The interplay between the host's voice, the pieces of music and the additional information provides insight into the flow of the programme. If this flow changes over time, the differences can be mapped out to get a better understanding of how the broadcasts were defined and reformulated later. This would be the easiest way to describe the *sound identity* of a programme. Using lists of the music played in the time slot is an additional way of broadening the empirical basis of the programme's auditory aesthetic. By choosing a sample of interval lists, we can store information about what kind of music was fashionable then and later became less interesting.

The second step is to mark the *audibility* of a programme by looking into the written accounts of listeners corresponding with the editorial board of the broadcast. Uncovering the rhetoric strategies of the audience (Larkey, 2007) when requesting music is highly challenging but worthwhile, because they display various discourses concerning the relevance of the music to the target audience. As the station's music department was only partially responsible for the selection of music for broadcast, correspondence between the relevant departments is valuable. When discussions concerning music became heated, the head of programming was officially engaged as a conciliator and an arbiter. In one instance the managing director of a broadcasting station was dealing with musical issues when a member of the broadcasting council complained about the decline in musical taste and required an evaluation or a more restrictive handling of music as a part of the station's corporate identity. In another example, the broadcast editors did not deny making allegations about the audible indecency of a rival broadcast which gets a more convenient time slot or more money to produce a programme.

Examining the *music policies* of a broadcasting station is the third step in framing the negotiation of sound. The music department has already been mentioned as an important player. The existing divisions between classical, entertainment and pop music were deep. As the music department centrally managed the broadcasters' classical and dance orchestras, including their rehearsal facilities, and also kept firm control over the recording slots in the studios, the music branch was rather independent in deciding what piece of music was worth recording. As long as broadcasters produced music in their own studios, the branch kept a crucial gate-keeping position.

There was, however, a reaction against the music department and its desire to consolidate a coherent policy in terms of musical styles, when the first generation of radio DJs started playing vinyl records weeks before the music was actually available on the market. As record labels endorsed the hosts directly, and the music department was efficiently bypassed, comprehensive station strategies lost ground against a more individual, DJ-driven aesthetic of sound and the possible combinations of soul, country, beat and rock music. Applicable music serves as a key frame for studying the use of music in broadcasts.

Negotiating music policies in socialist broadcasting was always linked to the current interpretation of the cultural policy of the Party. In the case of East Germany, it was connected to direct competition in a border-crossing unilingual mediascape. Complying with the expectations of the Party's cultural functionaries constituted one pole, and competing western public broadcasting was the opposite pole. Tensions characterise the setting of socialist music policy. Preserving cultural dominance, extending influence into programming and developing appropriate musical tastes can be marked out as the main areas in this respect that need to be considered.

Looking into the dynamics of sound in radio plays (Birdsall and Enns, 2008) provides an insight into the creative dimension of working with insufficient means of production, and of getting the most out of the existing studio and recording technology.

In terms of communicating politics in broadcasts, the auditory experience of listening to statements made by politicians or journalists reporting incidents is worth reconsidering. In what ways do the sound of words and the acoustic environment at scenes figure in creating notions of authenticity and relevance? Word diction and the sonic layers of reporting are domains that introduce an additional spin. Knowledge gained from examining the visual presence of people and places can be extended by shifting the scope to sounds filling the acoustic space (Carpenter and McLuhan, 1960). Studying the acoustic and vocal presentation of news and information helps decoding e.g. propaganda strategies during hot and cold wars. Such an approach can be labelled *blended listening*. Decoding the word-sound of politics significantly extends a sole text-based or visual examination of comments and expressions in the media sphere, but it cannot serve as a comprehensive substitution.

### 3. SOUND IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Sound is a rather fluid subject, as noise is as its opposition, too. Both signify contexts and mirror cultural debates and transfers, processes of selection, exclusion and enclosure. Focusing on sound and acoustic design, I will map here some areas in which such a perspective is important.

*Sound as a technical process.* When looking into the production process of broadcasting, sound obviously plays a major role. It is linked to the technical equipment in the studios and to the technical infrastructure in live recording, in catching the authentic atmosphere at live events. Sound is a practice and a temporal result of technicians and engineers who manipulate microphones, recording devices, amplifiers, sequencers and transmitters to manage sound properly – at least to their ears. Reception devices such as a wireless self-construction kit, a massive wooden tube radio or a transportable receiver lie at the other end of the production process. The radio and telecommunications industry, the product fairs and the aspects of marketing and advertising are gaining relevance as well, especially in terms of making the sound of radio available and adding a specific design to the practices of reception and consumption. The devices did not sound the same and their technical capacities have evolved over time.

*Sensory dimensions of social interaction:* Sound can provide insight into the sensory dimensions of past and contemporary social interactions and it can give us an idea of how different the sonic environment was in days gone by, of the way speech and language have developed. A general curiosity towards listening to melodies, sentences and words whirring out of a wireless box or a transportable transistor radio has influenced the modes of consumption in private and in public space. Critical and pessimistic accounts regarding the sound of radio and the suggestive power of speeches have been advanced (Anders, 1992). But these statements should encourage researchers to go beyond those comments and reframe social interaction with their ears wide open.

*Sound as a dimension of creativity:* Regarding broadcasters, this aspect is related to the production of radio plays as an art form. Sound and noise are means of creativity underlining, surrounding and mirroring a plot, a specific dramaturgy and its social and intermedia references. The auditory layers within radio plays are still a fairly neglected issue within the frame of analysis. The production of music, understood as a cultural obligation of broadcasters, and the development of music programmes, can

be seen as a supplementary field of creativity. All music formats of public and private broadcasting, such as Adult Contemporary, Adult Standards / Middle of the Road, Beautiful Music, Contemporary Hit Radio and College Radio have grown out of somewhere, being developed out of comprehensive evening shows.

*Sound as a marker in the programme flow:* The signal of the broadcasting station, announcing the full hour and the subsequent news slot, is the most important acoustic marker in broadcasting. Until the mid-1960s a kind of 'small box' programme dominated radio broadcasting. Each editorial board received airtime whenever it was suitable or required and only a few slots of airtime were fixed. Certainly a Saturday night family broadcast had a primetime space but many other programme formats did not. Making the programme flow (Williams, 1997: 77-120) was a challenging task. Understanding a programme as a sequence of different voices, word-sounds, topics, and varying musical interludes gradually became markers to separate those parts. The auditory image of such a programme gives us a different idea about the aesthetic of the media products, their cultural and social functions and the interrelatedness with other media.

*Acoustic layers are signifiers of multiple media realities:* Sound adds something outstanding to the examination of contemporary and past broadcasting, I postulate, especially in terms of considering the conditions of cultural flows (Hannerz, 1996) throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When studying cultural transfers between Western and Socialist media systems during the Cold War of voices, words and entertainment music, the sonic layers of broadcasts – music programmes, live reports and radio plays – are capable of serving as signifiers of multiple, competing media realities. Last but not least, sound provides a different texture to historical events and their narratives.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The auditory dimension of media in general and of broadcasting more specifically remains a neglected area of research. The number of PhD theses and books on the auditory dimensions of media is low across all European countries, compared to many other areas of media and communication studies.

Re-exploring the written archives of broadcasters can lead to different his-

torical and contemporary contextualisations of the production and experience of broadcasts and of the inclusion of historical accounts in actual programmes (with respect to both development and (re)selling of these programmes). It is necessary to reformulate approaches to broadcasting and media history, in order to re-enter the archival stocks and to produce new insights with more recent methodological approaches.

Directing research interest to the potentials and opportunities inscribed in this material, an auditory perspective on broadcasts and audiovisual media products offers an additional line of interpretation, yet one that is rarely chosen in research designs. Obviously, there are challenges with respect to accessing material. In addition, when focusing on the relationship between media systems and processes of cultural transfer, or with respect to image-based media cultures, sound points to a specific dimension within the product itself, whether it might be authenticity or a streamlined acoustic presence. Audibility mirrors the conditions of negotiating the narratives of political and cultural debates – on the one hand, within the broadcasting station, and, on the other, within specific political and cultural environments.

Sound can provide an insight into the sensory dimensions of past and contemporary social interactions. It can also give us an idea of how different a sonic environment was in the past, of the way speech and language have developed. But sound is not only a matter for social and cultural historians. When listening to sonic events induced by computer programmes like Skype, or by any sort of ringtones or special content announcements by trendy mobile applications, we can realise that today sound has been released from its previous 'old media' constellations, and that it has entered the presence of contemporary intermedia research. Think about MySpace or Last FM, or about Napster to name a slightly older platform. They are constituted by sound. Sound does matter.

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# SECTION TWO

## CROSS-FERTILISATIONS



FINAL PRESENTATIONS  
(BLUE FLOW)

PHOTO: RANJANA DAS



# Questioning vulnerability: How Europeanisation studies might challenge small states media systems typology

Sally Broughton Micova

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In a recent special edition of the *International Communications Gazette* (vol. 71, no. 1-2), Manuel Puppis and his colleagues brought the specific characteristics of small states media systems back onto the research agenda. Reminding researchers that size does matter, Puppis argues that small states are susceptible to commercialisation and domination by foreign content or capital. Looking at the practical problems of preserving national political and cultural public spheres, Puppis (2009) argues that small states are particularly vulnerable. He suggests that small states' regulation of the media market is more influenced by the European Union (EU) and large neighbours, and that they are less able to intervene in the public interest in the face of commercialisation (Puppis, 2009: 11). Small states within the EU or engaged in the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) are obliged by EU competition policy, including the use of state aid, and by media related directives such as the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)<sup>1</sup> and the Framework Directive for Electronic Communications Networks and Services<sup>2</sup>.

It has been argued that the EU's approach to the audiovisual media services sector has been overly technocratic, and primarily one of an industrial policy that does not give due credence to the important role that broad-

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1 The AVMSD is the 2007 revision of what was the Television without Frontiers Directive of 1989 (TWFD).

2 The Framework Directive (2002) pulled together the pieces of what have been referred to as the Telecoms Package that included the Open Networks Provision, Universal Services and Access Directives.

casting plays in democratic and cultural life (Harcourt 2005; Harrison and Woods, 2007; Burgelman and Pauwels, 1992). The liberalisation of broadcasting and telecommunications markets within Europe, combined with positive content regulation such as European Works Quotas and production subsidies, make up an attempt to create a common media market that can compete internationally, particularly with the US.

However, Harrison and Woods claim that the efforts to protect a European media market threaten the national level markets in small states (2001; see also Burgelman and Pauwels, 1992). They suggest that EU policies, aimed at promoting *European giants* within the media sector, may exacerbate the vulnerability of small states described by Puppis.

In this article I will argue that the concept of vulnerability in the case of small states media systems within Europe needs to be problematised and dissected. I suggest that looking at the relationship between European media policy and national level dynamics in small states as a process of Europeanisation, we may arrive at a more complex view of the concept. Europeanisation studies, namely research on the implementation of EU policy<sup>3</sup>, has yet to delve into culturally sensitive issues such as mass media. However, the exploration of other policy areas has shown that a variety of factors influence the implementation of EU policy and its impact at the national level. After discussing in more detail the typography of small states media systems, I will describe some key elements that can be drawn from Europeanisation studies. I will attempt to show how some concepts can be used to investigate the dynamics between the supranational and the national, and provide an example in the examination of the implementation of content quotas in broadcasting in Slovenia and Macedonia. I will conclude with suggestions as to how this approach to media systems research may contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the particular situation of small states media systems in the European context.

## 2. SMALL STATES MEDIA SYSTEMS

The analytical category of the small state has been discussed in political science circles since the 1970s. The work of Baehr (1975), followed by Christmas-Moeller (1983) and others, discusses the various attributes

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3 This chapter deals primarily with the Europeanisation study as the investigation of the implementation of EU policy. For discussion on broader definitions of Europeanisation and other branches of study within the field, see Featherston, 2003; Olsen, 2002; Introduction in Graziano and Vink, 2008; and Börzel and Risse, 2006.

which can be used to define smallness other than geographic or population size. The specific characteristics of small states media systems began to be defined in the early 1990s by Trappel (1991), Meier and Trappel (1992), and Burgelman and Pauwels (1992) among others. The limitations of having small advertising markets and production capacity identified by Trappel (1991) remain key facets of the small states typology. In describing the characteristics of *dependence* and *vulnerability*, Trappel (1991: 360) specifically cites dependence on decisions of supranational bodies such as the EU's TWF Directive. He points out that small states are required to open their markets in line with TWF even though "*in neither documents concerning transfrontier television were small states' peculiarities really taken into account*" (Trappel, 1991: 360). He suggests that small states are vulnerable to both direct foreign takeovers in their media markets and to foreign content and channels eroding the audience share of domestic media, forcing them to resort to imitation (1991: 361-2). Essentially, domestic media cannot compete with what comes in from abroad, both in terms of capital and content.

Because of this, Puppis (2009) claims that small states may have different media policy goals than larger states, favouring the protection of their PSBs and national media culture over liberalisation and media diversity. He argues that structural differences and political traditions are important, and that consideration needs to be given to post-socialist states under a separate category (Puppis et. al, 2009: 106-7). Puppis et al. (2009: 107) believe that small states tend towards interventionist regulatory approaches; however, they call for further research to examine the "*varying degrees of protectionism and interventionism*", particularly in the context of Europeanisation and globalisation. The conclusion that can be reached is that while small states might want to intervene more to protect their national media, they are unable to do so because they are vulnerable to the influence of political decisions taken at the supranational level. Nevertheless there may be differing degrees to be investigated at the level of how small states adapt to or influence the decisions made at the European level.

Focusing on the specific economic conditions and structural peculiarities of their markets, the typology of small states media systems implies that they are vulnerable to foreign domination and highly influenced by supranational decisions. However, recent work also suggests that differences in the way individual states adapt to the decisions of supranational bodies, such as the European Union, may account for variations in regulatory approaches and refinement of the typology. The next section will

discuss how research on the implementation of EU policies provides tools for examining this adaptation process and the relationship between small states and EU institutions.

### 3. EUROPEANISATION

Empirical studies of Europe have resulted in a basket of theories aimed at explaining the function of the Union and the process of European integration. Just as most of the small states theories mentioned above, these engage mostly a *supranational* conceptualisation of Europe as opposed to an *intergovernmental* one (Schimmelfennig and Rittberger, 2006). This allows for the role of non-state institutions and transnational agents in the process of integration. In examining these roles, *institutionalism* assumes that both supra- and national level institutions have constitutive power and are actors in their own right. The *institutionalism* I use here can be referred to as *new institutionalism*, particularly historical and sociological institutionalism as described by Hall and Taylor (1996). Historical institutionalism defines institutions as the “*formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organization structure of the polity or political economy*” (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 938), and provides an analytical framework useful for examining the issue of power. Sociological institutionalism adds to the previous definition the “*symbol systems, cognitive scripts and moral templates*” (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 947) involved in meaningful production for the actors involved. Avoiding the inevitability or economic determinism of traditional institutionalism, this new branch maintains that “*human action is the cornerstone*” and institutions “*operate as intervening rather than independent variables*” (Knill, 2001: 23). This means that it can accommodate agency at various levels, and dynamic relationships among institutions and between institutions and other actors.

The concept of the European Union as a supranational entity made up of institutions acting in their own right opens the door for the investigation of the intersection between European level change and domestic institutions (Risse et al., 2001). Institutionalists assume that supranational European institutions are highly autonomous, and influence both European level policy making and national level policy structures (Chrysochoou, 2001: 116). This assumption is present in European implementation research; however, it does not preclude the agency of national actors in shaping policy implementation. Research to date has produced evidence of great differences across the EU in terms of the way member states have



implemented policy (Duina, 1999; Cowles et al., 2001; Falkner et al., 2005; Luetgert and Dannwolf, 2009; Toshkov, 2008)<sup>4</sup>. It has also generated a range of theories to explain these variations. A few stand out as having the potential to provide a framework within which to analyse the way the issues arising from the special nature of media policy may come into play.

### 3.1 EXPLAINING DIFFERENCES

Research into Europeanisation began as a quest to explain the differences in the implementation of European policy and compliance with transposition deadlines across the Union (Luetgert and Dannworth, 2009). One of the first theories developed was that of *fit/misfit*. It suggests that variations in the implementation of EU regulations and directives can be explained by the degree to which the policies coming from Brussels differ from existing national policies (Duina, 1999). While this may be the case sometimes, empirical studies of various sectors have also provided contradictory data (Haverland, 2000; Falkner et al., 2005). A more sophisticated version of the *fit/misfit* theory developed by Knill (2001; see also Knill and Lenchow, 2001) argued that implementation depends less on sectoral policy fit and more on likeness to values and practice of domestic institutions. He argues that there exists a *core* of national administrative traditions and structures with which EU policy must fit (Knill, 2001). This is based on earlier work that isolated the regulatory approach, style and practice as well as *embedded* arrangements in the sector as key factors in domestic adaptation (Knill, 1997). The *institutional core* can be described as the set of values or belief-based practices, structures and arrangements that characterise the national administration. This concept provides a valuable theoretical tool for analysing the adaptation of small states regulatory practice to European level decisions in the area of media that Puppis (2009: 109) argues communication scholars have yet to examine.

Policy fit or misfit with the *institutional core* may explain unintentional resistance to European level policy in national level adaptation. In exploring the dynamics of vulnerability and resistance, it could be that there is also a conscious response on the part of national actors. The literature includes an array of what Luetgert and Dannworth (2009) call *preference-related* explanations reflecting intentional non- or partial compliance in implementation. Falkner et al. (2004), investigating European labour policy,

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<sup>4</sup> Works cited use either original data from large scale multi-state studies or compile data from several case studies.

demonstrate that what they called *opposition through the back door* is not necessarily connected to opposition expressed during the policy-making process. Drawing on the *veto player* concept of Tsebelis, Haverland (2000) finds the pace and quality of implementation linked to the number *veto points*, which he defines as the opposition parties or coalition partners who could *veto* changes, deriving from the Packaging Directive (94/62/EC). More recent work, however, suggests a complex relationship between domestic politics and implementation, with some empirical studies providing evidence contradicting the *veto points* explanation (Falkner et al., 2005). A desire to delay or only partially adopt European regulations or directives may not only derive from concern over opposition, but also from the preferences of the political party in power. The research of labour regulations and social policy by Falkner et al. (2004; 2005) and Toshkov's (2008), which included a broader range of policies that were part of the accession process for the CEE countries, demonstrate a perhaps predictable left/right split in the efficiency with which governments in power implement EU policy.

The literature cited above aptly highlights the role of political parties. However, I find it limiting to focus solely on the dynamics between the parties in power or opposition. Knill (2001; Knill and Lehmkuhl, 2002) provides a more analytically useful theory for examining the *preference-related* factors in implementation, arguing for attention to the way EU policy changes domestic *opportunity structures*. This means the European policy agenda may either alter the positions that domestic actors have on the relevant issues or the power they have to influence the outcome of policy reform or implementation processes. Radaelli (2003: 42) explains that "*when markets are opened, and certain choices are excluded from the domestic policy menu, existing equilibria are challenged. [...] It all hinges on who is empowered and disempowered, and how [...]*". For instance, the opening of the telecoms market under the SAP in Macedonia led to investment in the former national telecom company by Deutsche Telekom, which was then able to expand into Internet Protocol Television (IPTV). This caused the company to become a powerful advocate for copyright enforcement, particularly on cable networks. The new interest and power of this particular stakeholder brought the issue onto the agenda of the broadcast regulator, which until then had deferred to other state institutions in that area<sup>5</sup>. The *opportunity structures* concept provides a theoretical bridge on which to cross from the explanation of implementation differences to the investigation of im-

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5 This account is based on knowledge gained by the author while participating in related meetings and discussions, and following the process in a previous professional capacity.

plementation dynamics. This can include the role of EU audiovisual and competition policy in changing the number and relative power of players in the domestic market, an area which Puppis et al. (2009; 108-9) argue demands further research, particularly through cross country comparative studies.

### 3.2 IMPLEMENTING MEDIA POLICY

The studies cited above show that European policy implementation has been studied in a variety of policy areas. However, the study of cultural or media policy in Europe from the aspect of implementation remains limited. Existing research does not investigate much beyond the transposition phase of implementing EU level policy and decisions, and has yet to thoroughly consider the small states perspective. Nevertheless, a few key studies have laid the foundation by defining the scope of decisions and policy that make up the media framework, and by identifying some key issues in the relationship between states and the EU institutions in this field.

Harcourt's (2003, 2005) research into national policy convergence within the framework of European audiovisual policy gives an analysis of the national level processes leading up to key elements of European level policy being put into law in several Western European countries. She identifies the TWF and the 1990 Open Networks Provision Directive (ONPD) as instrumental in instigating the liberalisation process in the communications sector in Europe, and describes the development of these into the set of directives that make up the current framework (Harcourt, 2005). Harcourt (2005) also points out the relevance of EU competition policy, particularly for the position of public service broadcasting (PSB). The role of specific court decisions and European Commission decisions governing competition policy and PSB is extensively documented by Ward (2003; 2008) with discussion of their potential impact. Both these scholars cover aspects of the dynamics among national stakeholders and institutions, identifying power issues in the relationship between the European and national institutions. This could be seen as a type of exploration of changes in the domestic *opportunity structures*, and provides insight into considerations related to national interpretations of the public interest. Harcourt's research, although it does not go much beyond transposition in terms of the practice of regulation, does investigate the impact of European level adjudications and national markets, problematising European level influence over media ownership.

Another example, that of Levy (1999), focuses specifically on policy related to digitalisation and identifies clear imbalances in the ability of states to influence the policy-making process at the European level. His investigation into the national level implementation process in Britain, France, and Germany concludes that there was considerable resistance from member states to give up control of broadcasting regulation because of its political and cultural significance. Although he does not cast his analysis in terms of big states and small states, the differences in influence over policy outcomes seem clear. The European media policy framework has evolved considerably since Levy's work, but his conclusions suggest that power dynamics and cultural identity may still play a role in the Europeanisation of this sector.

Research to date has clearly defined the framework of European policy affecting the media sector, and has highlighted some issues that arise during implementation in the relationship between national level institutions and those at the EU level. Europeanisation studies in other policy sectors have provided analytical tools with which to more closely examine this relationship and the ways in which national level actors adapt to EU policy. In the next section I will offer a brief example to illustrate how further research may use a Europeanisation studies approach to investigate national level implementation of a particular aspect of EU media policy.

#### 4. EUROPEAN WORKS QUOTAS IN TWO SMALL STATES

In 1989, the TWFD opened up national television markets within the EU to cross border transmission and investment. It also established a form of positive content regulation aimed at promoting European production within the Common Market, a quota for European works in broadcast content (CEC, 1989). As the directive required the quota to be directly transposed into domestic legislation, it is an interesting starting point for investigating the implementation of EU policy. The currently in force AVMSD includes the same 50% quota for European works that was contained in the TWFD for linear services (CEC, 2007: art. 4, 5), and asks countries to monitor the amount of European works present and their prominence in non-linear catalogues (*ibid.*: art. 3i). Those studying content quotas at the national or European level often brand them as a response to fears about the dominance of the American audio-visual production industry and the impact that might have on audiences (Dolmans, 1995; Tunstall and Machin, 1999; Bektali, 2006). Others argue that they are more simply an economic policy aimed at protecting domestic, or European, audio-

visual production and distribution industries (Hitchens, 2006; Motto and Polo, 1997). European quotas persist despite significant criticisms (McGonagle, 2008) including those who find them ineffective, and others who argue they encourage the spread of cheaper to produce, yet less culturally valuable, products (Anderson et al., 1997; Iosifidis et al., 2005). Studies in Canada on domestic content quotas suggest that while they may increase diversity, they actually drive down ratings for television as quota content is not so popular (Anderson 1992; 1997). An investigation into what happens with the implementation of the European Works Quotas (EWQ) at the national level may contribute to this discussion.

#### 4.1 DOMESTICATING THE EUROPEAN

In both Slovenia and Macedonia<sup>6</sup>, the definition of European works and the terms of the quota have been directly transposed into domestic legislation. However both the Slovenian Mass Media Act of 2005 and the Macedonian Law on Broadcasting Activity of the same year also contain quotas for content in their respective languages, and in the case of Slovenia also for in-house production. The Macedonian domestic quotas had been in place since an earlier law passed in 1997. Currently, broadcasters are required to ensure at least 30% of their daily content is originally produced in the Macedonian language or the constitutionally recognised minority language in which the station broadcasts (Rep. of Macedonia, 2005: art. 74). News, game shows, teleshopping or live sports broadcasts cannot count towards this quota (*ibid.*). Slovenian law requires that television stations broadcast daily 20% in-house production, and radio stations 30% (Rep of Slovenia, 2005: art. 85). Although in-house production by default is domestic, the law also states that 20% of music on radio or television broadcasted daily must be Slovenian (*ibid.*: art. 86), and that 5% of annual transmission on television must be Slovenian audio-visual works (*ibid.*: art. 87). As both countries are European, their domestically produced content can be used in the fulfilment of EWQs (see definition of European works (CEC, 2007: art. 1). With the additional imposition of

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6 Slovenia and Macedonia fulfil both the quantitative and qualitative definitions of small states (Maas, 2009; Baehr, 1975; see also Thorhalsson and Wivel, 2006 for discussion on definition within the EU). They each have a population of just over 2 million inhabitants (CIA, 2010). Though Slovenia's economy is larger than that of Macedonia, neither have significant economic or political power within the context of Europe. They each have a unique language for which there is not a significant market outside of their borders. Slovenia has been a member of the EU since 2004. Although Macedonia has been a candidate country since 2005, it has had EWQs in place since 2004 as part of the Stabilisation and Association Process and as a signatory to the Council of Europe Convention on Television without Frontiers.

domestic quotas both states have ensured that a significant portion of the mandated European works broadcasts are domestically produced in the national language.

In 2009 even Slovenia's most popular and American-owned private station, Pop TV, exceeded the EWQ with 28% of qualifying programmes being Slovenian content. This was an increase from a 51% share of European works and 7% share of Slovenian works in 2008 to a 68.5% share of European and 19% share of Slovenian works in 2009<sup>7</sup>. The Broadcasting Council in Macedonia does not yet report in such detail. In order to get an idea of what makes up EWQ compliant content, I conducted a content analysis of programme schedules from two average viewing weeks in 2008 and 2009<sup>8</sup> for the four private national channels. During this period, the stations averaged 40% EWQ compliant content, not quite meeting the quota, but more interestingly 70% of that was Macedonian language domestically produced content. This suggests that the EWQ may not negatively impact the amount of culturally valuable content in the manner mentioned above. The EWQ may be overshadowed by domestic quotas aimed at protecting national culture industries, particularly in Macedonia where there was already an institutional tradition within the regulator and the stations for compliance with domestic quotas.

## 4.2 ENFORCING QUOTAS

Existing traditions are part of what make up the *institutional core* that EU policies confront at the national level. Regulatory practice can also be indicative of the priorities and values held within implementing institutions. In the case of quotas, one key practice to look at is enforcement. Both Slovenian and Macedonian laws include significant fines as potential penalties for non-compliance of EWQs and the domestic quotas. The Slovenian Agency for Post and Electronic Communications (APEK) monitored both radio and television compliance of domestic quotas, issuing several warnings in 2009 to radio stations for non-compliance of quotas for Slovene

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7 Calculated from the Report on Shares of Slovenian and European Audiovisual Works for 2009 and in the Annual Report for 2009. Full reports can be found at: [http://www.apek.si/sl/delezi\\_lastne\\_produkcije\\_ter\\_delezi\\_slovenskih\\_in\\_evropskih\\_avdiovizualnih\\_del](http://www.apek.si/sl/delezi_lastne_produkcije_ter_delezi_slovenskih_in_evropskih_avdiovizualnih_del) & [http://www.apek.si/datoteke/File/Porocila/AnnualReport2009\\_final2.pdf](http://www.apek.si/datoteke/File/Porocila/AnnualReport2009_final2.pdf).

8 The last two weeks of January were selected to avoid major events, such as elections or the Olympics or similar. The data were extracted from the audience measurement software of AGB/Nielson Macedonia.



music (APEK, 2010: 68). In addition, they issued warnings to three television stations for non-compliance with domestic works quotas, and to two stations for non-compliance of EWQs (APEK, 2010: 64). Though APEK is not severe in punishing non-compliance, it monitors for both EWQs and domestic quotas. According to its 2009 Annual Report, the Broadcasting Council in Macedonia did not monitor EWQ compliance. They did monitor compliance of domestic quotas, and also issued warnings to several stations for non-compliance (Broadcasting Council of RM, 2010: 13-14). This data only hints at possible trends in enforcement. Research that includes interviews with individuals within the institutions may shed more light on the priorities or other factors behind the practice. Nevertheless, strict enforcement of the EU policy appears not to be given in either case.

#### 4.3 CHANGING OPPORTUNITIES

One of the critiques of quotas listed above is that they may lower the ratings of television channels. Private television operates in a two-sided market in which it has to appeal to audiences in order to appeal to the advertisers from whom they draw income (Seabright and Weeds, 2007), and ratings are a key part of that relationship. Ratings can affect the financial strength of the stations, as well as the power they have in their audience appeal being influential in the political scene. If quotas, European or domestic, cause ratings to drop, this could undermine the position of domestic broadcast media, particularly in relation to telecommunications operators providing foreign content or even to the publishing industry. In the case of Macedonia, the content analysis of programme schedules drawn from audience measurement software allowed for the comparison of quota compliant content to other content in terms of ratings. For the four weeks studied in 2008 and 2009, both the EWQ compliant content and the domestic content over the four stations had a very similar Average Minute Rating (AMR) to all other non-news content. This means that in this case the EWQ and domestic quotas may not be damaging the overall ratings of the private stations or negatively affecting their positions.

This preliminary exploration of the dynamics of the implementation of EWQs in two small states indicates that there is a complex story to be uncovered. Domestic quotas appear to be more of a priority both for broadcasters and regulators, albeit more so in Macedonia than in Slovenia. Further research is needed to explore the decisions and values behind the compliance and enforcement practices at work in order to understand

more fully the relationship between these aspects of the *institutional core* and the EWQ policy. At the same time, concerns that the EWQs may negatively impact one aspect of broadcasters' positions within the *domestic opportunity structure* can be questioned. Since market power is not the only indicator of power among national level stakeholders, further research should examine other avenues of influence over policy-making and policy implementation that exist in each context.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The typology of small states media systems remains a useful analytical tool, and considering the recent expansions of the EU, it may be particularly relevant to understanding the situations in the Union's newer members. However, the characteristic of vulnerability needs to be explored more thoroughly in order to grasp the potential variations of "*protectionism and interventionism*" (Puppis et al., 2009: 107) occurring at the national level. The foray into an investigation of EWQ implementation presented here shows that the way EU policy interacts with existing traditions and regulatory practices may complicate post-transposition implementation. The conceptual tools of Europeanisation studies can be useful in furthering research into the values, priorities and practices of national level institutions affecting the extent to which these states are protectionist in the face of EU policy. These tools also provide an agenda for more investigation into the dynamics between EU policy and power relations among domestic stakeholders, important to a more nuanced understanding of the potential vulnerability of small states.

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# The task of interpretation. Converging perspectives in audience research and digital literacies

Ranjana Das

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Audience reception studies have in past decades emphasised the active, interpretive, critical, creative and sometimes resistant nature of engaging with the media. This research has been theoretically underpinned by insights from mass communications research, literary aesthetics, (social) psychological approaches and cultural theory. Empirically, an array of material has accumulated from research into mass media audiences (primarily although not exclusively radio and television audiences). While the priorities of audience reception studies – discussion of the contexts within which media content is appropriated, of the nature of fandom and of the development of mediated identities within a mediated everyday life – have smoothly transferred from a mass mediated environment to a more convergent media environment, some of its conceptual ‘tools’ seem to beg clarification in the age of interactive, networked media. Generally, it seems that many highly used theoretical categories – interpretation, text, genre, mode – call for some rethinking and clarification in the context of Web 2.0. More specifically, it has recently been suggested that parallels of significance exist, conceptually as well as empirically, between audience reception studies and user studies (for instance Livingstone and Das, 2009). One such area ripe for convergence is in research with media and digital literacies, where both literacies and interpretation share a focus on the media itself (the question of text) and engagement with the media (interpretation, use) within contexts (see Livingstone, 2008). This all seems to be suitably framed within an ongoing conversation on transforming audiences, transforming media environments and transforming societies. It is in this context that the present chapter reports on a project which pays attention to the ‘journey’ in a sense, of concepts from one moment of me-

diated communication (text, genre, interpretation) as they are employed to interpret conversations with young users of an online genre. The task, then, is to be able to comment on 1) how these concepts might prove useful across moments of mediated communication and 2) how they might have to be rethought in the face of retention. In presenting a text-reader analysis of youthful engagement with an online genre, this chapter explores four broad categories of tasks involved in literacies as interpretive work. The attempt is not to outline any sort of taxonomy but to draw attention to the range of tasks these children perform in the course of social networking. As Iser (1974: 288) observes in commenting on the interpretation of printed (literary) texts:

*We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their non-fulfilment, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject; this is the dynamic process of recreation.*

Definitions of media literacy parallel much of what Iser says above, especially in their focus on analytical, evaluative and critical tasks. There is a shared recognition of the complexity and range of tasks involved in interpretation.

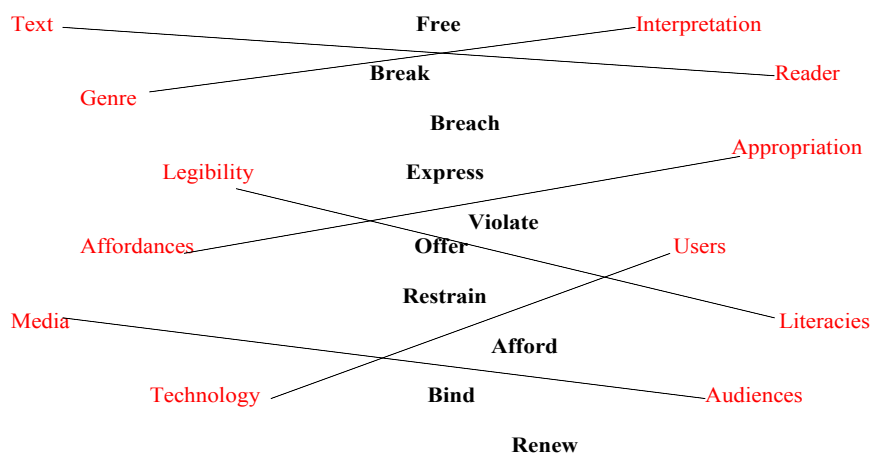
## 2. LITERACIES AS INTERPRETIVE WORK: THE TASK OF INTERPRETATION

Unsurprisingly, the children whose interpretive work I have been studying lead very different lives. They go to rather different schools across London, and then return to rather different homes, within which Facebook finds space in very many different ways. Many stories lie in between the extremes that I highlight. What is of interest is not only that the contexts of use are divergent, but that these divergences both resource and limit their interface with the text. Most of these stories are easily anticipated and the contrasts in contexts are reasonably clear. Alice, Dorothy, Adil, Sophia and their peers are all articulate and intelligent young people. They are all up to date with the latest changes to profile pages on social networking sites and they are all eager to share their stories with me. As they go online each day – either on a single computer shared with parents and many siblings (as with 14-year-old Janet), or on a laptop from which a disabled parent works (as with 11-year-old Alice) or on the trendiest mobile in their pockets (as with 13-year-old Sophie), – these contexts tell contrasting stories of deprivation and luxury, happiness and gloom, confidence and fear, domestic problems and stable families. They point to children with no hobbies or children with many specialised leisure activities, of confidence and fear. They tell of stable ambitions and confused aspirations. It is in the context of all this that I move on to identify the range and nature of interfacing tasks they perform. I always have to remind myself that these children are not at all members of a homogeneously happy group, optimistically embedded in a delightful online world with all of them operating with the same technical and critical expertise and all of them having the same domestic resources at their command, all the time.

There is a range of tasks to accomplish in interpretation, responsibilities to fulfil in relation to the text and in relation to the expectations that one holds of the text (consider Liebes and Katz's references to 'interpretive work' (1993)). Definitions of media literacies make such work amply clear. In analysing, evaluating, critiquing and creating the media, there are tasks to be performed. As Iser (1974) reminds us, the processes of looking forward, backward, deciding, changing decisions, forming expectations, questioning and musing all come into the category of interpretive work. In interpreting, there are tasks of commuting involved – from the text to the social world, especially when the social world is continuously being inscribed into a continually changing text, hence, perhaps, Liebes and Katz's notion of referential readings (1993). But there is also the task of commuting between modes, genres and even media, as interactive spac-

es become increasingly multi-generic and multi-modal, reminding us of concepts such as intertextuality, which lie at the heart of textual analysis. The concept of the interpretative contract, as outlined in the figure below, reminds us of how the contractual relationship of mutuality between interpreter and what is interpreted (Livingstone, 2008) can be breached (by a resistant reader) or accepted (by a reader whose interpretations align themselves with inscribed ideologies in the text). There is always thus a range of potential interpretations, although these are finite in number.

**Figure 1: The interpretative contract**



In what follows, the children's interpretive work is presented in a set of four tasks, which, by necessity, overlap. Of course, by using the word 'dimension' or 'task' in place of 'category' or 'mode', I indicate that these are not part of a typology of any sort. They are merely indicative of a range of tasks to be performed in interpretation and are therefore far from exhaustive. More importantly, however, these aspects overlap, their boundaries intersect and touch each other. We might therefore ask ourselves whether the task of resistance is entirely different from the task of being intertextually aware of the norms and conventions of a genre? Is intertextuality in interpretation entirely unrelated to the task of being collaborative? Surely not. This chapter aims to identify and analyse just some of the many different acts one performs in the process of interpretation.



## 2.1 INTERTEXTUALITY IN INTERPRETATION

*It is entirely conventional and recognisable, that is, it is a text with recognisable and oft repeated structure, with a particular way of expressing (coding) social relationships. [...] The conventionalized aspect of this interaction is what we recognize as being generic, as making of this text a particular genre (Kress, 1993: 24).*

In this first section, I highlight instances of intertextual reading, or lateral interpretations, where one genre is almost always compared with, connected with or tied into others, and where spaces within a genre are interpreted as interlinked and often woven into a narrative of connection. Generic similarities and dissimilarities are discovered, with varied amounts of information and speculation, reminding us often of what Livingstone had called the knowledgeable reader (Livingstone, 1998). The question of hybridity in the birth of a genre seems clear in the lateral ways in which they are read. Two 16-year-old boys, Neil and Samuel, attending a private school outside of London and invested in developing software, hardware and, generally, a future in technology, tell me how Facebook has been designed as an excellent advertising tool. The intertextual link one of them intriguingly draws on is not with another member of the same genre but rather with a video-sharing site, reminding us of Kress's point on hybrid genres being born from pre-existing or contemporary others.

*Neal: So many people use Facebook these days, it is an excellent advertising tool. It happens on YouTube as well, you will get adverts for certain things, most of the time you'll just completely ignore them, but there will be one or two which look pretty interesting.*

Samuel looks at the genre as a whole, covering MySpace, Facebook, Orkut and many others, and provides his critical take on public scripts around advertising on social networking services. Note how he works out a different 'strategy' of reconciling the commercial nature of these services, drawing attention not only to the conventionalised nature of interactions (Kress, 2003) but also the continuously established conventions that make these kinds of strategies necessary, and interactions possible.

*Samuel: What people can't appreciate is that when you think about it, if you were going to set up a server and code Facebook, it would take years and it would cost millions, and people don't think ... they think, how dare they advertise to us, but how come they're not charging for it, but would you rather be paying £2, 3, 6 a month and not be advertised to or rather just have someone*

*advertise to you and be able to completely ignore it. Basically it is a subscription service, or should be so.*

Interestingly, reading laterally, and being at the highest possible end of being informed and knowledgeable, is not simply a question of meta-comparisons between generic similarities across diverse Web 2.0 forms. Fifteen-year-old Martin has learned how to distinguish similarities and differences between micro-spaces within the genre where internal and external commercial presences can be discerned. He has followed a line of adverts, despite clearly ignoring them, and has begun to develop a typology of sorts between which ones will keep him within the textual boundaries of Facebook and which ones will push him further away. Following Iser's (1988: 279) line of thinking, it is as if every individual advert contains "a preview of the next" and forms "a kind of viewfinder for what is to come".

*Martin: Yes, it's basically an ad, but Facebook have different ads.*

*Interviewer: What's the difference between a general ad and a Facebook ad?*

*Martin: A Facebook ad would be advertising a utility that you haven't ... maybe you don't use or they're suggesting is useful for you, obviously another ad would be just advertising materials and things like that from shops and stuff.*

These trans-genre similarities and differences contribute to what Jauss calls the 'Erwartungshorizont' (horizon of expectations), where the norms of the genre and contemporary familiar literary-historical surroundings play a role in intertextual appreciation of a text. MSN, for instance, belongs elsewhere, and not quite in the same category as Facebook, but John, an older teen, compares them thus in a similar 'surrounding' when he refers to distinct evolutionary stages: "I think Facebook almost grew out of the Internet, didn't they, and (this) take them to almost something like a more MSN-ish point".

Thus, comparing and analysing, but also providing reasons (evolutionary, commercial and social) for these similarities and differences between genres and within genres, needs to be the subject of analysis and interpretation. Staying for a moment with Shayaana and Abby's stories about fears of negative spaces on Facebook, I now move on to 'tackling interruptions in interpretation'. My main focus here is on the interruptions brought about by negative experiences or spaces contained within the text.

## 2.2 TACKLING INTERRUPTIONS IN INTERPRETATION

*Whenever the flow is interrupted (in the text) and we are led off in unexpected directions, the opportunity is given to us to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections – for filling in the gaps left by the text itself (Iser, 1980: 280).*

The stories I follow in this section are not happy ones, for they represent a narrative of suspicion, fear and wariness when exploring what Kelly, 16, has aptly termed ‘Facebook streets’. The interruptions I highlight here are potentially dangerous. There are many potential interruptions to interpretation, of course, and following Iser, boredom and overstrain (1974) are the ones to which I paid greatest attention. Interestingly, contrary to expectations of boredom with repetitive games and spam or the frustrations associated with attempting to block annoying adverts, the most striking (and for me, unanticipated) interruptions in being on Facebook came up in the form of a fear of the unknown. This was punctuated with media images and everyday talk about ‘paedos’ and old men, together with occasional tales about personal experiences with good-looking guys and, most significantly, a range of strategies for keeping things steady.

Earlier, we had met Kelly, 16. On being stalked by her father, Kelly had gradually developed a calm and collected strategy of making herself almost invisible on Facebook. Rishona, almost 14, takes pleasure in sifting out ‘nice’ people on Facebook from the not so nice ones by guessing if their photos are Google images or genuine ones. She does not seek help in this task. The contract demands that ambiguous spaces (in this case unknown strangers posing as friends) are interpreted reflexively, leading to walks down one of three pathways in her interfacing with the text. The first is to get into trouble and stumble, the second is to figure out a strategy for avoiding these spaces and the third is, perhaps, a mix – to experiment, to take risks and to figure out what happens next. Rishona prefers the latter pathway, while 11-year-old Ryan usually opts for the second.

*Rishona: If I don't think that he's nice, or whatever, I'll first meet him online. When I first meet him, I'll go do searches when he first added me. I'll make sure that they are not like obviously from like Google or something.*

*Interviewer: What would people get from Google?*

*Rishona: Oh, well, some of my friends used to be funny, well, they used to make fake accounts, so like they only add people they know. So they'll make fake accounts and then find photos of models on Google and be, like, I'm a re-*

*ally good-looking guy. So they add ... so like it looks like they have loads of like really good-looking guys. So you can tell if they're fake or not.*

Consider the experiences of Alison, a very quiet 14-year-old girl from a Jamaican family, violent with her classmates, clearly upset with something that she has encountered on Facebook.

*Alison: What do you think of young people going on Facebook all the time? You are researching it, tell me.*

*Interviewer: I think, it's uhmm interesting, you tell me.*

*Alison: It's disgusting.*

*Interviewer: What?*

*Alison: The disgusting people, sick people on there. I don't write a word. I don't let anyone tag me. It's so disgusting, just disgusting.*

And so, she decides to switch off.

### 2.3 CRITIQUE IN INTERPRETATION

*The more a text individualises or confirms an expectation it has initially aroused, the more aware we become of its didactic purpose (Iser, 1980: 278).*

Following the lead provided by literacy scholars, if critical awareness means replacing faith and assumptions with evaluations and assessment, are these uncritical children? In the previous section we saw how all these children identified a 'problem' online. All had their own strategies for being critical in their evaluations and practices and all four had failed in their attempts to resolve these problems. Sophia, whom we meet later, places all her trust in the name of Facebook. Alison decides to switch off from the text. Rishona decides on a strategy of filtering styles of photos and experimenting with what she finds an interesting guessing game. What might it mean to be critical and even resistant? Following Iser above, perhaps, resistance means choosing to say no, to turn away, to reject, refuse or simply ignore.

Ideologically problematic meanings might then, as one has seen in the history of audience reception research, be rejected. But this is not always the case, of course. Media literacy demands that people adopt a critical and responsible stance as they evaluate, analyse and critique the media. In what follows I highlight stories that speak of resisting persuasion, or accepting it, or of being syntactically and semantically critical at times,

and not, at other times. These are also stories that speak of scepticism and trust, sometimes, of faith in one brand as opposed to others. Facebook is full of instances where people are invited to ask questions of others' social lives, to take quizzes and click on adverts that are tailored for their specific stage in life. They even keep virtual pets which will die without sufficient petting. Some turn away, some play on, some get immersed.

In the exchange that I describe below, 16-year-olds Cathy and Sebastian play an interesting game. Sam is invited to participate in a quiz 'by Facebook' and is going to ignore the invitation. Cathy decides to play on for him in endless rounds of questions that lead to more questions. In the course of being drawn into the quiz, they take no notice of countless adverts and pop-ups.

*Cathy: Yeah, look, Sebastian, take the quiz. And then it'll show you [interviewer] what it's saying about him now.*

*Interviewer: Oh, you are actually taking the quiz for him.*

*Cathy: Yeah, like how many kids will you have? Two.*

*Interviewer: What's that mobster thing up there?*

*Cathy: I don't know; that's a pop-up. They're just ... they're nothing to us. Okay, how much do you like to sleep?*

*Sebastian: A lot.*

*Cathy: So I love it.*

*Cathy: Hurry this quiz up, pretty patient, uh, not very patient.*

One has some difficulties in working out what is going on here. Cathy could ignore the quiz at some other time, whilst Sebastian might allow only a select few to play on his behalf. But the pop-up moment shows an immersion that ignores everything else. Has the text succeeded at this point in drawing the reader in and maintaining his/her attention? There were a range of potential paths in which Cathy might have walked, or, more generally, in which one might walk in the face of persuasive textual invitations. One of the potential differences between the work and the text was that the text offers a range of perspectives and patterns. These are set in motion in the act of reading. Note then, that these patterns do indeed exist, and presumably shape what is set in motion. Interpretive choice is finite, although there exist a range of potential choices.

Eleven-year-old Sophia comes from a working-class family and her parents are proud of their child's expertise online. Nevertheless they make her aware of 'bad things' that might happen on commercial sites, although they do not know the interface themselves. She understands the flaws in

the space that Facebook represents, but perhaps places too much trust in an unknown 'author', a 'they', who will resolve problems for her.

*Sophia: There are lots of pervs online. An old man pretended to be a 16-year-old girl and then met a girl who met him on Facebook, took her to a field and killed her. But I first add the people and then get to know them and then delete them if they are not fine.*

*Interviewer: But why do you add someone you don't know? They'll get to know stuff from your profile by then, right?*

*Sophia: No you can't write bad things on facebook, for they have a big computer. They will cancel your account if you are rude or a perv and never let you go online again.*

So, interpretive work must fill in gaps, anticipate realistically, handle unfulfilled anticipations and devise strategies with which to resolve problems opened up by the text. This is the task of analysis and critical evaluation. In the final section below, I shift focus to a more inductive category of task – the task of collaboration.

## 2.4 COLLABORATION IN INTERPRETATION

Strikingly, these stories are not always about doing everything together, in a space clearly meant for people to be together. So there are those who enter Facebook only to play games, and those who cannot quite explain what groups are working towards. And still more puzzling perhaps is that one child might have ten siblings, none of whom are related to her by blood. Here, a 13-year-old is married to their classmate. As Rishona (see below) explains to me, she is not actually a mother at 13. In an interesting reversal of what was intended to be personal profile information provided by the text, Rishona and many of her peers have taken the opportunity to express bonds of familiarity and solidarity within a peer group.

*Rishona: No, she's not actually my child. She's like one of my best friends so I pretend that she's ... a lot of girls have this thing – and guys as well – where they have fake kids like ... they wouldn't say it here but I'm ... on Facebook I'm married to one of my friends; I'm married to her. And like they're not actually my siblings.*

*Interviewer: So why ... I mean ...*

*Rishona: Because it's just to show like they're your friends, you know.*

Samuel, Cathy, Sebastian and Rishona collaborate on Facebook and connect with a wide range of diverse others. In both cases the intended pur-

poses of the text have perhaps not quite been followed. A 'family connections' space has been entirely reinterpreted creating a different version of the family, equally cohesive, less dictated by what is given and more by what network one wishes to create, with its own hierarchies. So the best friend is always the partner and close friends are the siblings. In the second case, befriending or joining groups has been re-interpreted in order to move away from a cohesive collaboration to a display of popularity and ties. In both cases, connection and collaboration were intended and, in both cases, these are doubtless achieved. Nevertheless this achievement possibly follows a different path from the intended meaning of the text.

Joining causes and groups are equally interesting. In both cases, the overall objective is perhaps achieved – a large number of potential connections are established amongst a group or in support of a particular cause. Beneath that, however, it seems gaps remain. In the case of causes, a quite frequent phenomenon amongst the children to whom I spoke is a misinterpretation of why at all one might wish to join these causes. A number of explanations are offered, ranging from the saving of lives to the contributions of pennies to make many millions of pounds. Such explanations are tinged with faith as well as scepticism. In the case of groups, one is not entirely sure why an individual joins a group, but interestingly enough, the purpose in joining the group is often not so much to collaborate with existing members but rather to show public solidarity for the person who has created the group. Collaboration is evident in both cases, but perhaps this is different from what seems to be indicated from a surface reading of the textual space. Thus Arthur chooses not to hurt a peer's feelings and so does not ignore group invites.

*Arthur: Because there's one person who just constantly sends me files and stuff, and I don't want Farmville.*

*Interviewer: So, why don't you tell him?*

*Arthur: You could ignore the people who send you, like, I think it's like ignore posts from this person in the application. But it's quite harsh, because if you get something good, he'll send it to you, but if not, you miss out on it. So, it's quite ...*

So it is not as if the pursuit of collaborative connections is free of ethics, care and feelings. Indeed, as Martin succinctly points out, Facebook 'looks different' during school hours: "When you're ill, you often go on Facebook and there's no one there doing anything. And, then it's completely different. it's really boring". Mutual support and solidarity are fundamental in making Facebook look different. As 16-year-old Delia points out: "We just like make



*fun of each other. You just laugh for a good five hours straight. You go on there and you just laugh for the whole five hours. And, it can take your trouble away”.*

Joining groups is often an extension of support and solidarity for the person creating the group rather than just a commitment towards a shared cause. Kelly explains to me that she joins most of her groups as an extension of support more than anything else.

*Kelly: One of my friends is addicted to making, so I ... she just makes them, so I'm like okay, I'll accept.*

*Interviewer: Groups about what?*

*Kelly: Um, like everything, like ...*

*Bob: There's one about the smell of gasoline.*

*Kelly: So like, you know, Roy Daniels of X Factor? Something like 50 requests for a group about him so I was like, oh, okay then, yeah.*

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I followed four strands of tasks involved in interpretation – in a mix of deductive and inductive reasoning. I selected stories from extreme instances of performing or not performing these tasks, or indeed, performing them differently. The richness of intertextual readings displayed a weaving of genres and of micro-spaces within genres into intriguing narratives of similarity and difference. Tackling negative spaces as interruptions in what could otherwise be a smooth experience of the text reveals divergent strategies in coping with these interruptions. Critique and resistance threw up a variety of potential definitions and only sometimes, perhaps, are they satisfactorily performed. Collaboration involves different purposes from those that are intended and the end products of collaborative engagement often indicate little about what went on in the first place. In the end, the task with this chapter was to take apart the precise, although far from exhaustive, aspects of interpretive work involved in being ‘digitally literate’ and also to outline how texts and contexts shape the varying degrees of ‘expertise’ with which these tasks are performed. Three conclusions seem relevant at this point.

First, inherited concepts, text and interpretation have been used in this chapter to make sense of how children interpret social networking sites. As entry points they seem to have proved fruitful. With the repertoire of anticipations, expectations, interruptions and intertextuality, one is able to sufficiently highlight the central role of the media, but also indicate the nature of



tasks involved in being a literate navigator or one who is prone to stumble. Second, inherited priorities from audience reception research which connect clearly to the conversation on media and digital literacies prove to be important by connecting resistance, for instance, and the broader task of critique, to the demands of being analytical, evaluative and critical users of new media.

Third, given the fact that there are a range of tasks involved in making sense of new media, it is useful to consider the notion of interpretation, and by extension, literacies as work. A number of the tasks I have begun to identify in this chapter have led to the discovery of significant parallels between such work for mass media (cf. Liebes and Katz, 1993), but also to a recognition of the range of tasks involved in living a digital everyday life.

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# Framing's overlooked frame: Fractured paradigm and the study of visuals

Ilija Tomanić Trivundža

Over the past two decades, framing has become one of the most widely used approaches within the field of communication research. Popularised in fields ranging from political communication and journalism studies to health communication and public relations, the myriad of related studies and publications has not led to the actual consolidation of a common theoretical framework or a commonly agreed set of basic presuppositions of framing research. In spite of recurring calls for such consolidation (e.g. Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 2004), framing has remained essentially “*a fractured paradigm*”. In part, this is due to the ambiguity and applicability of the concept of ‘frame’. Not only can the notion of a ‘frame’ be “*applied to many different aspects of messages and to many different types of messages*” (Weaver, 2007: 144), framing also provides what Reese has termed a bridging research model which “*has put together strange bedfellows that differ in important philosophical assumptions*” (Reese, 2007: 149). In many cases, it was precisely this theoretical diversity and terminological vagueness that has been beneficial in the gradual development of a more comprehensive understanding of the communicative and cognitive processes in question.

## 1. TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF FRAMING

In an attempt to provide a working definition of framing, Reese offers the following consensual definition: “*Frames are **organizing principles** that are socially **shared** and **persistent** over time, that work **symbolically** to meaningfully **structure** the social world*” (Reese, 2003: 11, original emphasis). Frames thus (1) serve to organise information and (2) achieve this by providing identifiable patterns or structures of varying complexity. They are (3) based on abstract principles and ideas and are (4) consequently discernible in symbolic forms of expression. In order to be functional, frames (5) must be shared (at least on some level) by members of a given group or society and are (6) persistent – their value lies in their durability, persistency and routinisation over longer periods of time (Ibid.).

Frames are therefore *"information-processing schemata"* (Entman, 1991: 7) that operate through salience – *"selecting and highlighting some features of reality while omitting others"* (Entman, 1993: 53), by prioritising selected concepts, keywords, symbols, metaphors and visual images. For example, Gitlin (1980: 6) defines frames as *"principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters"*. Similarly, Gamson and Modigliani (1989: 35) claim that *"frame is a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue"*, while Tankard et al. (1991: 277) describe media framing as *"the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration"*.

The perspectives above define frames as actively produced structures of meaning, which makes framing a process within which social actors compete for the definition of mediated social reality through the promotion and establishment of a dominant frame. These social actors include government bodies, political parties, NGOs, interest groups, civil society movements and journalists. Frames are therefore an expression of social power and delimit social and political reality. As such, they are not fixed entities or unchanging constructs, but have a temporal dimension. This is particularly evident in the case of novel events or topics, especially if reported content cannot be immediately subsumed within one of the salient, pre-existing frames. Miller and Parnell Riechert (2003: 111-113) define three stages of the framing process: (1) the definition/conflict phase, in which social actors try to gain media attention and establish *"a specific point of view as an appropriate frame for the issue"*, and often the conflict between these actors and their frames is the main driving force of news coverage; (2) the resonance phase, during which a particular frame becomes ascendant when it *"resonate[s] with the values and experiences of the public"*; (3) the equilibrium or resolution phase, which is marked by the establishment of a dominant frame. This does not, however, mean that opposition to the dominant frame has ceased, but only that it has at least temporarily lost its salience in mediatised public debate. New events can challenge the dominant frame, opening it up for contestation, or simply increase its complexity or coherence. The relative power of certain frames and their ability to become dominant depend in part on their resonance with shared beliefs, but also on power relations between the competing groups and social actors that promote them. Moreover, frames do not only develop and change over time but also operate on different levels of generalisation and specificity. Thus several authors distinguish between macro-level

frames; also referred to as journalistic, master frames (Snow and Benford, 1992), and meta-frames (Wolfsfeld, 1997) or enduring (cultural) frames that could possibly be applicable across different events (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989).

Undoubtedly, part of framing's popularity is that it foregrounds the relationship between (social) power and (mass) communication, on the one hand highlighting hegemonic struggles for the definition of social and political reality, while simultaneously drawing attention to the individualised processing of mediated information. As Reese (2007: 152) puts it, the "*framing project opens up more room for interpretation, captures a more dynamic process of negotiating meaning, and highlights the relationships within discourse*". Moreover, framing's operational principle – the prioritisation of selected elements, concepts or symbols – democratises and expands (at least in theory) a selection of research material and media. But has framing research actually lived up to the promise of this potential for cross-fertilisation, both within studies of communication and across disciplines? If it is "*a provocative model that bridges parts of the field that need to be in touch with each other: quantitative and qualitative, empirical and interpretive, psychological and sociological, and academic and professional*" (Reese, 2007: 148), has it actually taken advantage of the opportunity to explore (or exploit) these new possibilities?

Recently, a number of authors have attempted to answer this question in a much more systematic and in-depth manner than could be achieved in this format, and the reader is invited to consult a number of these overviews (Scheufele, 1999; D'Angelo, 2002; Reese, 2003; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). This chapter's claim is far more modest, though by no means unambitious – to expose one of the fundamental lacks of current framing research on news reporting – analysis of press photographs – and to point to potential benefits image analysis and cross-fertilisation with visual studies could offer for framing research.

## 2. THE MISSING PICTURE

Despite the proliferation of framing research, the visual component of news reporting remains *terra incognita*, or rather, *terra inuisitata*. News workers, media audiences and power elites alike are keen to acknowledge the extraordinary power of images to influence perception (e.g. see Perlmutter, 1998). It has been repeatedly argued that images have the poten-

tial to sway the opinions of individuals and social groups and stimulate social action because of their strong emotional appeal, and their power has been conceived much in the vein of the hypodermic needle conceptualisation of media effects (predestined, universal effects). Thus, on the level of news production, the existence of suitable imagery has become almost a mandatory precondition, without which a given news item is highly unlikely to enter into the news flow. Similarly, on the level of news presentation, images have increasingly come to the foreground, often eschewing or replacing the dominant position of textual news items. Given the strong criticism of the centrality of the 'image' in postmodern-era political, sociological or media studies, the absence of the visual component of framing research is both striking and surprising, especially since framing literature routinely lists images as one of the potential framing devices of news reporting. However, when these lists are transformed into research designs for the study of print or electronic news, images such as press photographs, illustrations or caricatures somehow fall out of the analytical framework.

The reasons for this neglect could in large part be connected to an ambivalent attitude towards images within Western societies in general, and within social sciences in particular. What I am referring to here is the peculiar dialectics of privileging ocular centrism as a means of acquiring knowledge, and the simultaneous denigration of images and vision. The latter is an extension of the ancient belief in (and fear of) the magical efficacy of images, very clearly explicated in Western philosophy by Plato. Within social sciences, this reluctant stand towards images could be termed 'rational bias', as the study of images is generally eschewed in favour of text on the basis of two deep-seated, but seldom examined presuppositions. The first postulates the rationality of human behaviour in the spheres of politics, economics and communication, and the second links images with irrationality and emotions (and the consequent hindering or overshadowing of the rational processing of information) as opposed to the alleged rationality of the mind and the written word. Within media studies, at least on the empirical level, the rational bias clearly transforms into textual bias. Framing studies that combine the textual and visual aspects of media messages (e.g. Entman, 1991), or studies dealing explicitly with visual framing (e.g. Fahmy, 2004), are few and far between. However, there is also a technological side to this historical baggage of textual bias. Many of the contemporary framing studies use article databases such as Lexis-Nexis to generate sampling material, which is then subjected to computerised content analysis, a process that by its design focuses only on



the textual aspects of news reporting. This has fairly little in common with the actual experience of reading an article on the newspaper page or on the computer screen, where large photographs dominate graphic layouts and structure the reader's attention, reading path and mnemonic processing and retrieval of information.

### 3. FIVE NOTES ON WHY TO INCLUDE VISUALS IN FRAMING ANALYSIS

Framing is defined as a process which sees an increase in the salience of one aspect of reality that promotes "*a particular problem definition, causal interpretations, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendations for the item described*" (Entman, 1993: 52) In this regard, visual images such as photographs seem to be ideal framing devices.

1. The primary function of press photographs is precisely to increase the salience of a selected topic or event. Studies confirm that photographs attract the reader's attention, with the size of a photograph being the decisive factor (Knobloch et. al, 2003). Eye tracking studies have confirmed that readers do not read newspapers linearly but 'enter' pages through the most powerful graphic elements, namely photographs (Gibson, 1991), their reading path moving from one salient element to the next (Krees and van Leeuwen, 1996: 218) before deciding which news items deserve their attention. Although attention to images does not automatically extend to text (Garcia and Stark, 1991; Knobloch et. al., 2003), combining both text and photograph makes it three times more likely that at least some of the text will be read (Pfau et. al, 2007). The effect of images drawing attention to the accompanying text seems to be dependent on the content of the image - the presence of danger-signalling images increases the likelihood of news items being read (Gibson and Zillmann, 2000).

2. Additionally, visual images appear to be far more memorable than verbal accounts of news. Studies indicate greater information recall in cases where news items are accompanied with visuals (Waddill and McDaniel, 1992). Pavio (1971) explains the increased memorability of images through dual code theory, which claims that visual and non-visual information are coded separately. Once visual images are encoded and stored in the memory, they tend to "*dominate verbal representations in subsequent retrieval, resulting in a 'picture-superiority effect'*" (Pfau et al., 2007: 152). Similarly, Pezdek (1977) found that the content of images and words tends to combine with time, with a distinct preference for visual content.

3. Studies of human brain structures seem to give some validity to the claim that visuals bypass reason, as visual signals appear to be processed differently, separately and before reason-based cognition. Barry (1997: 116) claims "*the language of images, grounded in the stuff of perceptual experience, affects us directly and involves instinct and emotion, before the linear logic derived from language can be imposed on it*". These findings do not presuppose that the emotive capacity of images necessarily overpowers rational perception, but merely that they have this capacity and that the whole process plays out on a subconscious level.

4. Research has also shown that it is generally the visual content of news and not textual reports that elicits emotional and mental states such as pain, happiness, sadness, curiosity, doubt, fear or embarrassment (Graber, 1996). In research on images of war, negative images (e.g. war casualties) were found to elicit negative emotional effects such as puzzlement, anger and sadness, while text (if compared to photographs) appeared to enhance positive emotions (Pfau et al., 2007: 160-161).

5. Visual images were also found to be more efficient in communicating 'things' that cannot be fully expressed in words, such as the implicit conveyance of affective meanings and (symbolic or implied) relations between subjects (El Refaie, 2003). This is consistent with a standard proposition of photography theory about the incomplete match between the possibility of expression in images and that of words: the 'translation' is always incomplete and a certain 'residual' remains after images are translated into words.

In part, the power of the photographic image stems from its ability to offer the illusion of participation, of 'bearing witness', 'being there', of 'seeing with one's own eyes'. But more importantly, the power of photography lies in its simultaneous symbolic quality, its ability to surpass the descriptive limitations of the language. It is precisely photography's inherent ambiguity, its symbolic potential and metonymic nature that enable the still photographic image to stand in for individually and collectively (re) produced interpretations of the present and past. As several authors have argued, journalism turns to visual storytelling not because of its superior descriptive capabilities but because of its ability to contextualise the discrete details in a broader, symbolic frame that is rendered more natural and hence more pervasive by the apparently unmediated realism of the medium (Zelizer, 2004: 130). The 'real' storytelling potential of press pho-

tography thus depends on its ability to bestow interpretations to accurately rendered objects, to synthesise the meaning of their relationships into a single image. Or frame. Collectively, the results of existing studies on the efficacy of visuals presented above point to the fact that images appear to be potent 'triggers' of an individual's mental frameworks. Namely, the individuals do not process, store and retrieve information in their totality but resort to 'shortcuts', such as comparing new information to already existing organising principles in the network of concepts (schemata), which also structure information retrieval and its subsequent adaptations. In short, they have a powerful potential to act as news frames, guiding the processes of information selection, interpretation and retrieval. The power of photographs thus seems to be dependent not so much on their explicit content (specific event) but on how this content resonates with already existing schemata, with pre-existing attitudes or opinions on a given issue. As such, they can act as powerful crystallisers and motivators of public debate. Rather than simply instilling pictures in our heads, photojournalism pictures appeal to "*pictures in our heads*", to borrow Lippmann's famous phrase.

#### 4. THE MISSING FRAMES

The incorporation of image research into framing studies designs is by no means an unchallenging project. Visuals have a notorious tendency to be polysemic and thus can remain fairly open to interpretation. Furthermore, their meaning is always (con)text-dependent and the same photograph can change suggested meaning in a different context or if accompanied by different text. This should not, however, be taken as a discouragement. Photographs can fruitfully be incorporated either into quantitative, qualitative or mixed research designs, and visual studies have developed a series of indicators that can help pin down framing's "*imprint of power*" (e.g. see Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). The aim of this chapter, however, is not to lay out a methodological blueprint but to argue for the need to conduct analysis of press photographs as news. With this in mind, the conclusion must necessarily address the question of what is gained by this inclusion.

First, visual frames communicated through press photographs can be markedly different from textual frames. This is particularly likely if a media outlet is producing its own textual content while relying on photographs supplied by news agencies. For example, in the coverage of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 in Slovene newspapers, textual reports and opinion

pieces which were often openly critical of the US-led invasion were supplemented with photographs deeply embedded within the discourse of Orientalism (Tomanić Trivundža, 2004). Such dissonant frames need not be a result of the dominance and hence frame-setting ability of press agencies over the flow of (international) news. Rather, it should be attributed to the role of 'indigenous' gatekeepers within media institutions, such as journalists, editors and graphic designers and to photography's lower status within image production. Namely, there are no commonly accepted rules and guidelines on the selection of press photographs, which is often carried out by news workers with little or no background in photography. Frequently, photographs would be selected intuitively and as such can be potent indicators of commonly accepted social norms and values that can exert a strong influence on news frames, particularly as these social norms are not held in check by strict professional norms that mould the textual side of news reporting.

Second, in cases of consonant framing, press photographs can add another interpretative layer and thus enhance the dominant frames. This is most often achieved through the use of standardised and stereotypical images (e.g. hooded Muslim militants) that often obscure the specific aspects of individual news items by evoking an associative chain of preconceived notions, interpretations and attitudes, or through patterns of structural inequality in terms of visual representation. For example, in one major Slovene daily, Western politicians are depicted as being more visually 'legitimate' than their developing world counterparts. Politicians from developing nations are thus less frequently featured on photographs and, when they do appear, they are less prominently displayed in terms of size and placement. Often, the political actors of developing countries are not even depicted in person but dehumanised to their representations on placards, signs, murals or statues. In extreme cases, the representation of political actors is substituted by the depiction of street scenes and groups of anonymous people (Tomanić Trivundža, 2006).

Third, media outlets often use two types of photographs that do not necessarily strictly adhere to the rules of accurate and timely reporting. These are photographs that serve as visual metaphors that supply symbolic statements, connotations or interpretations of events through the use of gestures, symbols etc. and photographs that serve merely as illustrations, with little or no direct connection to the reported events. Both are – precisely because of their looser connection to factual reporting – potent framing devices, as their appeal draws directly on socially shared repertoires of

ideas. For example, in one major Slovene daily, news from the developing world can be visualised through archive photographs, photographs from other regions and countries, unrelated photographs and depictions that resonate with image repertoires of stock and travel photography. Such photographs, which carry little or no news value, are not merely illustrations, attention-grabbers and visual attributers of focus and importance, but serve as potent purveyors of pre-established ideas, stereotypes and visual differentiation that can, for example, serve to legitimise certain attitudes, policies or understandings of appropriate action (Ibid.).

As Griffin (2004: 384) argues, news photographs “*may be more important for their role in priming pre-existing interpretative schema, linking viewer’s memory to familiar news categories and scenarios than for their specific referential or descriptive function*”. Frames are important not only for their influence on the interpretation of events, on how people understand the world and thus form judgements, but also for their role in information retrieval. They are constitutive to the forming of schemata, commonsense models of the world that not only speed up the information retrieval process but also serve as a pool of data from which missing information is supplemented.

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# SECTION THREE

## MEDIA MEETS THE POLITICAL



ATTENTIVE AUDIENCE AT  
WORKSHOP ON IDEOLOGY  
IN POPULAR CULTURE

PHOTO: MAXIMILLIAN HANSKA-AHY



# Processes of hybridisation in contemporary popular and media culture: Theoretical remarks<sup>1</sup>

Irena Reifová

## 1. INTRODUCTION

To approach communication media in their complexity as a media culture means showing equal interest in both producers of media texts and users of their meanings as two fully fledged parts of a single whole. This approach explores the formative tensions in which the particular articulations of production and consumption in the particular culture make sense, i.e. facilitate the processes of de-/stabilizing identities, power relations, cultural anxieties or pleasures. The interrelationship between political communication and popular culture, the culture-bound articulation of 'serious affairs' and 'light entertainment', the realm of the important and the trivial, represents one of the strongest late modern formative tensions of media culture, and must be accounted for as such. This set of introductory theoretical remarks synthesises recent explorations in a dialectics of politics and popular culture and translates them into a model of mediatisation of political communication. This model of a general tripartite process of hybridisation of public communication validates the presence of all three types of relevant actors: political, media and civic.

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1 The chapter is an output of a long-term project devoted to the study of television popular culture and Czechoslovak serials and series, 1959-2009, at Charles University of Prague, Centre for Media Studies (CEMES). As such it is a part of the research project, entitled "Development of Czech Society in the European Union: Challenges and Risks (2005-2010)", MSM002162084.

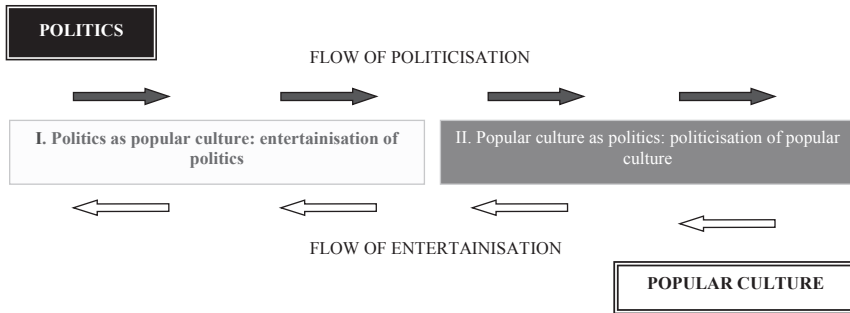
## 2. THE ENTERTAINISATION OF POLITICS AND THE POLITICISATION OF POPULAR CULTURE

The increasing proximity of serious political communication and relaxed popular culture is currently understood in social and cultural studies from a dystopian and a utopian perspective. The dystopian perspective starts from the point that previously serious political debate in the public sphere ('the bourgeois public sphere', Coleman and Ross, 2010: 30) is now degraded as a result of interference from entertainment. This perspective (owing its substance to the original conception of the public sphere formulated by Jürgen Habermas in 1962) puts a great deal of emphasis on the degeneration of serious public debate. It focuses on the decrease in the information quality of media content, which can then be utilised less and less for the purposes of responsible citizenship. The utopian perspective, on the contrary, sees popular culture as a province for democratic deliberation. Although it usually does not represent party politics, it has the capacity to convey and stimulate 'the political' (Mouffe, 2005). It processes inherently political issues in talk shows, reality shows or socially realistic soap operas, and brings 'the political' closer to popular receptivity and creativity. Afterwards it is used as one of the resources to produce meanings and identities and to develop the tactics that can outmanoeuvre the strategies of power (de Certeau, 1984). Popular culture then becomes the parallel forum to an elected political representation that is less and less capable of any representation.

John Street labels the dystopian perspective 'politics as popular culture' and the utopian perspective 'popular culture as politics' (Street, 1997). It is important to keep the parallelism of both perspectives in a prominent place in the research agenda – as a way of avoiding the usual catastrophic-elitist or democratic-populist dogmas. The complex of contemporary media culture is based on the simultaneity of both elitist and democratic elements. It is a fusion in which traditionally high-quality political communication (more a normative dream than an actual reality) is debased and turns into a 'circus'. At the same time there are (some) new spaces which, at least potentially, incorporate new democratic qualities. They do not fit into the frame of the traditional public sphere and do not resemble anything that has been understood as a guarantee of a democratic political system. But these two tendencies give a true picture of the formative tension of contemporary media culture only if their coexistence is represented. The two tendencies are the modification of the classic public sphere, based upon the activities of professional politicians and communicators,

and the acceleration of the participative public sphere, based upon the activities and resources of the public. This formative tension is illustrated in Figure 1, which captures the oppositional flows of entertainisation and politicisation.

**Figure 1: Flows of politicisation and entertainisation in political communication**



## 2.1 THE ENTERTAINISATION OF POLITICS - POLITICS AS POPULAR CULTURE

The dystopian perspective, inspired by the classical critical theory of society and mainly the Habermasian concept of the transformation of the public sphere (Habermas, 2000), requires the public sphere to be serious, critical and rational, although the media, commercial and ideological principles permanently contaminate it with the populist attractions of entertainment. The public sphere and its communicative rationality are thus constantly at risk of becoming a target for the colonising ambitions of economical and political power. The elementary qualities of the public sphere, especially its attribute of 'ideal speech situation', are endangered by ongoing private efforts to recruit political or economical upholders, in other words voters or clients. This perspective's point of departure is a firm duality between the serious public sphere and ephemeral, secondary entertainment – and the necessity of maintaining this distinction. As the public sphere confronts constant attacks from commercial and ideological interests, its content and rhetorical style are turned into entertaining trivia. Popular entertainment lures the mass audience, it pleases and meets its taste and brings together numerous recipients who are used as an object of political or commercial persuasion. People who should be addressed as citizens with the power to form their own opinions are appealed to as consumers of easy distractions.

The very typical and long running debate covering the decline of the media's democratic functions (especially television turning politics into a show) concerns the so-called 'video malaise' (Robinson, 1976; Holtz-Bacha, 1990; Brants, de Vreese, Miller and van Praag, 2010). "*The term media malaise refers to accounts claiming that common practices in political communication by the news media and by party campaigners hinder the 'civic engagement', meaning citizens' learning about the public affairs, trust in government, and political activism*" (Norris, 2000: 4). The long list of concepts was also collected in media studies within research that aimed to determine more specific violations of the seriousness of political news coverage: infotainment, celebritisation, commercialisation, drama democracy, personalisation, privatisation, sensationalism, simplification, sound-bite democracy, spectator democracy, tabloidisation and trivialisation (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995; Elchardus, 2002; Manin, 1997; McNair, 2003; van Zoonen, 2009). Brian McNair describes this strand of research as an enquiry into: "*the decline in the quality of political journalism, driven by what are variously described as processes of commercialisation, tabloidisation, Americanisation and, in the currently fashionable vernacular, the 'dumbing down' - in short, the ascendancy of 'infotainment' over 'serious' reportage and analysis of politics*" (McNair, 2006: 2).

## 2.2 THE POLITICISATION OF POPULAR CULTURE - POPULAR CULTURE AS POLITICS

The utopian perspective, on the other hand, seeks to study democratic processes by looking at the political potential of popular, entertaining content, especially in television and new media/technologies. This standpoint represents an opposition to the critical/elitist view, but these two parts give the full picture of contemporary media culture only if studied together. Blurring the line between mere entertainment and political readings has been previously referred to as the convergence of politics and popular culture. "*However, to set politics apart from the rest of culture is not a feasible option for the maintenance of citizenship: not only will it survive the competition for spare time, but more importantly it will also be separated, different and distant from everyday life*" (van Zoonen, 2005: 3). Where the elitist position sees politics and popular culture as purist categories that must be kept separate, the democratic position sees them overlapping and hybridising. From this perspective, popular culture has noticeable potential for political meanings – it can function as a parallel sphere of civic activities that may have the sublime in it.

Graeme Turner (2004: 82) uses the notion 'demotic turn' to refer to the accession of ordinary people, who are not elites, celebrities or professional communicators, into the media. Analysis of this process is based on the presupposition that popular culture may make otherwise boring or opaque topics more accessible, make citizenship a more pleasant activity and free it of political clichés or news speak. This analysis builds on the key concepts of 'popular citizenship' and 'cultural citizenship' (Hartley, 1999; Hermes, 2005; Miller, 2007). The classical concept of citizenship referred to the city as a political community or 'polis'. When traditional ties to the 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 2003) like nation had started to dissolve, new attempts to reconstitute citizenship on alternative, surrogate foundations emerged. In this case, citizenship is rooted in the everyday shared use of cultural texts and its contribution to building identities and clarifying values. John Hartley, for example, differentiates mass television and new 'emergent' television that may foster redefined forms of citizenship. In his view, the convergence of popular culture and politics results in so-called 'democratainment' (Hartley, 1999: 154).

Recently, the arena in which new citizenship is realised was detected in the realm of the participatory formats of popular culture in the 'old media', and the participatory dimension of the new media/technologies (e.g. social networks, blogospheres and citizen journalism) (Jenkins, 2006). The advent of popular bottom-up communication practices is mainly about the quality of representation. In post-hegemonic society people seem to prefer identity politics to party politics as a tool kit to help them to find their place in the world (Hall and Du Gay, 1996). Parliamentary democracy thus fails to create the experience of true, corresponding and sufficient representation. In this situation, deliberative elements of pure democracy surface as the option – and the inclusive, participatory formats and technologies are more and more often listed as the prime site of such a 'digital democracy'. Stephen Coleman made 'the representation' the key notion of his study of TV reality shows (namely the British version of *Big Brother*). Opinion-forming and voting account for a substantial part of audience activity, which inspired Coleman to compare this reality show to the political democratic process and the *Big Brother* house to the House of Commons in the British parliament. However they differed in a tiny, tiny detail – viewers of the reality show felt better represented by the procedures of the show than voters did by their MPs in the House of Commons (Coleman, 2003).

### 3. AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF MEDIA HYBRIDISATION

This set of theoretical remarks seeks to emphasise that research on contemporary media culture should include both types of analysis in one. Media culture should be framed as an inseparable unity of elitist and democratic processes. The main reason is that the aforementioned and seemingly contradictory processes – the ‘dumbing down’ of serious political communication and the ‘politicising’ of popular culture – have a common background. The common explanatory framework can be covered by the concept of *integrated hybridisation*, which can be applied to the scene of contemporary political communication.

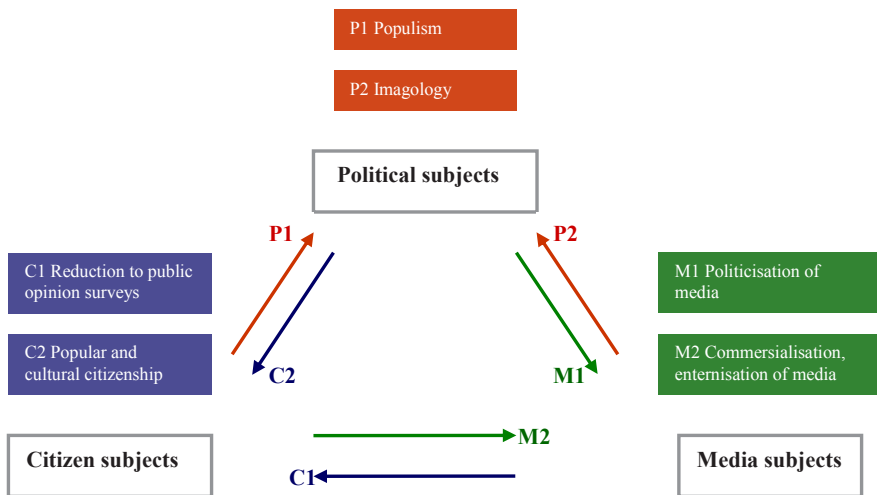
One-way hybridisation between media and politics has previously been described as ‘mediatisation’ (Schulz and Mazzoleni, 1999). Politicians and political actors are surrounded by omnipresent ‘media logic’, adapt to it and anticipate it in the forms they use to present politics to the public. The political actors a priori create the political reality so that it fits in with media style and meets the media routines and practices (for example, the aforementioned infotainment or sound-bite tendencies) The political actors are ‘mediatised’ – they live political lives that are always already predestined and prefabricated for media coverage. In postmodern politics, the purity and autonomy of the political subject is dead. According to the concept of ‘mediatisation’, the political subjects are from the start impure or contaminated following the media logic. “*The original dichotomy of the political process (controlled mainly by the political elite) and its public manifestation (managed predominantly by the media) enters the stage of closer dependency and perhaps the competition for primacy,*” confirms Czech media scholar Jan Jirák (2000).

The original concept of mediatisation can, however, be widened in its scope. The elaborated, generalised version of mediatisation (which I call hybridisation) introduces the idea that the reciprocal transmission of influence is not limited to the domains of media and politics. The integrated model of hybridisation works on the assumption that each subject involved in political communication determines and gets determined by all the others. The network of behaviours that follow from mirroring the other two parties in the process and taking over parts of their roles are here called hybridisation. The network of hybridisations includes political subjects, media subjects and citizen subjects. Each element gets hybridised by the other two elements. The political subjects get hybridised by both media subjects (politics is mediatised, turned into imagology) and citi-



zen/user subjects (politics goes populist). Media subjects are hybridised by both political subjects (the media become a political force, the 'fourth estate' etc.) and citizen/user subjects (the media become commercialised). Citizen/user subjects are hybridised by both media subjects (citizens absorb the opinions presented to them by the media) and political subjects (citizens are politicised and display this e.g. in the uses of popular culture and new technologies). The integrated model of hybridisation is visualised in Figure 2. Line C represents the hybridisation of citizen subjects due to the exchange of logics between citizen subjects and media (C1) and political (C2) subjects. Line M represents the hybridisation of media subjects by adapting to the logics of political (M1) and citizen (M2) subjects. Line P represents the hybridisation of political subjects by anticipating the logics of media (P1) and citizen (P2) subjects.

**Figure 2: Integrated model of hybridisation**



#### 4. CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the growing extent of reader/user autonomy and the shift from interpretation to production, the 'war' over the authority of the text against the competence of the reader is based on the underlying platform of contradiction between structure and agency that lingers through social and human sciences. This particular duality of social existence is also indisputably at the very core of cultural studies. The study of popular

culture only mirrors and amplifies this basic interest in the tension between structure and agency because popular culture content is capable of delivering interesting research 'material', i.e. ordinary people (actors, to put it differently) who perform their agency, which is what remains after the contestation of structural determination.

Cultural studies also belong to the tradition that perpetuates the significance of an interrelationship between structure and agency. The process of reflecting on the interplay between structure and agency is one of the most important engines in the field. Cultural studies (in the form of a by-product) place emphasis on an inseparability of structure and agency, and show that structure and agency have a purely analytical function, if they are seen as isolated, detached categories. Structure and agency are categories that help people to think in abstract terms but which have no other existence in reality.

In this analytical sense, structuralism has always been involved in the study of impositions of meanings from above by language, social, discursive or ideological structures; it has been concerned with non-human or super-life-sized forces. Culturalism, on the other hand, focuses on the agency of humans, with all their peculiarities and down-to-earth specificities. Both perspectives are highly anti-essentialist, they do not assume that meanings are 'out there'. In terms of structuralism, meanings are part of the non-human structures that 'speak' about things; in terms of culturalism, meanings are part of the human agents that 'read' the structures and make their own sense out of the readings.

Reconciliation of the perspectives emphasising structure and agency has been an ongoing quest in sociology and other related domains. The integrated model of hybridisation presented above strives to enrich this debate with the concept of a continuum of structure and agency. It proposes looking at these two robust sociological abstractions from the perspective of the slow mutual transformation of the one into the other (and back) on the principle of reciprocal adaptation and absorption of the attributes of the ever co-present counterpart. Any isolated purity or autonomous existence seems to be just a fading illusion in late modernity, when everything is co-present with everything.

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# Media, participation and the state of democracy

Fausto Colombo and Matteo Vergani

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This article provides an overview of the relationship between media, participation, and the state of democracy. In what follows we will develop a model that combines four different factors. The first factor concerns the shared experience of politics and the role played by individual and collective political actions. The other three factors attempt to explain citizens' experiences of, and attitudes towards, politics, and the various forms of participation in which they are engaged. These factors are the formal institutional system, the media system, and the state of cultural flows<sup>1</sup>.

For each of these factors, we will discuss some of the basic theoretical elaborations, in combination with some of the relevant critiques and illustrations, that Italy provides for us. Our analysis of the four factors uses a perspective which is firmly embedded within the tradition of civic cultures. Through our analysis, we mainly want to sketch the interrelatedness of the four factors; more specifically, our basic hypothesis is that political culture affects the use of media and that this has an impact on the state of democracy.

## 2. THE SHARED EXPERIENCE OF POLITICS AND THE TRADITION OF CIVIC CULTURES

The history of the relationships between forms of government and citizens' modes of behaviour has been discussed since the dawn of time:

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<sup>1</sup> This four-factor model was first elaborated by Fausto Colombo as part of a course taught in Pesaro that examined the strengths and weaknesses of web 2.0.

in the Bible, by Plato, by Aristotle, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Tocqueville, Wilson, and Marx. Among European sociologists, it is Weber who has significantly deepened the subject: In his work on religion, in his definition of the 'ideal types' of political authority (traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic), and in his remarks on political parties and on social action. Even work conducted in the area of social psychology in the twentieth century has been concerned with the challenge of explaining the political and social disasters of the time through the concepts of instinct, habit, feeling, and attitude<sup>2</sup>. In a similar way, psycho-anthropology from Freud onwards has approached this issue by using psychoanalysis (of which Lasswell is the best known exponent). Authors working in this tradition attempt to explain political culture by looking at the role played by attitudes developed in childhood under the influence of parental figures or by examining other agencies of socialisation (Almond and Verba, 1980). A milestone work which deals with the relationship between forms of government and the experience of politics is *The Civic Culture* by Almond and Verba (1963). The book defines *civic culture* as the set of cognitive, affective, and evaluative orientations regarding political phenomena that are distributed in national groups or subgroups<sup>3</sup>. Almond and Verba believe that, using this definition as a starting point, the concept of political culture can be expanded in three directions: *substantive content*; different orientations towards the system (*varieties of orientation*), and the *systemic relations between these components*.

The model of civic culture developed here is somewhat different from the earlier psychologistic and reductionist version. The model of civic culture that we have developed attempts to suggest what civic culture should be today, how it is affected by a diverse set of factors, and how democracy can be strengthened through it (Dahlgren, 2002). Empirically, we are talking about the preconditions of democratic participation in the institutions of civil society, in the public sphere, and in traditional political activities. These preconditions relate to the prevailing cultural attributes among citizens, which may, in various ways, facilitate democracy. Here, not only the attitudes of citizens, their preferences, orientations, and perceptions, but also and especially the systemic and sociological dimensions, the frames within which these attributes are generated are considered. On the one hand, it can be said that civic culture generates the cultural and norma-

2 See for instance Lazarsfeld (1960).

3 One of the most frequent criticisms made in this connection is that of falling into so-called *methodological nationalism* (see Beck, 2006).



tive resources necessary for democratic functioning, but on the other, civic culture is based on political and economic power<sup>4</sup>.

Dahlgren (2002, 2009), who has made a major contribution to these debates, proposes a model of civic culture consisting of six parameters, assembled in a dynamic circuit in which each parameter relates to the others. Each parameter reflects a normative assumption, and at the same time provides a set of tools for critical analysis. These are the six parameters that Dahlgren proposes:

*Values.* Dahlgren distinguishes between substantive values such as equality, freedom, justice, solidarity, and procedural values such as openness, reciprocity, discussion, responsibility, accountability, and tolerance.

*Trust and a sense of belonging.* This not only refers to a sense of belonging to a shared political and social community, but also to the trust regarded as accountable towards institutions, and the level of reliability these institutions have amongst citizens.

*Civic knowledge.* Reliable knowledge of the social world is essential to keep democracy alive. It allows communicative relations to be established in the political environment.

*Practices.* Individuals, groups, and the wider communities of practices express their membership in a civic culture through routine and through what is taken for granted in everyday life.

*Civic identity.* This dimension does not refer to the formal institutional system, but is rather a perceptive dimension. In late modernity, individuals are seen as being endowed with multiple, multidimensional, liquid, and hybrid identities. Hybrid ethnicities, regionalisations, post-colonialisms, federalisms, issues regarding gender and sexual preferences –all of these factors have an impact on how civic culture is perceived by citizens, and impacts on the perception of their effectiveness in the democratic system.

*Discussion spaces.* This parameter brings us back to the starting point: the centrality of communicative interaction (i.e., discourse) among citizens.

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4 In this sense, structural factors such as the formal institutional system (made of laws, regulations, and the structure of democratic powers), the media system, and the cultural flows help to shape civic culture, and are in turn affected by it.

Another interesting way of studying the relationship between civic culture and quality of democracy (see, among others, Almagisti and Iazzetta, 2009) is by employing the so-called theories of civil society. There are a number of conceptual and empirical pitfalls in defining civil society and its boundaries, and in classifying which of the many associative/organisational forms of late modernity should be placed inside or outside its boundaries (Dahlgren, 2002). However, the central issue of these theories is the optimistic neo-Toquevillian belief according to which a lively democracy needs a strong basis of associations within society<sup>5</sup>.

In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (2000) argues that the decline of civic participation comes with a decreasing 'social capital' of the citizenry. An increasing fragmentation and atomisation corresponds to a decline in social trust, which in turn inhibits participation. Putnam and others attribute this situation to the dumbing-down effect and to the monopolisation of time associated with the new media culture. Others, like Cohen and Arato (1992) emphasise the role of the state's social and economic policies, and of the legal/institutional frame in shaping civil society. Even though Sennet's (1977) reflections on the decline of American public culture refer to a previous historical period and stem from a different scholarly tradition, they remain relevant.

From these theoretical starting points – and in every nation and culture – studies on local civic cultures and subcultures have flourished. As far as Italy is concerned, Sani (1980) speaks of a reticent culture (that is, a reluctance to talk about politics) and of a culture of political antagonism (one which moves along the left/right and secular/clerical axes, and causes strong feelings of mutual hostility in the electorate). In his famous study on the political subcultures of southern Italy, Banfield coins the term *amoral familism* to describe "the inability of people to act together for their common welfare or, indeed, for any purpose that transcends the immediate, material interest of the household" (Banfield, 1958: 10)<sup>6</sup>. Putnam (1993), in a study on the institutional performance of Italian regions, suggests – in contradiction to those who claim that institutions have a fundamental role in shaping politics – that the differing efficiencies of identical institutions (the 15 Italian regions with ordinary statutes) can be explained by the effects of the social

5 Of course, this theory tends to ignore illiberal and undemocratic associations and groups such as racist and neo-fascist groups.

6 Sciolla (1997), by contrast, does not believe that familism is a source of problems, but is rather indicative of its vital strength. Sciolla claims that civic sense is not absent in Italy, but isolated and unable to create forms of political participation.

context, and especially of culture. Yet there are still many studies which analyse local political subcultures, especially in southern Italy, and see these as contributing to sediment phenomena such as nepotism and the relationship between mafia and politics (see among others: Della Porta, 1999; Anastasi, 1995; Piattoni, 2005).

The approach suggested here takes account of these research traditions, putting them in relation with the frames of the formal institutional system, the media system, and the flows of culture.

### 3. THE FORMAL INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

Action and communication are generated and operate within frames that are not directly controllable by the actors involved, whether these be individuals or collective actors such as companies, institutions, or political parties. The formal institutional system is the set of rules, procedures, relationships, and balances (such as the division of the executive, legislative, and judicial powers) that enable and legitimise the exercise of government power as a process of democratic decision-making. Amongst the essential requirements of formal institutional systems there are rights such as the right of expression, freedom of association, of religious belief, of fair elections, of access to alternative sources of information, and so on. The less these rights are protected, the less one can say that the formal institutional system is working properly. And, consequently, democracy becomes less healthy (Dahlgren, 2002).

Viewed historically, government is seen as a top-down process of imposing the will of the public administration by using available formal instruments (such as laws, administrative acts, decrees, regulations). From the late 1970s, the debate on public policies has led to the establishment of a new form of *public management*, based not only on government but also on governance. According to this new logic, administrations should exert a regulatory function privileging the principles of consensus, functionality, and technical, organisational, economic, and social feasibility. The instruments of governance are not exclusively formal, such as those used by government, but are rather informal. As such they arise out of relationships, agreements, and arrangements between the public and the private stakeholders of a local community (Della Porta, 1999).

The traditional equation 'government = formal instruments: governance = informal instruments' can be enhanced by another dimension: that of the informal backstage of government. In Italy, this dimension is made clearly visible through the biased relationships that exist between government and the public broadcasting system, even though the latter should answer only to Parliament. A good example of this situation is given by the following episode.

On March 12<sup>th</sup> 2010, Italian newspapers reported the case of wiretaps in which Prime Minister Berlusconi lobbied AGCOM<sup>7</sup> to get the *Annozero* talk show cancelled. The same article reports a telephone call between Berlusconi and Minzolini<sup>8</sup>, in which it appears that the latter reassured the Prime Minister about some of the contents to be aired on the news. According to press reports<sup>9</sup>, these events were confirmed by the Public Prosecutor's office of Trani, which had begun an investigation that could result in bribery charges being levelled at Minzolini, Prime Minister Berlusconi, and Authority Commissioner Innocenzi.

If these charges were to be upheld, it would reveal a state of affairs and a set of communicative practices that are usually hidden from public view. It would shed light on the dark plots that bring government into disrepute, but which will nevertheless not shift or topple those presently in power. It is just as in more traditional practices of government, where agents of public administration exert their power over others. If government can be defined as decision-making according to a formal institutional system, backstage government can be defined as decision-making through informal relationships. They share the hierarchical structure, the lack of cooperation and mediation between the parties, the rigid and specific nature

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7 The Communication Regulatory Authority (AGCOM) is the independent regulator of the Italian communications sector. It was established on 31 July 1997, by Law n. 249/97. AGCOM is a 'convergent' regulator. The definition refers to the choice made by Parliament, which attributed to AGCOM a series of functions extending from telecommunications to audiovisuals and publishing.

8 Augusto Minzolini is the director of the main Italian television news show (TG1), aired on Rai Uno.

9 The news was reported first of all on the front page of *Il Fatto* on 12/03/2010, and was subsequently followed by all main Italian newspapers. To find confirmation on online resources, visit the websites of the newspapers *La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere*:  
[http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2010/03/12/news/inchiesta\\_a\\_trani\\_telefonate\\_per\\_bloccare\\_annozero\\_berlusconi\\_fece\\_pressioni\\_su\\_tg1\\_e\\_agcom-2602943/](http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2010/03/12/news/inchiesta_a_trani_telefonate_per_bloccare_annozero_berlusconi_fece_pressioni_su_tg1_e_agcom-2602943/)  
[http://www.corriere.it/politica/speciali/2010/elezioni/notizie/di\\_pietro\\_minzolini\\_tv\\_e7f902d8-2dc6-11df-ab2a-00144f02aabe.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/politica/speciali/2010/elezioni/notizie/di_pietro_minzolini_tv_e7f902d8-2dc6-11df-ab2a-00144f02aabe.shtml)

of the contents of decisions which are not negotiable. These three aspects make government, backstage government, and governance very different from one another. Backstage government and governance only share the use of informal channels.

What is weakened in this episode is the role of the stakeholders in the national media system. They are no longer active subjects. They are both objects and instruments of power. They are objects of power because political power is exerted over them, and they are instruments of power because power is exerted through them. Television still has a dominant role in attempting to shape the cultural trends and habits of Italians, to shape Italian public opinion in the political sphere, and to influence voting trends<sup>10</sup>. The actors in the political system have an interest in exerting power over the media system to create conformity (Wick, 2001). In this struggle for consensus, the media are the main weapons. Since the formal institutional system does not provide legal opportunities to exert political power over the media – at least not for purposes of propaganda – this power cannot express itself through direct forms of government, but must focus on forms of backstage government and adopt informal means for bringing pressure to bear.

#### 4. THE MEDIA SYSTEM

Relations between media and politics are many and often contradictory. The media can be a *field* influenced by political power, the place where political leaders perform and where political stakeholders strive to gain influence. It is the place in which actors (including the same political leaders and stakeholders) see society reflected.

We take as our starting point that digitisation has brought deep changes, and that these have affected the whole media system, from production to distribution to consumption of media products. These changes have implications for all sectors of the media industry: from music to audiovisual (television and cinema), radio, and publishing. Just consider the struggles of the music industry against P2P, or the digitisation of traditional televi-

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10 For more on this subject please consult a recent piece of research by Censis, available at: [http://www.censis.it/10?relational\\_resource\\_51=5758&resource\\_50=5758&relational\\_resource\\_52=5758&relational\\_resource\\_385=5758&relational\\_resource\\_381=5758&relational\\_resource\\_382=5758&relational\\_resource\\_383=5758&relational\\_resource\\_384=5758&relational\\_resource\\_403=5758](http://www.censis.it/10?relational_resource_51=5758&resource_50=5758&relational_resource_52=5758&relational_resource_385=5758&relational_resource_381=5758&relational_resource_382=5758&relational_resource_383=5758&relational_resource_384=5758&relational_resource_403=5758).

sion (with the related problems of the switch from analogue to digital), or the challenges that the traditional publishing industry faces when devices such as iPad are introduced (see Jenkins, 2006; Colombo and Vittadini, 2008).

Digitisation has important consequences not only for the media as a system, but also and especially for everyday life practices. As the frame of everyday life is central in defining media (think of the process of double articulation as outlined by Silverstone (1994)), so do the media have a vital role in everyday life. Their narratives and their schedules offer interpretive frames for negotiating the ambiguity and complexity of the world. They comfort viewers by satisfying their need for order and security in everyday life. The internet, for instance, has become a permanent guest in the majority of Italian households. As Silverstone (2006: 52) states: “*The internet is not yet, and may never be, strictly a plural medium. It is singular: it significantly relies on, and reinforces, identity not plurality. And it has real problems with narrative*”. With regard to the digitisation of the media system and the consequent fragmentation of audiences, Silverstone (2006: 99) makes the following observation:

*Released from the fixed lines and solitary domestic screen, media culture is fracturing and distancing itself from the singularity of the mainstream [...] There is a political and economic dimension to this fragmentation and diversification too, of course. The convergence of the personal and the political, once the banner of feminism, has now become a reality, which has meant what many would suggest is the decline of the political, especially a withdrawal from the established and still modestly potent spaces of official politics and public discourse. There is a weakening, too, in the confidence which established media can feel in relation to their hold on the market as new entrants continue to challenge their twentieth-century security as dominant players (this goes for the established mainstream in press and broadcasting as it does for the established transnational enterprises in the new media marketplace.*

Probably, this separation from the official mainstream arena does not represent the death of politics *tout court*, but of politics as we knew it in the era of mass media. Chat rooms, message boards, blogs, and many other spaces of semi-public (or semi-private) online debate have begun to colonise the public political sites of the global media arena and play a key role in the development of *mediapolis*<sup>11</sup> and of new forms of political commit-

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11 Silverstone (2006: 50) defines *mediapolis*, starting from the concept of *polis* as found in Arendt, as the mediated space of appearance, the public mediated space “*which constitutes, more and more often, the basis of contemporary political life, both at a national and international*

ment. Many authors have interpreted this phenomenon through the categories provided by Habermas. According to this line of thinking, blogs in particular are regarded as sites for reanimating the public sphere and facilitating new forms of rational deliberation, freed from the colonising influences of the economic and political system.

Several criticisms have been levelled against these ideas (among others by Dahlgren, 2002; Murru, 2009). Firstly it has been noted that in Habermas's perspective on the dimension of power is completely removed from resolution (deliberation) and relegated to the realm of the 'system'. Secondly it has been stressed that Habermasian theorists underestimate the institutional context (*audience democracy*<sup>12</sup>), the feelings and attitudes towards politics, and the popular contents constituting the so-called civic culture. Thirdly, Habermas's perspective overstates the role of rationality in policy-making and public debate. The communication process described by Habermas is simple and devoid of those fundamental communicative dimensions related to rhetoric, to narrative, to identity, and to the event, which goes against the model of pure and ideal rationality. An ideal speech would imply that citizens face each other agreeing to give up their history to embrace a procedural and impersonal idea of communication. However, as Bourdieu (2000) states, interpersonal relationships do not occur in a social vacuum, but always combine a set of *habiti*, that is to say the sets of stories, sensitivities, emotions, feelings, experiences, and social relations that are also involved in communication and that shape the meanings of what is said. Finally, the Habermasian perspective makes a clear distinction between media, and underestimates media flexibility and mutability. In general we can say that this perspective overstates the media's *agenda setting* ability in determining the content and methods of debate in the public sphere. Rather, we can say that the processes of media agenda setting are both shaped by the dominant culture and supported by the political and social system.

The ideas that Silverstone develops in *On the Rise of Mediapolis* are less concerned with media ontological distinctions. Media constitute a complex system of different public arenas in which specific cultures and typically shared cultures are articulated at the same time. As Silverstone (2006: 31) says: "*Viewers watching Al Jazeera will obviously be seeing a different world from those watching Fox. And those differences are palpable and gripping. Yet*

*level; the place where both symbolic and material morphogenesis of the world takes place, mainly through political action and electronically vehicled communication*".



*they will be seeing that world through the media, and to a significant degree so do we*". It is precisely on difference that Silverstone proposes to build a new ethics of media. As he observes: "*We are different and, therefore, we are equal ... Acceptance of diversity and the ability to make distinctions are the building blocks of a strong global media ethic*" (Silverstone, 2006: 16). Democracy itself is the acceptance of difference, the rejection of difference is totalitarianism. Political life thus depends on diversity, on the presence of the Other in our world, and on the recognition of the Other's existence in the communicative sphere.

As for the Italian case, the anomalies of the media system are significant on two levels. The first concerns the advancement of digitisation, which is still only marginally impacting on television's central role. Compared to other major European democracies, Italy still has a low use of the internet, and broadband penetration is also lower than might be expected. It follows that the attitude towards participation is weak and shaped by television consumption. The second level regards the centrality of television, which is strongly supported by government policies (not surprisingly dominated by a TV tycoon) and is thus capable of providing biased forms of reporting by both public and private broadcasters.

## 5. THE FLOWS OF CULTURE

Political affiliation is expressed by citizen participation, by civic consciousness, and by politics. The term 'political' comes from the Greek *politikos*, and indicates the citizens of the *polis*. The *politikoi* are those who actively participate in public life, making the necessary choices for its civil and economic growth. All citizens who participate in the political life of a country are *politikoi*; they are politicians, and the place of politics, especially the kind of politics which we might call citizenship politics, is the *public space* (Arendt, 1958), as created among citizens. It is a site where words and dialogue are exchanged, a place of visibility and audibility, where people take the floor and expound their narratives about the world. Arendt (1958: 198) describes the *polis* as a "*space of appearance, in its broader sense: the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but were they explicitly appear*". The *polis* is the place where people pay heed to the *res publica*, and take responsibility for their social life. This responsibility is not innate, but has to be learnt by men, even with difficulties. As Larrauri (2001) says, the Aristotelian maxim according to which man is a political animal is not entirely true: a



man becomes a *politikos*, becomes a citizen, only if he takes the floor, if he makes himself visible, if he assumes the responsibility of taking care of the world – if, that is, he thinks it is worthwhile taking the floor and making his views known.

According to Arendt (1970), the 1930s in Germany were one of the darkest periods in human history. These were times when, though formal democracy was standing and citizens could therefore still participate in public life, a kind of internal migration occurred: a phenomenon that led citizens not to leave the country, but to withdraw from the public sphere into private life. Hannah Arendt denounces in particular the responsibility of intellectuals, philosophers such as Heidegger, who had the cultural and critical capacity to counter the advance of Nazism, and who should have taken the floor and fought against the direction in which history was moving. According to Maite Larrauri, the abandonment of the public space by the intellectuals was caused by a kind of snobbish and haughty rejection of what they deemed to be merely worthy of their contempt. To some of them, the Nazis appeared as clowns, and a clown cannot be taken seriously, of course. This re-reading of the tragic story of the rise of Nazism shows the social and cultural role that intellectual elites play in a community. The stronger the role of cultural elites became, the clearer and louder became their word, and the higher the quality of *mediapolis* and society as a whole.

One does not participate in the life of the *polis* (or of the *mediapolis*) just by participating in the education system, but also by taking part in the production and distribution of information and, more generally, in all processes of knowledge production. As we have already mentioned with respect to civic cultures, knowledge of the social world is an essential feature of a vital democracy; otherwise the ability to establish communicative relations within the democratic landscape would be undermined at its base. Knowledge and skills (in media and communication) are a prerequisite for a vibrant democracy. As Dahlgren (2009: 108) observes:

... [the fact that] citizens ought to have the knowledge to be able to participate in politics is obvious and basic [...]. Speaking of knowledge, in this case, presupposes that it is built on raw information, and that information is somehow significant to become knowledge.

We define cultural flows as the ensemble of the discourses which citizens produce, share, and receive. These flows are traditionally ritualised, with

precise roles and tasks, and in modern societies intellectuals have always played an important, if not decisive role. We must therefore assume that the role of citizens is enhanced by the recognition of the public role of intellectuals in regulating and directing the flow of culture. This is not about the alleged superiority of intellectuals, but rather that even in a hypothetical 'knowledge society' each citizen can play the role of intellectual.

What is currently taking place in Italy concerns not only the decline of the citizens' intellectual role, but in general the very meaning of the intellectual's action. This situation is evident on the one hand in the crisis of the educational institutions (school and university), and on the other hand through television's glorification of non-intellectual if not overtly anti-intellectual persons as models of social success.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This article has aimed to show (and to model) the conditions for a positive and fruitful relationship between the media system and democracy, and to test them in a given country (in our case Italy). Very briefly, we have highlighted certain significant aspects that seem to us to be central.

In the first place, the relationship between democracy and media is not exclusive. The media are in fact only one factor (together with the formal institutional system, the wider culture, and the citizens' experiences of politics) acting in mediating the relationship between a democratic society and its citizens. In the second place, the links between these factors can have positive or negative consequences depending on the inherent quality of each of those factors: a stronger formal institutional system gives democracy more than a less solid system based on the processes of backstage government does, and likewise for the other factors. Finally, a multidimensional model such as the one just presented is a reminder that democracy is a fragile process that requires continuous revision and enhancement in order to forestall its potential collapse.

We also hope to have demonstrated how the Italian case offers an interesting example of potential democratic decline, actually starting from the assessment of the four factors we have pointed out.

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# To befoul one's own nest? Joris Luyendijk and the impossibility of journalism in the Middle-East.

Jo Bogaerts

## 1. THE TENSIONS OF THE JOURNALISTIC PROFESSION

In a well-known article on the role of professionalism in news reporting, Soloski (1989: 207) has ironically described the romantic vision of journalism as:

*that of a crusading reporter who, much to the consternation of a cantankerous but benevolent editor, takes on one of the more villainous politicians in the city, and after some hard work and a bit of luck, catches the politician 'red-handed', helps to send him to jail and betters the lives of the downtrodden and helpless.*

Such popular conceptions of the journalist not only feature in a good deal of fiction, like movies, novels and so forth,<sup>1</sup> but they also run curiously parallel to the self-image that some journalists have expressed in memoirs, autobiographies and other kinds of self-reflexive writings that flourished from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards (see Good, 1993). Likewise, journalism history has all too often contented itself with writing idealised biographies (or hagiographies) where “[j]ournalists are portrayed as part of this all-important Fourth Estate, striving towards objectivity and truth despite enormous difficulties” (Tapsell, 2009: 1-2). This romantic vision and its expression in autobiographies are related to the process of professionalisation in journalism. After all, it was only when journalism had claimed authority and legitimacy by subscribing to a range of core professional values such as objectivity, autonomy and public service that the journalist

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1 Of course, the popular conceptions of the journalist are manifold and equally include that of the drunken, corrupted or otherwise untrustworthy individual. However, as Ehrlich (2004) has indicated, even those representations that seem to put the press in a bad light usually end as moral tales that generally reconfirm journalism's core values.

was perceived as society's 'truth teller' (McNair, 1998). However, such an image obscures the actual routine-based nature of journalism work and the journalist's dependence on and functioning within the news institution. Indeed, as Høyer and Lauk (2003: 4) indicate, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

*[a] contrast emerged between the objective description of journalism and the subjective image, which journalists held of their work. Journalists endured long hours in news-factories combined with low wages and a lack of job security [...]. All of this might have bound journalists in common solidarity to typographers and office workers. But journalists rarely thought that low wages made them into 'workers'.*

In other words, journalists have not always defined their professional identities by asking themselves *how* they produce their work as much as *why* they produce it. Indeed, when asked to legitimate their professional decisions, journalists will almost invariably refer to the value system of the profession and only admit to more down-to-earth explanations, such as the prevalent newsroom culture or practical issues, when pushed to do so (see Deuze, 2004).

Yet, the apparent gap between practices and values does not seem to confront journalism very often. Even though journalistic work regularly fails to live up to its promise, journalists rarely doubt the value of their work and seldom look back upon it, certainly not in public. It has indeed often been noted that:

*Journalists ignore criticism leveled at them in journalism reviews, academic conferences, books, and the alternative press, trying to maintain a stance of autonomous indifference both vis-à-vis the events of the real world and that world's most vocal inhabitants, their critics (Zelizer, 1993a: 81) (compare also Lule, 1992; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001).*

Of course, such an apparent lack of (public) self-criticism should come as no surprise. After all, if the profession did turn a more critical eye on itself, then reliable journalism would soon appear an unmanageable challenge, which in turn would threaten its ability to convey authority and thus severely undermine the trust of both audiences and practitioners. In order "to go on despite this quagmire, journalists are trained to forget the bad trail; they live on the positive results of their work, and colleagues remember them for the best scoops" (Kopper, 2005: 316). This is a discursive process of identity formation that Zelizer (1993b) has investigated through the con-



cept of the journalistic 'interpretive community'. That journalists manage to keep faith in the high-flown values of the profession, despite evidence that contradicts these claims, must also be related to a more fundamental aspect of the profession. It is by taking a cue from the concept of *paradigm* that one may elucidate how practices and values are reconciled in journalist's daily work.

## 2. PROFESSIONALISM AND THE NEWS PARADIGM

The concept of paradigm was developed by Thomas Kuhn in the sociology of science, and first applied to Journalism Studies as 'news paradigm' by Gaye Tuchman in her 1978 book *Making News*. Kuhn's most interesting observation is that science cannot formulate questions and problems nor solve them prior to establishing a common framework with which to look at reality. The empirical data, in other words, is always the result of a Kantian categorisation that delineates, and thus limits, the ways in which reality is perceived. As such, any science is based on a number of values, presuppositions and beliefs that, with some degree of variation and contingency, guide the activities of its practitioners and determine what problems are regarded as scientifically interesting and what methods as legitimate ways of solving them. Interestingly, science only comes into being as a professional affair once a community of scholars reached a semi-closed consensus upon this frame of presuppositions into the nature of reality through acceptance of the paradigm.

In a similar way, journalism may be regarded as an activity that is guided by a paradigm that comprises a "*set of broadly shared assumptions about how to gather and interpret information*" (Bennett et al., 1985; Reese, 1990). Such basic beliefs and convictions, again, with some degree of variation and contingency, are central to the journalist's value system, cognitive maps and behavioural routines that guide processes such as news selection and source confirmation. We may think of the basic presumption that an event can only count as 'news' when it is out of the ordinary or that official sources are more reliable than others. That giving an objective account is believed to lie within the grasp of the journalist, moreover, is the result of a conviction in neutral description and faith in the media's ability to pass on information without distorting it, or of the ability to suspend disbelief.

As a research activity that is indebted to the positivist logic that also characterises the exact sciences, journalism has only come into being as a pro-

professional sphere of activity at the moment it was no longer exclusively divided among political-ideological fractions but embraced a common value system, epitomised for over a century now by the Anglo-Saxon norm of objectivity. Although there are many variations in the ways objectivity is practised, it has become a key signifier. Indeed, since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, journalism has conveyed a "*near-universal faith in the validity of [this] system of representing and applying information,*" (Bennett et al., 1985: 54) rendering it the hegemonic form of 'good journalism' or attaining, in Kuhnian terminology, 'paradigmatic standing'. This emergence of a common set of values and presuppositions must be understood in conjunction with the process of professionalisation. During this process, newspaper work was increasingly rationalised, journalists were disciplined to meet the expectations of editors and a range of occupational values were consolidated through which journalism claimed authority and legitimacy for itself. Part of this ideology is a range of values such as objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, public service, management, membership of a professional elite and ethics (see Deuze, 2005; Carpentier, 2005). Objectivity, autonomy and public service may be regarded as the core values of the profession as they not only express a firm claim on truthfulness, but also function "*to self-legitimize [the journalist's] position in society*" (Deuze, 2005: 446).

Part and parcel of the emergence of this set of convictions and presuppositions is an array of methods and practical routines that gained ground contemporaneous to the consolidation of journalism's occupational values. As Kuhn shows, without the elaborate presuppositions of the model, the methods developed to investigate them would never be conceivable; conversely, considering the wealth of possible descriptions of the world, practices related to a paradigm severely limit the ways in which this world is perceived and represented. As the assumptions inherent in the paradigm set the scene for actual practices, it comes as no surprise that the latter tend to anticipate expected outcomes rather than aiming at novelty. The configuration of reporters around institutions such as parliament, police departments and courts, as part of what Tuchman (1978) has called 'the news net', for example, testifies that the expectations embedded in the concept of 'newsworthiness' revolve, at least in part, around the political process, the exceptional and the deviant. It is also indicative of a prevailing modernist notion of the nation-state as the centre of political power. As Kuhn (1970: 35) shows, "*the range of anticipated, and thus of assimilable, results is always small compared with the range that imagination can conceive.*" Indeed,

*a result like that produced through journalism [where contingent events are generally reported in very similar terms among individual journalists] in its daily practice is, in fact, extreme. It is based on the success of education and training to fulfill this job with exactly those results in mind (Kopper, 2005: 313).*

Even though methods for deciding on newsworthiness and reaching 'objectivity' are only one particular way of perceiving and representing reality as 'news', the paradigm tends to become a universal horizon of interpretation that pushes alternatives away. What is indeed characteristic of the pervasiveness of a paradigm is the obstinacy with which practitioners hold on to it when the anticipated results do not come true or the model of explanation fails to account for events. Such anomalous cases are, for example, violations of the objectivity principle, the newspaper's autonomy and other professional values. They are related both to 'deviant' journalists that disrespect common practice (Reese, 1990; Hindman, 2005), an exception in the scripting of a news event (Bennett et al., 1985) or apparent mistakes in reporting, e.g., inaccurate messages or violation of ethics.

Rather than rethinking the presuppositions of the model, intrusions that cannot easily be incorporated are regarded as mere 'anomalies' that the scientific community will either ignore or strive to 'solve' by remaining within the logic of the paradigm. As Hindman (2005) shows, there are at least four ways in which one may deal with such challenges. These are to ignore the challenge, merely to acknowledge the limitations of the paradigm, to 'repair' it or to change it. However, of the multiple ways in which a news institution may deal with criticism, a change of the paradigm never actually appears in case studies. Rather, challenges to journalism are almost always tackled by strategies of news repair that aim to "*justify their standards and repair the paradigm by segregating the offending individual or organization and stressing the value of their routines and standards*" (Hindman, 2005: 238). By excluding the 'erroneous' reporter from the ranks of 'professional' journalists, news repair deals with the process of 'boundary work' that reaffirms the value of professionalism by distinguishing between those that exemplify good practice and those that do not. As follows from the logic of the paradigm, news institutions can only uphold their professional standards and values by reference to routines and practices. After all, journalists have only a "*limited repertoire with which to define and defend their objectivity*" (Tuchman, 1971: 662).

One of the reasons for the resilience of the news paradigm is that it is conferred upon practitioners through education and socialisation in the organisation. Likewise, the process of evolving to an 'old hand' in the trade of journalism is a matter of acquiring a number of unspoken beliefs attached to the job (see Kopper, 2005). Those who are new to the field are thus consistently acquainted with one dominant way of interpreting reality. Those who do not hold faith in the model usually do not 'qualify' as professionals and so alternative views are kept out of the system. Since both the acquisition and perpetuation of a 'paradigm' are highly dependent on "*learnable routines for their practitioners*" (Reese, 1990: 392), the underlying assumptions of the model most often remain unconscious, which may in turn account for their perseverance. It is telling, in this regard, that even though journalists have a strong sense of newsworthiness and journalism is characterised by some degree of self-reflexivity, journalists cannot always explicitly account for the reasons behind choosing an event as 'news' (see Zelizer, 1993b: 220).

### 3. THE PARADIGM UNDER ATTACK: THE CASE JORIS LUYENDIJK

Soon after graduating as an Arabist and cultural anthropologist, Joris Luyendijk started working as a foreign correspondent in the Middle East for print media, as well as television and radio. He first worked for the Dutch quality newspaper *De Volkskrant* and contributed to Radio 1, later on he moved to *NRC Handelsblad* and the television broadcaster NOS. Not lasting for very long at either of these, Luyendijk resentfully turned away from the profession some five years after he was first employed. Soon after, he published *Hello Everybody! One Journalist's Search for Truth in the Middle East*<sup>2</sup>, a highly critical and introspective account of the unavoidable deformations, biases and general untrustworthiness of coverage of the Middle East that was to spark long-lasting debate in the Netherlands.

In his book, Luyendijk rehearses a range of well-known issues that confront journalism and coverage of war and multicultural conflict, in particular the inherent bias of language, the tendency of media to become a part of the event they cover, the media's liability to manipulations by propaganda machines and the fact that news does not cover everyday life, but only exceptional events. Moreover, he indicates a number of fil-

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2 Interestingly, the book has first been published in 2009 as "People Like Us: Misrepresenting the Middle East", but when it came out in 2010 (with a different publisher) it bore the more telling and personal title "Hello Everybody! One Journalist's Search for Truth in the Middle East".

ters that inevitably deform the representation of the Middle East and he exposes traditional journalistic routines and rituals as unreliable methods for getting to the 'Truth' of the Middle East. Such a failure is related to the general inaccessibility of reliable information either because sources refuse to speak up for fear of being tortured or because official statistics are simply unavailable in many Arab countries. The fact that 'traditional' journalistic methods, such as proper checking, double-checking and hearing both sides of the story, simply do not work in a dictatorship led him to exclaim "*I don't Know. I Can't Know. This is a Dictatorship*" (Luyendijk, 2010: 100 – caps in original, see also Trioen and Carpentier, 2010).

However, the most disturbing aspect of Luyendijk's work was not his claim that it is difficult, yet not impossible, to do Western-style journalism in the Middle East, but the paradox that the better you manage to do so, the worse the distortion of 'reality' will be. After all, by representing the political process of a dictatorship in terms of a parliamentary democracy, you will omit the aspect of 'dictatorship' altogether. "*Once you accept that the classic fit-to-print methods of journalism are suited only to the sort of political system they grew out of – democracies – a space opens up for non-conventional reporting*" (idem: 241). As such, Luyendijk does not lament that journalists do not do good work or that journalism is useless, but rather that there are unbridgeable limitations inherent in the prevalent journalist methods that radically skew the representation of the Middle East and are in dire need of rethinking:

*When I went to Cairo as a correspondent, journalistic practice seemed a set of tools you could unpack and use all over the world. But dictatorships and democracies weren't two cars of different makes. If a democracy is a car, a dictatorship is a cow or a horse. The man who turns up with a screwdriver or a soldering iron is powerless (Luyendijk, 2010: 78 - compare Luyendijk, 2007: 217; van Hoogstraten and Jinek, 2008: 179).*

#### 4. TO BEFOUL ONE'S OWN NEST?<sup>3</sup>

Generally reviled by fellow-journalists and highly acclaimed by the audience, Luyendijk provoked reactions that may be regarded as exemplifying the current state of affairs of a profession that has met increasing resistance from a distrusting audience. Thus, fellow journalists forcefully

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<sup>3</sup> The title is taken from a tellingly self-righteous reply to Luyendijk where he is reproached for being a 'nestbevuiler', a bell-ringer who speaks ill of his own work and colleagues thus 'befouling his own nest'. (See van Hoogstraten and Jinek, 2008: 45).

blamed him for discrediting a profession already under siege. Yet even within the field of journalism, Luyendijk's book has elicited a paradoxical range of reactions encompassing criticism, rejection and disregard, but also acclaim and acknowledgement. In 2002, he received *The Golden Pen* [Het Gouden Pennetje], a prize devoted to young and promising journalists. In 2006, the year that witnessed the publication of his controversial book, he was elected 'Journalist of the Year' by the Dutch Association of Journalists. In addition to this, he won the Dick Scherpenzeel award for developmental journalism in 2006 and the literary award NS Publieksprijs in 2007. Conversely, his book met fierce criticism of colleagues, epitomised by the publication of *The Constructable News* [Het maakbare nieuws], a compilation of articles written by fellow foreign journalists conceived as 'an answer' to Luyendijk that aimed to reaffirm the value of foreign journalism.

This paradoxical reception of *Hello Everybody!* can be related to Luyendijk's own peculiar position in the news institution. Unlike such well-known 'deviants' in the news institution as Kent MacDougal, Jack Kelly or Jayson Blair, whose work evidently violated agreed-upon practices, Joris Luyendijk discredited journalism exactly by denouncing the value of adherence to journalistic practices. However, in spite of his avowed wish to change the ways of journalism, his short-lived career exemplified 'good work'. Thus, rather than simply marginalizing the journalist's work as a violation to work standards, as is common in the above-mentioned cases, during the 'Luyendijk controversy', paradigm repair entailed a far more ambiguous process aiming at the same time to denounce the message of Luyendijk's controversial book and to reaffirm the work he did for the Dutch media. The gist of these various and contradicting arguments is that Luyendijk never was up to the job.

Generally, the most biting criticism in *The Constructable News* follows from the prevailing interpretation that given the obstacles that confront journalism, the book's purpose is simply to denounce it as a useless affair. However, critics are quick to point out that the concerns raised by Luyendijk do not hold, if only because his own work proves him wrong. After all, his work is highly acclaimed and no one, except Luyendijk himself, seems to doubt its results. Indeed, "As almost every critic has noted since the publication of the book, Joris' five years as a correspondent have proven to be the most telling counterexample to his own argument" (van Hoogstraten and Jinek, 2008: 76). Such a stance emphasises that, as long as all journalistic routines have been carried out properly and editorial demands have been



fulfilled, journalists are in no need to look back upon their work. There is indeed a telling disregard for Luyendijk's essential point, namely that the successful application of journalistic routines may inadvertently generate a problematic representation of the Middle East. None of the concerned editors, for example, has devoted a full-fledged article in reply to this critique, nor do any of the contributions in *The Constructable News* address this issue.

Rather than reflecting on the very basis of their practice, i.e. the paradigm itself, fellow-journalists have responded to Luyendijk in ways that set him apart from the professional community. Despite widespread recognition of his work and acknowledgement of many of the more traditional problems that he raises, a recurrent criticism focuses on the fact that Luyendijk is a mere beginner that lacks experience and knowledge of the field (see van Hoogstraten and Jinek, 2008). For example, Conny Mus, a long-time foreign reporter in the Middle East, avers that Luyendijk simply lacks the contacts and experience to provide for reliable information (van Hoogstraten and Jinek, 2008: 126). On a similar note, critics regard Luyendijk as a hopeless idealist that is out of tune with the expectations that most journalists set for their own work. Yet, even though many journalists note that Luyendijk sets too high a standard for both himself and the profession (see van Hoogstraten and Jinek, 2008), responses to his call for more transparency and honesty in journalism testify to efforts for maintaining these idealistic standards vis-à-vis the audience. Paradoxically, whereas some state he tries too hard, others have rather bluntly suggested that he is simply not trying hard enough. Inspired by the mythical heroism of journalists such as Ryszard Kapuściński and Edward Behr, a number of journalists defy the inconveniences of the profession, regarding them not as an opportunity for reflection, but rather as an impetus to carry on under the principle "*when the going gets tough, the tough get going*" (van Hoogstraten and Jinek, 2008: 195 - see also Matheson, 2003). In conspicuous contradiction to Luyendijk's efforts to problematise professional routines, the reactions in *The Constructable News* testify to an obstinate attachment to work practices as the last stronghold of journalism values. Thus,

*Luyendijk is disqualified as a correspondent without any training or experience, so his observations and conclusions are not considered representative or reliable. He is a kind of Alice who tumbled into a strange world that was not his own* (van Hoogstraten and Jinek, in Broersma, 2010: 23).

That this world was 'not his own' holds true precisely because he had already acquainted himself with the Arab world and devoted two books to the topic before he ended up becoming a journalist. That severe criticism against journalism should come from a relatively young person, educated as an Arabist and cultural anthropologist, with no training as a journalist should come as no surprise. After all, it is only those who have not yet fully internalised the paradigm and learned to 'see things the right way' that are able to recognise that the dominant view is only one of a range of possible ways to interpret 'reality'. Here, we can return to Kuhn (1970: 90):

*Almost always the men who achieve these fundamental inventions of a new paradigm have been either very young or very new to the field whose paradigm they change. And perhaps that point need not have been made explicit, for obviously these are the men who, being little committed by prior practice to the traditional rules of normal science, are particularly likely to see that those rules no longer define a playable game and to conceive another set that can replace them.*

However, despite the discussions Luyendijk elicited in the Netherlands and beyond, no substantial change to the dominant paradigm has been brought about. Most of his efforts to change journalism, including the appeal to readers to co-own their newspaper, have passed largely unnoticed and, in many ways, the recent war in Afghanistan repeated the issues he exposed in his book. As such, both journalists and audiences may be characterised by what Slavoj Žižek (2008: 45-46) calls "a fetishistic disavowal", i.e., a gesture of willful forgetting that enables one to go on despite a knowledge that would upset the way we act in the world. Such a fetishistic attachment to the values of journalism may be elucidated by likening it to magic:

*The magician knows he will not actually saw the woman in two. The audience knows he won't. But they both hate the smart ass who gets up in the middle of the show and breaks the illusion by shouting, 'It's just a trick!' (Broersma, 2010: 26).*



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# Citizenship, globalisation and communication: Meanings and theoretical stakes

Bertrand Cabedoche

*“Toute querelle terminologique relève d’un positionnement idéologique”* (Every terminological debate shows an ideological positioning), Régis Debray said. Such a remark justifies the fact that before examining stakes and contemporary theoretical positions connected to concepts, an etymological and historical clarification appears indispensable.

## 1. HISTORICAL THEORETICAL LOCALISATIONS OF THE KEY CONCEPTS

### 1.1 THE FIRST KEY CONCEPT: CITIZENSHIP

Historically, it is interesting to observe that *citizenship* is a concept created to exclude. In the Athenian democracy, before being defined by rights and duties, *citizenship* is first characterised by the limits of the *demos* – by exclusion of non-citizens. Slaves and women were all considered an eternal minority, as well as metics (foreigners), and were excluded from the political community, as was the case in most Greek cities. So, initially, *citizenship* and *globalisation* are two anachronistic terms. As an ancestor of contemporary democracies, the Athenian city is in a state of isolation from the rest of the world. Certainly, in the century of Pericles many foreigners, mainly Ionians, arrived in Athens from every part of Greece, but both Aristophanes and Plato were made anxious by their obsessive presence and by the laxness of the City, too tolerant according to them, in allowing migrants to become too numerous. A metic (μέτοικος – *metoikos*) is “the one who lives with us”, but not “the one who is as we are”. He may live, work, get married, settle down, undertake business and possibly grow rich but none of these criteria would confer the right of citizenship. Every foreigner living in Attica must be registered and has no right to marry an Athenian. He must pay taxes but cannot buy any agricultural property, so most metics were storekeepers and craftsmen.

This localisation is not specific to Greece. Dating from the Ming dynasty and extending some 1500 miles from the Kansu province to the Yellow Sea, north of Beijing, the Great Wall of China was set up in 210 as a protection against nomadic invaders. The fear of barbarians continued later in Europe, with the building of the nation-state. The processes of construction and nationalisation of states led to the encompassing of social life within closed communities.

Europe exported this concept of the nation all over the world from the 15th century onward, when the Portuguese king, Manuel I, added to his title in 1499: Lord of the Conquest, the Navigation and the Business of Ethiopia, Persia, Arabia and India. The vocabulary begins to widen the borders with the term *civilisation*, defined as embodied, conquering and proselytizing. 'Embodied' means that Europe, and later the Occident, represents civilisation. 'Conquering' means that civilisation equals progression. 'Proselytizing' means that the duty of those who are lucky enough to be civilised, is to help those who are uncivilised (Bénéton, 1975: 36-37).

The word 'slave' is now used with a fixed ethnic and racial connotation that did not exist in the Athenian city-state. Effectively, in Greece, there was no hard line between freedom and slavery: one could be a free citizen in his own city but could be sold in another, following some misfortune, or after being legally condemned for debts or fraud. An erstwhile slave could also become a metic. The economy and social system of a colonial 'society with slaves' does not depend on its slaves, whereas a 'slave society' does – the slaves occupy a role essential for its functioning and become an important factor of the strengthening of the social identities.

The world in the colonial period presents us with only two options. The first is a general claim: A human being believes that his representations are right and shared by everybody. The feeling of an uncomfortable rupture with the certainties of common sense leads to the denial of difference. For example, the Vatican believes that human beings are created as identical entities with an identical image, i.e. without any differences, according to the will of the universal creator. Thus, people from outside the civilisation can be either excluded from the universal community ('native Indians have no soul'), or incorporated into this supposed community of human beings. This absolute rejection of the difference means that humanity is the community of 'us' – what is different is not human and deserves a non-human treatment.

The second option appears in the Enlightenment period before the French Revolution introduced universal citizenship into Europe. Contrary to the ideology of rejection, this ideology assumes its own existence and recognises other groups of humanity at the same time. But the outsider appears only with the potentiality of symbiotic integration – to continue to exist, he must symbolically embody the values of the group. This explains why Enlightenment philosophers wrote at such metaphysical level, using abstracted ideas like “*freedom, equality, brotherhood*”, because of their universal potentialities: to recognise the difference is to act against the course of history, which works precisely to eradicate any difference associated with disparity (Wieviorka and Ohana, 2001: 7-14). From this, the French Revolution draws its own conclusions and model. *La Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* - the Declaration of the rights of man and the citizen - is expressed in universal terms. Article 1 arises directly from the natural state, from the principle of equality. Citizens are born as equals and remain equals; this is an inalienable and imprescriptible right. Politically important because clearly it means the end of the Ancien Régime, this document also represents a general principle of law. The idea of equality is the philosophical basis for every other right in this text: political freedom, the separation of powers, the free flow of business and industry, the abolition of privileges, as well as numerous other fundamental rights. This universal dimension led to the abolition of slavery. On 4 February 1794, the French Convention voted for abolition in every part of the French Colonial Empire. Napoleon Bonaparte reinstated slavery in 1802, however, and abolition was not fully accomplished until 1848, when Victor Schœlcher finally succeeded in bringing it to France, following the examples of Britain, the Ottoman Empire and Sweden (Jennings, 2000).

The completion of revolutionary principles during the 19th century led to the universal spread of the idea of *citizenship*. Saint-Simon's work is a symbolic reflection of one question: Why are the principles of the French Revolution not entirely incorporated into post-revolutionary society? If the revolution is to lead to a new social system, how is it to be made efficient? Saint-Simon battles against Adam Smith's economist vision of the world which, he says, would lead to an increasing gap between the poor and rich. He proposed transition to a new order, a new Christianity, and allow the advent of a 'real' citizen society all over the planet, under the management of the world by a Universal Association of Scientists and Entrepreneurs, instead of the actual transition, managed by metaphysicians and jurists, blocking progress towards the industrial age (Musso, 2003).

The Universal Republic was never born, but its principles of equality led to a levelling of citizens at the beginning of the 20th century. In this period, levelling, as uniformisation, is considered as positive, in reference to the symbolism of the level, an attribute of the 'goddess' Philosophy, emblem of the cult of reason. The level is a symbol of citizen egalitarianism, of 'universal public-spiritedness'. Later, Abbot Grégoire issued a call to arms against the local sense of identity and local dialects as the remains of feudalism, and desired to generalise the French language. In the 20th century, led by the French Nobel Prize winner for literature, Anatole France (1844-1924) and French minister Émile Combe (1835-1921), the French republican public schools tried to erase the psychological, 'cultural and social adhesions': to accept any kind of differences, e.g. cultural, ethnic, religious and social differences, was said to work against historical meaning (*'le sens de l'histoire'*) and against equality.

This reflection on *citizenship* also explains the works of pioneers of a new discipline, the Communication sciences. Initial work emphasised the phenomenon of *crowds*. As early as June 1791, the first French Constitution and the Le Chapelier Law forbade any workers' gatherings and organisation into groups, because collective gatherings were considered dangerous for the free will of citizens. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, criticism of the psychology of crowds became fashionable. After the critique of Alexis de Tocqueville against levelling (which he understood as 'the tyranny of majorities and inferiors') and the building of public opinion, suggestion, mental contagion and hallucination became key concepts. For the French Gustave Le Bon and the Italian Scipio Sighele, the contemporary age of crowds was an age of irresponsible, unreasonable, somnambular collectives, disrupted by psychological fermentations and dangerous impulses, and manipulated: leaders, such as politicians, journalists and union activists, deprive the citizen of autonomy.

Auguste Comte's positivism helps us to understand how citizenship must be conceived: from a linear, global and historic perspective. Firstly, a theological stage is at work, within which the condition of a human being is fictional: one tries to explain the world, either by ascribing intentionality to things (fetishism), or by speaking to supposedly supernatural creatures (polytheism) or to God (monotheism). This is the condition of children, children-people, children-cultures and children-nations. Then comes the second metaphysical stage, in which the condition of a human being is one of abstraction. One tries to explain the world with general principles: nature for Spinoza; geometry for Descartes; materiality for Diderot; ra-



tionality for the philosophers of the Enlightenment. This corresponds to the stage of adolescence. The third positivist stage appears when a positive spirit explains the world not by asking why, but by looking for facts. The experimentation with reality allows speculative discourses to be left behind. Knowledge comes from the observation of reality, with scientific methodologies. This is the condition of adults, adult-people, adult-cultures and adult-nations. This explains and legitimises the idea of duty for these nations to spread the rationality all over the world; it forbids arguments that try to fight cultural dimensions out of sciences, such as previously mentioned. This perspective introduces the next key concept of *Globalisation*.

## 1.2 THE SECOND KEY CONCEPT: GLOBALISATION

Just before the First World War, the interstate dimension seems to give place to the 'civilised man', considering Universalism as good. Thanks to travels, literature and contact in general, a world thought started to build beyond the national and ethnic thoughts. The Belgian Paul Otlet thought that the connection between libraries will lead to 'The Universal Book of Knowledge', the basis of the 'World City'. Otlet founded the journal *The International Life* in 1912 together with his friend and compatriot Henri La Fontaine, Nobel Peace Prize winner.

After the First World War, the focus of thought moved to the United States. The sociology of development urged the tardy people and nations to modernise. President Truman popularised the pairing of 'development/underdevelopment' in 1947 to fight the poverty feeding Communism. His theoretical legitimacy comes from a political concept of stages of growth, inspired by Walt W. Rostow, a theory as linear as that of Auguste Comte. To reach the take-off stage, a colonised people must follow the example of developed countries until they reach the model of the 'consumer society', embodied by the US 'Modernisation of the World'. This is the expression of a diffusionist concept: the innovation is transferred from top to bottom (Rogers, 1962 and 1976), from the developed to the tardy countries (Rostow, 1960). Decision makers speak in terms of 'Westernisation of the World'.

Multinational companies became the main drivers of development. Becoming multinational in the 1960s, business reinvented the phrase: 'What is good for GM is good for the World'. 20 years later, business introduced a new way of speaking: 'the language of the global'. Thenceforth, the term

*Globalisation* came to mean the project of constructing a homogeneous space of valuation, unification of the standards of competitiveness and profitability on a global scale. Managerial decisions must be rational, universal, de-territorialised and disconnected from cultural and national obstacles. *Communication* becomes the language of the company and English 'the language of the planet', without really questioning the conditions of this choice.

*Globalisation* also came to mean *deregulation*. From 1984 onwards, pressure for the liberalisation of information and communication systems and industries increased and state power was denounced as an obstacle. The marketplace became global, signs more and more visible. The concentration of companies started, as did domination of financial logics and powers, as well as informatisation of management on the scale of a 'market-universe'.

Thinking globally has started a fashionable theory. National and local are now disqualified. Differences between cultures, standards and structures are vestiges of the past; desires and behaviour of people evolve in the same way, no matter what they are consuming; Coca-Cola, jeans, movies, pizzas, cosmetics, microprocessors (Levitt, 1983a & 1983b). Theories legitimise the global democratic marketplace. Some speak of the end of history: the model of historic completion of each human society is the homogenisation of the Capitalist system (Fukuyama, 1993). Others think that a soft integration by seduction of the global market opens the way to democracy (Nye, 1990).

Now, more and more social actors think 'global'. Media and the US are the main agents of the impulse, with Media playing a fundamental role in this soft integration. The thesis comes from the 1950s, when Lerner (1958), studying Middle Eastern societies, established the link between development and consumption: Western Media. At the end of the 20th century, this convergence towards a ubiquitous global lifestyle is explained also by consumers interiorizing the symbolic universe distilled since the end of the Second World War by movies, advertisements, and transnational media, mainly American television programs. The US is promoted as a vector of the 'New Universalism'.

The United States would have triumphed by the imposition of their representations of the *citizenship* and *globalisation*, but it is now necessary to add a third key concept that constitutes the triptych – *communication*.

### 1.3 THE THIRD KEY CONCEPT: COMMUNICATION

The pioneers of media and communication sciences connected *citizenship*, development and *communication*. Harold Lasswell and mass communication research advocates thought mass media were potentially useful and powerful. Citizens and political leaders needed media as propaganda for democracy. Media played societal roles for the governmental management of opinions: surveillance of the larger environment, achieving consensus among segments of society, and transmission of culture including validation of civil society values (Lasswell, 1948: 37-51; Lippman, 1922).

The communicational approach was also a part of the international strategy of the United States from the Second World War onwards. The focus on content analyses by the American universities was politically justified because it revealed the bad propaganda, fighting the media promoting Hitler and later the USSR. After Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the State Department designed an official radio propaganda device, The Voice of America. Later, in the 1960s, President Carter's future national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, proposed that the US assume its leadership of the technetronic revolution working towards *globalisation* (Brzezinski, 1961).

Such a strategy was not easy to promote outside the US, especially in Europe. The birth of *communication* in the pessimistic European context occurred between the two world wars, and was expressed by the German Oswald Springler and the French Paul Valéry (1871-1945). "*We civilizations now know that we are mortal.*" Valéry spoke about a crisis of European identity as a loss of wisdom (Valéry, 2000: 405-414). This was a significant contribution to conceptual debate: when the American author Boorstin (1976) associated popular culture and mass culture, Europe differed, considering numerous agents as vectors of socialisation, with intellectual elites, churches, educators, political thinkers and social partners more effective than media. European authors tended to reject *communication* as primary source of influence.

This reticence was also a criticism against 'the American way of life'. French authors in particular criticised American modernity as a potential blocker of social evolution and a contributor to the disappearance of knowledge (Kojève, 2000: 436). There were also critiques of American research. From the European perspective, American functionalism could appear as devalued, due to excessive *empiricism* and *social* normativism.

Rejection tended to grow when US private foundations and federal government tried to impose this concept of human sciences with the Marshall Plan (Pollak, 1979).

During the 1970s, a double crisis provoked some reversals. For some Europeans too, information and communications technology appeared to offer a solution. The misunderstanding about communication persisted. For example, popular culture was still wrongly translated into mass culture by the US (Mattelart, 2000: 36). The situationist philosopher Debord (1967) continued to be read for his criticism of the entertainment society. The context was also defined as a 'crisis of civilisation', but in a new way. The situation of both the crisis of economic growth and the crisis of the mechanisms of political governmentality led to the same solution: It was necessary to invest in ICTs (Minc and Nora, 1978).

In fact, Europe had been prepared for a long time to adopt the idea of *a new age*, henceforth called a 'communication society' or 'networks society', to use the words of Castells (1998; 1999). Hence the reflection of the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau: How to repeat the Athenian democracy when citizens are so numerous and the territorial dimension of agora grows from the scale of a city to the scale of a country? The first ICT appeared in Europe in 1791, with the invention of optical telegraph by the Chappe brothers, opening the path to the contemporary utopia: Information technologies are solutions for the new *democratic age*. Then, during the 20th century, many authors focused on the potentialities of ICTs. Mattelart (1995) speaks about "*the eternal promise of the paradise of communication*". During the 1900 world exposition in Paris, focused on the cinema, Jack London described this technological innovation as the means to fight wars, class segregation and cultural misunderstandings. Because the language of the cinema is easily understandable by everybody, without prerequisites and particular knowledge and education, it is efficient in provoking the consciousness necessary for the happiness of humanity (London, 1980). A similar message came from Europe with the Scottish sociologist Patrick Geddes, who interpreted the advent of electricity as a step towards the *neotechnic age*. And quickly, Europe accepted the same utopia of a new society with the advent of radio and television (Carey, 1981).

The term 'communication society' has been used since the middle of the 20th century. American mathematician Norbert Wiener (1894-1964) is considered the father of cybernetic sciences and the creator of the term.

Human information networks are resources to avoid barbarianism. Albert Arnold Gore Jr. designed the Group of Seven (later the Group of Eight) to adopt information superhighways in 1992. Finally, Manuel Castells (1998; 1999) speaks about the new information age following the industrial, with more relevant emphasis to social change. The new century should be, and is, the century of the network society.

UNESCO is dedicated to the communication society. Since its launch, the international organisation has considered *communication* as a resource, and radio, cinema, TV and press as resources to deepen the mutual respect of peoples all over the world. A better understanding is expected from the presentation of common qualities of humanity (Wilson, 1947: 286). About 60 years later, UNESCO prepared its world summits in Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005, under the title Communication Society, without any question mark. With this dedication, UNESCO seems to have confirmed the convergence between *citizenship*, *globalisation* and *communication* in which the state representatives, as well as NGO and transnational company leaders, were invited to be dynamic actors of the new age. In sober fact, however, the term 'communication society' is as deeply debatable (and debated) as are the concepts of *globalisation* and *citizenship*.

## 2. CITIZENSHIP, GLOBALISATION, COMMUNICATION: CONTEMPORARY CRITICS

The focus on *globalisation* and the 'communication society' is characteristic of contemporary criticism. The apparent consensual dimension of both terms masks the reality of power struggles by the dominant nations as well as by the major companies, not to mention dominant theoretical theories. Cynically, the economic power is particularly and exclusively preoccupied by its own interests. It smashes everything and everybody blocking its way – people, cultures, nations and competitors. To accomplish its ends, it uses hard resources like brutal delocalisation regardless of the social consequences, blackmails, using threats of withdrawal from the financing of international development projects, even war if necessary. It sometimes uses *soft* resources like lobbying, embedded journalism, pressures on scientific researchers to impose false theoretical concepts, debatable theories and pseudo-paradigms, like selective reading of the principles of the international public law, (particularly illustrated by the disrespect of the article 51 of the Geneva Agreement in 1951, concerning the peace in Indochina), to spread any binding reference in accordance with the American interests (Chomsky, Clark and Saïd, 2002: 41-47).

## 2.1 A NEW KEY CONCEPT FROM THE 1980s: GLOCALISATION

Here is a paradox from history: The American cinema industry can create the fantasy of Hollywood's dream and the desire of the US to gain European admirers. But during the Marshall Plan, the European countries tended to filter the invasion of products coming from the American cultural industry. France was the most reactive, obtaining protection through the Byrnes-Blum agreement, which barred American films from French cinemas for one week in every month. The British authorities tried to tax foreign movies but were boycotted by the US movie industry. The French socialist government of the 1980s tried to re-impose their cultural exception.

The cultural protest is one characteristic of debates between the 1950s and 1980s about the New World Information and Communication Order, NWICO. Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, all of them sharing the experience of colonisation, proposed the rehabilitation of native cultures by structural anthropology and the criticism of neo-colonialism exported to the US by Jean-Paul Sartre (1964). Authors spoke about two new concepts: 'cultural imperialism' and 'alienation'. Formulated in the 1970s by Herbert Schiller, *cultural imperialism* extended criticism against the domination of the North (Schiller, 1976; Boyd-Barrett, 1977). Borrowing from Marx and Freud, Herbert Marcuse used the term *alienation* to explain the role of media in the will of people, either as producers or as consumers (Marcuse, 1964). This partially legitimises the demands of the non-aligned countries - which UNESCO welcomed in the 1970s - for a New World Information and Communication Order, NWICO, because of the one-way flow of information (Nordenstreng, 1986). So, from the 1970s, a violent contest inside UNESCO was stirred up by partisans for regulation. At the same time, European countries also tried to protect their cultural space by state regulation, with the French minister Jack Lang defending cultural exception in the 1980s.

The reaction from the theorists was: Think 'global' and act 'local'. According to Bouchet (1995: 68-84) the company is the best agent of cultural diversity. Hollywood movies, made in a free-flowing exchange of cultural industries, are, according to the liberal authors, more efficient in protecting cultural diversity (for example the expression of Australian aboriginal peoples) than the public administration of states wanting to define quotas in order to protect their local culture (Fiske, 1987). *Glocalisation* was born.



Applied to the communication field, *Glocalisation* was introduced by cultural studies – Fiske (1987) agrees with this line of thought. Cultural studies opened in the UK in the 1960s, before spreading to the US, the main argument was that those receiving the hegemonic speech of the dominant Northern media would be able to re-encode it according to their own cultural values (Gripsrud, 1995; Morley, 1986; Hall, 1974).

Besides *Glocalisation*, ‘deregulation’ became a key concept from the 1980s onward. Social actors became ever more convinced, particularly in the sector of telecommunications and media, that in the face of the world competition, state mediation must disappear. At the same time, the US and UK accused UNESCO of being an instrument of the totalitarian ideology of the Soviet state. So, to be competitive in a global marketplace as well as to be open-minded toward cultural diversity, a free flow of communication is presupposed. In the middle of the 1970s Italy, a pioneer of a large movement for worldwide deregulation, declared the public monopoly of television to be illegal. In 1984, Ronald Reagan opened global networks to competition, accelerating the mega-concentrations in this sector.

Some authors assume that revival and a new convergence between theories of management, cultural studies and postmodernism, occurs with the concept of *hybridisation*. To widen their audience, communication companies, like others, became decentralised, stateless, hybrid and multilingual. With *El Globo* in Brazil or *Teleglobo* in Mexico, the economy-world moves away from the centre, and dominions are only temporary (De Sola Pool, 1990: 212-213). In the same period, humanities and social sciences evolved, also integrating the phenomena of hybridisation and prolonging the reflection on the active dimension of the receiving public. Voluntary or forced, immigration has led to the creation of the interstitial human being, whose individual identity is constantly building outside borders, structures and standards (Appadurai, 1996).

The convergence also concerns the role of ICTs. Today’s achievement of the stage of information capitalism and control of the ICTs is becoming the determinant for the development of an entity: a developed or underdeveloped structure of economic, political or cultural organisation (Castells, 1998; 1999). The internet in particular has become the ideal organisational structure, renewing power and knowledge. Instrument of a renewed citizenship, the network of the networks finally realises the community of equals and opens up space for general development of peoples and human societies, such as private advisors are now promising, particularly

for Africa (Ngouem, 2007). At the same time, many researchers protest because this consensual image ignores power struggles.

## 2.2 THE CRITIQUE OF THE TERM COMMUNICATION SOCIETY AND THE IDEA OF CITIZEN NETWORKS

The criticism of 'the American way of life' in the 1950s was not only a nationalistic reaction. For example, Ellul (1962; 1988) protested against a technological bluff and the rise of propaganda. In the same way, UNESCO's criticism of the non-aligned countries in the 1970s was quickly forgotten. It did not reduce the understanding of the unequal exchange as the negation of cultures, even if it drew a stiff and dichotomous mapping of dominions. This reminder is important, in order to understand why later criticism aims at the contemporary culturisation of politics, as in the critique of the Slovenian philosopher and psychoanalyst Slavoj Žižek (2006). That everybody is focused on his or her own lifestyle and specific cultural modes is, according to Žižek, a diversion, since the real focus should be on the political and economical stakes. But, the process of reception can no longer be analysed in an autonomous way (Garnham, 2000: 72-73). Development of information takes place in a trade universe. Questioning cultural diversity requires considering of the heavy trends, inherent to the restructuring of the world economy. Concentration and weight of the financial actors threatens the contents of media (Mattelart and Neveu, 2003).

At the end of the 1990s, criticism concentrated on the term 'Communication Society', denouncing it as a *technological determinism*. The 'Communication Society' does not fulfil its promises: the main target of a *glocal company* is still the reliable markets. It resorts to nationalism in a crisis, for example in the case of CNN International during the first Gulf War. Confusion between *communications industries* and *content industries* is skilfully maintained by strategists of world capitalism (Bouquillion, 2008). But for engineers and financiers, only technical matters and benefits are important, not the production of sense or *knowledge* (Mattelart, 2000). Using a pseudo-concept, the theorists of the 'Communication Society' skilfully validated a false correspondence between transnational capitalism's need to reduce the subject to a status of *annihilated consumer* and the citizens' desire for decentralisation of information (Mattelart, 2000; Mattelart and Delcourt, 2008: 52; Mattelart, 2003).



At the same time, researchers declare the 'community of equals' as an imposture. Working inside the logic of the *mega moguls controlling communication*, mass media only debate the stakes between Democratic and Totalitarian logic, citizens' emancipation and the project to indoctrinate the mind. But even there, the forms of exchange, even military, are not determined by their presence on the digital interfaces; neither, intrinsically, are they open to genuine knowledge. This imposture was almost never criticised during the last century:

*The notion of Communication is essential for human engineering ... Public relations and human engineering do not constitute an isolated phenomenon inside the American civilization. They are the forerunners of a big movement which affects every aspect [of human life]. Religion, arts, literature, education, social and family relationships, love and sexual life... take place by themselves under the sign of this false smile, this false cheerfulness, and this false democracy so useful for the interests of social preservation [...] a social technology hides behind a scientific appearance (Crozier, 1951: 71).*

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# Citizenship and political communication

Manuel Parés i Maicas

The relationship between the complex concept of citizenship and political communication has produced a large corpus of literature that can be consulted in various languages. In this text, I shall try to show that there are *different forms of conceiving citizenship* in this context, which explain its contents in relation to the development of political communication in various geographical areas.

## 1. THE CONCEPT OF CITIZENSHIP

We can say that citizenship is the juridical and legal status in relation to political institutions through which citizens acquire certain rights as individuals (civil, political, social), and also certain duties (taxes, military services, commitment to a cause or to an institution). In addition, as a consequence of the democratic principle of popular sovereignty, citizens enjoy the right to be active in the political life of their respective state or community.

Each citizen is incumbent to a certain number of rights, which are specifically recognised in the corresponding constitution, but at the same time, she/he has to assume certain obligations. These rights and duties include, among others, financial and military on one side, and active political participation in public affairs on the other. *Membership in a political community is a condition for being a citizen.*

Citizens are considered to be those who enjoy this condition, according to their constitutional provisions. In other words, they have full rights as members of their state and community, as indicated in the constitution. It is necessary to remark that the concept of citizen has evolved with time and under various circumstances, and today we can say that, in the political sphere, it has undergone two great transformations, even if the usual concept of the citizen corresponds to the one just described. Therefore, the

concept of citizen is very much associated with *the reality of permanent social change in the political area*, and it needs to be emphasised that the ideological influences and changes in the interests of different societal forces also have great importance.

## 2. TRANSFORMATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

There have been two main changes in the concept of the citizen:

1. the appearance of the concept of *globalisation* has, in general, attained a special signification. The fact that a great number of activities: economic, political, cultural, social and so on, have largely become integrated in a world-scale strategy through the electronic networks of exchange of capital, goods and information, is what we have come to consider as 'globalisation'. The paradigm of globalisation is the *internet* and what is today called the *information society*. This means that, collectively and individually, human activities are ever more globalised in all respects. The new concept of Europe and its development must also be included in this movement.
2. Moreover, the various states and their political and social institutions are becoming increasingly *multicultural* and *intercultural*, and the homogeneity of nation states is competing with the corresponding appearance of the concepts of cultural diversity, cultural conflict, cultural pluralism and the presence of the realities of multiculturalism and multiethnicity. One must not forget to mention cosmopolitanism, which is strongly connected to the other listed concepts. Still, we must not forget that citizens have strong feelings about the fact they belong and relate to a specific community and its characteristics, positive or not.

At this point, I will not enter into the details of the concept of communication, because this would require a broader analysis, and would exceed the limitations of this text.

## 3. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Instead, I will formulate a certain number of premises needed to clarify *the concepts of citizenship in the context of political communication*.

Citizenship rights are linked with the fundamental concept of *power*, which is exercised by an institution setting up the rights of citizens according to its constitutional laws. This act requires the pre-existence of a democratic system which, in principle, excludes the possibility of linking citizenship with a dictatorship or an authoritarian regime. Therefore, there may be diverse types of functioning citizenship if the legal system, in its various stages, is unitarian or federalist. Nations without a state represent a special case, in which citizenship rights are related to the allowed competencies and their compliance with the willingness of the state on which the nation in question is dependent. In the case of Spain, an autonomous state, there are the competencies of the state itself, and then there are the concepts of subordinate and dependent citizenship in its autonomous communities. In every case, the responsibility of the institution, either the state or the dependent community, is evidently connected to *geographical parameters*.

We can formulate the following taxonomy of citizenships according to the constitutional system and its various competencies: global, federal, local, political, cultural, transnational (e.g. European) and universal. As we can see, the *territorial approach* is the basic criteria in defining citizenship.

In the *political development of citizenship* we could isolate certain elements, such as history, mentality, ideology, interests, the concept of nationalism, the sense of identity and the prevailing and individual political cultures. They may all play an important role. Moreover, particular attention should be paid to the political governance of organisations, and their various competencies, the role played by political parties, social movements, and in particular, the pressure groups, whether lobbying or not, without neglecting the positions occupied by private firms in the capitalistic structure.

Then there is the influence of the *social class*, evident in the citizenship of any political community, and bringing about different forms of social and political inequalities requiring corrective actions from civil servants and politicians in their respective areas. Again, the respective public policies have to be taken into consideration.

Next, we enter into the field of *human rights* and the various types of citizens as subjects of rights and duties, either fundamental or social. In fact, we realise that in any political community, there are: 1) citizens enjoying full rights, by origin or by legal acquisition; 2) a large group of immigrants

of diverse nature and legal status, belonging to different religions, having different levels and types of education, various cultures and diverse economic systems; and 3) the exiled, the minorities and their rights, the refugees, the stateless and the disabled. From the negative perspective, these situations often entail racism and xenophobia, with their logical negative implications. The actions carried out by delinquents and terrorists of whatever sort deserve special consideration, as they constitute an evident breach of the rule of law, which is naturally essential for any democratic society.

From the personal point of view, the questions of gender, age, education and *intellectual contribution* have become extremely important in any treatment of the complex concept of citizenship. If we place the importance of our analysis on the individual's socialisation to political and civic culture, we must emphasise the relevance of the content of education in social and humanistic fields, as well as education in the experimental sciences and technology. Moreover, the contribution of universities and teaching institutions has to be taken into account.

In this respect, the role of intellectuals is of the highest importance, a fact that is not always sufficiently taken into consideration. Their contribution is essential in spite of the new technologies of communication and education, even the on-line versions. Neglecting this fact in favour of the technological approach may often contribute to serious mistakes. In my view, *the key function of thinking and reasoning is the conviction that human beings are principally those actors whose objective is thought*. Regretfully, this does not seem to be the principal concern in some areas.

The preceding point is related to the function that we should grant to the intellectuals - in spite of the critical situations in which they find themselves on certain occasions. Their contribution, if formulated seriously, should deserve our greatest attention. Furthermore, it is worth reminding ourselves that they integrate, intellectually speaking, the elitist branch of society, which is necessary for the development of any society, even if their behaviour is not always presided over by specific *intellectual ethical standards*. We should place scientists of all types in this category. As I will show at the end of this text, ethics have a paradigmatic influence in this field.

In *economic terms*, the concept of citizenship is linked with the fact that we have to consider capitalism as both the prevalent ideology and the domi-



nant ideological political, economic and social system. We should remind ourselves that there are rich and poor countries and areas, and indeed the same can also be applied equally to their citizens. Poverty is a reality that affects many citizens, especially in the present phenomenon of immigration flows of various types, generally originating in the widespread disadvantageous economic situations of many populations, sometimes even in territories that can be considered affluent. In fact, access to a decent economic situation is quite discriminatory for many immigrants. In conclusion, we can claim that the welfare state is undergoing a great crisis; not only economic, but a crisis of democratic structure and cultural values as well, which is accentuated by the present economic crisis in many areas of the world.

This consideration can also be applied to the role of *consumption* in industrial societies, and its dependence on the new economies with the prevailing realm of financial stock markets and stock exchanges. Although consumption is a basic activity to any industrial society, and the citizen's role as a consumer is essential; active citizenship is today strongly limited by the so-called new economy. Policy based only on consumption without the understanding of market logic and ethical limitations of market-based policy creates a severe risk to democratic citizenship.

The role of the *working environment*, the right to work, the quality of the citizen as a worker in its various areas and possibilities, the place of the trade unions as the key representatives of workers – these are the themes that deserve special attention because of their relation to the development of a democratic and non-discriminatory citizenship.

The place occupied by *education*, with its experimental sciences, techniques, technology and new technologies, which are the dynamic elements of economic and social development, must not be excluded. In European terms, the role of the Euro in the European economic, social and political development and its relation with other non-European economies is also worth noting.

In his *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Will Kymlicka mentions the *linguistic, vernacular citizenship*, which represents an interesting contribution to the role of languages in the construction of citizenship. Because of the large number of languages, the situation of bilingualism or diglossia, affecting many societies is often a cause for social and political conflicts. In this context, the stereotypes and prejudices that

have a great negative impact on social life and human interrelations are worth mentioning.

Citizenship, communication and informatisation are the three key and intertwined concepts that are very much connected to the ever increasing development of the *media*, particularly in the field of political communication. Communication messages should be informative and fair journalistically. However, in reality, we see they often become a matter of propaganda or disinformation. In addition, the ever present *public relations*, with its positive, and sometimes negative, effects, and *advertising*, with its link to the economy and the devastating influence it has in many areas, cannot be neglected.

We have already mentioned the place that currently is occupied by the *new technologies of communication and information exchange* in the development of citizenship and the increasing use of digitalisation, which allows us to express a new mode of citizenship, specifically, digital citizenship, in terms of a cyber-citizen. In summary, the importance of the *internet* and its instruments (e.g. blogs) has become a necessity and is unavoidable.

Finally, I would like to underscore that all the preceding considerations, elements and factors always require, on the one hand, *ethical*, and on the other, *deontological* reflection, which must preside over the content and behaviour of citizenship in its vast array of relationships with political communication<sup>1</sup>.

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# SECTION FOUR

IMPULSES FROM NEW MEDIA STUDIES



VISIT TO LOCAL NGOs  
(KIBERPIPA/CYBERPIPE)

PHOTO: ILIJA T. TOMANIĆ



# ICTs, teachers and the so-called digital natives: A case study of professional appropriation

Åsa Olsson and Tobias Olsson

## 1. TEACHERS AND ICTs: A QUICK GLANCE AT A RESEARCH FIELD

In recent decades, the media landscape has been radically reconfigured. With the help of concepts such as globalisation (Castells, 1996; Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1997), digitalisation (Latham and Sassen, 2005) and convergence (Jenkins, 2006; Livingstone, 2010) media researchers, as well as other scholars, have tried to make sense of the changes that have occurred within a media environment that once seemed rather stable. From the analytical points of departure offered by these (and related) concepts, research has tried to analyse the significance of media change for most modern institutions and phenomena. The question then arises: what do these changes mean for participation within the public sphere (Butsch, 2007; Dahlberg and Siapera, 2007; Olsson, 2009), or for our construction of identities (Rydin and Sjöberg, 2008)?

One area that has been paid special research attention with reference to the changing media environment is education in general, and pupils' school-related media practices in particular. This literature is vast. Operating in a number of different research disciplines, various academics have, for instance, offered theoretical reflections concerning the ways in which new media – most often the internet – might transform what it means to learn (Säljö, 2005), or produced insights into how new ICTs are used by pupils in learning contexts (cf. Churchill, 2009; Greenhow et al., 2009; Sigala, 2007). Issues concerning media literacy have been of special interest here to a number of authors, not least from the field of media and communication studies (Livingstone, 2003; Hartmann, 2010). They have offered analyses of how the transformation from an analogue media environment to an increasingly digital one might reshape what it means to know one's

way around the media. The question that is posed here is: what new skills and knowledge does the internet demand from young people? Needless to say, these are all important educational aspects. So far, however, far less research attention has been paid to an almost equally important category of people when it comes to issues concerning learning and media – teachers.

Despite the fact that computer technology has been around as an educational tool for a long time, within Swedish classrooms, but also as an issue for discussion within public debates, research into the ways in which teachers as a *profession* appropriate and make sense of it has been scarce. As early as in the 1960s, the debate about the pros and cons of computers in schools was initiated (Karlsohn, 2009). It was not, however, until the 1970s that (a few) computers actually became available in Swedish classrooms. At this time computer use in schools was basically limited to specific development projects, in just a small number of schools, and these projects were most often pioneered by teachers who had a particular interest in technology per se (*ibid.*). Integrating computers into the school environment was nevertheless a sensitive issue, at least within public debate – a lot of people expressed concerns about the fact that the increasing use of ICTs in schools would potentially dehumanise education.

Countering these hesitant voices, the Swedish government made great efforts to put computers into schools; the political establishment was very keen on framing computer access in schools as ‘the future’. These efforts were initiated during the 1980s, took off during the early 1990s and peaked in the late 1990s and early 2000s when the national programme *ItiS* (*IT i skolan* or ICTs in school) was launched. The programme aimed to improve schools’ access to ICTs and to increase participation among teachers and pupils in ICT development (Karlsohn, 2009).

In light of the general interest in and concerns about computers and – later on – the internet in Swedish schools, one could expect that the role of professional teachers in computerisation would have been analysed and discussed in some detail. The same applies to their views of these changes from their professional outlook, in terms of being responsible for young people’s learning. But apart from a very few exceptions, this has not been the case. Instead, very little research attention has been paid to the ways in which teachers have appropriated (cf. Silverstone, 1994; Miller and Slater, 2000) and made sense of this development. Within popular debates, however, teachers have more often come to play a part in discussions con-



cerning new ICTs in school. In this context it has lately been somewhat fashionable to portray teachers as ignorant, unknowing relics who have been unable to grasp and understand the new, digital world inhabited by young, so-called digital natives (cf. Graffman, 2008; Johansson, 2010). Generally speaking, these images of teachers have been contributions to the drawing of a malicious portrait of the abilities of teachers to adapt to and cope with the new media world.

The time is certainly high for research into the ways in which professional teachers actually appropriate and make sense of the development that has brought computers and internet access to their classrooms and to their pupils' everyday lives. This is, of course, in itself a potentially vast research area. Hence, in this chapter we limit ourselves to a modest, initial contribution to the field by analysing issues that have been actualised by a recent case study of professional teachers in a Swedish primary school. This school is an average school, situated in an ordinary, mid-sized Swedish town. Drawing on 12 semi-structured interviews with professional teachers, analyses of relevant policy documents and observations at the school (mainly within classroom contexts), we will be analysing and discussing the following two overarching research questions, which are related to teachers' appropriation of computers and the internet: What are teachers' views of their own ICT capabilities? And how do they, as professional teachers, evaluate their pupils' – the 'digital natives' – ICT capabilities?

In adopting this approach, the study also aligns itself with ongoing research concerned with how new information and communication technologies might change and reshape various *professions*. So far, various research efforts have been undertaken to analyse the consequences of ICT development for professional groups such as health care professionals (Winman and Rystedt, 2009), and not least professions involved in various kinds of media production (cf. Deuze, 2007; Nygren, 2008; Quandt and Singer, 2009). This chapter is part of an effort to bring teachers into this research area as well.

## 2. PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS AND ICTs

### 2.1 ICT EXPERIENCE

In contrast to the often repeated and malicious portrait of teachers as inexperienced tourists in a digital world inhabited by their young, digitally savvy pupils (cf. Prensky, 2001; Tapscott, 2008), the teachers participating

in the case study have both quite wide-ranging and long-standing experience of computer and internet use. Typically, using a home computer was their first computer experience (in the 1980s or early 1990s). By using this home computer they informally learned working life computer skills, such as word processing. The interviews quite clearly reveal the everyday character of these experiences:

*I got my first PC at the end of the 80s. That was mostly due to the fact that my husband needed it for work. And I just used it for writing (Teacher 7).*

*We got a computer in my family pretty early, in the early 90s. It was probably quite early in comparison to other households. At that time, we used the computer mainly as a working tool. I used it for writing documents [ ... ] (Teacher 10).*

These informal computer experiences were later on transformed into working life skills as computers made it into Swedish schools in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Most teachers participating in the study started to make use of computers in school by deploying their informally learned skills long before getting enrolled into the various government efforts to increase ICT skills among teachers and pupils in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

## 2.2 DIGITAL CAPABILITIES

Considering that the teachers in the study are experienced users of computers and related ICTs, it is hardly surprising that the teachers consider themselves to be fairly knowledgeable and skilled users. Their use of ICTs is generally high, in terms of both frequency and variety, and their use furthermore reflects an interest in issues related to ICTs. Given this level of capability, most of the interviewed teachers have not had any problems integrating ICTs into their curriculum. On the contrary, they all tend to agree on the fact that it would be very difficult to manage a working life as a teacher without having fairly good skills in computer usage.

*I have had a laptop since I started working as a teacher 10 years ago. That is why I find it so difficult trying to understand that [some] teachers are capable of doing their job without using a computer, and without being connected to the internet (Teacher 6).*

It is, instead, a recurrent theme within the interviews that the interviewees insist on the need for contemporary teachers to be able to teach their pupils adequate and useful ICT skills. Or as one of the teachers puts it: *“In the future, the pupils will, in one way or another, work with computers, and the school has a responsibility to prepare [them] for it”* (Teacher 10).

## 2.3 ICTs IN PROFESSIONAL EVERYDAY PRACTICES

An important part of the teacher’s ICT use concerns *administrative work*. A large share of these duties is dependent on computers and the internet. For instance, every day pupils’ absences need to be recorded. Furthermore, regulations require that teachers in Swedish primary schools spend a lot of time on documenting pupils’ development and learning. This in turn increases the teachers’ administrative duties:

*We spend a lot of time using ICTs for documenting pupil progress*  
(Teacher 1).

*I also use the computer to a large extent when it comes to administrative work. I do a lot of planning and documentation on the computer. Since about four years ago, I have my own computer in the staff room* (Teacher 5).

Despite their increasing administrative workload, the teachers generally have a positive attitude towards ICTs and their ability to support them in their administrative duties. The respondents point to the potential of ICTs to improve the quality of their work.

Another salient category of everyday ICT practices among professional teachers, of course, covers those practices that are related to *communication*. Among the teachers the internet has been shaped into a platform which colleagues and pupils (and their parents) can visit for information and news. The school website, for instance, is used for both internal (within the organisation) and external communication. It conveys a wide variety of school information, such as schedules, weekly letters and information about upcoming activities, and also holds information aimed specifically at the pupils’ parents. The teachers especially emphasise the internet’s excellence in terms of helping them to keep in touch with parents. For instance, the interviews make it very obvious that e-mailing plays a pivotal role when it comes to building and maintaining strong relations between the school and the pupil’s parents.

As teachers the interviewees also make use of their computer skills in the *classroom* too. There is an instant, ongoing discussion among the school's teachers about how they could adapt and accommodate computers and the internet in their pedagogical work. They also make good use of computers in their classrooms in almost all subjects. The teachers' main reason for integrating ICTs into teaching is to offer their pupils useful, elementary tools for the future, such as developing skills in criticising sources on the internet.

Some of the interviewees also express concerns about the low number of computers available to pupils in school. The relative lack of computers prevents the teachers from integrating them more fully into learning processes. The teachers also recognise the need to use ICTs to a larger extent in the future: *"In teaching I would like to use ICTs even more. For example, in math I have a desire to integrate it more as a training tool"* (Teacher 4).

### 3. PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS REFLECT ON THE 'DIGITAL NATIVES'

#### 3.1 TEACHERS' VIEW OF PUPILS' ICT CAPABILITIES AND PRACTICES

Another important part of the interviewees' professional role as teachers has to do with their knowledge and perception of the pupils' ICT use and competence. How knowledgeable are the so called 'digital natives' in reality, when it comes to ICTs? And how do they actually make use of ICTs at home and in school?

The teacher interviewees can clearly sense that their pupils spend a lot of time around computers in general and on the internet in particular. The pupils seem to use ICTs in many everyday situations, not only at school, but also at home and in other venues throughout their everyday lives. According to the teachers, the pupils' computer skills are mainly connected to different kinds of 'edutainment' and various social activities, such as music programmes, interactive games and social communities:

*When it comes to computer games, they know far more than I do. That is a totally different world. But when we talk about school-relevant tasks [ ... ] the pupils are no smarter. [ ... ] If we generalise, they are better at [moving] into communities on the web and playing interactive games and so on. But they are not better at searching for information online* (Teacher 2).

The pupils' solid competence when it comes to streaming music does

not, obviously, equate to the skills necessary for searching and finding relevant information on the internet. Hence, despite the pupils' extensive internet experience and skills concerning various internet practices, these practices do not in any simple way transform themselves into educational skills, such as word processing, problem-solving, searching and sorting information, etc. Within these school-related areas, the teachers perceive that they possess significantly higher degrees of knowledge and skills. The teachers even highlight what they perceive as a general lack of knowledge and skills among their pupils when it comes to reflecting on their internet use in a critical manner.

Several teachers also insist that many pupils have problems when it comes to practices related to searching for and evaluating resources on the internet. In addition to that, the teachers also describe most of the pupils as passive consumers of the internet; they present a passive and shallow interaction with texts on the internet, and they are – furthermore – not engaged in creating their own web content. They basically rely on the internet for information-gathering and communication activities, without deeper reflection.

The teachers nevertheless describe the pupils as “*fearless*” and “*fast*” when it comes to the internet. Moreover, they perceive them as updated when it comes to new phenomena on the internet, such as the latest programmes for streaming music. The teachers also agree that the pupils' ICT capabilities are oriented towards computer games, with a special culture around it. Within this sphere they learn much faster than their teachers, but such skills are not so easily applicable within other areas:

*I feel that students think they know a lot, they presume that they often know better than their teachers. They like taking control over the computer. But the fact is that they often have preconceived ideas (Teacher 9).*

*One can expect that they would be really good. But they are good in certain areas, for instance in downloading movies and music. But when it comes to dealing with writing programmes, they have problems managing even the simpler forms (Teacher 11).*

### 3.2 IS THERE ONE DIGITAL GENERATION?

From the point of view of the teachers interviewed, it is a brutal simplification to claim that all contemporary young people would fit the stereotype

of being a 'digital native'. Normally, a classroom is filled with pupils coming from a range of backgrounds. Some of them do not have computers at home, some have disabilities, and some are simply not interested. This is made very evident within the interviews. The teachers are very quick to point out huge differences in the ways pupils use ICTs both in school and at home. The teachers also highlight that there are wide gaps between groups of pupils when it comes to ICT capabilities and experiences. For instance, children who are used to computers at home seem to be more enthusiastic and confident when using one in school.

*How much they actually use computers varies a lot. Some children may be at the computer one hour a day [and] then it is over. And the other children, it seems that they have unlimited time, they sit there [in front of the computer] from the time they get home from school until it is bedtime (Teacher 2).*

#### 4. DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, very little research attention has been paid to the ways in which professional teachers appropriate and make sense of the ICT development. On the other hand, a number of pundits within the field have asserted that a new generation of learners is entering the educational institutions. Prensky (2001), for instance (see also Van Slyke, 2003; Tapscott, 2008), refers to this new generation of learners as 'digital natives' or 'the net generation', and claims that it is the first generation that has grown up with computers and internet access. A guiding assumption in his analysis is that the teachers, labelled 'digital immigrants', do not have the ICT skills necessary, and as a consequence they can no longer guide contemporary students. Hence, teachers must learn and adapt to the ICT language in order to become useful as teachers. Within this analysis it is furthermore claimed that many teachers feel professionally threatened by ICTs, because the students themselves are able to seek their own information and the teachers may thus lose control over the teaching processes:

*It's very serious, because the single biggest problem facing education today is that our Digital Immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language (Prensky, 2001: 2).*

If digital immigrant teachers want to reach 'the digital natives' – their pupils – they will have to change, according to Prensky. Prensky's analysis concludes with the belief that this asymmetric division of powers alters

the relationship between teachers and pupils. It challenges both teachers' classroom authority and – perhaps even more dramatically – current educational approaches.

The data and analyses presented in this chapter, however, point in another direction in respect of professional teachers' capabilities. On the face of it, the results of the study would initially indicate very little cause for concern. The case study finds that, contrary to the discussion above, the use of ICTs among teachers is generally high, both in frequency and variety. They also have an interest in ICTs as educational tools and in how they can be involved in different teaching and learning processes. Additionally, there is a great deal of interest in finding out more about the learning potential of ICTs.

When it comes to 'the digital natives' themselves, our data suggest that the claims of a complete transformation among pupils are considerably exaggerated. The data do, of course, make it clear that contemporary pupils are comfortable in the digital world, but they seem no more prepared than previous generations when it comes to having the knowledge and skills required to handle ICT practices that are applicable in educational contexts. In general, pupils' computer skills are strongly connected to edutainment and social activities, such as music programmes, interactive games and social communities. In terms of practices more applicable to educational tasks, such as criticising one's sources, searching and sorting information, etc., teachers still seem to possess significantly better skills and knowledge than their pupils. Furthermore, there is also a great variation in terms of how digitally competent young people are – to talk of them as a whole generation of new learners is to oversimplify a complex reality.

In this light it cannot be asserted that the pupils are 'natives' and their teachers 'immigrants' when comparing their ICT capabilities. The pupils are not as computer literate as we might imagine. Several of the teacher interviewees instead highlight the idea that young people show high computer literacy is in fact a myth:

*I think it is a myth that pupils are far more ICT-literate than their teachers. At first glance, it may appear that they know better, but if we really look a bit deeper it is clear that, even when it comes to basic knowledge, they are not literate enough (Teacher 3).*



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# Digital attraction: How new media can invigorate election campaigns, or not.

François Heinderyckx

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Election campaigns in the United States have always been the object of much attention. The world is not only fascinated by the stakes of the election, the magnitude of the campaign and the staggering budgets involved: US campaigns are also known to be the scene of innovative practices in political marketing and, as such, they feed endless debates about what worked well and what did not, and what can be transposed in other settings and countries. Much has been said and written about the 2008 US presidential election. Most observers consider this campaign, and particularly that of Barack Obama, as a turning point in the history of political marketing. It marked the beginning of a new era where the internet and other digital media play a decisive role. The shift can be compared to that of the 1960 US presidential election, when modern marketing techniques were, for the first time, heavily mobilised for the campaign, with television being used as the central medium to reach the public in general and voters in particular.

The exact nature of the change at hand, its magnitude and future prospects, are difficult to assess with clarity. The enthusiasm and fascination that materialised during the Obama campaign and in the aftermath of the election led to hasty judgements about how election campaigns would, from now on, be internet-centred or be doomed to failure. These early diagnoses are to be taken with a pinch of salt, given the recurrent techno-deterministic hysteria that technological innovation should be driving every aspect of our lives in the fast lane toward a better world. Predictions in that area have more often than not dramatically failed to foresee the adoption, use and impact of emerging technologies. One enduring reason for those failed analyses lies in the disregard for the difference between *design* (what a technology was developed for), *potential* (what it could be

used for, including impressively varied and unforeseen areas) and *use* (the actual adoption and use by individuals, institutions, companies etc.). A number of classic cases of inaccurate predictions and interpretations can be found in the area of political marketing. In the early days of the web, technology experts prophesied that political parties would make all kind of documents and fancy multimedia content available online so that voters could be fully informed and could compare the propositions of the different parties before making a well-informed choice. Likewise, because the new media provide the means for real and presumably eagerly awaited interactivity, political parties and candidates would at last gather people's opinions and options, and they would engage in a real and constructive dialogue. These balanced exchanges would improve the understanding of public opinion by the political sphere, while gratifying the public with (a sense of) participation and reconciling them with politics and democracy.

Of course, none of that came true to any significant degree. People who distance themselves from party politics and election battlefields do not change attitudes simply because they can access a wealth of campaign-related content online. Also, information overload is more likely to confuse people and drive them even further adrift. Likewise, most attempts by political parties to set up any lasting structure for dialogue with the public (online forums, essentially) were confronted with insurmountable difficulties related to the monopolising attitude of a few, often extreme voices, and the limited overall number of participants. In general, political discussion forums did not turn out to be a wondrous place where people would widen their horizons and mature in their world views as a result of dialogues with people from diverse ideological, social, national and professional backgrounds, all brought together by the technology that abolishes frontiers. The exact opposite happened. Research shows that online deliberation structures are places of self-reinforcing ideological ghettos, where participants voicing opinions that diverge from the core views of the group are simply excluded, often forcibly (Davis, 2005).

That is not to say that the development of information and communication technologies is trivial in political communication and election campaigns. There is no question that ICTs have irreversibly modified the very fundamentals of political communication by a magnitude proportionate to the penetration of these technologies. But this does not mean that political marketing is being redefined entirely from the ground up, with ICTs as the sole campaign ground. Using the Obama08 campaign as a testing ground, we will try to clarify how ICTs influenced the course of events.

## 2. ICTs AND THE OBAMA08 CAMPAIGN: A CRITICAL OVERVIEW

The ICT arsenal mobilised for the Obama08 campaign was not restricted to the internet: mobile phones (and particularly text messaging) and land-line phones (still predominantly used for calling prospective voters) were heavily used in addition to traditional websites, video-sharing websites and social networks (also known as “socnets”). Almost all of these tools were developed and used by Howard Dean during the campaign for the Democratic Party primaries in 2003, but it would seem that the Obama campaign managed to consolidate and to integrate them more tightly while, obviously, people had become much more familiar with them in the meantime. Indeed, the proportion of internet users participating in social networking sites had quadrupled since 2004 and more than half of the US adult population gathered news about the 2008 campaign online, a record high, but still far behind television (Smith, 2009). The Hillary Clinton campaign also used similar tools, but these were hindered by the conflicting dynamics between a largely top-down campaign and tools that are most powerful in a bottom-up campaign (Talbot, 2008). Sceptics remained careful, considering that, after all, the Dean campaign had failed. They wanted online tools to be one of many components in their campaign, while the Obama team decided to make them completely central to their operations. Paradoxically, the proportion of internet users was higher among John McCain’s supporters than among Barack Obama’s (83 per cent versus 76 per cent), but the latter were more active in campaign-related online activities (Smith, 2009).

These tools were fitted into the campaign strategy and showed unprecedented efficiency in a range of crucial aspects of the campaign, covering five areas: recruitment, motivation, information, organisation and fundraising.

### 2.1 THE USE OF ICTs FOR RECRUITMENT OF ACTIVISTS AND SUPPORTERS

The recruitment phase relied on viral circulation of various messages and videos targeted at a wide range of audiences and pointed consistently to the main sites of the campaign, driving as much traffic as possible toward “MyBO”, the exclusive social network created for the campaign (my.barackobama.com). People could register their profiles and join a variety of groups within MyBO, thus interacting with other supporters sharing

more than their interest for the campaign. Those who wanted to attend some of the large meetings organised early in the campaign had to register online to get an invitation, thus feeding the larger database of supporters with a minimum set of personal information, at the very least a functioning e-mail address. Figures from the campaign staff indicate that up to 2 million profiles were created on MyBO, while groups were gathering more members and supporters on most of the existing social networks, including all major ethnic ones. These staggering figures are extremely difficult to interpret. First - because they cannot be verified. Most of the statistics circulating about the Obama campaign originate from the campaign staff themselves and cannot possibly be cross-checked<sup>1</sup>. Second - because these likely supporters must include, alongside outright devoted fanatics with real intentions of getting involved, any number of simple lurkers satisfying their curiosity and even some opponents trying to find out more about the methods of the Obama camp. Nevertheless, the recruitment was undeniably successful and provided the campaign with decisive momentum. Another remarkable feature of the recruitment process is the fluidity with which individuals who made even the most minor of contacts with the campaign could gradually be converted into front-line campaigners, even for as little time as these people could devote to the cause.

## 2.2 THE USE OF ICTS FOR ENHANCING MOTIVATION

The motivation of campaigners was enhanced by the sense that they were part of a historical moment, that radical change might be under way and that they could contribute to that widely hyped change as members of a large community who shared an ideal. Gratification was then in proportion to the level of involvement and participation. Technology was put to good use to further boost the motivation of militants who were able to monitor their performances and their peers', with numerous indicators encouraging a sense of competition among campaigners or teams. Overall, the motivation was extreme and channelled successfully into action, but probably only so on two conditions: first, that all action be aimed at one simple and well-identified objective (the election of Obama as president of the US); second, that the action and the objective be clearly bound in time, set with a deadline or a fixed set of deadlines (key primaries, the convention of the Democratic Party, and finally the election). The importance of these two conditions is confirmed to a certain degree by the fact

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1 A very large proportion of writings on the campaign quote figures that can be traced back to an interview given to the *Washington Post* by Joe Rospars (New Media director for the Obama 2008 campaign) in November 2008 (see Vargas, 2008).

that the Obama administration did not really manage to transpose the dynamics of the community of supporters of Obama as a candidate into supporters of Obama's policy until the key battle for healthcare reform. Here again, for the first time since the election, mobilisation had been needed for a specific and important goal (voting on the bill in the House and the Senate) with a set time-frame (the votes in both chambers). The mobilisation was once again impressive in its magnitude and efficacy.

### 2.3 THE USE OF ICTs FOR DEPLOYMENT OF (PRIVILEGED) INFORMATION

The targeted, swift and timely circulation of information was a crucial asset of the Obama campaign. With the full range of communication channels available thanks to the latest information and communication technologies (Delany, 2009), the campaign was able to reach the broad community of supporters. Messages either conveyed key information or boosted motivation at crucial moments in the campaign. Because these channels were diverse and, to some extent, individualised, messages could be tailored to the information needs of the different actors of the campaign. These channels ranged from websites (including thematic portals and social networking websites) to e-mailing (more than a billion messages were fed to some 13 million addresses), extending beyond internet technologies to mobile telephony, and more particularly text-messaging (5 to 20 messages per month were sent to the million mobile phone numbers which were registered through the campaign). This sleek dissemination arsenal was decisive in at least two ways. First, it allowed some level of control over the perception and the framing of the campaign. This was particularly effective when messages needed to be sent swiftly regarding an emerging issue, controversy or smear before it reached the media. Supporters thus received first-hand, unfiltered and untampered information, its framing controlled by the campaign team, before any significant fact or controversy started flooding the public space with its customary share of distortion, errors, rumours and attempts at reinterpretation and destabilisation. Second, this dense (but hopefully not overwhelming) flow of messages reinforced among militants a sense of belonging to the inner circle, an exhilarating feeling of being part of an elite that enjoyed privileged channels of communication with core campaign organisers, and even occasionally with Barack Obama himself.

## 2.4 THE USE OF ICTs FOR ORGANISATION OF THE CAMPAIGN

The very practical organisation of the campaign is not extensively documented, but there is little doubt that here again, new media played a central role. Campaigners found online the resources and the tools to guide and maximise their action while providing them with a large degree of autonomy: lists of phone numbers to call, addresses of undecided voters in their neighbourhoods, newspapers or other institutions to contact and speak out to, brochures and posters to print, priority areas for campaigning, testimonies and talking points. The organisational part of the campaign's e-machinery also included features enhancing a stimulating sense of competition: levels of campaign activity could be compared on different parameters and individuals achieving set levels of activity were granted a higher rank with corresponding privileges, such as access to additional tools to organise their teams. Overall, the campaign excelled in converting enthusiasm into action by inviting supporters to engage in their own field operations following simple instructions and giving them a sense of purpose.

## 2.5 THE USE OF ICTs FOR CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING

The very successful fundraising spectacularly confirmed the effectiveness of the internet in this area, as shown previously, and most famously, by the Howard Dean campaign in 2003. This is a particular case of the known capacity of the internet for aggregating small, scattered efforts from a large number of individuals tantamount to a staggering cumulated force. In the case of the Obama campaign, small donations were numerous and often repeated, in part as a result of insistent invitations to donate (again) using the various information channels described above. Not only did this strategy bring in unprecedented levels of funds, it also gave a strong popular legitimacy to the financial means gathered (and alongside to the candidate thus supported), given that these small donations were implicitly from the middle and lower classes. Traditionally, the exorbitant funds for campaigning are provided above all by the well-off and by vested interests. It is, in more than one way, another example of the 'long tail' effect of the internet.



### 3. CONCLUSION

Lessons learnt from recent political campaigns tend to encourage political actors to engage in digital campaigning of some kind. Yet, the mere correlation between the well-thought-out use of up-to-date technologies and electoral success does not tell us much about how the increased use of ICTs may induce a systemic shift in such crucial areas as political engagement, political opinion formation and election behaviour. Research is only beginning to explore these questions from the point of view of citizens, prolonging a lengthy and controversial string of research into media effects on political behaviour. For example, Zhang and al. (2010) find that social networks users tend to show higher levels of civic participation, but not of *political* participation, the latter still being driven primarily by interpersonal discussions (Zhang, 2010: 86-87). Likewise, young people seeking news on social network websites are not better informed about politics and not more inclined towards political participation (Baumgartner and Morris, 2010: 38). A Pew survey found that although some 60 per cent of US internet users said they were engaged in sharing or receiving information about the campaign, less than 40 per cent said they were communicating with others about politics using the internet (Smith, 2009). This would indicate that the 'online political users', to use the phrase coined by the Pew Center, are more prone to share bits of information about the election than they are to engage in actual political discussion online.

Politics, democracy, elections, engagement and trust are typically in a permanent state of flux. Alterations are driven by the larger context and communication technologies are no more than one among many factors making up that context. To claim that innovation in technology drives change is to overlook that context and to succumb to technological determinism. But to downplay the decisive role of technology by cautiously assuming that it does not really make much difference as compared to other factors is to neglect a key link in the chain of events making up the very fabric of political activities. Looking back at the still very short history of digital political communication, there are strong signs of structural changes not merely in the tools and media, but in the disturbance of power structures and distribution, such as the shift from a few major financial donors to many small contributors, or a shift from well established influential political institutions to new aggregates of activists developing their own ideological platforms along with powerful means to disseminate their views. Examples include MoveOn.org, which started in 1998 as an attempt to gather support for Bill Clinton during his impeachment procedure (fol-

lowing the Monica Lewinsky scandal), and has since gained momentum and started a life of its own, bringing its own spin to the public space. Similarly, the same community that supposedly brought Barack Obama to the White House later joined, to a certain extent, the opposition forces, holding him accountable for his campaign promises and as such interfering strongly with the Obama administration's policies and actions. The irreducible top-down dynamics of political leadership must learn how to cohabit with an ever stronger plethora of bottom-up, grassroots initiatives – to tame them and embrace them, with all their versatility and instability, or bear the consequences.

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# Face-to-face or Facebook: Are shy people more outgoing on Social Networking Sites?

Tim Blumer

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Some of the most frequently asked questions within psychological research on computer-mediated communication (CMC) include: How does CMC impact on human communication and interaction? For which occasions is CMC more suitable than other types of communication? Which people have a particular preference for CMC? This research tradition has a long legacy (e.g. Rice and Case, 1983), and has foregrounded some highly regarded, as well as some more controversial theories and models. Most of these models, however, relate primarily to *text-based* CMC (e.g. e-mail, chat, instant messengers). After the emergence of Web 2.0, purely text-based CMC has become less important. For instance, communication on social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook, but also applications such as Skype, include not only text but also a number of additional modes of communication (e.g. pictures, video or sound) which are likely to play a role in human interaction.

One of the main focal points of psychological research today deals with checking whether the established theories and models from the Web 1.0 era still hold true for communication on Web 2.0 platforms and (when needed) developing new models for these new types of communication. The aim of this chapter is to examine whether the well-established finding that shy people prefer CMC compared to face-to-face communication (FTF) still applies to CMC on SNSs. In order to understand why shy people prefer CMC above FTF, the psychological notion of shyness and the specific needs of shy people are introduced in the first part. After this, it is shown that some characteristics of text-based CMC perfectly fit shy people's needs. Third, the transferability of crucial aspects of text-based CMC

onto SNSs is assessed. Finally, it is discussed whether communication on SNSs might still be suitable for shy people.

## 2. SHYNESS ONLINE

Psychologically speaking, shy people are seen to be having an excessive self-focus. They tend to devalue themselves and to feel uncomfortable in interpersonal situations. Typically, new or unfamiliar situations are problematic. Shyness refers to cognitive aspects (e.g. negative self-assessments), to emotional aspects (e.g. increased anxiety) as well as to physiological aspects (e.g. tachycardia, sweating) and to behavioural aspects such as avoidance of situations (Henderson and Zimbardo, 1998).

As mentioned in the introduction, psychological research often tries to identify groups of people who have certain preferences for CMC. Shyness is probably among the most regarded traits in this context (e.g. Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel and Fox, 2002; Caplan, 2007; Rice and Markey, 2009; Saunders and Chester, 2008; Sheeks and Birchmeier, 2007; Stritzke, Nguyen and Durkin, 2004). And in fact the results are quite clear: shy people prefer text-based CMC to FTF more often than non-shy individuals. Actually, some studies showed that shy people even describe online relationships to be more satisfying than non-shy people (Ward and Tracey, 2004). However, these results are merely descriptive and based mostly upon correlative statistical relationships. To understand why this relationship is robustly reported in the research literature, the specific needs of shy individuals have to be taken into consideration.

Shy people often have serious social deficits, as they frequently have problems concerning interpersonal interactions and relationships. Their fears and inhibitions hinder forming strong social bonds and establishing satisfying relationships. Thus, they often feel alone, lonely and belonging nowhere. As a result, the need for belongingness (Baumeister and Leary, 1995) which exists in every human being can often not be satisfied. The absence of significant others also leads to deficits regarding the important human need for self-esteem (Schlenker, 1980). Salutary self-esteem requires social confirmation, positive feedback and support but also critical, constructive conflict. This can only be found within reliable and trusted relationships.

Additionally, since shy people are excessively preoccupied with the impression they make on others, self-presentation is of some importance. On the one hand,

they desperately try to create a positive impression but, on the other hand, they believe that they will fail in these attempts. Thus, shyness increases with the desire to create a good impression and decreases with the perceived success in doing so. The outstanding relevance of impressions management leads to a heightened need for control in social interactions. Control here refers to questions of self-presentation: How can I represent myself? What aspects of myself would I rather hide? Or even: How can I deceive? The work of Goffman (1959) on the difference between front-stage and back-stage behaviour is often relevant in this regard.

According to McKenna and Bargh (1998) and to the uses-and-gratification approach (Blumler, Katz and Gurevich, 1974), people actively choose environments or media to satisfy particular needs. The following paragraph outlines the environmental conditions of text-based CMC for human communication, interaction and relationship formation and compares these characteristics to the shy needs described above.

### 3. TEXT-BASED COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

Computer-mediated communication is characterised as a form of human communication which occurs through the use of two or more networked computers (December, 1996). Relatively early, psychologists began to investigate the effects of computer communication on interpersonal interaction in contrast to FTF communication (e.g. Rice and Case, 1983).

In terms of text-based CMC, three major differences with FTF communication have been identified (e.g. McKenna, Green and Gleason, 2002):

7. **Cue reduction:** Text-based CMC lacks acoustic, social, and most visual cues. Apart from text-based information, interaction partners cannot get further information (e.g. through body language, vocal cues or social cues like physical appearance, clothing etc.).
8. **Anonymity and distance:** People can browse the internet and contact others anonymously. The average internet user is not able to figure out the true identity of his or her interaction partner. Closely related to this point is third difference:
9. **Possibility of selective self-presentation:** Due to the limitation on text-based communication, people can decide on their own which personal information they want to share. That is, they also have the opportunity to deceive (e.g. concerning age, looks).

Of course these three aspects are neither independent nor exhaustive. For instance, other important differences are the persistence of CMC (f.e. the recordability of conversation contents), the reciprocity (Peter and Valkenburg, 2006) or the fact that CMC produces completely new communication channels, as Sproull and Faraj (1995) point out. Nevertheless, the three characteristics listed are predominant in the psychological literature.

For more than two decades there has been a lively debate on how these characteristics of text-based CMC affect human communication, interaction and relationship formation. As with every new invention of media technology, pessimistic as well as optimistic views form regarding the social and cultural impacts of these new developments on the media and communication environment. In the early age of CMC, scientific perspectives have been rather pessimistic. Culnan and Markus (1987) called the early approaches cues filtered-out perspectives (CFO). The unifying theme to these approaches is that the reduction of social cues leads to a depersonalised form of communication. Due to cue reduction, interaction partners cannot develop personal impressions of each other, thus, CFO describes CMC as being more impersonal and more task-orientated when compared to FTF (Daft and Lengel, 1986).

On the other hand, it is suspected that CMC may also force anti-social behaviour (e.g. Sproull and Kiesler, 1986). In the early 1990s researchers tried to find out which aspects of CMC caused these effects. In fact, it was shown that the negative influence on personal interaction was not caused by the cue reduction in itself. In experimental conditions Walther (1992) demonstrated that the observed task-orientation and depersonalisation was the result of a deceleration of the information exchange process. Social cues can be replaced by other, text-based information, such as topics, diction or emoticons. Thus, interaction partners can develop similar personal impressions and relationships over a sustained period of time. Since a number of studies reported that CMC even surpasses FTF in some interpersonal aspects such as intimacy or sympathy, Walther (1996) attempted to identify the conditions which have led to these contrasting results in the research literature. Walther formulated an interactive model to explain these interpersonal effects: the sender tends to project a socially favourable self-representation, whereas the receiver over-attributes these cues and, furthermore, tends to idealise the sender. Because of the distance and anonymity on the internet, other authors suggest that CMC even leads to greater self-disclosure. Especially within concerns of social stigma, people might disclose their 'true self' more easily. The authors see parallels to the



'strangers on a train' effect (Rubin, 1975), in accordance with which it is often easier to confide in a completely unknown person than, for example, in close friends (e.g. Amichai-Hamburger, Wainpel and Fox, 2002; Bargh, McKenna and Fitzsimons, 2002).

The early CFO perspectives have been disproved in many cases and seem obsolete in the face of a lively and by no means anti-social online culture. Nevertheless, time and time again critical voices concerning interpersonal effects can be heard (Kraut et al., 1998, Suler 2004). However, these assumptions are questionable because of missing empirical evidence and a weak methodological reliability (Kraut et al., 2002). In particular, the models by Walther (1992, 1996) and the true-self approach (e.g. Bargh, McKenna and Fitzsimons, 2002) found wide acceptance within the research community and have led to numerous further studies.

The following characteristics of text-based CMC are considered to be crucial in relation to the personality trait of shyness:

1. **Controllability concerning self-presentation:** Due to (social) cue reduction people can decide which personal information they want to share. They have more control than in a FTF situation because involuntary expressions like mimic, gesture or vocal cues are absent.
2. **Anonymity:** People can remain anonymous as long as they want to. For shy people who have strong fears of rejection, the anonymity and the physical distance of CMC are seen to be a safe haven.
3. **Easy transition to personal issues, especially concerning socially stigmatised topics:** Talking about personal issues is always an obstacle for shy people. To reveal themselves to others is associated with great anxiety. Research has shown that this inhibition threshold is significantly easier to overcome with CMC.
4. **Rich opportunities to make new friends:** Last but not least the possibility to make a variety of new acquaintances might also be an important point for shy people. As described before, many shy people have difficulties with meeting new people and with building satisfying relationships. On the internet it is easier to find like-minded others (e.g. through topic-related forums).

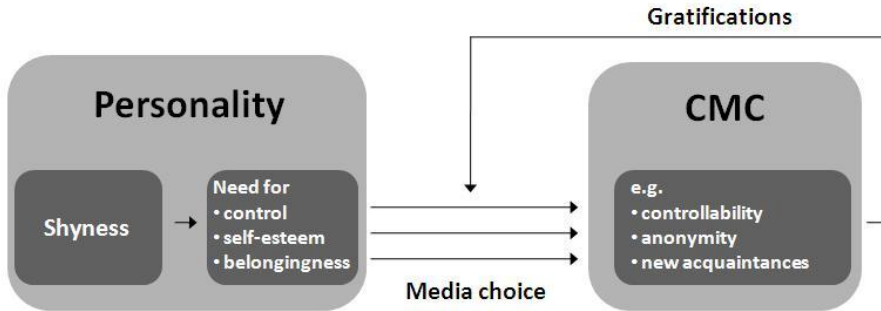
**Figure 1: Relationship between shyness and CMC**

Figure 1 outlines the assumed relationship between shyness and CMC affinity. On the one hand, shy people have *inter alia* heightened needs for control, self-esteem and belongingness. On the other hand, compared to FTF, CMC offers more controllability, anonymity and plenty of opportunities to make new friends. Of course, this relationship is only lasting when shy people succeed in satisfying their need or, in other words, when they gain gratifications.

#### 4. TRANSFERABILITY OF TEXT-BASED CHARACTERISTICS ONTO SOCIAL NETWORKING

In their often cited article “Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship”, Boyd and Ellison (2007: 211) define SNSs as

*web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.*

To a certain extent, the third point cannot be disregarded as a necessary condition. Current controversies about privacy on the internet have prompted many providers to allow their users to hide contact lists (e.g. MySpace) or to stay invisible to others within the contact lists (e.g. Facebook). A more recent and as widely accepted definition is lacking at the moment.

Having addressed the early research on text-based CMC, the question arises as to what extent their outcomes also hold true for social interaction on SNSs. Communication on SNSs offers a whole range of additional modes of communication. However, the number of channels is still reduced in comparison to FTF communication. For instance, there are no odours, rarely is there body language, etc. However, the aspect of controllability cannot be transferred easily from text-based CMC onto social networking. Although SNSs mostly provide greater control than FTF communication, under certain circumstances, the control can also be lower. For instance, users are often able to gather a lot of information about others (profile texts, pictures, number of friends, etc.) without even having contacted them or asked permission for it.

In addition, the disclosure of personal information is limited by the potentially large public. Since profile owners share the same information with a large group of addressees, spreading false or euphemistic information would be noticed immediately (cf. Schlenker, 1980; also see visibility and the public/private boundary below). Accordingly, Back et al. (2010) showed that Facebook profiles reflect the actual personality of the owner rather than an idealised self-image. An additional limitation concerning controllability is related to the risk that third parties might divulge intimate details (e.g. by commenting on wall posts) that one would rather have kept secret.

Anonymity is an extremely difficult and frequently discussed issue in the context of social networking. Although most providers of SNSs offer more and more possibilities to customise adjustments of privacy, intentional anonymity undermines the very idea of social networking, that is, to represent and to transfer offline relationships onto the internet, and, in reverse, to build new relations online which are sometimes extended to the offline world. Additionally, profiles on SNSs are often used as self-promoting tools. Thompson's (1995) notion of visibility is highly relevant in this regard. Whereas the majority seem to struggle for visibility, shy people are likely to avoid visibility. Accordingly, the blurring of the public and the private and of front- and back-stage behaviour (Goffman, 1959) is also of some importance. If shy people tend to avoid disclosing too much information about themselves, how do they deal with publicising their private life on SNSs? Surprisingly, many users do not seem to be aware of this visibility and the broad public (Kennedy, 2006). This raises the question of the extent to which individual perceptions derogate the effects of actual visibility. Eventually, the extent of anonymity is different for particular

SNSs. On professional and career-related sites like LinkedIn or Xing, it is certain that no one would use a pseudonym, while on Facebook and other more 'private' SNSs it is quite common to use fake names or nicknames.

It can be assumed that self-disclosure on SNSs is not as easy as in purely text-based CMC. The stranger on a train effect might not occur due to higher degrees of visibility and reduced anonymity between interaction partners. However, since communication on SNSs is still *perceived* as being more anonymous and distant than FTF communication, people might still disclose personal information more easily. Furthermore, it has to be emphasised that Web 2.0 continues to offer unsurpassed access to socially stigmatised or rarely encountered topics. Finally, SNSs still offer plenty of opportunities to make new friends or acquaintances.

**Table 1: Characteristics of text-based CMC and CMC on SNSs in comparison with FTF communication**

Differences from FTF communication	Text-based CMC	CMC on SNSs
1. High controllability concerning self-presentation	Yes	(Yes)
2. Anonymity	Yes	No
3. Easy transition to personal issues	Yes	Yes
4. Rich opportunities to make new friends	Yes	Yes
5. Issues of visibility	No	Yes
6. Merging of private and public	No	Yes

As outlined in Table 1, the comparison of both text-based CMC and CMC on SNSs to FTF communication suggests that communication on SNSs does indeed offer less controllability than text-based CMC. Nevertheless, the controllability on SNS might still be higher as in FTF contexts. Since this relation is just a presumption, 'Yes' is parenthesised. As social networking requires at least a minimum of visibility and the disclosure of one's identity, anonymity is no longer given. The table also makes clear that an 'easy transition to personal issues' and 'rich opportunities to make new friends' are still constitutive features of SNSs, whereas, the aspects of visibility - which is of course closely related to the loss of anonymity - as

well as the increased blurring of private and public spheres are considered to be new aspects of communication on SNSs. Both are likely to influence (not only shy) people's choice of communication contexts.

## 5. RATHER FACEBOOK THAN FACE-TO-FACE?

Orr et al. (2009) showed that shy people tend to spend more time on Facebook compared to non-shy participants. However, this does not necessarily imply that shy people are also more than normally active on SNSs. In this chapter it has been argued that the characteristics of text-based CMC cannot just be transferred onto SNSs without difficulty. Some characteristics of CMCs have become less relevant; others are similar to the characteristics of SNSs. Apart from the more or less objective characteristics of CMC, the perception of the user has to be taken into account. As long as shy individuals, as well as all others, perceive communication through SNSs as still being more anonymous, casual or effortless than FTF communication, similar differences between communication through CMC and FTF will occur on SNSs compared to FTF. In this regard, Kennedy (2006: 866) emphasises the differences between "*being anonymous and feeling anonymous*". In their internet-attribute-perception model, Schouten, Valkenburg and Peter (2007) have also drawn attention to the importance of individual perspectives. However, the perspective of the individual and/or the group can change quickly. For instance, the continuous coverage of Mark Zuckerberg's<sup>1</sup> attitude towards privacy might also have changed users' perceptions of their own anonymity.

Thus, whenever research tries to take subjective perspectives into consideration, the risk of just representing snapshots arises. Nevertheless, it seems quite reasonable that the characteristics of communication on SNSs feature some specific qualities that influence the subjective perception in a systematic manner. Referring back to text-based CMC, cue reduction had the effect that people scrutinise the attributes of their interaction partners more intensely (Hancock and Dunham, 2001). In relation to SNSs, being aware of eavesdroppers or lurkers is likely to have an influence on the nature of human interactions in these interactive spaces. Maybe there is even a new online bystander effect – the phenomenon when individuals do not offer help in emergency situations when other people are present (see Latane and Darley, 1970). However, such ideas have to be tested further in future research. With regard to shyness, further research should pay more attention on the

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1 Best known for co-founding the currently most successful SNS Facebook.

notion of visibility and investigate how the blurring of private and public impacts on online behaviour. The question of whether or not shy people are more outgoing on SNSs cannot, therefore, be answered at this stage. Nevertheless, the high relevance of the subjective perception of attributes of communication on SNSs suggests that a majority of users still feel relatively secure and anonymous. Thus, self-disclosure of shy and non-shy individuals is still more likely to occur online than in FTF situations.

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# Cross-media television: An empirical approach to the study of production culture

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, a great deal of both theoretical and empirical research attention has been paid to the digital transformation of television (Caldwell, 2008; Spigel and Olsson, 2004; Lotz, 2004, 2007). Even though researchers differ in their ways of denominating and explaining the phenomenon, they refer to television as being more than “*simple and understandable, a fairly monolithic entity*” (Lotz, 2004: 424). This transformation has also been paralleled by the emergence of an economic climate of restrictions and instability (Uricchio, 2009) affecting public broadcasting services. In their efforts to deal with the new situation, public service broadcasters have, among other things, expanded their emission platforms through the strategy of ‘media diffusion’ (Bechmann, 2006), which takes advantage of the evolution of the internet, as well as the technical development of multiple devices that allow for audiovisual consumption. In essence, public service broadcasters have taken important steps towards *cross-media production*.

In this context, following the definition of Boumnas (2004), cross-media could be defined as a process which involves four main characteristics: 1) it uses more than one medium in a chain where each brings its own individual characteristics to the final message; 2) it requires integration in the production of a certain type of content; 3) it is committed to the broadcasting of a wide range of possibilities for support and reception, and 4) it demands a common objective. In this sense, cross-media not only means the juxtaposition of different platforms. Instead, cross-media television goes beyond broadcasting in using different technical systems, but it also further implies associations in production and therefore also different levels

of convergence in terms of content (Dailey et al., 2005) through narration in a multi-platform environment (Dena, 2004; Jenkins, 2003).

From a production point of view, this “*disaggregation of [...] media processes*” (Küng-Shankleman, 2000: 44) means that distribution, or emission networks, and user devices must be taken into account in the creation, packaging and programming of content. But what effects does this change in production have on television channels? The introduction of new platforms has provided an incentive for management synergies and cooperation among different business units (Schulze et al., 2005), the implementation of new online content management systems (Franquet and Villa, 2010; Domingo, 2005; Jeffery-Poulter, 2003), and the redefinition of the physical and business organisation (Bechmann, 2006). This includes new possibilities for cooperation among workers, sometimes in the form of spatial relocation, as well as the assignment of new tasks to journalists, often destined to become multitasking professionals commissioned to produce for all platforms (Quinn, 2004).

Seen from the inside (Cottle, 2003), audiovisual production for a range of platforms demands flexible working schedules, the intersection of cultures and the introduction of different digital technologies, multimedia production and journalists who can adapt easily to different tasks. The objective of this chapter is to examine the change in production culture in this new context in order to find out *how the professionals involved in this process see themselves and their environment*.

## 2. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Among the different sciences dealing with the study of organisations (for instance social psychology, anthropology, administration) and the abundant literature that exists on media organisations, we need to situate the theoretical perspective on which we base our work. Most often research that has been carried out into media industries and their relationship with culture has focused on regulation, the concentration of companies and the link between capital and the media from a macro political and critical economic perspective (Havens et al., 2009). In contrast, the study of cultural practices at an organisational level has been given over to media management studies concerned with change, culture and business strategies (e.g. Cottle, 2003; Küng-Shankleman, 2008). In a broader sense, this study shares the interests of both the aforementioned perspectives and it is situated within the body of research dealing with the processes of interac-

tion between technology and society that has arisen since the 1990s, which seeks to understand how the internet and digital convergence influence cultural industries (e.g. Jenkins, 2008; Deuze, 2008).

In studying the production culture of cross-media television, we consider the relationship between the social network and media technology itself (Williams, 1974), following the line taken by authors who have carried out empirical studies on new digitisation during the last decade (e.g. Weiss and Domingo, 2010; Boczkowski, 2009, 2004; Domingo, 2008; Hemmingway, 2008) influenced by Rogers (1962), Latour and Woolgar (1986), and Bijker (1995) and their theories, such as Diffusion of innovations, Social Shaping of Technology (SSOT), Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) and Actor Net-Theory (ANT). We share a common interest with these studies in trying to discover the nexus between the evolution of technical artefacts and the specific social context in which they are used. From this perspective, and in accordance with the sociological tradition, we analyse media organisations as institutions that bring together a group of professionals with formally established work routines and permanence and who also share immaterial aspects such as norms, values, discourses and ideas.

This set of factors is explored from the perspective of the organisation as a *cultural organisation* and with a critical focus on change. The change in culture is one of the most complex facets of cross-media production, not least due to the fact that the structure of audiovisual companies is usually dated to the age of analogue television (Vilches, 2000), but also because organisations' established work routines tend to resist technological innovation (Mateu and Clavell, 2005).

The theoretical perspective of culture that is applied has been developed by Schein (1991). Unlike most theorists concerned with organisation and organisational culture (Pettigrew, 1985; Morgan, 1986; Bolman and Deal, 1991; Hampden-Turner, 1994), Schein's view of organisational culture can easily be transferred to the operational territory and clarify how culture affects production strategy. According to Schein, corporate culture is made up of three levels: *artefacts and creations*, *values* and *basic assumptions*. In this chapter, however, we will focus specifically on *basic assumptions*, understood as ideas invented, discovered or developed by a given group when it confronts problems of external adaptation and internal integration (Schein, 1991).

By observing these assumptions it is possible to identify the conflicts and possible solutions in production management since, as Schein points out (1991: 18): “If a basic assumption is strongly held in a group, members would find behaviour based on any other premise inconceivable”.

For our analysis we have chosen *Televisió de Catalunya* (TVC), the public service broadcaster (PSB) of Catalonia, Spain, as our case. In order to obtain our data we used qualitative triangulation methods from the area of ethnographic studies centred on case studies where the sources of information are provided by observation, interviews and analysis of documents and artefacts (Yin, 2003: 83). Observations were carried out during the months of December 2008 and January 2009 at the headquarters of the Catalan Interactive Radio and Television Corporation (Ccrivi). Thirty-seven company professionals were interviewed in 2008 and 2009 and internal and external TVC documents such as the activity plan, budget and programming criteria were reviewed, as well as the organisation’s internal and external press archives<sup>1</sup>.

### 3. THE CASE STUDY: TELEVISIÓ DE CATALUNYA

TVC defines itself as a public television channel and therefore its aims include the dissemination of Catalan language and culture. This paradigm promotes an organisational cultural identity that corresponds to the particular historical situation in which it began broadcasting on 10 September 1983, three years after the constitution of the first government of the Generalitat after the Franco dictatorship.

TVC is part of the *Corporació Catalana de Mitjans Audiovisuals*, CCMA, a public broadcasting group that ever since its conception has been concerned with the inclusion of technical innovation in production and emission. One of its main objectives is to promote the offering of content through new social communication media and new technology, such as radio, digital television, the internet and mobile phone technology (TVC, 2009). This self-definition was a response to the corporate principles that

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<sup>1</sup> This article presents some of the results of the PhD thesis: Cross-media television production. The case of *Televisió de Catalunya* is part of the “Cross-media environment: Organisational and production transformations in radio and television groups” (CSO2009-09367) project, financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, as part of the premises of the National Plan R+D+i, 2009-2011 and carried out by the Image, Sound and Synthesis Research Group GRISS ([www.griss.org](http://www.griss.org)). This team is a consolidated research group, recognised by the Generalitat de Catalunya, and part of the Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising at the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*.

were established in 1999, when the CCMA (in what was then called the Catalan Radio and Television Corporation (CCRTV)) declared its intention to lead the evolution towards multimedia digital radio and television. This was part of a strategy for the future and a role undertaken as a public service in order to guarantee universal access to new information technology (Moragas and Prado, 2000).

The principles expressed in the CCMA's philosophy are put into practice using advanced technical principles related to television broadcasting. TVC is the leading channel in Spain in the development of interactive applications for Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), internet broadcasting and in the creation of audiovisual content for mobile phones.

### 3.1 SYNERGIES AMONG THE GROUP'S COMPANIES AND DISTRIBUTION OF FUNCTIONS

The CCMA has two large companies to cover audiovisual communications services: *Televisió de Catalunya* and *Catalunya Ràdio*, engaged in the production and diffusion of content for television and radio respectively. There are also several subsidiaries of the group that participate actively in cross-media production: the Catalan Interactive Radio and Television Corporation (Ccrivi), whose mission is to ensure that all content produced by the different companies of the CCMA has a growing presence in new broadcasting platforms, and *Activa Multimèdia Digital*, responsible for innovation, creation of new technology and multimedia content.

From the point of view of production, the organisation's shift towards cross-media production is focused on the creation of a technical project. It begins with the digitisation of files, which includes the implementation of new forms of network access, content search and information management (using different Content Management Systems (CSM)). This technical solution enables professionals to search, download, carry out, share and coordinate the entire production process online from their work station. CCMA companies have different types of software available for the creation and management of digital content: *Digiton* is used at TVC, *Dallet* at Catalunya Ràdio and *Deliverty* at Ccrivi. At the same time, these programmes use *Digiton* as a content archiving system, providing high strategic value for the CCMA, since it offers more than 60,000 hours of audiovisual content (Vila, 2009).

It is, however, worth pointing out that although there is a significant interest in offering products that combines different platforms, the CCMA defends the specific identity of each medium and has therefore promoted interconnection rather than unification. This conception is, for instance, reflected in the physical separation of the company branch headquarters participating in cross-media production.

For us, the convergence of media is not the same as the unification of these kinds of tools, but it is more like the possibility of interconnection that facilitates network creation and inter-media collaboration (Member of the CCMA technology area management, 2009).

In recent years, the CCMA has focused its attention more on content than on platforms. The strategy of the organisation is centred on finding ways to take radio and television beyond the limits of their usual reception terminals, increasing its portfolio of services and opening up paths for audience participation in the creation of content.

### 3.2 TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND ITS EFFECTS ON CULTURE

As Schein argues (1991: 36), “*the introduction of any new technology into an occupation, organization, or society can be seen as a cultural change problem*”. Professionals linked to television production have formulated their methods, values and self-image around analogue technology. But now that technology has undergone substantial transformation, as a result of digital convergence, members of the organisation not only need to learn new methods, but also have to redefine themselves and sometimes change their basic cultural assumptions.

This situation generates a sense of instability among professionals who allude to the idea of ‘crisis’ to explain the present situation. This situation is also observed by Siapera (2004) and Boczkowski (2004) in their case studies; both of them reach the conclusion that new media can end up breaking radically with the old, and even deny its continuity.

*We have spent 25 years operating as a domestic goods corporation. In other words, we have one company called radio and another called television. For 25 years this system has worked, but when the Internet appeared this model was turned on its head* (Member of the TVC multiplatform management area, 2009).



In the transition connected to technological change, the introduction of new systems, or tools, also means that the hierarchy and the power within the organisations are viewed in a different light. Added to this is the fact that each new technology brings with it its own professional culture (Schein, 1991).

The difference in the evaluation of the importance of the internet and new media is linked to the presence of different subcultures aimed at working in cross-media production. Specifically, professionals at TVC, with a production culture originating in an analogue environment, need to work with Ccrtvi staff who have a digital background. But each company appears to have a different appreciation of the use of the new platforms.

*The CCMA management places great value on cross-media television, whereas it does not seem as important at TVC, and Ccrtvi always wants to do many things. It is difficult for TVC to see the new platforms not as something complementary but rather as something strategic (Member of the TVC multi-platform area management, 2009).*

The diversity of opinions is typical of a state of organisational growth and cultural change, and in a phase of succession, since “*culture is a battlefield between conservatives and liberals, and the potential successors are judged in terms of how they preserve or change cultural elements*” (Schein, 1991: 267).

### 3.3 THE ROLE OF EACH MEDIUM

On the level of production there appears to be a direct relationship between the use and the role of each medium in cross-media environments. In line with the observations made by Siapera (2004), it appears as if television tried to dominate the internet rather than make use of the potential of this network. While general agreements are sought on the type of content appropriate for each medium, an increasing amount of attention is also paid to audience demands and to audience tastes and behaviour.

*At TVC there is a different idea about the type of content that needs to be offered through new media. Professionals trained in a newsroom are used to thinking about the news item they will start with and end with, but Internet consumption is not linear. It is only when you look at where the user clicks and discover their priorities that you start to change your ideas. It will take several years before television producers see this differently and reach people with new ideas (Member of the Ccrtvi content department, 2008).*

Professionals involved in the creation of internet content believe that television producers do not place enough value on new media. This perception forms part of the problem of changing social ideologies and cultural cognitive maps. But reaching agreement about the importance of the internet between different social groups in the organisation could take a long time because cultural elements act as a defence against their environment and they are reinforced over time as patterns of behaviour that are often unconscious (Schein, 1991).

*The culture of TVC has not changed and if we have progressed it is because Ccrtvi exists and exclusive resources and staff have been available for production in the Internet and new media. Although there appears to be a willingness among the top managers at the broadcaster to support cross-media television, this has not translated into investment, which is where priorities are ultimately reflected (Member of the Ccrtvi content department, 2008).*

This argument reveals, as Quinn (2004) has indicated, the basic dichotomy between the vision of convergence from a business point of view, on the one hand, – and the resistance from the professionals that are responsible for making it happen, from the other.

The decisions made by the managers of TVC, as well as the value they place on new media, has a direct influence on both production culture and business strategy. These convictions determine the development plans and the positioning of the internet as an alternative, complementary or essential medium (Küng-Shankleman, 2008).

*Cross-media television will be successful when it comes to form part of the company and when the management assumes a clear role and imposes clear directives for the whole staff (Member of Ccrtvi management, 2008).*

Faced with the threat that the new imposes itself and makes the old disappear, we can identify an internal argument over the role of each company within the CCMA and their functions. These conflicts are those of working groups with strong subcultures, which often develop their work assumptions not on what each of them does, but on what they ought to be doing (Schein, 1991: 43).

*You can say that you really believe in multiplatform television, and this is the discussion, but in practice you find television producers who do not update their programme websites because they do not have time. Each of them has their own priorities. At Ccrtvi, having a blog with old information would not*

*be allowed, even more so with a website for a programme with high audience ratings. But this happens in TVC because change is not easy. It is one thing to say that new media are important to you, but reality is something different (Member of the Ccrtvi department of content, 2008).*

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The transformation of television production for cross-media broadcasting has required a global strategy within the communication groups to increase synergies among different kinds of companies. At the centre of this process is technological change that starts with digitisation of the audiovisual content and production system, and which has extended in recent years to the use of content managers as tools that allow coordinated production. In this sense, the synergies in the technological field surpass those that are produced by human teams.

Each company has nevertheless remained spatially separate from the others and this has promoted the strengthening of different cultures of production among the teams responsible for television production and those responsible for the exploitation of audiovisual content using new digital media. These subcultures have been exclusive, formed through interaction with the technological basis of the medium that was inherent when they started (analogue television versus digital signals), but also through common working experience. This situation produces diverging opinions, which seem to limit the development of cross-media production; a situation that can prove difficult to overcome as rivalry and conflict serve to preserve rather than change subcultures of production (Schein, 1991).

Hence, I would like to argue, in accordance with Weiss and Domingo (2010) and Boczkowki (2009), that technological change does not automatically produce social change and that professional cultures always interact with technical developments to shape and mould working practices. In accordance with studies on technology such as SCT, SST and ANT, we can see that the production of multiplatform products is subject to the way in which its actors (different professionals and companies) interpret and incorporate it into their working culture within a pre-established organisational culture.

With reference to the functions of platforms, controversies have emerged over what content each medium should present and in what way. The discrepancies derive from the production cultures of the companies and the

basic assumptions of the different professionals. While some seek to take full advantage of the possibilities offered by the convergence to their content, others see in the internet and the new platforms an opportunity for cross-promotion (Dailey et al., 2005). In this context, more than technology, it is audience tastes that are influencing editorial decisions. Additionally, culture that is acquired through the daily habits of the professionals who work in each medium seems to be significant for establishing a view of which content is appropriate, for instance, for a website or a mobile portal, and to what extent they could relate to a television programme.

Schein's (1991) propositions have proved useful for identifying not only the positions of members of a company in terms of their different roles and responsibilities, but also for interpreting how these affect cultural values within the innovation process. These basic underlying assumptions constitute a useful starting point for understanding the complex dynamic of the process of change. A cultural approach to the study of production may be especially beneficial for identifying the relationship between subjects and technology as well as conflicts and links among the different groups that make up a media organisation.

Given that culture is formed from this idea of group knowledge, it will be important to consider the perspective of organisational learning and practice-based studies in future research. Both approaches call for a view of the organisation as a system of representations through which the media company constructs itself through a process of collective learning and knowledge. Undertaking research that takes both perspectives into account can help to provide more specific details of the relationships between actors in cross-media production and the extent to which an increase in broadcasting media has changed the production structure of television channels.

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# Re-examining 'newness'. A case study on the Czech discourse about new media in the 1990s<sup>1</sup>

Jindra Ticha

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to point out some of the persistent problematic aspects of the concept of newness throughout media history. I will especially focus on the meanings of 'newness' in relation to the modernistic narratives about progress, which have continued to exert a considerable influence on new media discourses. The concept of newness has been repetitively used in the situations of technological change, and I will reflect upon it from a social constructivist perspective. A short case study of the articulations of new media as contemporary art in the 1990s will serve as an illustration of the ways in which new media were assimilated by this discourse on newness, with its logic deeply embedded in modernism, both at the level of aesthetics and in terms of its social role.

## 2. BACK TO THE NEXT REVOLUTION

From the domestic uptake of the internet in the early 1990s onwards, there have been several theoretical approaches to new media working with the concept of newness. Such literature emphasises its distinction from previous mass (or traditional) media, and associates new media with the idea of an information revolution. Although Holmes (2005) suggests that the idea of a second media age had already become popular in the 1980s, he recognises the array of texts devoted to this idea that followed Poster's (1996) *The Second Media Age*, which was published in 1995. Based on the historical distinction between a first and second media age, this literature

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter was written with the support from the Grant Agency of Charles University in Prague.

expresses either a kind of fascination with the liberating social possibilities of 'new' technology, or, conversely, recommends that we rethink the impact of "older" technologies on social processes. For Holmes (2005), "*second media age thinkers*" are mainly represented by Mark Poster, George Gilder, Howard Rheingold, Nicholas Negroponte and Pierre Lévy; it is argued here that their work contains similar ways of expressing a claim that the internet (and new technologies in general) will enable a substantially radical social change.

To exemplify this, in his book *Cyberculture*, Lévy (1997/2001) considers that new media will usher in a new knowledge space that will be characterised as open, fluid and dynamic. Lévy places the new space in contrast to that of the mass media, which he describes as linear and hierarchic. According to Lévy, one of the most important promises of new technology is that it provides an alternative to mass media, to "*communications systems that distribute organized, programmatic information from a central point to a large number of anonymous, passive and isolated receivers*" (Lévy, 1997/2001: 223). Furthermore, he tries to persuade us that the new knowledge space will generate a broader social transformation – even a new beginning of the world. To emphasise the radicality of this social change, Lévy is using the metaphor of the biblical flood, with the difference that this "*flood of information*", caused by digital communication, is seen never to subside. For Lévy, cyberculture means the rise of a "*new universal*", which is different from the cultural forms that preceded it. But of course, it cannot be a brand new universal, because in order to define it, it has to be compared to the previous one. Lévy not only refers to the mass media, but he also hypothesises that cyberculture reinstates the communication environment of oral societies, albeit on a different scale (Lévy, 1997/2001: 14). He conceives the virtual interface in terms of the return to the conditions of face-to-face interaction. As Kevin Robins (1999: 19) pointed out, the potential of new technologies, then, seems to reside in some kind of social reversion rather than change, or, more likely, a regression.

The basic problem with the concept of newness is that it is implicitly historical. Knowing that something is 'new' is not possible without defining it in comparison with 'the old'. The question of 'new' then requires a temporal and spatial framework which carries with it the risk of setting up "the new" as a culmination, as a fulfilment of 'the old', as the onset of utopia or dystopia (Poster, 1999). In the historical periodisation of the "*digital era*", "*second media age*" or "*new universal*", these periods are frequently contrasted with a dark age of the previous era of mass media

(or even of oral societies). However, in the introduction to his influential book, *The Second Media Age*, Poster shows that he is aware that he is using a binary logic (first age/second age) and thus producing a discourse that works within a modern narrative. But for him the key solution lies in being aware of the problems that this logic contains and to render it reflexive (Poster, 1996: 22).

This chapter will focus on dealing with this modern narrative when it is unrecognised and when it is focusing on a particular expression of a historical differentiation of technologies which fetishises their newness and accentuates "the new" as better. Such long-standing beliefs have been inscribed in new media as part of persisting modernistic narratives about progress in Western societies. This apparently innocent enthusiasm for newness is rarely if ever ideologically neutral.

In order to avoid thinking of history as a process of culmination and as a totalising narrative of historical differentiation between 'old' and 'new', Bolter and Grusin (2000) are using Foucault's genealogy to criticise the "*information revolution*" as a hyperbole and a modernist myth of novelty. Focusing not on the origins of things but on affiliations (the attachments and connections between things), they have shown in their theory of remediation how new media are tied to the old ones as a structural condition of all media. "*No medium today, and certainly no single media event, seems to do its cultural work in isolation from other media, any more than it works in isolation from other social and economic forces*" (Bolter and Grusin, 2000: 14). As Bolter and Grusin pointed out in this quotation, researching the concept of newness requires not only questioning the relationship between continuity and change, but also an investigation into the emergence of new technologies as both a technological and a social process<sup>2</sup>.

In the next part I would like to focus on the concept of newness and its usage in the situation of technological change. I will argue that re-examining it from a social perspective enables us not only to see the problematic components of novelty but also to observe how it participates in the discursive construction of technology as 'new'.

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2 Although Bolter and Grusin (2000) have mentioned social and economic forces, in fact, their theory of remediation is based on dealing with the media as refashioning each other without taking into consideration any human agents.

### 3. NEW TECHNOLOGY AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

*It is often said that television has altered our world. In the same way, people often speak of a new world, a new society, a new phase of history, being created - 'brought about' - by this or that new technology: the steam engine, the automobile, the atomic bomb. Most of us know what is generally implied when such things are said. But this may be the central difficulty: that we have got so used to statements of this general kind, in our most ordinary discussions, that we can fail to realise their specific meanings (Williams, 1974/2007: 1).*

Williams invigorated an intellectual tradition of seeing media not as fixed natural objects but as constructed complexes of cultural and social practices. Considering his reflections on television in the 1970s, we can clearly see the danger of the presence of technological determinism in current discussions about new media. Through this process, technology and society become abstracted and the isolation of technology from the social renders it a self-acting force which is able to create new ways of living, or to provide materials for these new ways of life. As Williams (1974/2007) claimed (when writing in the 1970s), it was society that required this “*new information*” and these “*new kinds of orientation*” (Williams, 1974/2007: 15), which are positions that are deeply embedded in modern thought. This has not changed with the emergence of new media technologies, as these positions were reinvented and reused, mostly as part of the same modernistic logic that defined new media as a progress-making force, promising us a better future. At the same time we should be careful, as Williams’ position might lead to the interpretation that technology loses all its strength as an active force. But Williams (1974/2007: 133) explicitly warns against this perspective: “*While we have to reject technological determinism, in all its forms, we must be careful not to substitute for it the notion of a determined technology.*”

In this chapter I would like to use a social perspective inspired by Williams, but I will focus on the discursive level of the situation of technological change. I would like to show how ‘new’ needs and ‘new’ possibilities are created before the emerging technology is adopted in society. And I will also argue that it is the already settled ‘old’ technology which is used in this rhetorical fight, acting as a competitor which has to relinquish its place in favour of the ‘new’ one.

#### 4. ALWAYS ALREADY OLD 'NEWNESS'

New technology typically emerges not from flashes of disembodied inspiration but from an already existing technology, by a process of gradual change and new combinations of existing technologies (Wajcman and MacKenzie: 1999). As Wajcman and MacKenzie argued, these existing technologies are important preconditions of new technology. It provides the basis of devices and techniques to be modified, and is a rich set of intellectual resources available for imaginative uses in new settings (Wajcman and MacKenzie: 1999). When the “*always already new*” (Gitelman, 2006) technology emerges, the concept of newness with its modernistic connotations offers an attractive opportunity to stress this special moment of “*breaking with the past*”. On the other hand, however, the comparison with the previous (old) technology is part of defining it. This discrepancy inherited in the concept of newness not only shows its discursive nature, but also how it can be manipulated.

In his study of Edison's electrical light, Bazerman (1999) investigated how Edison positioned his new system against competing technologies, especially the older ones (such as gas lighting), in order to add value to his projected vision. As Bazerman argues, it was easier for Edison, in order to establish a new technology, to identify an existing technology that was already accepted as a social fact and that had already worked in numerous systems of meaning. Through these logics, Edison's 'new' technology could be represented (and also perceived) as more valuable than the existing technology. Finding the beatable competitor helped Edison to better define the new technology, by making it seem more imaginable. To make an emerging technology successful, it must succeed both materially - establishing its place within the world of human activities - and symbolically - giving it a significant and stable meaning within a germane discourse so it would become the object of human attention and action (Bazerman, 1999).

In addition, Marvin (1988/1990) recognised that this is not the first time that 'new' forms of communication are seen to bring rapid and extraordinary societal shifts.

*If our own experience is unique in detail, its structure is characteristically modern. It starts with the invention of the telegraph, the first of the electrical communications machines, as significant a break with the past as printing before it. In a historical sense, the computer is no more than an instantaneous*

*telegraph with a prodigious memory, and all the communications inventions in between have simply been elaborations on the telegraph's original work (Marvin, 1988/1990: 3).*

In her study of discourses about the inventions of telephone and electric light, Marvin argues that all debates about electronic media in the twentieth century had in fact begun toward the end of the previous century, when new electronic media were sources of endless fascination (and fear as well). The introduction of a 'new' technology creates the opportunity for a kind of discursive drama, where different groups attempt to assimilate the technology into their familiar worlds, rituals and narratives. In this situation, hopes and dreams are projected onto 'new' technologies to solve existing social problems, while at the same time fears about disrupting social stability are also surrounding them.

The ambivalent responses to new media are part of a long history of hopes and fears toward emerging technology. The discursive conventions for thinking about emerging technologies have developed in much the same way over time. Even the new concepts of "*information revolution*" or "*digital age*" that came along with new media appear as a hyperbolised illusion, a rhetorical gambit (Winston, 1998: 2). As Winston argues, there is nothing in the history of electrical and electronic communication systems to indicate that any significant changes have not been accommodated by preexisting social formations. Historical repetitions which can be seen across the diverse range of technologies and across the two centuries of their development not only enable us to see that the pace of change is slower than usually suggested (Winston, 1998), but allow us to recognise the different modes that these changes usually have.

## 5. A CASE STUDY ON A CZECH NEW MEDIA DISCOURSE

In the following case study I will focus on the Czech discourse about new media in the first decade after the revolutionary events of 1989. At that time, the Czech discourses on new media partly drew upon and magnified the more general obsession with the reconstruction of the democratic system after the decades spent in a totalitarian regime. In the enthusiastic atmosphere of political and social transformation (wherever they were discussed), new media were considered to be among the tools that would help to (re)constitute the democratic system.

One of the key supporters in spreading the awareness of new media and stirring up discussions about their social role in the Czech mediascape was the Soros Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA). It was founded in Prague in September 1992, as part of a network of 20 centres located in the capital cities of the former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In the mid-1990s, the SCCA organised an exhibition entitled "*Orbis Fictus. New Media in Contemporary Art*". The exhibition catalogue (Hlaváček and Smolíková, 1996), together with the last 1995 issue of the specialised journal *Atelier* - devoted to new media art and published at the beginning of the exhibition *Orbis Fictus* - will be used to illustrate my analysis.

According to its then director Ludvík Hlaváček, the SCCA aimed to put visual arts back at the centre of public life. In doing so, the Centre placed particular emphasis on new media in contemporary art, as they were supposed to introduce a new model of social relationships into art. Behind the Centre's support for the implementation and presentation of new media works of art was the main question: How is art associated with society, politics, technology, science and other contemporary activities? (Hlaváček, 1996: 8). It was deemed that, in an upcoming democratic system, new media art, with a special emphasis on its newness, should function as a supportive tool in the process of reactivating the critical potential of an "*open*" public sphere (Hlaváček, 1996).

Supporters of the idea of a forthcoming information revolution were expressing skepticism towards the "traditional" media. While stressing and criticising the negative aspects of the medium of television in particular, the authors of *Atelier* (Bielický, 1996; Vančát, 1995) pinned many of their hopes to the emerging new media. This aversion to the 'old' technology can be explained not only by the endeavour to overcome the preceding ideologically biased media, but it is also based on modernistic assumptions of "*new equals better*". The old media aversion was effective in creating a 'new' space for emerging technologies in the Czech media landscape of the time<sup>3</sup>. The uniqueness of the new technology was being stressed while the existing history of media was re-written. In order to legitimise and ground the new media in Czech media discourse, long lines of predecessors were presented, going as far back as the myth of Golem, and right up to the ideas of the renaissance pioneer in media pedagogy, Jan Amos Komenský, or to the films of the Czech avant-garde in the 1930s. From a modernistic logic, the continuing and linear history of the relationship

3 This 'new space' was created not only within discourse, but also in a material sense, for example, when a department of new media was created at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague at the beginning of the 1990s.



between art and technology was reconstructed, suggesting that each era had its significant art medium. Presently, new media art was seen to take this role.

In the *Orbis Fictus* catalogue (Hlaváček and Smolíková, 1996), the assumption of radical social change brought about by new technology is almost taken for granted. The texts are investigating new media in terms of their future aesthetic, social, cultural or political function in society. The enthusiastic mood about their potential is more or less evident in most of them, just like the activist undertone evoking us (addressing the readers as well as the whole society) to exploit the situation favorable to political change when “*people seem to be more willing to embrace major breaks with the past than in societies where everything is continuing along its usual and familiar path*” (Ströhl, 1996: 135). This historical break from 50 years of totalitarian rule is supposed to be strengthened by an immediate shift to the “*information society*”. What makes the appeal even stronger is the stress on the very “*newness*” of these media. At this early stage of its emergence, new media might reveal their “*communicative, creative and critical potential*”, before they fall prey to economic, military and political pressures (Ströhl, 1996: 137).

In this document we see a modernistic rhetoric of technology as revolutionary force joined with the assumption of art as critical and disruptive throughout the history of modern art. Moreover, we can also observe here the workings of Greenbergian modernistic ideas about the task of artists (and of theoreticians of modern art) to search for the fundamental essence of the medium that is used (Greenberg, 1961/2007). In the case of new media, the assumption is that their “*medium specificity*” (Greenberg, 1961/2007: 773) is found in their interactivity. Many hopes were placed on enabling audiences to participate and on distributing art directly to global audiences by making use of the internet (Bielicky, 1995; Vancat, 1995). This articulation is not limited to the *Orbis Fictus* book; in the 1995 issue of *Atelier*, too, we can find utopian statements about how easy it is to make an electronic picture, which will allow everybody to produce new media artworks. The development of new media is compared to the rise of literacy, and to Gutenberg’s invention of book printing. New media are seen to demythologise art, making the creative process available to all (Vancat, 1995). Here again, the contrast with ‘old’ media is in-built, as new media are seen to have this demythologising capacity (and old media not), which in turn legitimises the ‘new’.



Simultaneously, we see the appearance of multiple dystopias about new technology. In particular, the relevance of new media art is questioned from an aesthetic point of view. Doubts are voiced about their place in contemporary art. In addition, some theoreticians have rather circumspect attitudes towards mass distribution. In general, only when new media take the form of contemporary art are they considered to have a critical potential. The (inherently problematic) idea of autonomous art thus persists, despite statements about bringing contemporary art and the public closer. In summary, the liberating possibilities of new media art are welcomed through utopian statements, while their wider diffusion beyond the world of art is observed with a rather dystopian mindset. Instead of discussing how to get art to play a stronger role in the public sphere(s), the 'new' technologies are seen in relation to their opportunities for reviewing and changing art itself, exactly according to the Greenbergian logic of progress. By using an 'old' modernistic approach to the relationship of 'new' technologies and art, instead of structurally reconsidering the position of new media art, it is once again positioned in contrast to (the rest of) society.

## 6. A SHORT CONCLUSION

In the Czech media landscape of the 1990s, new media have become part of a "*discursive drama*" (Marvin, 1988/1990). Utopian statements presented new media as solutions to persisting problems, promising to remove or at least erode the wall between contemporary art and its public audiences. While assimilating the emerging technologies within a germane discourse, they were also incorporated into a familiar modernistic narrative about autonomous art, which contradicted the utopian perspectives. As I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter, this uncritical esteem for 'new' technology, the obsessive concern with its novelty, presented in revolutionary, utopian or dystopian terms, actually turns out to be its conservative inverse. What we can observe is the recycling of the 'old' fantasies of technological mastery that in fact inhibit real and meaningful social transformations.

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# SECTION FIVE

METHOD MEETS THEORY MEETS PRAXIS



SUMMER SCHOOL AS  
DISCUSSION FOSTERING  
ENVIRONMENT

PHOTO: ILIJA T. TOMANIĆ



# Theory Matters

D. Beybin Kejanlioglu

The title, *Theory Matters*, can imply a response, on the one hand, to a critique of postmodernism which in its extreme version discards theory altogether or at its best announces the triumph of multiculturalist plurality (Rosenau, 1998). On the other hand, it can have a very modest target, as it does here, acknowledging the need for theory in order to make sense of the world. This does not mean, of course, that a subtle criticism of the postmodernist attack on 'theory' does not exist in this paper. Yet the focus will be on the uses and meanings of the concept, keeping in mind that even though the works of postmodernist thinkers include arguments against the primacy of theory, ironically, they are also described as being too theoretical.

I decided to organise this workshop at the 2010 ECREA European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School in Slovenia, and write this chapter, after years of experience in teaching 'theory' at various levels (BA, MA, PhD) at faculties of communication in Turkey and the Turkish part of Cyprus, and after my first workshop experience at the ECREA European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School in Estonia in 2008. 'Theory' is generally conceived of by students as a simple universalistic claim, an abstract generalisation, something difficult/impossible to understand or something that needs a God's eye view. This comprehension leads to a fear and an escape from 'theory'. My Summer School workshop was designed to overcome this escape first through a discussion on theory, then through an exercise with an exemplar text in social theory. The text is Max Horkheimer's (1999) classic piece from 1937, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', which also guided the very first categorisation of communication research by Lazarsfeld (1941) and Adorno (1998 - originally 1969)<sup>1</sup>.

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1 Of course, Lazarsfeld's definitions of administrative and critical communications research are far different to Adorno and Horkheimer's. However, his use of concepts seems to be derived from their usage.

## 1. WHAT IS THEORY? WHY IS THEORY?

*Theoria-theorein*, in its classical Greek meaning, is a visual contemplation of the world, a visual distance to be placed between the subject (observer) and the object (the world) (Akarsu, 1975: 113). However, we cannot limit 'theory' with its classical meaning or with visual distancing if we follow Martin Jay's (1996: 172) method, i.e. revealing theory's others. Jay identifies three forms of relationship between theory and its others: (1) the object of theoretical inquiry, (2) the subject or the inquirer, and (3) how subjects relate to the objects (i.e. via practice, subjective and objective experience, storytelling/narrative and hermeneutic arts):

*Theory [...] must be situated in a semantic network with its multiple others: objects that defy subsumption, practices and experiences that are pre-reflexive or the posterior test of a theory's validity, hermeneutic arts such as reading, looking, and listening that resist universal generalization, the unique intelligibility of narrative, and the community and institutions of theorists who do the theorizing (Jay, 1996: 177).*

We live in an imperfect world constructed by fallible humans. So, it is not possible to assume the existence of "self-sufficient immanence" on the levels of practice, experience, interpretation, story-telling or empirical facticity; all are marked by fractures, tensions and contradictions. What Jay argues is that the incompleteness of these counter-concepts of theory makes theory necessary if insufficient by itself, insufficient without the power of its various others. Theory cannot be fully transcendent, contemplative and self-sufficient. "'Theory' is a moment of reflexive self-distancing, a moment that subverts the self-sufficient immanence of whatever we happen to be talking about" (Jay, 1996: 179), yet "it can only become effective when it acknowledges its inherently parasitic relation to what it distances itself from" (Jay, 1996: 178). And if we refer to Horkheimer (1999), he describes the subject of (critical) theory as intertwined in the world it observes from a distance. If so, one cannot charge theory as a master theory involved with gazing, observing, surveying and contemplating from above but entailing its others and related fractures and tensions. Neither can s/he consider the act of theorising by individuals and communities *only* as locations of power. Theory can and must contribute to understanding and changing the world we inhabit.



## 2. 'TRADITIONAL AND CRITICAL THEORY'

Max Horkheimer (1999: 188) begins his classic piece, 'Traditional and Critical Theory', first published in 1937, with a question, "What is 'theory'?" And he answers it within the contours of contemporary science: "Theory [...] is the sum-total of propositions about a subject, the propositions being so linked with each other that a few are basic and the rest derive from these". Against this definition of traditional theory, Horkheimer argues for the 'critical theory', "the unfolding of a single existential judgement" (Horkheimer, 1999: 227).

For him, forms of judgement and historical periods are connected:

*The classificatory judgement is typical of prebourgeois society; this is the way it is, and man can do nothing about it. The hypothetical and disjunctive forms belong especially to the bourgeois world: under certain circumstances this effect can take place; it is either thus or so. Critical theory maintains: it need not be so; man can change reality, and the necessary conditions for such change already exist (Horkheimer, 1999: 227 fn20).*

In fact, Horkheimer not only defends value-laden social sciences but also emphasises 'praxis'. This emphasis brings us to the different uses of the concept of theory and to an argument for maintaining 'theory' in order to make sense of the world dialectically and historically. Theory, in this sense, has everything to do with what Jennifer D. Slack and Martin Al-lor (1983) describe as "the epistemological and political" questions. Against positivism, pragmatism and phenomenology stands *critical theory*, which is imperfect, signed by fractures and tensions and immune to change. Against the imperfect world we inhabit stands *critical theory*, which cannot change the world but shows how relationships of power operate under particular conditions.

## 3. AN EXERCISE ON EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL STANCES

As the workshop 'Theory Matters' was divided into two groups at the ECREA European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School in Slovenia in 2010, two set of quotations were selected from Horkheimer's essay, 'Traditional and Critical Theory' (see Appendix 1). Each student was expected to tick statements that fit into her/his understanding of theory, theoretical activity and theoretician. Then, a second sheet of pa-

per showing which approach these statements describe according to Horkheimer was distributed around the classroom (see brackets at the end of each statement in Appendix 1)<sup>2</sup>. Of course, the two groups had different 'experiences'. The first group was interested in social theory and media studies whereas the second group questioned the realists, what usefulness means, etc.

#### 4. BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

This exercise created an enjoyable atmosphere for a discussion on theory with students who ticked several combinations of traditional and critical theory. Even a student said: "*theory has never been such fun*". Through analysis and self-positioning of these statements, students were able to take a different stance to the theory and hopefully were better able to reflect the position of theory in their own doctoral theses.

### Appendix 1

#### GROUP 1

The quotations below are from Horkheimer, Max (1999) "Traditional and Critical Theory" in *Critical Theory. Collected Essays*. New York: Continuum, 188-243. Information in [ ] was presented as a second part of assignment. Critical theory is marked with CT and Traditional theory with TT.

1. Thinking [...] is motivated today by the effort really to transcend the tension and to abolish the opposition between the individual's purposefulness, spontaneity, and rationality, and those work-process relationships on which society is built. [(CT), p. 210]
2. Theory is stored-up knowledge, put in a form that makes it useful for the closest possible description of facts. [(TT: positivism. Poincaré), p. 188]
3. Theory is a systematically linked set of propositions, taking the form of a systematically unified deduction. [(TT: phenomenology Husserl), p. 190]
4. Theory of society is the unfolding of a single existential judgement. [...] [I]t need not be so; man can change reality. [(CT), p. 227]
5. There is always, on the one hand, the conceptually formulated knowl-

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<sup>2</sup> Inspired by students' papers that were full of DTAs, CDAs, ATs, etc., Traditional Theory was shown as TT, and Critical Theory, CT.

- edge and, on the other, the facts to be subsumed under it. Such a subsumption or establishing of a relation between the simple perception or verification of a fact and the conceptual structure of our knowing is called its theoretical explanation. [(TT: positivism), p. 193]
6. A theoretician's profession is the struggle of which his own thinking is a part and not something self-sufficient and separable from the struggle. [(CT), p. 216]
  7. The rules of experience are the formulations of our knowledge concerning economic, social, psychological interconnections. With the help of these we reconstruct the probable course of events, going beyond the event itself to what will serve as explanation. ... If circumstances a, b, c, and d are given, then event q must be expected; if d is lacking, event r; if g is added, event s, and so on. [...] It is in this fashion that theory [...] is actually elaborated. [(TT: Weber's theory of objective possibility), p. 193-194]
  8. The connections between theoretical work and the social-life process are very important. So, the prevision and usefulness of results are the scientific tasks. [(TT: positivists and pragmatists), p. 196]
  9. There is no theory of society [...] that does not contain political motivations. [(CT), p. 222]
  10. Theoretical explanation signifies not only a logical process but a concrete historical one as well. [(CT), p. 211]
  11. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the eating here is still in the future ☺ [(CT), p. 220-221]

## GROUP 2

The quotations below are from Horkheimer, Max (1999) "Traditional and Critical Theory" in *Critical Theory. Collected Essays*. New York: Continuum, 188-243. Information in [ ] was presented as a second part of assignment. Critical theory is marked with CT and Traditional theory with TT.

1. Once an essential law has been ascertained every particular instance will, beyond any doubt, exemplify the law. [(TT: phenomenologically oriented sociologist), p. 192]
2. Theory constructs a developing picture of society as a whole, an existential judgement with a historical dimension. [(CT), p. 239]
3. The primary propositions of theory define universal concepts under which all facts in the field in question are to be subsumed. [(TT: positivism), p. 224]

4. The rules of experience are the formulations of our knowledge concerning economic, social, psychological interconnections. With the help of these we reconstruct the probable course of events, going beyond the event itself to what will serve as explanation. ... If circumstances a, b, c, and d are given, then event q must be expected; if d is lacking, event r; if g is added, event s, and so on. [...] It is in this fashion that theory [...] is actually elaborated. [(TT: Weber's theory of objective possibility), pp. 193-194]
5. The connections between theoretical work and the social-life process are very important. So, the prevision and usefulness of results are the scientific tasks. [(TT: positivists and pragmatists), p. 196]
6. The reception, transformation, and rationalisation of factual knowledge is the scholar's special form of spontaneity, namely theoretical activity. [(TT: positivism), pp. 196-197]
7. Theory is neither "deeply rooted" [...] nor "detached". [(CT), pp. 223-224]
8. The presentation of societal contradictions by the theoretician is not merely an expression of the concrete historical situation but also a force within it to stimulate change. [(CT), p. 215]
9. Theory is a store-house of hypotheses on the course of particular events in society. [(TT: positivism), p. 239]
10. Theory has no material accomplishments to show for itself. [(CT), pp. 218-219]
11. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the eating here is still in the future ☺ [(CT), p. 220-221]

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# Deploying discourse theory

## An introduction to discourse theory and discourse theoretical analysis

Nico Carpentier

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Though at first sight focused on reopening (and redirecting) discussion on Marxist theory, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (HSS–1985) also engages with the early development of the discourse theory (DT) of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Laclau and Mouffe’s HSS remains one of the key works in the field of discourse theory, next to Foucault’s theoretical elaborations on discourse – especially his *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) – and has significantly contributed to the ‘discursive turn’ in the social sciences (Critchley and Marchart, 2004: 4). In the meantime, HSS has generated a considerable amount of secondary literature (e.g., Smith, 1999; Torfing, 1999; Howarth, 2000) and a number of political scientists have made good use of the DT toolbox, as is for instance evidenced by the readers *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis* (Howarth et al., 2000), *Laclau, a Critical Reader* (Critchley and Marchart, 2004) and *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy and Governance* (Howarth and Torfing, 2004).

Laclau and Mouffe’s HSS is a highly valuable but complex and hermetic work, which can be read on three interrelated levels. The first level – DT in the strict sense – refers to their social ontology (Howarth, 2000: 17) and to the position they negotiate between materialism and idealism, between structure and agency. A second – and strongly related – level is what Anna Marie Smith (1999: 87) calls Laclau and Mouffe’s political identity theory, which is tributary to conflict theory. Key concepts at this level are antagonism and hegemony. Here, (more) attention is given to how discourses, identities and their nodal points are constructed and obtain fixity. Laclau and Mouffe’s post-Marxist approach becomes even more evident at the third level, where their plea for a radical democratic politics places

them in the field of democratic theory. Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 190) still situate themselves within the ‘classic ideal of socialism’. At the same time they plead for a ‘polyphony of voice’ in which the different (radical) democratic political struggles – such as antiracism, antisexism and anticapitalism – are allotted an equally important role (Mouffe, 1997: 18).

In this article, it is contended that DT is more than ‘just’ a political philosophy and that it can provide useful support for empirical analyses in a variety of fields, including Media Studies. In other words, the article seeks to show how DT can provide the ‘little toolboxes’ that Foucault (1996: 149) described thus: “*If people want to open them, use a particular sentence, idea, or analysis like a screwdriver or wrench in order to short-circuit, disqualify or break up the systems of power [...] well, all the better*”. In order to show the applicability of DT (probably in a more modest version than Foucault suggests), there follows a brief overview of Laclau and Mouffe’s DT and of the critiques that have been launched at it – and that need to be (at least partially) overcome. Then, the transformative strategy of adding a more analytical component to Laclau and Mouffe’s DT, termed Discourse-Theoretical Analysis (DTA), will be discussed.

## 2. A SHORT OUTLINE OF LACLAU AND MOUFFE’S DISCOURSE THEORY

The theoretical starting point of Laclau and Mouffe’s DT is the proposition that all social phenomena and objects obtain their meaning(s) through discourse, which is defined as “*a structure in which meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed*” (Laclau, 1988: 254). In what they refer to as a radical materialist position, the discursive component of reality is emphasised without equating discourse and reality. The concept of discourse is also described as a structured entity, which is the result of articulation (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105), which in turn is viewed as “*any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice*”.

As the definitions above indicate, the articulation of discursive elements plays a vital role in the construction of the identity of objects, individual or collective agents. Identity is – according to Sayyid and Zac (1998: 263) – defined in two related ways. First, identity is defined as “*the unity of any object or subject*”. This definition links up with Fuss’ (1989: ix) definition of identity as “*the ‘whatness’ of a given entity*”. A second defining feature of identity arises when this concept is applied to the way in which



social agents can be identified and/or identify themselves within a certain discourse. Examples Sayyid and Zac (1998: 263) give in this context are “workers, women, atheists, British”. Laclau and Mouffe call this particular component of identity a subject position, and define it as the positioning of subjects within a discursive structure:

*Whenever we use the category of ‘subject’ in this text, we will do so in the sense of ‘subject positions’ within a discursive structure. Subjects cannot, therefore, be the origin of social relations – not even in the limited sense of being endowed with powers that render an experience possible – as all ‘experience’ depends on precise discursive conditions of possibility (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 115).*

This last definition implies neither a structuralist nor a voluntarist position. In spite of Laclau and Mouffe’s unanimity with Althusser’s critique on the autonomous and completely self-transparent subject (which is a voluntarist position), they vehemently reject Althusser’s deterministic working of economy in the last instance (which is a structuralist position), as they think that this aspect of Althusser’s theory leads to a ‘new variant of essentialism’ (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 98).

*Society and social agents lack any essence, and their regularities merely consist of the relative and precarious forms of fixation which accompany the establishment of a certain order. This analysis [of Althusser] seemed to open up the possibility of elaborating a new concept of articulation, which would start from the overdetermined character of social relations. But this did not occur (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 98).*

Their critical attitude towards Althusser does not alter the fact that Laclau and Mouffe borrow the originally Freudian concept of overdetermination from Althusser, though not without altering its meaning. Laclau and Mouffe see identity as a fusion of a multiplicity of identities, where the overdetermined presence of some identities in others prevents their closure. The multiplicity of identities will prevent their full and complete constitution, because of the inevitable distance between the obtained identity and the subject, and because of the (always possible) subversion of that identity by other identities. It is precisely the contingency of identities that creates the space for subjectivity and the particularity of human behaviour. In this way, a structuralist position is avoided, and a poststructuralist stance is assumed. In Laclau and Mouffe’s DT, discourses and identities are thus not defined as stable and fixed: a discourse is never safe from elements alien to that discourse. Discourses are embedded in a field

of elements – the field of discursivity – that prevents the full saturation of meaning (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 112). Later on, (mainly) Laclau will refer to the Lacanian concept of lack to theorise this structural openness. The overdetermination of discourses (and the impossibility of reaching ‘a final closure’ (Howarth, 1998: 273)) is also made explicit in the concept of the floating signifier, which is defined as a signifier that is “*overflowed with meaning*” (Torfing, 1999: 301). Floating signifiers will, in other words, assume different meanings in different contexts/discourses.

At the same time, discourses have to be partially fixed, since the abundance of meaning would otherwise make any meaning impossible: “*a discourse incapable of generating any fixity of meaning is the discourse of the psychotic*” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 112). The points where the discourse is (partially) fixed are called nodal points, by analogy with Lacan’s concept of *points de capiton*. These nodal points are privileged signifiers that fix the meaning of a chain of signifiers (or moments) (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 112), and have a certain degree of rigidity. Nodal points are constructed on the basis of articulation:

*The practice of articulation consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning; and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 113).*

When nodal points (and the discourses that lie behind them) acquire or start to acquire social dominance, Laclau and Mouffe refer to the concept of hegemony, as developed by Gramsci. Originally, Gramsci (1999: 261) defined this notion in relation to the formation of consent, rather than as the (exclusive) domination of the other, without, however, excluding a certain form of pressure and repression: “*The ‘normal’ exercise of hegemony [...] is characterized by the combination of force and consent variously balancing one another, without force exceeding consent too much*”. Howarth (1998: 279) describes Laclau and Mouffe’s interpretation as follows: “*hegemonic practices are an exemplary form of political articulation which involves linking together different identities into a common project*”. The objective of hegemonic projects is to construct and stabilise nodal points that are the basis of a social order, the main aim of which is to become a social imaginary, i.e. the horizon that “*is not one among other objects but an absolute limit which structures a field of intelligibility and is thus the condition of possibility of the emergence of any object*” (Laclau, 1990a: 64).

Hegemonic practices suppose an open system, which makes articulation possible. In a closed system there would only be repetition, and nothing could be hegemonised (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 134). Mere articulation, however, is not sufficient to be able to speak of hegemony. According to Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 135–136), antagonistic practices linking elements in so-called chains of equivalence are a prerequisite: *“in other words, that hegemony should emerge in a field criss-crossed by antagonisms and therefore suppose phenomena of equivalence and frontier effects. But, conversely, not every antagonism supposes hegemonic practices”*. Antagonisms have both negative and positive aspects, as they attempt to destabilise the ‘other’ identity but desperately need that very ‘other’ as a constitutive outside to stabilise their proper identity.

When the question arises as to how antagonisms are discursively constructed, Laclau and Mouffe refer to the logic of equivalence and the creation of chains of equivalence. In such chains, different identities are made equivalent, and opposed to another negative identity. In other words: the logic of equivalence brings together a number of identities in one discourse, without, however, totally eliminating their differences: they *“can weaken, but not domesticate differences”* (Laclau, 2005: 79). Howarth (2000: 107) uses as illustration the letters a, b and c for the equivalent identities (in which  $a \approx b \approx c$ ) and the letter d for the negative identity. The logic of equivalence results in the formula:  $d = - (a, b, c)$ , of which the final result is the coming into being of two antagonistic poles. Laclau (1988: 256) gives an example of a possible chain of equivalence: *“For instance, if I say that, from the point of view of the interests of the working class, liberals, conservatives, and radicals are all the same, I have transformed three elements that were different into substitutes within a chain of equivalence”*. Next to the logic of equivalence, Laclau and Mouffe also discern a logic of difference, which breaks existing chains of equivalence and incorporates the disarticulated elements in another discursive order (Howarth, 1998: 277). As opposed to the logic of equivalence, the logic of difference weakens existing antagonisms and relegates them to the margins of a society.

### 3. CRITIQUES AND REPLIES ON LACLAU AND MOUFFE’S DISCOURSE THEORY

Laclau and Mouffe’s DT has obviously not remained free of criticism. To develop a theory from a combination of poststructuralist and post-Marxist sources of inspiration is in many cases sufficient in itself to be discredited.

In these critiques, the term 'postmodernism' is used as a rewarding but unnuanced umbrella term in combination with the traditional modernist accusations of nihilism, relativism or eclecticism. Such critique is — ironically — summarised by Butler (1997: 249) as follows: "*discourse is all there is, as if discourse were some kind of monistic stuff out of which all things are composed; the subject is dead, I can never say 'I' again; there is no reality, only representation*". Geras (1990), for example, takes a critical stance that can be subsumed into this type of critique, when he says that Laclau and Mouffe's DT lacks any foundation. For him, the resulting consequence is that their theory "*slides into a bottomless, relativist gloom, in which opposed discourses or paradigms are left with no common reference point, usually trading blows*" (Geras, 1990: 99). One refutation of this critique can be found in the importance that Laclau (1996: 57) attaches to universal principles that "*have to be formulated as limitless principles, expressing a universality transcending them: but they all, for essential reasons, sooner or later become entangled in their own contextual particularism and are incapable of fulfilling their universal function*". The second — and more important — refutation is that Laclau and Mouffe explicitly argue against both total contingency and total fixity of meaning. After all, Laclau and Mouffe posit that meaning is partially fixed, and introduce the concept of a nodal point to further theorise these partial fixations. In a similar way, the notion of hegemony makes it possible to theorise the attempts of social actors to stabilise and fix the contingent social. At the same time, Laclau and Mouffe emphasise the situatedness and contextuality of their DT, which rejects "*the rigid separation of facts and values*" and accepts that "*the discourse theorist and analyst is always located in a particular historical and political context with no neutral Archimedean point from which to describe, argue and evaluate*" (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 7).

In addition, serious objections were launched from traditional Marxist positions, since it was considered that the decentralising of the class concept and the rejection of economic determinism were problematic. For example, Gledhill (1994: 183) calls Laclau "*a disillusioned Althusserian Marxist of the 1968 new left vintage who now declares himself a post-Marxist*". This critique actually touches upon the heart of the theoretical project of Laclau and Mouffe, which aims at de-essentialising Althusser's and Gramsci's work (and thus indirectly also the work of Marx and Engels). From a less traditionally Marxist point of view, the decentralisation of the class struggle makes it possible to incorporate other relevant societal struggles and identities (for instance those related to ethnicity and gender) and thus correct the traditional Marxist neglect of these areas (Torfing, 1999: 291).

Next to critiques of the poststructuralist and post-Marxist points of departure of Laclau and Mouffe's DT, four additional critiques have to be mentioned. One critique is levelled at their so-called idealist stance (see for instance Woodiwiss, 1990). Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 108) themselves anticipated this critique in HSS, as they refused to have themselves locked into a realism-idealism dichotomy. Their plea for radical materialism as "*tertium quid*" (Howarth, 1998: 289) does not alter their strong orientation towards the analysis of discursive components of reality, and more specifically towards the analysis of such signifiers as democracy and socialism. This implies that in their specific analyses they will pay considerably less attention to material components of reality (for example bodies, objects, organisations or interactions).

A second critique is aimed at the so-called primacy of the political over the social, where Laclau and Mouffe interpret discourse and identity as political entities. This critique is partly refuted by indicating that social relations are formed by political struggle, but that these will eventually lose their contested political nature and become sedimented in social norms and values, which might be contested again later in history (Torfing, 1999: 70). A more convincing counterargument is the Schmittian distinction introduced (mainly) by Mouffe between 'the political' and 'politics', which allows for a broadened articulation of the political, as a dimension of the social.

Third, despite the energy Laclau and Mouffe have spent on defining the key concept of discourse, some of the other core concepts such as identity, ideology and power remain under-theorised. These concepts are in danger of becoming vague umbrella terms regarded as 'black boxes'<sup>1</sup>, whose status spoils the theoretical elegance with which other key terms are developed. What would also considerably strengthen the discourse-theoretical framework would be more theoretical elaborations on the tensions between individual and collective identities and their institutional and organisational sedimentations<sup>2</sup>, and of the tensions between idealist and materialist approaches – focusing on how discourses can be condensed into material structures. Finally, Laclau and Mouffe's theory is

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1 Latour (1987) uses this term — inspired by cybernetics — to describe situations in which complex components are present in an argumentation, but without fully developing or representing this complexity (also see Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 73).

2 See Howarth (2000: 119–120), although subsequently Mouffe (2005) did address the question of democratic institutions.

also subjected to methodological critiques. For example, Howarth (1998: 291) states that:

*[...] Laclau and Mouffe need to lay down, however minimally, a set of methodological guidelines for practitioners, as well as a set of questions and hypotheses (à la Lakatos) for clarification and development. Thus far, the only clear methodological rule consists in a 'non-rule': rules can never be simply applied to cases, but have to be articulated in the research process. [...] The lack of adequate responses to the epistemological and methodological questions poses significant problems for researchers working within discourse theory.*

#### 4. FROM DT TO DTA

As Derrida pleads for the singularity of each deconstruction, and Foucault at all times writes a specific 'history of the present' (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 4), Laclau (and Mouffe) plead for the articulation of theoretical concepts within each specific empirical research question (Laclau, 1990b: 208–209). It is precisely the rejection of essentialism that pushes discourse theorists towards open-ended theoretical frameworks, which is said to hamper the methodological development and (again) the empirical application of the framework (Howarth, 1998: 288). In spite of these difficulties, Foucault's archeo-genealogical method and Derrida's deconstruction do offer often-applied methodological points of departure, and Laclau and Mouffe's DT can function in a similar way.

The strategy that is used here to rearticulate DT into DTA is to relate DT to the core principles of qualitative research, as there are significant parallels between DT and the basic principles of qualitative research. First, both focus on processes related to the generation of meaning. The interpretative and 'Verstehende' logics of qualitative research aim to provide an understanding of meanings that circulate within the social. DT theorises the role of meaning as discourse. Second, qualitative research uses a research perspective that explicitly aims to respect societal diversity and contingency. Although the categorisations that qualitative research produces are fixations of social realities, qualitative research simultaneously emphasises the structural impossibility of ultimately categorising (fixing) the social reality that is being researched. This ontological position is also translated into research procedures, which emphasise the importance of openness to the meanings found in the communication of subjects, but also to the theoretical frameworks that are being used to support the analysis. The iterative or cyclical character of qualitative research, where theory and empiri-



cal research permanently impact on each other, is one way to balance both components. In addition, the notion of the sensitising concept has been developed in order to protect the balance between the need for theoretical foundation and the need to avoid a dominant theoretical framework that mutes the voices being analysed.

Sensitising concepts – which will be used to support the translation of DT into DTA – are concepts that assist researchers in “*what to look for and where to look*” (Ritzer, 1992: 365). In defining the sensitising concept, Blumer (1969: 7) contrasts it against another type of concept, the definitive concept. The definitive concept “*refers precisely to what is common to a class of objects, by the aid of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed bench marks*”. By contrast,

*[a] sensitizing concept lacks such specification of attributes or bench marks and consequently it does not enable the use to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. Instead, it gives the use a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look (Blumer, 1969: 7).*

Blumer (1969: 259) stresses that “*sensitizing concepts may deepen perception*”, but that they also “*provide starting points for building analysis, not ending points for evading it*”. This openness to the theoretical framework resembles Laclau’s plea for theoretical support that is specific to a set of empirical research questions. Moreover, the notion of the sensitising concept incorporates the idea that it is structurally impossible for discursive elements (like sensitising concepts) to provide full closure, or to completely capture social reality. In other words, the ontological prudence in fixing theory and analysis, which is characteristic of qualitative research, aligns well with the basic premises of DT.

But the sensitising concept has another role to play. While some qualitative methodologies employ a completely open approach towards the selection of sensitising concepts (which is ‘merely’ driven by research questions), other qualitative methodologies come with a preset of sensitising concepts. To give just a few (rather obvious) examples: narrative analysis uses the ‘narration’ as a primary sensitising concept; conversation analysis privileges the ‘conversation’ and discourse analysis has ‘discourse’ as primary sensitizing concept. But these more directive qualitative methodologies do not restrict themselves to articulating primary sensitising concepts. They often offer an entire toolbox of secondary sensitising concepts,

in combination with a social ontology and a normative framework. One example of the latter is Critical Discourse Analysis's emphasis on its critical nature combined with the ontological building blocks that the social is partly linguistic-discursive and that discourse is both constitutive and constituted (see Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 271ff).

In the case of Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA), which is seen here as a strand of Discourse Studies, discourse is again the primary sensitising concept. It naturally takes into account the specificity of the definition of discourse (as provided by DT). DT also enables production of a list of secondary sensitising concepts. At the first level of DT, this list includes the concepts of articulation, nodal point, floating signifier and subject position, but also overdetermination, and the dynamics of fixity and unfixity. At the second level of DT, where DT functions as a political identity theory, the notions of the chain of equivalence (and difference), conflict, antagonism, agonism, hegemony and social imaginary should be mentioned.

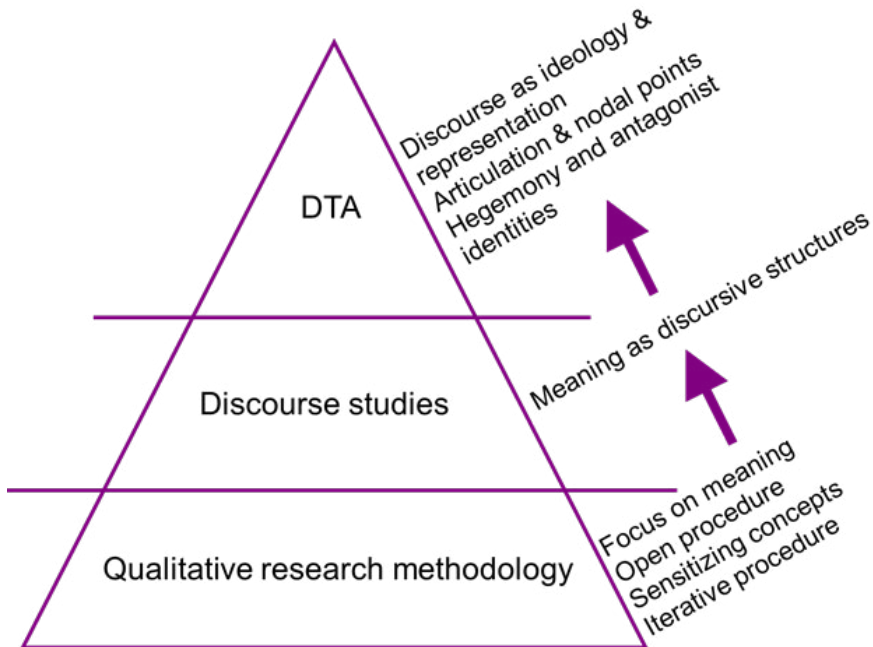
The macro perspective of DT (see Carpentier and De Cleen, 2007: 277) facilitates the development of a second strategy to generate sensitising concepts, apart from the list of primary and secondary sensitising concepts that can be found in DT itself. DT can also be used to generate additional sensitising concepts by re-analysing other theoretical frameworks and incorporating them within the logics, ontology and language of DT. Incorporations are in some cases quite natural, especially when these theoretical frameworks are paradigmatically related to DT. The addition of, for instance, the notion of power as a secondary sensitising concept (using the Foucauldian approach to the analytics of power) is relatively easy, while incorporating Bourdieu's notion of the field already requires a more structural reconfiguration of field theory. But even concepts such as the Durkheimian ritual, with all its positivist-functionalist significations, can be theoretically reconfigured, as demonstrated by Couldry (2003).

Together, these strategies help to deliver the methodological-analytical arsenal necessary to perform a DTA. As Figure 1 shows, this implies the research is grounded in a more qualitative research logic (without wanting to exclude the use of quantitative methods, as long as they are critically integrated and, if necessary, re-configured as well). It should, however, be kept in mind that this component is not specific to DTA, but shared with many other qualitative methods, inside and outside Discourse Studies. Specific to Discourse Studies is the use of the concept of discourse as



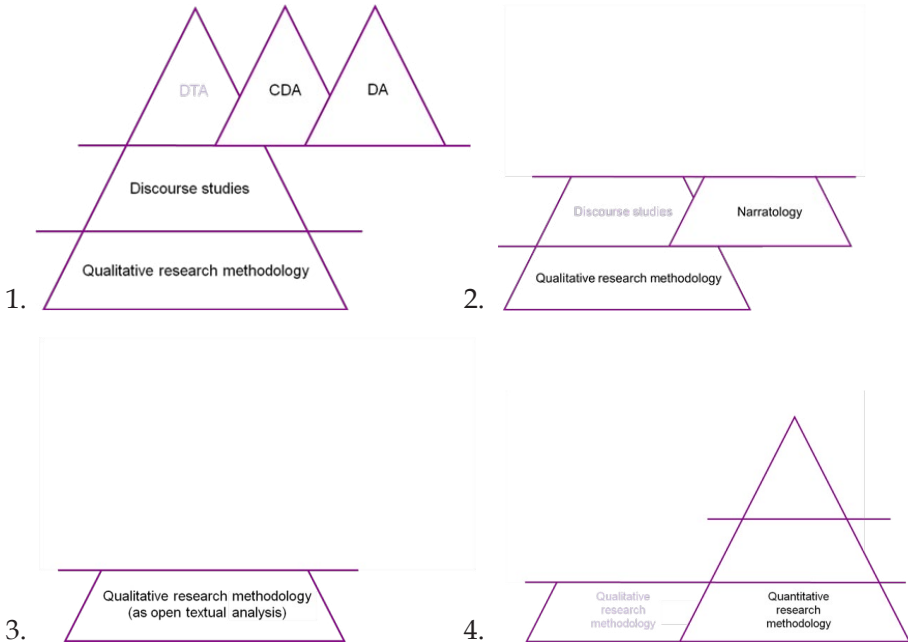
a primary sensitising concept, a strategy which is shared by Discourse Analysis (DA), CDA and DTA, for instance. Specific to DTA is the use of the conceptual toolbox of DT, which provides the secondary sensitising concepts, potentially complemented by additional sensitising concepts produced by the incorporation and re-configuration of other theoretical frameworks situated outside DT.

**Figure 1: The sensitising concepts of DTA**



As already indicated, this pyramid is specific to DTA, but many other research pyramids can be drawn. Below, four options are visualised. First, within Discourse Studies, alternatives like DA and CDA (1) but also other more directive qualitative methodologies (outside Discourse Studies) (2) obviously remain options. In addition, the use of the non-directive qualitative methods (3), as for instance advocated in grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), and the use of quantitative methodologies (4), which produce an entirely different set of pyramids, can be considered. In addition, multi-method and even multi-paradigm research projects remain possible, however difficult it may be to implement them in actual research practice.

**Figure 2: Sensitising concepts in and outside discourse studies – 4 variations**



## 5. A SHORT CONCLUSION

Because of its clear focus on political theory, Laclau and Mouffe's DT has remained largely confined to the study of politics and the political. Despite the rather limited attention paid by discourse theorists to the realm of the (mass) media (and the discourses that circulate in media texts, but also in media organisations), a few authors have used elements of Laclau and Mouffe's DT to analyse media and/or have discussed the potential use of DTA (see e.g., Carpentier and Spinoy, 2008; Torfing, 1999: 210–224).

DTA can provide ample theoretical and methodological support for Media Studies-oriented analyses; it allows a different – but equally relevant – type of analysis of media content and practices than could have been performed by reverting to the multitude of other research methodologies. Given the nature of DT, DTA is especially suitable for research projects that insist on taking the contingent and constructed nature of the social explicitly into account, whilst not falling into the trap of underestimating

the role of dominant or hegemonic cultural configurations that (always temporarily) fixate the social. This makes DTA also highly suitable for analyses that focus on social struggle and conflict, and the way that this struggles are fought out at the level of the discursive. There is no better way to illustrate this significance of conflict and the discursive than to refer to Keen's (1986: 10) analysis of war:

*In the beginning we create the enemy. Before the weapon comes the image. We think others to death and then invent the battle-axe or the ballistic missiles with which to actually kill them.*

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# Action research in media studies

Ebba Sundin

*Action research challenges the claims of a positivist view of knowledge which holds that in order to be credible, research must remain objective and value-free. Instead, we embrace the notion of knowledge as socially constructed and, recognizing that all research is embedded within a system of values and promotes some model of human interaction, we commit ourselves to a form of research which challenges unjust and undemocratic economic, social and political systems and practices (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood and Maguire, 2003: 11).*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

What is action research? And do we find it useful as a research method within media studies? So far, action research has not made a splash within our field. On the contrary, it is more or less not recognised among many journalism researchers or media and communication researchers.

In this chapter, I will try to outline the basic features of action research and the roots of this tradition, taking us back to the social-psychological experiments of the 1940s. I will also try to raise the question of areas of media and communication studies, including journalism studies, where the use of action research could add knowledge. In the last section, I will also introduce a research project - CESEM - young news producers in Jönköping University - as a way to use action research in journalism studies.

Many action researchers agree on the difficulties of defining action research. Chandler and Torbert (2003) lean on the definition offered by Reason and Bradbury, who wrote in *The Handbook of Action Research* from 2001 that:

*[...] it seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities (Reason and Bradbury, 2001: 1).*

Chandler and Torbert's interpretation of this is that action research is the same as the guiding method for everyday inquiries and the organisation of actions. They state that "*action and research are inherently intertwined in real life, not polar opposites of one another*" (Chandler and Torbert, 2003: 134).

Action research is often linked to education research and is sometimes referred to as educational action research. In his review of recent books and journals on action research, Bob Dick states that this has been especially common in the English-speaking world. But he also highlights the difficulties with finding a clear-cut definition of what it is: "*Educational AR is a minefield for novice action researchers. AR is so variously defined that it is sometimes hard to know just what form of research is being discussed*" (Dick, 2004: 432).

According to Rönnerman (2004), educational research has been mostly developed in Great Britain, the USA and Australia, but with a fair amount of research in Europe in connection with school development. In addition, Dickens and Watkins (1999) present the lack of a definition of action research as both a strength and a weakness. They claim that action research "*remains an umbrella term for a shower of activities to foster change on the group, organizational, and even societal levels*" (Dickens and Watkins, 1999: 127).

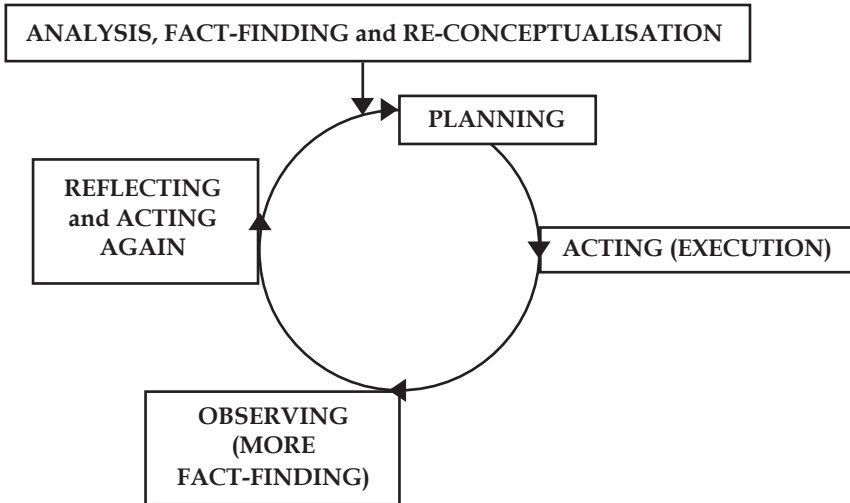
## 1.1 LEWIN'S THEORY OF ACTION RESEARCH

Early examples of action research date back to the 1940s. The theory of action research was developed by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in 1946 and described "*as a spiral of steps involving planning, fact-finding (or reconnaissance) and execution*" (Lewin in McNiff, 2002: 41). According to McNiff (*ibid.*), this was later to be known as the action-reflection cycle, consisting of the four steps: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The steps in one cycle can be seen as a sequence of many cycles with re-planning and then the following steps to be continued.

Lewin's original theory can be expressed in a simple model as in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Lewin's action research model (sources: Dickens and Watkins 1999 and McNiff 2002)**



The early model of action research has been criticised as being too simple. Somekh (2006) argues that the link between cause and effect in social situations was seen as unproblematic and that this is a difficulty for action research. Some of the critiques of early studies are also connected to the experimental settings. Lewin has not become one of the theoretical ancestors within media and communication studies because of his development of action research theory. Instead, he is known to everyone within the discipline for his 'gatekeeping theory', applied to the major field of news studies. Another theorist sometimes mentioned when early communication theories are highlighted is John Dewey. Also in descriptions of the development of action research, his name appears frequently as one of the early theorists to use the method in his studies of education (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003; Rönnerman, 2004).

## 1.2 NEW PATHS IN ACTION RESEARCH

In this chapter, the ambition of describing action research is to give a very basic and simplistic picture of action research. Therefore, it has so far been taken out of its context and not applied or illustrated in specific disciplines, except for mentioning its lack within media and communication studies and its recognition within education studies. From Lewin's

early and simple model, action research has taken some different paths and also produced combinations of other theoretical and methodological approaches. For example, Baskerville and Pries-Heje (1999) present their *grounded action research* for studies of information technology in practice. They combine action research with grounded theory (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) including the coding procedures in the cycle. *Participatory action research* (PAR) stresses the participation even more than the original thought of action research (McTaggart, 1997; Brydon-Miller et al., 2004). *Insider action research* adds the three key concepts of 'pre-understanding', 'role duality' and 'organisational politics', and the possibility that the researcher is also an employee of the organisation where the research takes place (Coghlan, 2001). In this case, the method is used within organisational and management studies. *Educational action research* states the scientific field it is focusing on (Noffke and Somekh, 2009; Stringer, 2007). There are many more combinations of action research and some are also found within our own field. For example, in *Action Research and New Media* some interesting projects are presented, providing some insight into the usefulness of action research combined with new media technology (Hearn, Tacchi, Foth and Lennie, 2009).

## 2. PLANNING ACTION RESEARCH

In short, action research is difficult to define, there are different paths and variations in the labels used for the method. Nevertheless, Dickens and Watkins (1999: 134) offer some comfort when they write, "*Most action researchers agree that action research consists of cycles of planning, acting, reflecting or evaluating, and then taking further action.*" Let us stay on this level and move forward to drawing up a plan for an action research design. McNiff (2002) gives practical advice on how to carry out action research. First of all, she recommends staying small and focused:

*Don't try to research everything at once ... . You need to stay focused on one issue, and get on the inside of it and understand it, and put the others on hold. Concentrating on only one part of your work helps you to understand the nature and process of your own learning* (McNiff, 2002: 85).

It is clear that McNiff is referring to the process of the researcher and practitioner's learning in the set-up of the research design. Second, she talks about the importance of identifying a clear research question. Typical for action research are questions like 'How do I ...?'. It is possible that action researchers would disagree with the following interpretation on how

to construct research questions, but it seems that in this case the questions are formulated by the practitioners and therefore, from the research standpoint, they could be re-formulated to 'How do they ...?'. This could be supported by McNiff (2002: 89) saying, "*in interpretative action research, researchers observe others doing their action research, and offer accounts of activities*". This is not the true core of action research, since action research claims to be the self-studying and self-reflective way of gaining knowledge about learning. In Figure 2, McNiff's advice has been summarised to work as a model for action research. The cycle has in this figure become more or less linear, but only for illustrative purposes.

**Figure 2: McNiff's advice on how to conduct action research combined with the action-reflective cycle (2002: 40, 85-91).**

PLANNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•STAY SMALL. STAY FOCUSED → IDENTIFY CLEAR RESEARCH QUESTION</li> <li>•BE REALISTIC ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO → PLAN CAREFULLY</li> </ul>
ACTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•ENSURE GOOD ETHICAL PRACTICE</li> </ul>
OBSERVING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CONCENTRATE ON LEARNING, NOT ON THE OUTCOMES OF ACTION</li> <li>•THE FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH IS YOU, IN COMPANY WITH OTHERS</li> </ul>
REFLECTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•BEWARE OF HAPPY ENDINGS</li> <li>•BE AWARE OF POLITICAL ISSUES</li> </ul>

Needless to say, some of the advice applies to all research that has been properly conducted. In the following section, a research project at the School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University in Sweden will be presented as an example of a project that might fit into the costume of action research design within journalism studies.

### 3. CESEM – YOUNG NEWS PRODUCERS

During spring 2010, the following pilot project was set up for the purpose of developing a framework for a larger project and to gain knowledge of how best to proceed with the future project. Five girls, aged between 9 and 12, were assigned to participate in the project. They came from two different schools and they knew each other from school, but not outside of

school. They met three times at the university to work on a special given task: to reproduce news from the local newspaper as a TV news production that would be shown to all their classmates.

At the first session, the girls were introduced to the project and then given their first assignment: to read the six latest copies of the newspaper and individually pick out the five most interesting news stories. The only restriction was that the news article should be local. Second, they were presented with each other's choice of the week. The choices of the five girls could yield a maximum of 25 news stories, but some girls picked the same story. The result was 20 different stories. The next task was to discuss the different stories and agree on a new selection of six stories. They were then split into two different teams (by school) and assigned to turn three stories into TV news. Before the end of the first meeting, they were introduced to the cameras and each team brought one camera for their assignments.

They were given no instructions on how to produce their follow-up stories from the newspaper. But before the next meeting at the university, both teams were supposed to bring some recorded material. During the second meeting they worked in an editing suite and also decided the order in which to broadcast the different items. During this time, the five girls also decided on how they wanted their news show to be announced and what its name should be.

The third meeting was to record the show. They had decided the setting, the running order for their six items, and also how they should take turns. Before coming, the girls had decided on their clothing and general style. Over the course of two hours, they worked in the TV studio on recording the show.

All three meetings were organised by the three members of the research team. But instead of giving directions on how to do things, they observed the work with as little interference as possible. All the discussions among the girls were recorded for analysis. All the material has been kept for further analysis in order to answer questions about what the girls made of their tasks.

In one sense, I would argue that this project had two main aims. One is related to the mainstream of media and communication studies and the overall question of what children see as news. The second aim relates to action research, working with children, allowing them to learn about

news, in order to find out how they learn and how this knowledge can be used in schools in media literacy education.

#### 4. MEDIA RESEARCH AND ACTION RESEARCH?

Is it possible to combine traditional research questions within journalism studies/media and communication studies with action research and its ambition to focus on learning? Or does the media environment solely become the target and is no different to other organisations, management studies, educational settings etc.? When we look at the broadening perspective of action research, we find two patterns of prefixes; either to narrow the method itself, e.g. insider, participatory and grounded, or to state the specific research field, e.g. educational action research. Would media action research do? Or why not communication action research?

In the following areas, could action research bring new knowledge into the discipline and would it still be possible to outline a research question in a more traditional way, where the focus could still be on results and not merely on the learning outcomes:

10. Newsroom studies: journalistic routines
11. Participatory journalism: participants learn about journalism, journalists learn about the considerations of news values from laymen
12. Organisational communication studies: information flows
13. Strategic communication: e.g. health campaigns
14. Children's awareness of news: media education in schools?

These examples can help to start a discussion among scholars and doctoral students to further develop concepts and tools in order to broaden the field of media studies. And not only in methods but also in theory.

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# Is there participation in your action research?

Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt

## 1. INTRODUCTION

For many of us, our research projects often stem from the fact that we find that something around us is wrong and we want to change that. In the classical approach we then spend time studying our object of concern and not until we think we know the roots of the problem do we swing into action in order to suggest or recommend change from our now superior and knowledgeable position. This paper, however, looks at the possibility of conducting action research in a context of communication research while keeping the crucial, critical aspects of research in mind. That means establishing what is wrong together with a group, an organisation or a community, and conducting research and suggesting changes within the same cooperative framework. One key concern within such an action research framework is whether it is possible to conduct action research which is truly participatory.

The chapter will first give a brief overview of what would count as quality in action research. It then introduces two case studies where aspects of the action research approach have been used. The chapter's last section offers a critical evaluation of whether the participation used in this context can actually be considered participatory. Hence, this is not a classical research project article with theories, methods, results and discussion, as it aims to be more of a reflexive article on how action research as a framework might help us to understand communication projects and on how conducting action research might enrich one's research repertoire. Both projects discussed here are still ongoing, so the results of what we have actually managed to achieve will need to be discussed in future papers.

## 2. ACTION RESEARCH

Sometimes researchers are confronted with a situation where they are looking for ways to study an organisation that is in dire need of change. In many instances, theoretical literature, or outside experience, indicate a particular direction as a potentially good way to proceed with the changes. This offers a good opportunity to consider initiating an action research project. All action research should be collaborative. This includes working with the people you are studying, with the aim of improving the context in which your participants work. Action research means that the researcher works *with* practitioners rather than *for* them, and with the aim of contributing to change rather than just studying it (Bradbury Huang, 2010).

From the point of view of action research, there are many aspects of research in which practitioners can be included. Practitioners may be part of the research simply as one-off consultants, or they can be seen as co-researchers whose work may also take research in new directions (Bradbury Huang, 2010). From the same article, we can also derive a list of criteria for action research projects. The list includes proceeding from the praxis of participation, being guided by practicality, taking proper account of stakeholder knowledge and helping out in building capacity for ongoing change efforts (Bradbury Huang, 2010).

A good quality action research project not only demands that the action implemented in the research context be theory-led, informed, inclusive and relevant, but also that the research practice around it should have clear guidelines. I will use Chandler's and Tober's (2003) and Bradbury Huang's (2010) overviews as a basis for discussion of the quality criteria for action research. As action research requires a high level of involvement from all parties, reflexivity and clarity about the role of different participants are pivotal. In addition, the aims and objectives of the action research must be clearly articulated, and, as Arieli et al. (2009) demonstrate, they also need to be mutually understood by all participants. The research obtains its validation from clear subject-positioning and explicit understanding of choices made within the research context. Good action research has to be critical, theory-led and methodologically sound, and the fact that you have action in your research project does not give you leeway in any of these aspects. The choices made within these areas also need to be clear, explicit and coherently communicated throughout the research project. And last, but not least, good action research needs to be made relevant and significant, in the context of research as well as in

the academic community and within wider society. Thus, in a sense, because of the many parties involved, action research makes even greater demands and needs more reflexivity, planning and relevant action to be considered good research than regular research does, but, at the same time, the stringent rules also help the research to be better connected with the needs of society.

In the following sections, I will briefly introduce two action research projects with which I have been involved – the Huwy.eu participatory youth democracy project and an open curatorship project at the Estonian National Museum.

### 3. CASE 1: HUWY.EU – HUB WEBSITES FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Hub Websites for Youth Participation is a European Commission-supported e-participation preparatory project which involves four different countries, and within these countries local researchers, youth groups and policy-makers are relevant actors (Taylor-Smith, 2010). Table 1 gives an overview of the basic characteristics of the Huwy.eu project. The aim of the project has been to find good ways to support interaction between policy-makers and young people's discussions on what the latter perceive to be (policy) changes needed in and around the internet. The idea that distributed discussions among people are relevant to political decision-making stems from the work of Dahlgren (2006) and Bohman (1996), who stress that larger spheres of everyday talk are important for maintaining larger spheres of citizenship. The project takes the notion of talk as a point of departure, tries to tap into the possibility of directing different instances of talk among young people towards discussions that will be of actual relevance to policy-makers, and then asks the participants to send their ideas to policy-makers. This kind of Hub website system, which assumes that people talk about policy-relevant ideas in informal settings, online and offline, tries to motivate participants to submit their ideas to policy-makers. The project takes no responsibility in case the ideas are not realised and only tries to take on an active role in fostering discussion about and feedback to the ideas themselves.

**Table 1: Short description of the main components of the HUWY – Hub Websites for Youth Participation project**

<b>HuwY.eu</b>	<b>Participatory project for youth engagement in internet-related policy-making</b>
<b>Background</b>	UK, Ireland, Germany, Estonia. International project supported by EC e-participation measure. Theoretical background for the project comes from the ideas of participatory democracy, everyday talk as model for political participation, etc.
<b>Goal</b>	Develop distributed discussion model for policy consultation/participation. Have young people discuss the hot topics in the internet, wherever they have their actual discussions, and bring the results together on a Hub website.
<b>Research practice</b>	Develop the Hub website. Investigate the quality criteria set by young people and policy-makers for good participation (surveys, interviews, focus groups). Investigate the realisation of these quality criteria within the context of this project for the policy-makers and for the young people (surveys, interviews, text analysis).
<b>Expected results</b>	Informed and engaged discussions about internet policies. Evaluation of distributed discussion model.

The practical nature of the project is strongly connected with the funding measure of e-participation preparatory action from the European Commission. For that reason the action component was strictly necessary and development and evaluation methods are highly relevant. The inclusive nature arises out of the need to have as many project stakeholders on board as possible in order to maximise the potential benefits. In the ideal design of the project, the participation of representatives of young people and policy-makers has been crucial at every stage in the project. At the same time the financial and time-related constraints of the project have made actual participation difficult.

So far, the design phase of the research project has included consultations with the policy-makers concerning the relevance of the project to them. Policy-makers were also included as project partners in order to give them the incentive to invest time in the project. Young people were recruited as project partners more on the general basis of whether they would provide good gateways to the discussions among young people, and their actual

participation in the design was never realised. Young people's opinions were actively sought in connection with content, methodology and the Hub website, but the project's international nature and comparative ambitions meant that many of the opinions which were voiced as preferences rather than musts were neglected. Financial and time-related constraints meant that a few pointers for the actual Hub website were also ignored, despite the strong arguments put forward by participating youth groups.

On the research side of the project, young people and project partners voiced their opinions about the evaluation criteria. The novelty is that the evaluation of the project is not based on some universal text-book criteria, but focuses on the actually perceived relevance among the target groups. Here, gathering the evaluation criteria is more problematic as people find it fairly difficult to evaluate things in general rather than attaching them to a specific experience. Hence, the actual numbers of participants who influenced the evaluation criteria are fairly small, despite the international reach of the project.

The Huwy.eu project is in its essence still about discussions and gathering and distributing policy opinions related to the internet. Elsewhere I have described the difficulties that such projects face in Estonia (Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, 2007; Runnel et al. 2009). The choice between top-down consultations and bottom-up 'irrelevant remarks' is unfair and difficult to make. Striking a good balance in a policy project so that it is both interesting for the participants and relevant to the policy-makers is one of the aims of the HUWY project. Whether the balance is actually achieved will need to be analysed more thoroughly within the context of the project later on. In the final evaluation of the project, policy-makers and young people will have a chance to express their opinions, and this will be the final iteration of the participatory nature of the project.

#### 4. CASE 2: ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OPEN CURATORSHIP EXHIBITION

Table 2 gives an overview of another participatory project that could be defined as action research. Part of a larger grant project called "Museum Communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Information Environment", the open curatorship project was one of many undertakings aimed at involving the general public more heavily in the activities of the Estonian National Museum. People were invited to submit their ideas and proposals for an exhibition to be held in one of the smaller rooms in the museum, with all

proposals to be evaluated through public voting and the best two proposals having the chance to set up their own exhibition. Altogether there were 33 proposals and 564 members of the public voted. Two proposals were selected, one exhibition to open in September 2010 and the other in March 2011.

**Table 2: Short description of the main components of the Estonian National Museum Open Curatorship exhibition**

<b>Open Curatorship</b>	Participatory project engaging individuals and groups outside museums to propose, choose and hold an exhibition at the Estonian National Museum
<b>Background</b>	Estonian National Museum – a 101-year-old ethnographic museum, collecting and exhibiting the everyday life of Estonia and its inhabitants. Also has an extensive Finno-Ugric collection. In the process of applying for funding for a new building, democratising and opening the museum up to be more involved with the general public and specific groups within Estonian society.
<b>Goal</b>	Involve the general public in museum activities, get rid of the dusty image of a 19 <sup>th</sup> -century peasant museum, change the image, but also change the museum. Open the museum up, from within, but also invite the public to reconceptualise the museum from outside. Democratise small aspects of the institution in order to democratise the whole of society.
<b>Research practice</b>	Analysis of the proposed 33 exhibitions in order to understand the museum's image, shift in museology. Open voting (564 votes), analysis of the comments from voters. A few questions asked of those who submit their proposals about why they joined in and two questions about their participatory practices in order to understand participation in a heritage institution. Analysis of the exhibition-making process in order to understand the shift in museology.
<b>Expected results</b>	Opening and (re)conceptualising the museum in the public domain, the 'third shift in museology'. To make people within and around the museum think about the issues and maybe include aspects of the experiment in other cases.

The theoretical basis for the project is twofold – partly the democratisation of everyday life and Giddens' idea of “*democratising democracy*” (1998) and partly the third shift in museology as proposed by van Mensch (2005). The third museological change sees museums shifting from being inward-facing and functional to focusing on inclusion and incorporating society to a greater degree. In a sense, the third shift in an ethnology museum (such as the Estonian National Museum), which is largely based on strong social ties, intensive fieldwork and active cooperation with different social groups, can be somewhat difficult to understand. ‘We already do a lot’ is a common argument voiced by museum members. There is obviously a need to establish a clearer understanding of the museological change, the shift towards equality and an increasing interest in involving the public.

The open curatorship project is interesting to analyse from an action research point of view for a number of reasons. One reason is the very composition of the research team, as the composition in itself provides grounds for discussing the participatory elements of the project, as the project was jointly developed by people who have double affiliations with the museum and the university. The inner struggles within the research group between researcher and museum identities have been an inherent part of the study. Figure 1 shows the many different groups of people who have been involved as participants in the project.

**Figure 1: Stakeholders and participants of the Estonian National Museum Open Curatorship Project**



As for the action research project, only a few stakeholders have actually been included as full participants in both research design and planned action. The dual role performed by museum project members has brought the project closer to the other members of the museum's staff. The staff are overloaded with everyday work, and so the project is still very easily considered as 'theirs' rather than 'ours'.

## 5. IS THIS REAL PARTICIPATION?

As stated at the beginning of the article, one of the key components for action research is its participatory nature. In this context, participation is not very well defined and it is understood to be anything from a) consultation; to b) making people do things; to c) making people actual co-researchers of a project. Arieli et al. (2009) have discussed the literature on action research with special attention paid to participation, and they note that what counts as participation – and ideas concerning how to achieve this in the context of research – are underdefined and most often simply assumed to



be necessary. In their discussion they focus on things that can go wrong in terms of participation and on how to rectify those problems in the specific stages of the research project. The key problems encountered are: power imbalances in terms of resources, knowledge imbalances and consequent feelings of superiority and inferiority, different goals and aims, and a lack of understanding of the balance between action and research (Arieli, Friedman and Agbaria, 2009). The idea of a participation ladder, coined by Arnstein (1969) and later also used by OECD (2001: 6), helps to present participation as a continuum of different activities where power and control over the activity vary. Carpentier (2007: 106) also shows that when analysing participation it is important to understand how equally, or unequally, power is distributed between participants. This makes it possible to distinguish between “*real*” or “*full*” participation and partial participation. In the discussions around action research, participation is often very loosely defined, incorporating many of the aspects that should actually be seen as either partial participation or non-participation (see Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, 2007 for a discussion).

The two projects discussed here are not free from institutional burdens and thus inherently imbalanced in nature. As discussed with members of the Estonian National Museum – at the end of the day, a museum is legally, morally and ethically responsible for all content displayed in the museum building. Hence, there is always a power imbalance there. The open curatorship project is, however, from all aspects a more democratic and power-balanced initiative. It has consciously given power away at all stages of the project, and the major aim of the intervention has been to achieve participation. HUWY.eu project is in a way hybrid, where participation is an aim of the project, but not a conscious goal of the research team. HUWY.eu has many participatory aspects, as for instance the content of what is discussed comes from the participants (although general themes for discussions are proposed, all ideas are welcome as there is an “open thread” for what does not fit under the general umbrella). At the same time, although the agenda can be set by the participants, the actual implications of the discussions to the policies (if any) are entirely up to the policy makers and institutional partners. Neither do the members of the research team have a say. Also in the set-up process and research design, despite the engagement from different parties, the final decisions are always kept closed and non-participatory.

In many ways the Huwy.eu project has made me ask questions about the price of participatory research. The relevance of the action research for the

stakeholders and participants is highly important, and if you and your research project can actually home in on solving issues that are crucial for your target groups, then the research project definitely feels like a worthy endeavour. At the same time, when issues such as financial constraints or time constraints force you only partially to fulfil your initial goal, then it is difficult to evaluate the project as good action research. For many new media-related projects, the technical component of the project may be too difficult to realise with the chosen methods and the evaluation of the actual participatory nature of the project may be hindered by the lack of technical realisation.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The fact that action research can often have an emancipatory aim is very alluring to many researchers (Bradbury Huang, 2010). However, in this discussion I hope to have demonstrated some of the potential pitfalls that lie in wait when engaging in this sort of venture. Making action research truly participatory can be the very focus of a research project, or a secondary aim, but should never be totally forgotten. Different participants also bring different aims and hopes to the project. This, in turn, can bring additional clarity and reflexivity throughout the project, and this is absolutely necessary for all participants. If time or financial constraints make it difficult to incorporate participants' ideas into the project realisation, then one should ask whether it is worthwhile to ask for these opinions in the first place. However, despite the difficulties, it feels very good to do something worthwhile with your knowledge and it is important to keep in mind the notion that it must be worthwhile for everyone in your team.

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# PART TWO

THE SUMMER SCHOOL STUDENT ABSTRACTS  
(in alphabetical order)



NAME CARDS  
(GREEN FLOW)

PHOTO: RANJANA DAS



# EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF LOCAL E-PARTICIPATION IN ITALY

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This doctoral project explores an intersection between political theory and new media studies to empirically evaluate local e-participation in Italy, a country renowned for citizen aversion toward the political sphere. A participatory perspective is employed to investigate how engagement in a selection of online local forums relates to the “sense of political efficacy” and the off-line political behaviours of participating citizens. On a theoretical level, assumptions from participatory theories of democracy are combined into a representative model, such as the liberal paradigm dominant in Western countries. Whereas liberal accounts confine citizen attitudes to the role of predictors of participation, participatory claims are strong reminders that the same attitudes can be influenced by participation itself, which leads to a (normative) view of participation as a self-propelling force. In light of this suggestion, e-participation is tested with regard to its influential capabilities on the sense of political efficacy. This parameter, extensively examined by political scientists since the 1950s, has been widely recognized as an indicator of healthy democracy. The first selected case studies are online discussion forums based in the Italian regions of Veneto and Lombardia. They refer to specific local contexts (municipality-level, district-level) and present relatively significant user activity. Some forums are promoted by local governments within the frame of regional programmes, while others are sustained spontaneously by groups of citizens. The choice of local initiatives is not accidental. The focus on “locality” in this e-participation work hints at the common point amongst political theorists – local participation as the necessary training ground for political engagement at higher levels. Whereas the technological scope of the Internet can be seen as global, its enabling role for democratic citizenship may be useful or even crucial at the local level. The main methodological approach is qualitative, with a corollary of basic quantitative data. In-depth interviews and thematic analysis are the core of the methodology. In conclusion, the project aims at understanding and unveiling the potential of local e-participation to challenge the current state of affairs. In fact, although presented with promotional verve by Italian politicians, the vast majority of e-participation initiatives still operate as empty shells, suggesting the need for a more substantial commitment to e-democracy goals.

## NEW MEDIA AND THE POLITICAL PROCESSES: CHANGING MODELS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

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Media has always contributed to the political discourse. Technological changes in communication bring apparent challenges for the political sphere, where the new media contributes to the emergence of virtual public spaces of a networked character. With the advent of new information and communication technologies, some prospects and potentials of the new (social) media are revealed, and must be considered with regard to citizens and political engagement. The current transformation in terms of citizen participation and deliberation involves the normative problems of legitimating a democracy, which recently became a focal point in the academic debate. Speaking broadly, with the advent of new information and communication technologies in contemporary society, a number of ongoing challenges are observed: liberal democracies are facing a crisis of legitimacy, public trust and understanding; the media uses decentralized, grassroots communication forms in its content; social media tools provide opportunities for meaningful civic engagement and political participation; and the social dimension is becoming part of media streams and moves the communicative power away from singular, dominant sources of communication. Online participation is increasingly spread out—the levels of activity are not as high as in traditional offline activities, but are not negligible. Overall, there are still questions as to who actively participates in these activities, whether the typical participatory biases of traditional participation are reproduced in the online sphere, and whether the new media (as a collective, user-generated, unmediated platform) has the same impact as the traditional media. Therefore, my research agenda is concentrated on new media developments in young democratic countries (e.g., the Baltic States), and aims to give a clear and focused explanation of what makes new media developments as well as audience media performance in these countries so different from online media developments in the West by targeting contextual particularities of new media applications and usage patterns, and focusing on the potential that new media holds to activate, catalyse and mobilize responsible citizenship and governance online.



## IRANIAN OCCIDENTALISM: IMAGES OF THE WEST IN IRAN'S MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS

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It is widely accepted that anti-Westernism, largely associated with anti-Americanism, is on the rise in Muslim countries including in Iran (Mogahed, 2005; O'Connor & Griffiths, 2006; Ray, 2009). Iran and the West have been at loggerheads for more than three decades. The confrontational nature of relations between "Oriental" Iran and "Occidental" West after 1979 has greatly affected the perception of the West (the United States, Britain, France and Germany) among Iranians and the role the media has played in constructing such an image is undeniable. The present research concerns Occidentalism from the viewpoint of Iran. Occidentalism is seldom the subject of scholarly inquiry and no comprehensive study has been conducted on the image of the West in the Iranian media. This project seeks to study mechanisms through which the Occidental(US) image is portrayed in the Iranian press. The image of the West in Iran is negative; however, how such an image is constructed is not known. Presenting a deep analysis of the political situation in Iran in the two periods, I will argue that both presidents Khatami and Ahmadinejad were trying to establish relations with the West (America in particular) but from different perspectives. President Khatami desired the resumption of relations with the United States under his Dialogue Among Civilisations theory, and this was a part of his efforts to set up a civil society. He was a Westoxicated (or Westernised) president in the eyes of the Conservatives and a freedom fighter and civil role model in the eyes of the Reformists. President Ahmadinejad, on the other end of the political spectrum, wanted to establish relations with the United States under the influence of the state's fundamental principles of safeguarding the interests of the Islamic Republic with "wisdom, expedience and dignity" in line with the country's long-term strategic plan "Vision 2025". Therefore, Ahmadinejad is an anti-American revolutionary hero in the eyes of the Conservatives, and ignorant and adventurous in the eyes of the Reformists. To study these perspectives, the researcher will analyse the content of the press during two presidential terms of Khatami (1997–2001) and Ahmadinejad (2005–2009).

## NEW INFORMATION PRACTICES: THE CASE OF HEALTH FORUMS

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Spurred by new technologies, Health Information (HI) has undergone significant changes including increasing production instances and information circulation. This information, previously scientific, becomes available to the general public. The Net user becomes both the producer and consumer of information. With Web 2.0 and its tools, patients and Internet-users are more informed. These open sources on the Internet, originally intended for professionals, were taken over by patients for their own medical uses. Many studies investigating asynchronous exchanges are analysed in forums in terms of conversational and interactional analysis. However, there are few works focused on health information in these new devices. Forums are places where information exchange is a collective construct shaped by the accumulation of interventions and by the pooling of individual contributions according to a logical close dialogue and conversation. They differ from other information sources. The emotional charge is very high, so it is not only medical information that people are seeking, although it is a large part of the exchanges. It is important to note that in the forums, false information can be circulated either intentionally or unintentionally. Therefore, we may wonder whether emotions condition the trust in information retrieval. In other words, what are the reasons that lead a user to seek HI on these forums? Are credibility and reliability necessary for advanced information retrieval? This work focuses on the cooperation in information retrieval in a collaborative human environment through a device called the Health forum.

## CONSTRUCTION OF ARTISTHOOD IN THE ONLINE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN BLOG WRITERS AND THEIR READERS

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Weblogs can be understood as both a personal space and a social medium (Boyd, 2006; Walker Rettberg, 2008) since they simultaneously empower the author to construct a presentation of the self and can engage the reader in actively commenting upon these self-constructions. Given both characteristics, the meaning of weblogs has been theorized in diverging ways. Weblogs are said to have the ability to demystify social constructions and relations between traditional content producers such as artists, and traditional content consumers because according to some scholars, these new technologies allow an almost all-revealing insight into artists' decision-making processes (Whiteley, 2007). In contrast, weblogs can also be understood as media that reaffirm the value, and hence, the distinction of the traditional content producer. Here, it is argued that the features and the conventions of blogs ascribe a certain type of capital to the blog writer that corresponds to the Romantic cultural convention of the author as an individual, mysterious and even magical genius (Chesher, 2005). It is remarkable that these ideas and arguments often echo opinions about how this specific relationship is constructed through the use of traditional mass media. Therefore, to understand how weblogs shape the relationship between artists and their audience as well as the degree to which these relations are distinct in connection with other mediated encounters between both actors, I focus on a specific type of artists – literary authors. There is a long tradition of valuing literature as a mythical form of art and knowledge (Bain, 2005: 43, Bennett, 2005: 106, Nair, 2010: 9-10), which makes it interesting to study the way the concepts of artisthood and artistic authority are constructed in writers' weblogs. The focus of my doctoral research is to study in what way contemporary writers use the weblog to enhance or open up their symbolic, cultural and social capital towards their readers (Bourdieu, [1986] 1993). Moreover, it is my intention to clarify to what extent the present-day relationship between writers and their readers as well as the way both actors perceive each other's social role and position is given form through the use of weblogs.

## VANITY FAIR AND SAFE HAVEN? NARCISSISM, SHYNESS AND THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

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At present, there are two contradictory opinions in the psychological research literature about how personality matters on the Internet. The first position claims that personality stays the same regardless of whether people are acting in real life or in the virtual setting of the Internet. In contrast, the second position indicates that personality changes in computer-mediated interactions. To investigate this contradiction, the proposed study will take an initial empirical approach. We want to determine whether the Big-Five personality traits – representative of the whole personality – can be transferred onto the Internet. At this time, the initial results are available. It appears that the Big-Five personality traits do not change on the Internet. Individual personality structures remain the same, although the influence of personality on behaviour seems to be reduced in favour of situational importance. In fact, past surveys that used the Big-Five traits to explain individual differences in Internet usage have not achieved reasonable results. Hence, recent research focuses on specific traits. Concerning the use of social networking sites, two quite different personality traits are the focus of interest: narcissism and shyness. Is social networking on platforms like Facebook and MySpace a vanity fair? Self-expression is certainly an important aspect of social networking, and users have plenty of opportunities to present themselves to an online audience. Additionally, most social networking sites provide numerous indicators of one's popularity (e.g., the number and ranking of friends). Therefore, the assumption that people with high scores on narcissism have a preference for social networking seems to be reasonable. On the other hand, communication and interaction on social networking sites also offer a higher controllability concerning self-disclosure when compared to face-to-face communication. Because social networking provides a constant spatial distance, users can decide carefully which personal information they want to share with their network. Especially for shy people and those suffering from social anxiety, social networking might be a safe haven where they are able to overcome their everyday fears more easily. In this case, shy people might have an easier time meeting new acquaintances, friends or even sexual partners online. In light of this finding, the proposed study will examine above mentioned perspectives: Is there a relationship between the traits of

narcissism and shyness and the use of social networking sites? This investigation consists of three parts: (1) the assignment of the Big-Five traits on the Internet, (2) the relationship between narcissism and social networking and (3) the relationship between shyness and social networking. This study refers to past research based on a quantitative research paradigm, related methods such as questionnaires (e.g., surveys among Internet users) and content analyses of profiles on social networking sites.

## **EMBODIMENT OF JOURNALISTIC VALUES IN THE FLEMISH PRESS**

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The proposed research project will investigate the discursive strategies that journalists use in order to cope with the ever-tensed relationship between journalistic values and their practical effectuation. Such journalistic values pertain to an occupational ideology that confers authority and legitimacy on journalism and journalists by implicitly claiming universal validity. As such, the project's analysis of journalistic values focuses on the debates surrounding "the end of journalism" by showing that coping strategies have become paramount in the construction of the journalistic identity and in journalism's efforts at maintaining authority and credibility in times of profound crisis. The theoretical starting point of this research proposal is that there is a gap that separates values from practices. Therefore, this gap (potentially) threatens the truth claims that are central to the journalistic identity, and we presuppose the existence of coping strategies that mediate this gap by reaffirming both the validity of the occupation and the identity of the professionals that work in it. As these coping strategies become most conspicuous during moments of crisis in journalism, the research project will use a case study logic that focuses on specific controversies that open up journalism to public debate. This empirical analysis will centre around three main case studies that are each devoted to one specific journalistic value: objectivity, autonomy and social responsibility, and its textual representation within the fields of war, (multi)cultural conflict and crime, respectively. Specifically, the first case study will be devoted to the (failed) search for weapons of mass destruction during the Iraqi war of 2003. The second case study, involving the Mohammed cartoon controversy, will highlight coping strategies as the

values of press freedom, freedom of speech and journalistic autonomy became entangled and required clarification and re-affirmation. Lastly, the research will focus on crime coverage, and in particular, on the case of Marc Dutroux, which is relevant in light of the moral engagement of the journalist with society. The research, which is methodologically based on an interdisciplinary combination of Discourse – Theoretical Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics, will entail a regular press coverage case study, journalistic book case study and a historical case study. This structure will facilitate uncovering the journalistic coping strategies and deepen our understanding of the complexity of journalistic identity.

## CONSTRUCTING THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM: MEDIA CONTENTS, DTA, CDA AND APPRAISAL THEORY

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The purpose of this study is to employ Carpentier's concept of Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA), Van Dijk's concept of ideology (linked to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)), Martin and Rose's Appraisal system and the analytical frameworks of Fairclough to analyse three elite online newspapers – *Tehran Times*, *The New York Times* and *European Voice* – related to Iran's nuclear program. An estimated 300 articles, 100 from each online newspaper, will be collected. Using DTA and CDA, this study attempts to elucidate the ideological representation of Iranian, European and American perspectives on Iran's nuclear program in the news discourse and editorial positions of three elite newspapers. Within the empirical research, the study will focus on two basic realizations of discourse – form and content. Using the theory and methodology developed by J. R. Martin (2000), and the Martin and Rose (2003) appraisal system, the research will analyse the media at the micro level. Thus, the study will pay special attention to the explicit and implicit way in which ideology is expressed using Carpentier's DTA (Nico Carpentier and B. De Cleen (2007), Fairclough's (1995, 1998) analytical construction and Van Dijk's (1997) framework. The following questions will be discussed: How do the *The New York Times*, *European Voice* and *Tehran Times* construct the Iranian nuclear program and the national, institutional and popular identities of the in-

volved actors? How do these newspapers construct the national identities of the main countries involved? How do they construct the identity of the national and international institutional actors involved? How do they construct the identity of the people's and civil societies of the main countries involved? How are these identities constructed as antagonistic, Orientalist and/or Occidentalist? How do the newspapers construct the (nuclear) technology itself? The presentation will show that ideology, using discourse, tends to emphasize good things about us and bad things about them and de-emphasize bad things about us and good things about them in each publication respectively. Since DTA and CDA view discourse as both produced and shaped by ideology, they stress the essential linguistic characteristics of social relationships, social structures and the power distributed among them.

## **RESISTANCE IS USELESS? CONSEQUENCES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPEAN MEDIA POLICY FOR SMALL STATES IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE**

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The Open Society Institute's latest review of Television Across Europe (OSI, 2008) found that the countries in Central and Eastern Europe show evidence of increased commercialisation and a degradation of the public service functions of television. All the countries it studied are either EU members or at various stages of implementing the *acquis communautaire*. They have opened up their broadcasting markets in line with the Television Without Frontiers Directive (TWFD) (EC, 1989) and their Public Service Broadcasters are subject to EU state aid regulations. Audiovisual media policy is part of the *acquis* and its implementation at the national level is part of being admitted into the EU. It has been argued that the EU's industrial policy approach to this sector undermines the important role that broadcasting plays in the democratic and cultural aspects of a society. The examination of small state media systems has led some scholars to claim that within Europe, small states are particularly vulnerable to commercialisation and domination of their markets by foreign media. This concern leads to my research question: What are the consequences of the implementation of European media policy for small states in South Eastern Europe? As this is the story of the implementation of European



policy, the literature on Europeanization, understood as the implementation of EU policy, provides theoretical tools and concepts through which to examine this process. Using an institutionalist approach often taken in studies of EU policy implementation, my research will examine aspects of national-level regulatory practice and dynamics in the domestic opportunity structure in the context of the implementation of European policy. This study will compare the case of Slovenia, a recent EU member, and Macedonia, a candidate country in the process of complying with the *acquis*. I will explore the vulnerability suggested in the small states typology and potential resistance in the way that national-level actors engage with the European policy. I hope to contribute to refining existing typologies of small state media systems, and instigate more research aimed at re-evaluating the assumptions of small states theory. As media policy and other policy areas related to national and cultural identity have not yet been adequately examined by Europeanization research, the findings of my project may inspire further investigation in this direction.

## MAPPING THE PUBLIC/PRIVATE BOUNDARY ON FACEBOOK

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Facebook celebrated its sixth birthday in January 2010. Since 2004, the site has advanced from providing a service for a small, select group of students at Harvard University in the US to becoming the most popular social networking site in the Western world. The initial restrictions on joining Facebook gave users the impression that they were part of an exclusive private community. In 2010, registration is unrestricted and the site has around 400 million users; it can no longer be viewed as exclusive. However, the perception of the site as a private-bounded community lingers. The Facebook boundary is gradually eroding following a progression of developments on the platform: users can access the social network from a variety of mobile media; external websites and advertisers can link to the site; external companies can develop and mount social applications on the site; and new links have been forged with external online service providers such as Yahoo and Microsoft. Facebook does not charge users for its services, and any suggestion that a fee might be imposed is met with strong opposition from users. Therefore, Facebook relies on gener-



ating money by advertising, and enables companies to reach their target markets by using personal information posted on the site. The social network site must try to balance the competing needs of different users ranging from private individuals who expect a level of privacy to advertisers who seek to monetize the opportunities offered by the ability to target their specific markets. At the heart of this dichotomy lies the personal information of private users. Facebook has attracted the attention of a diverse range of users, including institutions such as the CIA, British Army, politicians and advocacy groups. These Facebook public pages usually offer private individuals the opportunity for interaction with these bodies without the requirement to negotiate the gatekeepers usually found in traditional media platforms, public institutions and private companies. Facebook foregrounds the ability of users to control access to the content they post, but how effective are the control mechanisms in the face of the commercial imperative and the surveillance opportunities enabled by the social network site? My thesis seeks to establish a map of the public/private boundary on Facebook by looking at the core elements of social networking and their consequences for privacy.

## WHY PARTICIPATE? THE IMPACT OF MEDIA ON COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

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The overarching aim of this research is to investigate how media-related factors affect the decision to participate in communication activities (mediatized collective actions). Recently, a great number of collective actors worldwide have been deploying media as (constitutive) instruments within their socio-political struggles. Consequently, for the past 50 years, there has been an increase of studies related to these phenomena. The academic interest in participatory media can be divided into two main trends: 1) descriptive accounts of empirical cases, and 2) debates polarizing their socio-political possibilities and limitations. However, few efforts have been made to develop in-depth investigations of the processes that construct these media. The current project is an attempt to explore this gap. In this research, participatory communication will be conceived as consciousness-building based on participation and social dialogue. In this communication circuit, the moments of management, production and

reception can be approached through their interrelations. The focus of this study will be on how the close relations between management, production and (participant and non-participant) reception affect the levels of participation in a constant media environment. The main questions are 1) How participatory is participatory communication? and 2) How does the constant exposure to media impact people's engagement in collective actions? The empirical data will be collected in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a city that has a long tradition and wide variety of participatory media actions for social change.

## CONVERGING PERSPECTIVES IN AUDIENCE STUDIES AND DIGITAL LITERACIES: YOUTHFUL INTERPRETATIONS OF AN ONLINE GENRE

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In this thesis, I merge selected concerns in two fields that occupy distinctly different moments of mediation. Theoretically, I position myself within the field of audience reception studies as it makes a move from mass media to interactive media. I ask whether modes of engagement with digital interactive media can be understood through insights from research on engagement with mass media, thereby carrying the audience research agenda into the age of the Internet. I attempt to answer this question by operationalising key concepts from audience research (genre, text, interpretation) into a project with new media users (children using social networking sites) to explore whether these concepts can resolve an important question on the new media literacies agenda. Here, I ask whether children's online literacies diverge across age in contrast to the widespread notion of a uniform and homogenous "youthful expertise" with the Internet. Through importing a conceptual repertoire, from one moment of mediation to another, my agenda is to converge perspectives in the field of audience studies and new media literacies, where I treat both audiences and literacies as concepts that involve "interpretation" of the media as texts. With regard to conceptual and methodological priorities, the project is based on three core conceptual priorities that shape its design, theoretical framework and findings. First, I maintain that textual analysis of the media alone cannot account for the diversity of ways in which sense is made of the media. Hence, in conducting research with

the “users” (interpreters) of an online genre, I attempt to take the ambitious claims about literacies in new media environments out into the real, lived practices of engaging with a genre. In this process, theory-led qualitative interviews with 60 children between the ages of 11 and 18 years have recently been completed. Second, despite the weaknesses of a textual analysis alone, it is only in paying close attention to the media itself that one begins to understand its generic structure, which invites certain uses while restraining others. Hence, the project involves a comparative genre analysis of five social networking sites across languages and age groups. Finally, there is a focus on comparing both the text/reader and technology/user. I use data from interviews and genre analysis to compare the divergence in children’s digital literacies across age, and divergence in the form of a genre across selected instances. With regard to the theoretical approach, the theoretical framework brings together a theory of the text from: 1) genre studies and Umberto Eco’s work on openness and closure; 2) a theory of interpretation (deriving from Germanic reception aesthetics and North American reader response); and 3) a theory of divergence (deriving from intersubjectivist theories of cognition that recognize divergence in literacies as a socially located process). The project’s findings are expected to be in three directions. First, there will be findings on the divergence of an online genre across linguistic variations, and second, findings on the divergence of children’s digital literacies across age and finally, findings on four modes of literacies as practices of interpretation. With the first area, I expect to pay close attention to the question of the media as text, with the second, I expect to tackle the question of divergence in youthful uses of new media and with the last, I aim to explore media literacies as interpretation that follows four cross-cutting and overlapping modes.

## **ONLINE NEWS: FROM LINEARITY TO NETWORKED CONTENTS. A STUDY OF HYPERLINK STRUCTURES, STARTING FROM THE WEBSITES OF THE FRANCOPHONE DAILY PRESS.**

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The hyperlink lies at the heart of the concept of the Web. When considering the restricted field of online news, it also emerges as a key issue: it is said to be the first reliquary of interactivity (one of the main values of online news), an important organizing principle or a symptom of authority and credibility. Therefore, the networks weaved by hyperlinks are fertile ground for exploration. An emerging research field focuses on this issue and attempts to map domains of the World Wide Web in order to reveal and make sense of the mesh of connections going through an online territory. Those attempts stand at the crossroads between social sciences, cartography and the blend of physics and mathematics embodied in network sciences. Mapping the hyperlinked environment of online news websites is the main challenge of my research. In order to do so, two main trains of thought are expounded. First, there is an unavoidable reflection on the role of hypertextuality in the news landscape. It is framed within the examination of online news mythology, and implies weighing the promises associated with the hyperlink—namely, better accessibility to information, increased diversity and an accurate assessment of authority. The second axis aims at revealing the hyperlink structures surrounding the websites of the francophone daily press. This aim requires deliberation on the tools and the methods needed for both harvesting the data (i.e., the hyperlinks) and processing it to make it intelligible. The issue of harvesting the data addresses questions such as the relevancy of automatic crawling, the difficulty to achieve a closed, stable corpus and the impact of the analysis on the data. The issue of processing the data deals with questions of representations and visualizations of complex networks. The hyperlink maps describe the surroundings of the studied websites and allow a comparison as well as discovery of relational properties otherwise invisible (i.e. undetectable using a search engine or other traditional navigation tools). The function of hyperlinks in the context of news is fully investigated. These results will then be confronted with the conditions of production of online news. Using more traditional methods (such as interviews or newsroom ethnography), this research investigates the people behind the websites, and tries to reinstate hyperlink networks in the context of the journalists' professional practices and identity.

## WILD FIGURES AND GAZES IN MODERN CINEMA

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In the sixties and seventies, some important filmmakers, like Werner Herzog, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Glauber Rocha, Luis Buñuel and Alejandro Jodorowsky, focused their attention on the wild man. Despite working in different countries and coming from different backgrounds, all of them were concerned with primitivism, both in the characters and plots of their films and in their visual style. The aim of my PhD project is to use the films of these directors to analyse the concept of wildness in the cinema of the time. The analysis will be conducted from two points of view: its cultural genealogy and its aesthetic representation. The first part of the project studies the myth of the wild man in the selected movies, taking into account the anthropological, sociological and political implications of this figure along with the history, especially in artistic movements such as surrealism and Négritude. The main reference in this research will be the anthropological studies of Roger Bartra, which are focused on the wild man as a cultural construction of European countries. The aims of this part will be to define the main archetypes and to study how the wild man is built as a cinematographic character. It will consist of an analysis of the physical features of the characters, the space configuration, the construction of the myth and the opposition between wildness and civilisation in the narrative plots. The second part will be focused on the aesthetic characteristics that define the "wild cinematographic style". In this chapter, the main references will be the theories of George Bataille on formless and energy, which are closely linked to the concept of wildness and have previously been used to analyse art and cinema (e.g., in Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss' "Formless: A User's Guide" (1997) or in Jean-Baptiste Thoret's "Le cinéma américain des années 70" (2006). These theories can be completed with other approaches, such as those of Gilles Deleuze, Raymond Bellour or Georges Didi-Huberman. In the second part, I will analyse how the oppositions of regulation/excess, rationality/delirium and civilisation/wildness can be applied in cinema aesthetics. For this purpose, I intend to study the approach to the bodies, the work on filmic time and the visual attributes of the selected movies to define a wild film style that goes beyond the representation language and civilised rules.

## BEYOND HALLIN/MANCINI: COMPARATIVE READINGS OF THE LEBANESE MEDIA SYSTEM

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The focus of my dissertation is on the reportedly “disoriented and fragmented” Lebanese media system and to what extent this system “fits”, if at all, under any of the three “ideal types” put forth by Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini in their seminal book *Comparing Media Systems*. This endeavour will use the Hallin and Mancini models as a scholarly springboard in an effort to move these models beyond the established democracies of Europe and North America. This research responds to a recurring call for comparative work, and particularly for the application of the Hallin and Mancini model to other non-Western media models. Yet, this comparative approach, when applied to the non-Western world, may threaten to inadvertently do what Downing, Park and Curran have warned, which is universalizing the Western democratic experience. In applying the model to the Lebanese media system, this research will also assess the complex dimensions developed by the two scholars. It must be noted that Hallin and Mancini repeatedly, almost apologetically, acknowledge the limitation of this system and explicitly admit that restricting themselves to Western Europe and North America was a limitation and that the models should serve as an inspiration for a process of re-modelling by either adapting their models to a certain context or the creation of new models. This study proposes to do just that by collecting empirical data through interviews and the available literature. Quantitative research may be used, where necessary, to reveal information such as the partisanship of media audiences, horizontal vs. vertical relation to audience and whether entertainment unifies a largely “balkanized” market. The work will begin with a chapter on comparative media analysis and the Hallin and Mancini framework as well as the debate surrounding these models. This will be followed by a methodological outline of the study and an assessment of the Lebanese media and political system vis-à-vis the Hallin and Mancini “ideal types”, dimensions such as the development of media markets, the variable of political pluralism, the degree of development of journalistic professionalism and the degree and nature of state intervention. This set of indicators will also be amended or adapted to fit the Lebanese context en route to constructing a new model that will be tested at a later stage on another similar system.

## EVALUATING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND EQUITY

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In the past few decades, brand equity has been regarded as a crucial concept because of the competitive advantage(s) successful brands bring to companies. Therefore, it is no surprise that the marketing literature provides substantial discussion on brand equity and various methods of assessment (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1991, Simon and Sullivan, 1993; Mahajan et al., 1990). Furthermore, most of the studies examined focus either on the traditional ways of measuring brand equity (the marketing (customer-based) and financial (company-based) perspective) or extend it by suggesting a new set of measures adapted to the online environment. This thesis builds on the existing traditional and Internet-specific brand equity research by complementing it with new measures pertinent to social media (i.e., social networks and blogs). The primary objective of the thesis is to identify new, social media-specific measures of brand equity. Additionally, based on the collected data, the researcher plans to test and adapt existing models developed for traditional media, and to formulate a new model based on overall research findings that fully describes the relationship between traditional Aaker's brand equity ten and new, social media-specific measures and brand equity. The planned research methodology includes secondary and primary data collection, data processing, analysis and presentation of the research results. Secondary data collection will use relevant and available monographs, textbooks, journal articles, conference proceedings, online databases and Internet data sources. Primary data collection is planned after the completion of exploratory secondary data collection, and it will provide empirical validation of related, relevant theory. The data collection will consist of two stages: 1) qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews with experts (both academics and practitioners) in the field of brand management, brand equity and social media. The researcher will conduct these interviews in Croatia, Switzerland, Italy and the USA. Interviews will be conducted in at least two iterations (adapted standard Delphi technique – experts will be polled in multiple stages, with the results of each stage being presented before the following polling stage starts). Experts will provide fundamental determinants for further research and model development. 2) A quantitative survey will be conducted on a sample of social media users in Croatia, Italy and Switzerland. Collected qualitative data will be processed using SPSS and AMOS



statistical software in three steps: 1) Preliminary analysis, 2) Main analysis (model testing) and 3) Supplementary analysis.

## STRATEGIC CHALLENGE OF AN EFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER IN EXTERNAL SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

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Scientific researchers are increasingly required to present their work in a clear, concise and comprehensible way, as it is their societal responsibility to foster sustainable public awareness of scientific results and to accomplish high credibility. Therefore, continuous Public Relations (PR) activities for science are important for effective transfer of research results for dissemination through the media and to the public (Peters, 2008). Contemporary research in the field of external science communication is primarily concerned with the relationship between science and media (Göpfert & Ruß-Mohl, 2000), the evaluation of PR activities or new PR concepts for science (Bühler et al., 2007; Hermannstädter, 2007). Two important aspects have remained unconsidered: the scientists' attitude towards PR for science, and the implementation of PR activities – more precisely, the relationship between scientists and science communicators in the process of external science communication. The approach taken in my thesis is designed to examine the following research questions: Is the professional support by science communicators necessary? and What is the purpose of different PR strategies in relation to the respective disciplinary background? For this purpose, the project compares three Collaborative Research Centers (CRC) of the University of Bremen: the SFB/TR 8 Spatial Cognition, the SFB 597 Transformations of the State and the SFB 637 Autonomous Logistics. In Germany, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) funds CRC, which are defined as: “[...] institutions established at universities for a period of up to 12 years that enable researchers to pursue an outstanding research programme [sic!], crossing the boundaries of disciplines, institutes, departments and faculties. They facilitate scientifically ambitious, complex, long-term research by concentrating and coordinating the resources available at a university. Universities submitting a proposal are expected to provide appropriate core support” (DFG, 2010). Thus, CRCs instantiate scientific work that should be



communicated to the public and DFG consequently funds PR activities and positions in CRC. For this investigation, the selected CRC at the University of Bremen are interesting cases due to their differences with regard to thematic orientation and PR strategies. The examination will provide insight into the differences in the external science communication of different research fields, and their effectiveness and challenges.

## **INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNET ON NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: THE CASE OF TURKEY**

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This work aims to assess the impact of the Internet on the social oppositional movements in terms of their processes of debate, policymaking, organisation and action. It is argued that almost all the positive and negative impacts of the Internet produce a counter-situation. The anti-militarist movement, the LGBTT movement and the opposition to urban transformation were selected as sample groups in Turkey that use the Internet effectively. As stated by the pro-strugglists, this study agrees that those with power and capital try to control the Internet, that large segments of society are excluded from the Internet and that the Internet is wrapped up in racist-sexist discourses of violence. However, this study reinforces the importance of the Internet as a tool to be used in different ways in the struggle of social movements. The Internet can help activists to communicate easily, immediately and cheaply. Furthermore, the easy archivization of this information fulfils an important function, which is particularly relevant in Turkey since groups are not skilled in documenting their history. The expeditiousness created by the Internet speeds up decision-making processes, which might result in a lack of necessary debate, leading to undesirable results. Moreover, due to its multi-centred structure with easily transformable centres, the Internet can result in a government lack of control, unlike in other communication tools. This enables the communication of oppositional movements outside the central monitoring of the state, thereby avoiding the intervention of opponent groups. However, the Internet can be observed and monitored in a way unparalleled in other communication tools. In the discussions carried out over the Internet, users can remain anonymous, articulating their opinions more freely, but anonymity might result in a slipperiness of identities and non-accountability

for the expressed opinions. Political discussions not progressing through real people results in the inability to conduct real politics and the failure of discussions or actions. Individuals accessing the Internet have the opportunity to participate in discussions and actions in an unprecedented “equal” and “free” way. However, the limitations arising from the digital divide constitute a serious obstacle to all citizens’ access to these processes, and in this sense, the Internet maintains and even exacerbates the existing inequalities. There are good examples of initiatives discussing public issues and conveying opinions to local governments, which strengthen local democracy, but such Internet activism must parallel offline activism.

## **CO-CREATING “SECOND LIFE”: AN ANALYSIS OF COLLABORATIVE CO-DESIGN PROCESSES IN COMMUNITY-AUTHORED VIRTUAL WORLDS**

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Developments in digital communication technologies, the emergence of social media and the shifting of the digital media landscape towards a more participatory platform are not only the driving forces behind the implication of new technologies to the market, but they also have significant effects on the ways people communicate, interact, participate and create communicative content in social contexts. This PhD project aims to observe how residents of Second Life (SL) use the virtual world as a collaborative tool for creativity to co-design the world’s content – that is, virtual places and artifacts that mediate communication in SL. The outlined theoretical framework and methodological approach is intended to summarize impressions from my observations of Second Life “builders” in order to understand who they are, how they collaborate and how they make sense of their co-design experiences. In order to theorize the communicative aspects of the co-creation processes of virtual places and artifacts that constitute SL’s grid, this PhD project seeks answers to following research questions: 1) How do the designers (“builders”) in Second Life collaboratively make use of the virtual world’s affordances, and organize their resources within its constraints, in order to build 3D virtual places that facilitate social interaction among residents? 2) Can the (presumed) “collaborative co-design” model of Second Life provide implications about how forthcoming models of user-generated content can effectively

lead to user-driven innovation in virtual worlds? The categories of analysis emerged from a combination of theory and observations from twopilot studies completed in 2009. In these pilot studies, first, a 3-month multidisciplinary design process of a virtual laboratory was observed. Then, the laboratory was used for teaching purposes; students were asked to create virtual artifacts and join focus group interviews afterwards. The analysis so far indicates that Second Life comprises various affordances to facilitate object-based collaboration in design processes, and allows designers to develop context-specific co-design methods using available design resources (inspirational or material) situated within the virtual world (i.e., building 3D models, shopping for supplies, outsourcing tasks). Within this context, user-driven innovation is intended to imply innovative user practices within virtual worlds to find new ways of interaction and participation. The ultimate purpose of the study is to theorize social patterns that transform user-generated content into user-driven innovation, and to provide theoretically grounded empirical knowledge on which aspects of existing collaborative co-design facilities in community-authored virtual worlds affect user creativity and participation.

## **POLITICAL LEGITIMACY AND SATELLITE TELEVISION IN IRAN: A STUDY OF ETHICAL JUDGMENTS IN THE PERSIAN-LANGUAGE NEWS PRODUCTION OF BBC AND VOA**

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My research into non-domiciled Persian-language news production for the satellite channels of the BBC and Voice of America (VoA) aims to explore the relationship between public discourse and political legitimacy. I understand this news production (for Iran) as the creation of public discourse, and ask to what extent satellite TV can supply resources for democratization. Iran is an interesting case in this respect, as international satellite broadcasters, especially the BBC and VoA, are watched by large portions of Iran's population. The subtext of my research is embodied in the question: What do we mean when we say that public communication is important for democratic legitimacy, and what kind of judgements are involved in asserting the (normative) legitimacy produced through public communication? I draw on theories of public reason and the public sphere,

moral judgements and ethics, as well as news and democratization, combining conceptual approaches from ethics with empirical approaches from deliberative democracy and media research. Rather than follow well-developed approaches of treating normative questions as purely conceptual and questions of practices as purely empirical, my research seeks to negotiate a midway position. I operationalise my research by examining the way that practitioners address and think about normative problems, in order to examine the interaction between normative demands and the practices to which they relate, in this case, the production of news for Iran. I focus on two normative demands: 1) that all interests are included, and 2) that there should exist symmetry between those whose interests are included and those affected. These interests become salient in the case of Iran's non-domiciled media because there exists no *a priori* idea about the shape of the public good (secular or religious), and thus, no shared basis for making decisions about inclusion. Furthermore, the reliance on non-domiciled media raises questions about the nature of accountability (who is affected – domiciled citizens, diaspora, international community). The divergence between norms and practices is interesting because it can help identify the various institutional capacities and professional capabilities that structure responses to normative problems in news production. I then ask, given the nature of the practices of news production and the availability of a set of capacities and capabilities, whether we should either modify our norms or address a lack in the available capabilities and capacities. My research question is: How do news professionals respond to and think about normative demands for inclusion and symmetry?

## HOW MUCH LEARNING DO WE NEED? DIGITAL GAME-BASED LEARNING IN SCHOOL

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Digital game-based learning based on serious games is a fast-growing field of research. However, there is astonishingly little empirical research on optimal instructional design, a corresponding layout, and an efficient integration of serious games into lessons (for a literature overview, see Lieberman, 2009). However, several questions arise from the scientific work that has been done on serious games. One very popular question asks how a game can be used for learning purposes without destroying

the fun of gaming. Another problem emerges from the character of playing. According to Huizinga, play is “a voluntary activity . . . having its aim in itself” (Huizinga, 1955). Regarding the use of this kind of activity for learning in school, one may query the possibility or necessity of playing a serious game as a learning activity. Consequently, two main questions will be addressed in my research. The first question asks how much explicit learning content should be in the game. Therefore, two versions of a serious game will be examined, one with explicit learning content and one without explicit learning content. As result, a difference in terms of knowledge acquisition is anticipated. The second question asks how explicitly the game itself should be presented as learning material. Therefore, a learning instruction (Salomon, 1984) will be used. This instruction should theoretically manipulate the perception of the game as learning material. To answer both research questions mentioned above, a 2 x 2 factorial design experiment with two independent variables (explicit learning content yes/no; learning instruction yes/no) will be conducted. The dependent variables are the performance of the students dealing with an achievement test, which is divided into two parts: knowledge acquisition in terms of factual knowledge and transfer. Mediating variables such as mental effort or intrinsic motivation will be measured by questionnaires immediately after the game play. The gaming behaviour of each player will be evaluated by an analysis of the log files. The study is specially designed to test the following hypotheses: The perception of the game as learning material will not significantly increase performance because this perception does not fit with the character of playing. The implementation of explicit learning material will significantly increase the performance on inference. However, on the other hand, it will significantly decrease the flow and thus the intrinsic motivation. It is expected that the results of this research project will help to understand the potential and the limits of serious games as teaching material and contribute to the knowledge of an optimal didactic conception of serious games.

## **MEDIA - GLOBALIZATION - GENDER: ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS AS A TRANSCULTURAL NETWORK**

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The Association for Progressive Communications Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP) is a transcultural network that conducts women empowerment media projects in different countries. The aim of APC WNSP is the transformation of gender hierarchies and the realization of gender equality through the use of (mainly new) information and communication technologies. As a transcultural network, APC WNSP has become a phenomenon of contemporary media globalization, acting in a multi-level system on global, regional, and local levels. APC WNSP is of interest for gender analysis in media and communication studies as well as in globalization theory. Therefore, on the one hand, I analyze the transcultural structure of the network and, on the other hand, the gender norms of global organization as well as the efforts to implement these norms on the local level. The main question here is: Are there differences and tensions or homogeneous ideas of gender? As gender is always determined by other social categories, I combine the perspectives of intersectionality and transculturality for analyzing gender. While the transcultural perspective helps in the analysis of cultural patterns, an intersectional approach requires attention to the interdependence of different social categories within the category of gender. In my doctoral thesis, the efforts in the implementation of global gender norms are analyzed in South Africa as a significant regional example. South Africa is relevant for a theoretical globalization perspective because phenomena of cultural globalization can be significantly regarded within this cultural space. Because of its history of apartheid and accommodation of many migrants, South Africa is an interface of different cultures in which cultural negotiation processes take place. Media workshops conducted by one of APC WNSP's members, Women's Net, are used as examples for local media projects, which are then compared with the global ideas and norms of the network. For my project, I use a triangulation of different methods: expert interviews with APC coordinators; website and document analyses of the network structure and the gender concepts within the network; and interviews with project participants to bring insights into individual gender identities. Triangulation allows a comparison of the local and global levels. The main questions are the following: How do media/gender NGOs

network worldwide? How and with what effects does transcultural communication take place within this network? What concepts of gender do the NGOs agree on a global level, and what ideas of gender do they face locally? How does a transcultural network like APC WNSP influence local gender hierarchies?

## **BLOG THE INFLUENCE? BLOGGING COMMUNITY IN FINLAND.**

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The two-step flow theory (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) has long recognised that the ability of the few to influence the many by promulgating compelling ideas and information has great potential value. Since the time of that study, politics and business have been particularly keen to identify these individuals in an effort to maximise their own opportunities. With the explosion of blogs, the concept of influencers has naturally migrated to the online realm. Now blogs are seen as offering new opportunities to positively influence citizens' opinions and behaviour, as well as changing the way the public is kept informed about ideas, views, products and services. In Finland, blogs are also gaining popularity as a new kind of media space in which every day more than 30,000 active bloggers produce 4 000 posts and create 40 new blogs (Blogilista.fi). It is reported that bloggers in Finland are steadily increasing their influence over the public in decisions ranging from what car to buy to what newspaper to read (Mediacom.fi). However, despite the huge interest in both the influencers as a concept and blogs as the tools to engage with the public, very little research has been conducted to assess how bloggers exert influence over public interest issues and why such influence is ascribed to them. More specifically, the fact that bloggers represent the opinion leaders in the online environment seems to be assumed without having been proven. From the perspective of communication studies, it is a significant omission. There is neither an extension of the two-step flow theory with its opinion leaders, nor any other recent model explaining who and how influence is spread in the blogosphere. Therefore, this research seeks to designate the popular Finnish bloggers as an important target group. The study aims to test whether the behavioural and attitudinal patterns of influencers remain the same online as described in the two-step flow theory, and, if not, suggest a mod-



el to explain new mechanisms of the influence flow in the blogging community of Finland.

## DANCE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT AS A THEME IN THE CZECH MEDIA WITH EMPHASIS ON THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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When thinking about the history of journalism, people often tend to consider media as an all-round source of information or an instrument of political debate. Generally, journalists are not considered as actors with influence on public taste in cultural practice. If they are considered to have influence, then it is usually in writing on theatre (drama, opera), literature, music, film, or visual art. This project focuses on journalism and dance. However, journalism dealing with dance as a main theme or issue is no younger than other “critical” fields. The roots of dance reviewing dates to the 18th century and the Czech national renaissance movement. During the 19th century, some music and literature journalists specialised in writing on folk dances as well as dance as a performing art. In the first half of the 20th century, journalism began developing as a separate field. Its development went hand in hand with the development of dance as a performing art and with the growing importance of dance in everyday life. In the first half of the 20th century, the influence of the avant-garde was crucial for the position of dance within society. In this era, modern dance was considered to be a way of educating better people for the future of mankind, which is the reason so many schools and so many dance magazines emerged during the period from the 1920s to the 1940s in Europe. In the Czech environment, the most important influence came from German expressionism in modern dance. In both Czechoslovakia and Germany, the first specialised newspapers began at the same time. Emanuel Siblík and Jan Reimoser, two important personalities in dance research and journalism, were important for the development of Czech dance reviewing and dance journalism as a whole. They both were active as journalists, but their approaches have not yet been analysed. They also influenced further generations of journalist-critics, which is another reason we should pay attention to their work. Mapping the works of the most important per-



sonalities who had influence on dance writing in newspapers, magazines, and specialized magazines is the most important task at the beginning of the research. My work will be a starting point for further research and analyses. However, firstly, an overview of particular periods of development is fundamental; therefore, this work mostly will concentrate on historical analysis.

## CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IN ESTONIAN MEMORY INSTITUTIONS

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My PhD thesis focuses on the communication of Estonian memory institutions (MIs) with patrons and/or visitors and the meanings perceived (by different stakeholders, including the staff at MIs) in the context of MIs. Mapping the stakeholders at the University of Tartu Library and the Estonian National Museum is one of the first tasks. Who has stronger or weaker bonds with the MIs? Who are the stakeholders using MIs' digital environments, and are there any stakeholder groups that overlap on given museum and library stakeholders' maps? The issue of how different patron groups and the librarians themselves perceive meanings in and around the university library is also on the research agenda. The question, "what is the role of the library" is raised but in a new context. Because library science, like the social sciences increasingly deals with democracy and participatory practices, it would be interesting to know how these concepts work in a library. Of course, the library serves all members of the community and treats all information preserved in the library equally. However, what about participation? Although libraries are respected and valued members of society, it would be intriguing to study how modern civil society has found its way into the library. After considering different definitions of "participation" or "cultural participation" in the context of MIs, it appears that these notions are quite often mixed with notions of "availability" and/or "accessibility". Therefore, it is worth also studying the definitions of participation that are "circulating" in MIs. Our subject librarians offer a program on information literacy to the students of the University of Tartu. As one of the tutors of this program, I assist and give feedback to bachelor, master and doctoral students. However, does the information literacy "package" that we perceive as correct suit the needs

of our students? Although we collect feedback on the course from those who pass it, I also have been interested in how the students experience information literacy prior the course. How small or big might be the gap between different opinions on information literacy, and do they accept or contest the librarian notion of information literacy? Theories: information behaviour (Wilson, Kuhlthau, Savolainen etc), communication sciences and sociology (Blumer, Giddens, Habermas, van Dijk etc) and democratic theory (Pateman Arnstein). Methods: expert interviews, questionnaires (printed and online), grounded theory (for analyzing expert interviews), content analysis (for analyzing questionnaires).

## **PERFORMING STRATEGIC IDENTITIES AND CITIZENSHIP: KURDISH DIASPORA AND TRANSNATIONALITY ONLINE**

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This project examines the Kurdish diaspora in Europe and its use of computer mediated communication and how it contributes to the formation of a Kurdish identity. The aim of this work is to contribute to the ongoing discourse on diaspora, identity, and 'new' media by examining how diasporic communities use the Internet (CMC) to negotiate their identity and gain visibility and recognition in the public sphere. Previous researchers (van Bruinessen, 2000; Curtis, 2005) concluded that Kurdish identity has been reinforced by the second and third generation Kurds who are presently growing up in Europe. Simultaneously, other research on Internet technology (Eriksen, 2006; Miller and Slater, 2000; Franklin, 2004) found that the use of the Internet often strengthens national identity and that it can be particularly efficient in reproducing identities across distances and uniting scattered populations in virtual communities because it can exploit time and space completely. The Internet is rapidly becoming a major medium for consolidation and definition of collective identities, especially in the absence of a fixed territorial and institutional base. On that basis, the Kurdish diaspora has begun to play an increasingly important role in the internationalisation of the 'Kurdish Question' and in placing it on the European agenda. With the development of information and communication technologies (ICT), the process of constructing the Kurdish identity in a transnational context has changed character because roots and descent

are not only a personal question but also a political performance involving how we act and are allowed to act. Beside the internalisation of the Kurdish question on this macro level, Kurdish identity making has, on a micro level, implicit and explicit connections to matters of citizenship, minority policies and the politics of representation. The formation of identities both occurs in everyday life and relates to issues of citizenship and transnationalism. The Kurdish escape from what can be considered colonial rules to different European countries has not diminished the struggle of identity. As 'Mountain Turks' and 'Umayyad Arab', the Kurds are identified as either 'The people without a country', 'victims' or have been labelled with prefixes such as 'Swedish-Kurds' or 'German-Kurds'. The literature has introduced many 'overly-theorised' and vague abstractions about the diaspora. Furthermore, the existing academic literature is fluid in identifying not only the term diaspora itself but also the constitution of the diaspora. Not only is the Kurdish diaspora being subsumed under the heading 'Turkish speaking community', which negates their visibility in the public sphere but also they are geographically bounded in terms of living and activity patterns.

## MINORITY FILMS AS A RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORY AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

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Since the first days of cinema, the comprehensive relationship between history and cinema has made an important contribution to the making of films about historical events and facts. Turkish cinema is not an exception, especially if one considers the drastic increase in the number of popular TV series and films about the recent past. Examples can be given for TV series and films about five historical events: 1) 27th May 1960, 12th March 1971, and 12th September 1980 military coups; 2) the Capital Levy, which was implemented during World War II and directed against non-Muslim minorities as a result of Turkification policy; 3) the Istanbul Pogrom, also known as the Istanbul Riots, which was also directed against minorities on 6-7th September 1955; 4) population exchanges and expulsions, primarily between Turks and Greeks; and 5) compulsory deportation of Armenians from all parts of Anatolia during World War I. However, most of the popular films about minorities have been condemned for regenerat-

ing official historical theses through their modes of presentation and approaches to the facts. These films have usually been criticized for depicting those events as individual cases rather than systematic practices or policies of the state, thereby ascribing all the responsibility to individuals. In most cases, by conforming to nationalist discourse, the blame was attributed to non-Turkish factors, suggesting that what had been done to minorities was a way to secure “Turkishness” and was justified. In these circumstances, these films contributed to the presentation of history in a ‘timid’ format with a partial or distorted version of the reality; therefore, they mislead the new generation’s view of history learned by watching TV series or films. Thus, it is possible to maintain that these films function as a tool to purify state policies by marginalizing the historical facts. In my study, through a critical analysis of the relationship of history and cinema, I intend to focus on films about the historical experiences of minorities in Turkey. More specifically, I will investigate whether these films in any way depart from or assist the reconstruction of distorted collective memory through official theses; whether they assist to reconstruct the dominant status quo discourse in order to fortify nationalist policies; and whether they show parallelism with nationalist approaches. I will also determine whether an historical approach to these films conforms to Schudson’s (1995) definition of distortion of collective memory, including distinguishable processes of distortion in collective memory, that is, distancing, instrumentalization, narrativization, and conventionalization.

## TRANSCULTURAL PUBLIC ACTORS – A CASE STUDY OF POLISH-GERMAN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

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How can one conceive of transcultural public spheres? Scholars in the field of Europeanization or globalization seek approaches to answer this question, but they struggle with the phenomenon that communication flows are limited to nation states. Driven by this discussion, my dissertation project examines the eventual constitutive role of transcultural political actors (TPA) within transcultural public spheres, focusing on the case of political communication in Polish–German relations. The term TPA embraces celebrities from this area who are equally and regularly present

in the media framework of both countries. Guided by the principles of Grounded Theory, the dissertation aims at a thick description of the TPA phenomenon to both analyse the TPA role as elite celebrities constitutive of transcultural public spheres of the media and journalists and consider the TPA perspective. Based on a large-scale analysis of political media content (both Polish and German dailies, weeklies, and TV) a first relevant group of TPAs was identified by their transcultural (in both countries) and cross-cultural (in different media formats such as tabloids and TV) media presence. Another criterion is the acknowledgment of their role as celebrities. This 'approval' of TPA group members, and thus the indication of other relevant actors, emerges from guided interviews with transcultural public actors (14 in total) and journalists dealing with the area of Polish-German political communication (8 in total). A theoretical sample of relevant TPAs was thus created by reconfirming the media analysis results by talking to actors 'from inside'. Coding to date (work in progress) of this data set brought to light two central strongly related aspects of characteristics of the TPA roles with regard to the transcultural public sphere. On the one hand, TPAs and media actors underpin the significance of the transcultural interaction network in which they are engaged. From their viewpoints, TPAs gain credibility as political communication celebrities from this network, which allows them access to the media. On the other hand, in their media activities TPAs and journalists emphasise the significance of TPAs' nationalities and their ability to match verbally the discourse culture of the given country. The existence of a transcultural media network and the transcultural media presence of TPAs as celebrities in political communication thus seem not necessarily to constitute a common political communication, but to share and thus reassure nationally framed discourse cultures.

## **VISUALITY AND NEW MEDIA: THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE "SEEN" AND "SEER" AND THE STABILITY OF VISUAL CONTENT**

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As John Berger asserted, "seeing" has been a central form of cognition from the past to the present: "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak". The age in which we live is definitely

a visual age. In other words, media visibility in particular is an important part of our lives. Many media messages are not only supported by visibility but also constructed by it. Images and visibility determine the “reality” in today’s world. Can we understand, analyse and regularize this visual feast? Are we able to notice the reality and the partial representation of the reality in pictorial information? Cyberculture is rapidly absorbing all other forms of the media. Moreover, structured and processed images are used regularly in media contents. We can certainly recognize this visual bombardment by looking at both the historical change in the “seen” and the “seer” and the stability of the media contents for construing the images. “Seen” is now perceived to be more “real” with developments in image-based new media. On the other hand, according to some scholars like Giovanni Sartori (1998), from now on the human eye is not the subject of the seeing. It now is the object of seeing activity as a “seen eye” instead of “seeing eye”. The seer is humbled in front of the visual image at which he is looking. On the other hand, many viewers still have difficulty reading pictorial information and derive from it only hegemonic meaning. In other words, the visual contents of the media reproduce over and over again the systems’ codes in stereotypical representations. The transformation of “seen” and “seer” serves to reproduce the stereotypes by imagery content. Although the case study and samples of this research have not been clarified yet, this project aims to study visibility and identity in terms of the visibility of gender.

## EUROPE IN POPULAR CULTURE: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL IMAGINARY IN FICTIONAL MOVIES

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The political and cultural identity of EUropeans is predominantly confined to several national borders. Despite obviously recurrent aphorisms – for instance “the cultural roots of Europe”, which portray a common heritage of values – until now the transboundary EUropean identity could not complement the national sense of belonging. Significant for this phenomenon is that EUrope, as a political construct, has not experienced it directly but rather via the audio-visual media. This fact not only reconceives the cultural concept of identity, which above all encompasses a

transboundary and media-constructed idea, but also leads to the question of how the process of creating a European identity can be carried out successfully. According to this, European integration is not only a political and economic process, but also and first an emotional one. As Jacques Delors – former president of the European Commission – pointed out emphatically: “You don’t fall in love with an internal market.” The sense of belonging progresses beyond treaties, laws and regulations. Particularly, audio-visual media represent different cultural patterns that can provide interpretations not only for the presented fictional world, but also for the represented dimensions of real life. The emotional staging as well as the symbolic subtext makes fictional European movies an important source of cultural and political meaning. Consequently, a few core questions for the research project are the following. (1) What role do the media play in the European public sphere? (2) What is the main forum for a transboundary European political culture? (3) If European fictional movies offer different patterns of interpretation, values and meaning constructions, what are the significant symbols and narrative structures for determining them? The theoretical introduction, which is conducted through a European perspective, attempts to connect basic theories of political culture (e.g., Almond/Verba; Easton; Widlavsky; Rohe) with those of cultural/media studies (e.g., Williams; Gramsci; Carey; Hall; Kellner) as well as the relatively new theory of cultural citizenship (e.g., Rosaldo; Delgado-Moreira; Klaus/Lünenborg). Based on these theoretical findings, the project develops an analysis template and method for European fictional movies. The focus of the empirical section is on the classical analysis of film, semiotics, and narrative structure (e.g., Saussure; Pierce; Bordwell), which together will facilitate a demonstration of the elements of political culture in audio-visual media. The main objective is to disclose how fictional European movies (although they may not have an explicit political topic) are capable of affecting Europe’s political culture.



## TRUST IN SOCIAL NETWORK SERVICES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF LINKEDIN AND FACEBOOK

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The overall aim of this research project is to study Social Network Services (SNSs) and to further research on why and how different groups of people employ them, with special attention to users' experiences and the issue of trust in sharing digital information. As part of this research, the project focuses on users' evaluation of risk, trustworthiness, and privacy. The project also researches the process of adoption of SNSs. One of the major challenges when studying SNSs is that they often address different groups of people and support various kinds of social ties - the whys, whats, and hows of usage may differ according to the SNSs and their users that are studied. Moreover, the issue of trust is relevant to this research, as different SNSs may support various aspects of people's social practices. There is still much uncovered territory, and with the continuous growth and usage of SNSs, further research is needed for a more thorough understanding of these services. The research project is based on empirical studies of two SNSs that attract users world-wide but that also address different audiences and have different intentions related to use: LinkedIn.com and Facebook.com. LinkedIn is a SNS that primarily addresses adults in a professional capacity while Facebook generally addresses both youth and adults in a private capacity. Both SNSs attract a variety of members and might be employed differently according to user preferences. They also have interesting qualities and challenges related to trust issues, and in many cases trust may serve as a premise for the success of both services. Research on both LinkedIn and Facebook will provide valuable insights into how different groups of people may employ various SNSs; how different users' experiences and issues of trust are regarded in both private and professional settings; to what extent notions of privacy might be changing; and how users evaluate risk and trustworthiness when they share digital information. In order to study how different groups of people may experience and employ SNSs, how information and privacy is managed, and how users evaluate risk and trustworthiness, it is necessary to gain access to users of the SNSs. As such, the research project is primarily based on in-depth interviews with users (informants) of one of the two SNSs. The number of in-depth interviews in the project is estimated to be approximately 15 users of each SNS, depending on the point of saturation.



## THE LOGIC OF PUBLICIZING THE IMMIGRATION SUBJECT

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France has passed through successive waves of immigration. Consequently, the immigration issue has always been treated by the media with an appeal to the country's deep roots in immigration. Since the mid 1970s, the immigration situation has increased as a topic in political debates, law offices, and media outlets. Since 2007, when Nicolas Sarkozy created the first Federal Immigration Department for France, this theme has become even more relevant. However, the creation of the new department was not a surprise for the French community. In 2006, during his presidential election campaign, Nicolas Sarkozy presented the immigration issue as his main focus. At that time, he also suggested the creation of the department and the elaboration of an international treaty on immigration. However, as evidenced by the countless political debates broadcasted in the media, his ideas created polemical discussions. The relative importance of immigration in the public sphere is strongly connected with the public institutions and the media. This importance has grown not only because of media motivation but also because of the strategies of several agents such as public power and social groups. The rise of the immigration topic in the public sphere is the result of different aspects of the logic of the subject's construction: the logic of the media sphere, the government and local power, and the logic of the non profit organization and social agents. Our objective is to analyze the relation among political communication, social movements, and journalistic practices. We assert that there is a widespread use of communication and information strategies by these actors. Our main research question is: what are the roles of different agents in highlighting the immigration issue in the public sphere? What is their logic?

## THE INTELLECTUAL AND DIPLOMATIC ROLE OF UNESCO IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION POLITICS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DIGITAL AGE

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The thesis analyses the intellectual and diplomatic role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in international communication politics during the last decade of the 20th century. It thereby focuses on the phase in which digital information and communication technologies became real mass media as a consequence of the Internet's breakthrough in the 1990s. In this phase, UNESCO, like other actors involved in communication politics, had to redefine its role in the new global governance structures and at the same time develop new discourses and concepts of ICTs. For a better understanding of UNESCO's position as it relates to the research focus, the thesis is introduced by a historical review of the fundamental strategies of UNESCO in the field of communication since its inception. The historical background and the particular diplomatic context of the time provide a framework for discussion of the organization's debates concerning the question of access to information in societies that are increasingly driven by digital technology. The aim of the project is to develop a precise understanding of UNESCO's intellectual and diplomatic reaction to the arrival of the digital technology. To achieve this aim, the project will assess the organization's internal and external debates and strategies concerning the possibilities and risks these new media incur. Based on the methods of discourse analysis, the main part of the research consists of an evaluation of selected documents related to UNESCO's activities in the field of communication during the 1990s. Taking into account the particular interdisciplinary approach of the project, the discourse analysis combines with other methods of qualitative research, in particular techniques of expert interviewing. The empirical research will be guided and complemented by a double theoretical framework. The theoretical and socio-historical reflections on the phenomenon of the information society will be used as backdrop for the discussion of the documents and interviews. In addition, the empirical analysis will be embedded in the debate on the changing structures of governance in international communication politics and the new role given to intergovernmental organizations within that system. Grounded in an appraisal of the different 'Information Society' theories and the discourses about 'Global

Governance' in the field of communication, the theoretical aim of the project is to assess UNESCO's role not only as an actor in communication politics but also as an instigator of an alternative 'Information Society' concept that stresses social, educational and cultural dimensions.

## **MODELS OF MEDIA ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD: HOW CAMBODIA OFFERS AN EXAMPLE AND A WARNING**

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The 2008 national elections in Cambodia offered a fourth chance to assess the progress of the international community's rebuilding project that has been engaged in the country since the disastrous Khmer Rouge regime and subsequent Vietnamese occupation (1979-91). Chief among the failures, as outlined by numerous international observers, including teams from the US and the EU, was that the media had failed to keep the electorate fully informed in a balanced and fair manner in the pre-election period. This study will explore three crucial elements of how and why this failure could happen in a country in which the most modern thinking on media development theory has been in full effect for the past 20 years. In 1991, the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) included 'Ensuring Free Access to the Media....for All Political Parties Contesting In the Election (section D "Elections", paragraph 3[F]). To supplement these constitutional efforts, many international and western aid organisations have been involved in media development projects in the country. Cambodia was the only communist country in East and South East Asia to change its form of government at the end of the Cold War (Clarke, 2005). The media development measures introduced mirror those used in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, with the emphasis on western-style concepts of journalism and media freedom. For almost 20 years, among other initiatives, this model has sought to effect change through short term training programmes for existing journalists. This research is intended to explore why and to what extent this approach, in the case of Cambodia, appears to have failed. My research will examine the specific measures applied in Cambodia and the extent to which they have had an impact. It will examine the validity of the western model of journalism theory and journalism practice used and the possibility of building

a more inclusive concept that is both valid for journalism and adaptable to countries where cultural and material differences from Western norms are very great. My study will include a comprehensive and critical review of the literature relating to the media in Cambodia, in transitional and emerging democracies, and to 'development' models of journalism in the developing world. It will be followed by an assessment of the media guidelines established by UNTAC and by a detailed account of current media provision in Cambodia and their effectiveness. Fieldwork will include on-the-ground interviews, surveys of a representative sample of journalists and NGOs in Cambodia, and their assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the current media climate.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA: THREE GENERATIONS OF SHARING, CREATIVITY AND COLLABORATION**

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The web has become a place where the development and use of dynamic technologies and social software has created new communication channels. This development has given rise to web communities in which a culture of digital collaboration and sharing has proliferated along with reports of innovative uses within participatory media. Often underrepresented in these celebratory reports is how ordinary users engage and interact with these web technologies. As the web reaches maturity, empirical research is needed to understand what these uses mean in the lives of real people. In this research, I propose to investigate how three different generations of users exploit or engage with social media and examine how they share, create, and collaborate online. This study will expand knowledge of online participation to the research community by gathering empirical data to show how ordinary web users of different ages use the web. The aim is also to provide an understanding of how wide or narrow the digital divide separating three generations of existing web users is. My research will collect qualitative data to examine the technological utilisation and generational similarities and differences of three generations of participants using social media. Through this research I hope to discover what relationships exist among the age groups of users, how they use technology, and whether this fosters or obstructs online creativity, collaboration, and communication.

## PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DATA AS A SOURCE OF POWER IN THE DIGITAL CAPITALISM

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A great deal of interpersonal and public communication now takes place in digitalized environments. As technological capabilities develop, market logic expands into these environments. The general object of contemporary digitization, in the shift from analog to digital forms of communication, as Dan Schiller notes, 'is to increase the economic efficiency of networks by allowing them to be shared more thoroughly and effectively among many users' (Schiller, 2000: xv). Reasons for projecting oneself into a network and sharing personal and professional multimedia data through digital networks may vary from interpersonal communication to political representation. As Alison Hearn notes, 'the reflexive project of the "self", identified by Anthony Giddens as a hallmark of modernity, can now be understood as constituting a distinct form of labour' (Hearn, 2008:198). As she further explains, the goal is to 'produce cultural value and, potentially, material profit.' Commercial networking sites such as Facebook are constituted to map the language used to associate people with other people according to their personal preferences and behavioural patterns. In professional networks, politicians use networks and their own websites to communicate about themselves and governmental institutions use websites to inform the public about decision making. The technology of data mining enables the automatic classification, cluster, and finding of associations between the clusters in large amounts of clean data from which to extract information. These data models can be applied later for targeting market audiences (e.g., Amazon Books suggests that you buy a batch of books with the book you just chose), solving medical problems (e.g., the @neurist project aims at treating aneurisms), and other technologies such as cloud computing that can help to enhance the quality of reporting (e.g., the Document Cloud initiative, which collects governmental documents for computational journalism). Much government data in Lithuania such as voting results, parliamentary biographies, histories of party membership, and party funding is publicly available. However, the vast amounts of data complicate its personal use by the voter. There are several local initiatives working in the field in Lithuania such as the non-governmental initiative Atviras seimas (Open parliament). In addition, government information mechanisms such as Skatinimo planas (Encouragement plan) aimed at informing the public about matters such as financing business

enterprises and law making. In my work, I would like to analyze existing mechanisms of data collection and data mining in social networks and marketing campaigns, in addition to available legal information on governmental decisions and existing local government monitoring projects. I would also like to conduct a social network analysis on networks of people, identifying their expectations and voting outcomes. Based on that research, I would like to address the possibilities of creating publicly beneficial, clear, and personalized government transparency mechanisms in Lithuania.

## THE PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATIONS OF MARI EL JOURNALISTS

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Mari El is an independent republic within the Russian Federation. Its inhabitants belong to the Finno-Ugric group, which includes, for example, Estonians, Hungarians and Finns. In the Republic of Mari El, journalistic professionalism is directly linked to important cultural issues: maintaining and developing the Mari language and upholding cultural values and national identity. Within the last 10-15 years, a new generation of Mari journalists has been emerging, who are more highly educated and more professionally qualified, and who are better prepared for working in a competitive environment. The aim of my PhD project is to define the changes and new developments in the professional orientations of Mari journalists with regard to their role perceptions, their understanding of ethical standards, and their professional value judgements. Research questions for this study include: 1) How do Mari journalists see their role in society and journalism?; 2) How do journalists interpret their professional values and standards?; and 3) What changes have occurred between 2001-2009, and why have these changes occurred? The study is based on two surveys, conducted in Mari El in 2001 and 2009. It compares the results of these two surveys and also draws parallels with Estonia (where similar surveys have been conducted in 1995 and 2009). To determine how journalists adhere to professional values and standards, I will conduct the content-analysis. A comparison of the two surveys shows that some interesting changes can be detected since 2001. For example, in 2001 the majority of Mari journalists defined their role as to «protect and express the

interests of the people"; by 2009 Mari journalists see their task as informing people in order to help them cope with everyday life situations. By the end of 2009, the typical Mari journalist is a married man, with a university education in journalism, who works for the government mass-media.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN VENEZUELA

Virpi Salojärvi

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This study will focus on freedom of expression in Venezuela under President Chavez's rule. In my previous study I discovered that both the opposition and the government say they are fighting for freedom of expression in the country; however, their means to achieve this goal are very different. After 2002, Chavez tightened his control over the media, which has been largely owned by the country's opposition. Chavez believes he is just implementing his media's democratization plan, which includes, among other things, nationalizing some private media, setting new media laws, and strengthening community media. However, according to the opposition Chavez is just trying to control critical media outlets. Local NGOs, and some researcher, say this has caused a climate of self-censorship. Another interesting aspect of Chavez's media policy is the use of his TV show *Alo Presidente* and cadenas, which are important announcements about state issues, broadcast, simultaneously, on every channel. However, Chavez is airing these announcement whenever he wants, even during prime time. Furthermore, they can last for hours and can be about anything he considers important. Based on this situation in Venezuela, I will study the concept of freedom of expression. My main research question is: How is freedom of expression is defined in Venezuela? Freedom of expression is not an unchanging concept, but how it manifests changes over time and in different societies. Freedom of expression is a central part of democratic societies, but it also needs constant challenging and open discussion about how best to practice it. Therefore, I will first study democratic theories and the basis of a democratic state. From there I will move to studying human rights, especially freedom of expression. Freedom of expression includes journalists' rights to do their job but it also includes citizens' rights to receive and access information. My research materials will include newspaper articles of the opposition media and bulletins from the Venezuelan Ministry of Information and Communication. I will analyse the data both



quantitatively and qualitatively. First I will provide a broad overview of the data using content analyses. Next, I will apply a framework analysis. I am already familiar with this approach and it is very suitable for analysing large amounts of data. However, for my thesis I would like to deepen my knowledge of framework analysis, so I can best exploit its possibilities. I will also interview some NGO representatives and some journalists. For this data I will use argument analysis.

## **ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATIONS IN MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES BY MEANS OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA USING THE BLOG AS AN EXAMPLE**

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More and more, multinational enterprises are emerging in the course of globalization. Mergers, acquisitions and other business combinations result in heterogeneous corporate conglomerates whose integration proves to be increasingly difficult. In addition to the diversity of national cultural attributes, which extend well beyond language aspects, a wide variety of corporate cultures exist that do not necessarily have a direct relationship to regional diversity. Using the communication medium blog as an example, this PhD project aims to pinpoint the difficulties resulting from cultural diversity and examine the influence that the blog medium can have upon the integration process. The inventory of all the blogs offered by a Franco-American telecommunication company will serve as a corpus for the project. As a medium, the blog offers a comprehensive basis for a scientific analysis due to its written form, its interactivity, and the availability of large numbers of contributions accrued over longer periods of time. The subject will initially be located within the scope of communication sciences and, in particular, in the realm of interpersonal communication. Furthermore, this study intends to describe how the blog, as a medium, can be scientifically classified and defined within the range of technically mediated interpersonal communication as well as within the scope of computer-mediated interpersonal communication. In addition to the interpersonal communication aspect, the blog, as a medium, will also be discussed in relation to the field of communication with regard to multinational organizations and against the background of electronic enterprise communication. Language is a key element of any communi-



cation medium. In the form of written language, the blog, as a medium, will also be discussed from a linguistic perspective within the context of semiotics. Due to the fact that the corpus of communication acts, to be analysed by this study, were rendered in the corporate language English, this study will be conducted using “English as Lingua Franca” research (ELF). In its methodology the Ph.D. project will be based on two main approaches. On the one hand, quantitative aspects will be analysed, such as the number of blog participants, frequency of blog use, and the interaction of participants among themselves, employing the standard methods of empirical social research. On the other hand, the quality of blog contributions in their semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic dimension will be considered. One of the project’s goals is to demonstrate the influence of internal electronic enterprise communication media in cross-hierarchical multinational intercultural communication.

## MODELS IN COMPUTATIONAL JOURNALISM

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Some journalists write articles, others write computer software. The software can be used, internally, in newsrooms, or as a journalistic product. Computational journalism is an emerging field overlapping both information science and journalism studies. A rough definition, given by Nickolas Diakopoulos, states that computational journalism is, “[t]he application of computational algorithms to the goals of journalism: to collect, contextualize, and make sense of news information”. Newspaper editorial offices continuously utilize computational power for storytelling, while the scope and matter substance is poorly outlined and described in academia. In my Ph.D. thesis, I aim to narrow this gap by exploring possibilities and describing practices. In the 1950s, the term ‘database journalism’ became a new addition to the journalistic lexicon and workflow. Use of search engines and queries against various databases were new ways of supporting the journalistic process, often labeled with the acronym CAR (computer-assisted reporting). Use of word processors and spreadsheets are included in this evolution. All the activities described by CAR are now second nature to every journalist and every information worker. The computer came to stay in the newsroom, but the digital workflow still most often mimics the old ways, without playing to all the strengths of

the universal machine. The skills of programming journalists are among the strengths that are not fully being utilised. The mix between programming and journalism raises questions on a variety of issues. Some of the issues this study will explore include: How can programming and web development be further utilised as an editorial tool for the news industry? What technical and editorial challenges occur with extended usage of automated work processes in the newsroom? Can specialised software from other areas be imported for use in journalism? What, if any, modifications are needed to for these tools to fit into the journalistic domain? Do universal models exist for journalistic web content containing software code as a part of the news story? The methodical framework used in this study is design science. Theory from both information science and journalism studies will be explored and evaluated through development, user testing (lab testing/focus groups), and interviews.

## **TRANSCULTURALITY IN TOP MODEL: AN ANALYSIS OF A GLOBAL TELEVISION FORMAT AND ITS AUDIENCES IN DIFFERENT CULTURAL CONTEXTS**

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This dissertation project investigates the transculturality of global television formats by conducting an analysis of Top Model, and its audiences, in different cultural contexts. Top Model is a global television format that, since 2003, has been successfully produced in more than 17 different country versions. The overarching research question is Why the Top Model format is, despite cultural differences, successful in so many countries throughout the world? The hypothesis is that the Top Model format possesses a specific transculturality, which allows audiences from several cultural contexts to relate to it. In particular, the format is part of a global neo-liberal narrative, which is articulated through the invocation and reproduction of the enterprising self in the television shows. However, this does not mean that the format has a standardised meaning and that audiences relate to it in exactly the same way. Rather, there exists a multitude of negotiations, contradictions, and audience oppositions that can be described as culturally specific. This dissertation project is based on different theoretical approaches. First, the concept of transculturality is used as a research perspective from which the data from different countries is com-

pared. Transculturality is understood as a research perspective that examines the similarities across, or beyond, cultures without neglecting local differences. Secondly, the enterprising self is conceptualised within the approach of Governmentality Studies, based on the ideas of Michel Foucault. In the center of this analysis lies the relation between processes of neo-liberal subjectivation and forms of domination and authority. Methodologically, a multi-method research design is used. First, a television analysis of the original format of *America's Next Top Model*, and versions in other countries, is conducted to determine what topics and narratives are present in the format that can be related to, transculturally. Secondly, qualitative audience research, in the form of focus groups, is conducted in different countries to determine how audiences from different cultural contexts negotiate and appropriate the format. The aim of the project is to identify the processes of transculturality, within the format, and to show how global narratives and topics are negotiated and appropriated by local audiences.

## **POPULAR MUSIC AND URBAN LANDSCAPE. LIVE MUSIC AND MUSIC POLICIES IN MILAN.**

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This project will start by analysing the literature regarding popular music studies, with a special focus on the Italian context where a strong academic tradition of popular music studies does not, yet, exist as it does in other countries (Fabbri, 2005). Many studies in Italy have focused on the textual and historical point of view, beyond the influences of cultural and social forces. Instead, this analysis is interested, from a sociological point of view, on those studies related to the notion of popular music as an experience of placing (Frith ed., 2004, p.37) and to music embedness in place, as well as in the power of music as a tool for the cultural and creative development of cities. The research will outline the value of popular music for the cultural, creative regeneration of Milan, analysing the city's music scene, its relevance for the cultural growth and image of the city, and the role played by music policies, looking at bottom-up and top-down music initiatives. In particular, the music policies are meant as "a direct or indirect intervention into, and support for, music practice by local, national and local-national or international governing bodies based on conceptions

of music's social, cultural or economic significance" (Cohen, 2007, p. 126). The creation of a lively music scene depends upon the awareness of its cultural and economic relevance by these policies, which can influence it through regulations and financial supports. However, in many cases, this support of music can be in conflict with other interests and needs, between which policy-makers have to balance (Homan, 2003). In this perspective, qualitative methodology will be used with in-depth interviews with experts (with musicians, live music venues managers, festival organizers, cultural policy makers) in order to detect the dynamics and interactions between musical and institutional dimensions. Furthermore, by mapping the live music venues and by conducting participant-observation of venues and events, this project will attempt to understand the role live music plays in the cultural growth and image of the city as a 'music city'. This approach is being used in the first pilot project analysed, the initiative LiveMi, where the focus is on the people involved in its organisation (both councillors and musicians), and to the live music performances of emerging bands.

## A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF JOURNALISM ETHICS IN TURKEY (1990-2008)

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Journalism ethics emerged as a major issue in Turkey following the introduction of the liberalisation of broadcasting, which as a process also overlapped with the structural transformation of the press in the early 1990s. This research study specifically looks into the critiques of liberal perspectives in media ethics. Throughout my research, I analyse the ways in which the commercial press, and its professional codes and practices, constructed an ideology of professionalism in Turkey. In order to accomplish this, I specifically problematise liberal theories of press, as well as the concepts of self-regulation, professionalism, social responsibility and the ethical notion of journalism in relation to specific cases chosen from Turkey, this study aims to answer three main questions within three main cases: (1) How does the mainstream Turkish press legitimised giving promotions as a core activity of journalistic field? ; (2) How does the biggest media group of Turkey, DMG (Dogan Media Group) employ its ethical codes as a commercial strategy?; and (3) How was the notion of press free-

dom politicized within the conflict between the Prime Minister (Erdogan) and the leading media owner (Dogan). Apart from these controversial cases, I also analyse self-regulatory mechanisms, such as the representation of the audience/reader, ombudsmen and the “ethical view” of relevant parties (professional organisations, press unions, and the Press Council).

## **IMAGINING THE SOCIAL CHANGE: THE DIS-COURSE ABOUT NEW MEDIA IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AFTER 1989**

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The aim of this Ph.D. project is to investigate how the new media, and its social role, was discussed in the Czech Republic after 1989. In the enthusiastic atmosphere brought about by a new political orientation in the Czech Republic after the revolutionary events of 1989, new media were considered to be one of the tools that would assist with overcoming the past and help with constituting the new democratic social system. Much hope was placed upon this new technology, which was expected to facilitate radical social change. This study will apply the social constructivist approach to the emergence of new technology that proceeds from the assumption that technological change is driven by social processes rather than any technological logic. However, instead of focusing exclusively on the shaping of the design and technical content of technology (Bijker, 1987; Wajcman & MacKenzie, 1999), I would like to research the image of technology, regardless of the extent to which it actually corresponded with reality. I believe that the value of social predictions lies, primarily, in what the media tell us about repetitive moments and imaginative reactions of society to technology, which has to devise ways of coping with its own inventions. In doing so, I will revise and use the concept of technological imagination (Flichy, 2007) to draw attention to the way that dissatisfactions with social reality and desires for a better society are projected onto technologies. I would like to show the period of emerging new technology as a mix of tradition and innovation in which imagination plays a great role. After recognising the different imaginations of certain Czech media discourses, which played a role in shaping the portrayal of new media, I would like to examine new media from the perspective of myths, utopias, and ideologies. Methodologically, the project will use the Foucauldian method

of analysing the new technology discourse (Foucault [1969], 2002), using Czech specialised publications, journals, catalogues, etc. By investigating the discourse, within the specific historical situation of the Czech Republic after 1989, I would like to outline the deeply ingrained ways in which we think, talk, and write about new technologies.

## THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN THE CULTURAL PUBLIC SPHERE: AN ANALYSIS OF MUSIC'S IMPACT ON THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL OPINION

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Given the widespread presence of music, the emotional impact it can have upon the listener, and its interconnection with social and political identity, there is reason to believe that music plays a formative role in the process of political opinion-formation in the public sphere. The relation between music and democratic processes is, however, a field which calls upon further research – on both the empirical and the theoretical level. By combining different qualitative research methods in the study of practise within the musical genres of dance band, hip hop and contemporary classical music, I aim to contribute to the elucidation of the role music plays in the formation of political opinion in the public sphere. The goal of my PhD project is to analyse which role music plays in the process of opinion-formation and deliberation in the Norwegian public sphere. In order to investigate this, I pose the following four research-questions: (1) How are political identity and sentiment expressed through mediated texts within musical genre? (2) How are political identity and sentiments articulated through the musical-aesthetical practice of specific musical genres? (3) Which political identity and sentiments characterise the audience within different musical genres? (4) What impact do the political identity and sentiments that are being articulated on the level of musical genre have upon the processes of opinion-formation and deliberation in the public sphere? On the empirical level, I aim to gain insight to how political identity and sentiments manifests itself in the practice of the selected musical genres. On the theoretical level, I will discuss Jürgen Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy in relation to expressive culture.

## CHANGING NEWS FORMATS IN ONLINE NEWSPAPERS AND PRINT MEDIA

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The emergence of the Internet's virtual communication space has challenged traditional journalism and journalistic work processes. By making online newspapers possible, the Internet has changed newspaper readers' information consumption habits and behaviour and, as a consequence, has brought about dramatic declines in newspaper circulation in many technologically developed countries. The biggest impact of the Internet on journalism is the appearance of 'online journalism'. Specific features, such as multimediality, hypertextuality and interactivity make online journalism functionally different from print journalism. Furthermore, online journalism has influenced the ways print media present news. My study focuses on the different methods of news presentation in the print media and in online newspapers by comparing the print and online versions of the news in the Finnish newspapers *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Aamulehti*, *Iltalehti* and *Ilta-Sanomat*, the *International Herald Tribune* from United States and *The Guardian* from Great Britain. I scrutinise two key dimensions: news values and the structure of the news stories. This study combines qualitative and quantitative content analysis. The main method is qualitative content analysis, which enables the analysing of journalistic news content, news values and storytelling and illustrates trends, including the weak signals regarding the possible future of online news journalism and print journalism. Using quantitative analysis, it is possible to describe typical features of contemporary online news stories, like length, pictures and number of technical journalistic elements. The aim of the study is to make a model for content and form of new-type journalism and intermediality between the print and online versions of newspapers. My hypothesis is that online journalism makes greater use of the 'inverted pyramid' structure in combination with hyperlinks and the news topics are in general 'softer' but stories are more dramatised than the news in the print media. Print newspapers try to survive by offering more detailed stories, using various dramaturgical ways of telling stories, trying to foresee subsequent news events and contextualizing the news. This study also explores the distinction between Finnish online and newspaper journalism compared to their counterparts in the United States and Great Britain.



## THE ROLE OF THE INTERNET IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: CASE STUDY OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS, 2009

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This research focuses on the role of the Internet in the electoral campaign for the EP elections of 2009. It includes the following topics: the use of the Internet for marketing purposes; the communication between citizens and political actors; the interdependency of the Internet and other mass media; and advertising modes used through Internet. The theoretical framework is based on the connection of 5 nodal points: democracy, citizenship, public sphere, ICTs and political communication. The concept of citizenship has been changing over time, especially in the context of transnational 'state' or globalised media. Cammaerts and Van Audenhove (2005) suggest questioning the link between a nation state and citizenship and give a new perspective of citizenship as a notion that goes beyond the nation state. Pateman refers to it as a 'more flexible form of citizenship' (Pateman, 1998, p. 56). In the context of globalisation and new ICTs, Castells (1997, 2008) redefined the notion of a public sphere, which is now constructed around global communication networks. Foot (2005) proposes the new concept of 'electoral websphere' that gives more opportunities to run a political campaign than a classic one. Lusoli points out a reconnection of citizens by this new media and the re-establishment of a 'voter-candidate link' (Lusoli, 2005). Under the influence of Web 2.0, many politicians have created their blogs and social network sites' profiles. This PhD project is based on the case study of the European parliament elections in 2009 and has 2 parts: 1. The analysis of the European Parliament online political campaign for widening participation on its official website, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube 2. The analysis of Facebook and YouTube material and blogs, posted by parties/candidates taken into consideration (four countries, three political groups from the EP and one pan-European party). The methods of qualitative and quantitative content analysis have been used, incorporated in Critical Discourse Analysis and Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis. Included are the analyses and critical valorisation of texts and audio-visual material published online, concerning political marketing, electoral documents and marketing products of electoral competitors in Europe. For a broader perspective, the comparative method is used, in order to compare campaigns of different political actors and different countries inside the EU.



## TELEVISION PRODUCTION CROSSING MEDIA BOUNDARIES: THE CASE OF TELEVISIÓ DE CATALUNYA, THE PUBLIC TELEVISION BROADCASTER OF CATALONIA

María Isabel Villa

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Television broadcasters are modifying and redefining their formats and their relationship with viewers and other media. The notion of television along with the concept of programming, distribution and flow, as well as audiovisual consumption itself has substantially been transformed (Uricchio, 1999; Zaragoza, 2002). During the last three decades, among the most evident examples of innovation have been the rise of channels, the emergence of digital reception systems and interactive services. Nowadays, consumption is no longer merely attached to the television set. Rather, it has reached computers, mobile phones and other kinds of handheld devices. This thesis seeks to discern possibilities of developing cross-media production practices and identify the features and technological tools mediating the work process. Specifically, it acknowledges the fact that the development of cross-media products constitutes a challenge for media companies in terms of organisation patterns; thus, this research project endeavours to pinpoint the main transformations resulting from the emergence of new media. This research presents the findings of an empirical study on Televisió de Catalunya (TVC). This public broadcaster was selected because it has been a pioneer in technological development in both Spain and Europe. TVC was the first company in Spain to launch interactive applications for Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT). It was also the first in the country to broadcast programmes on the Internet, develop an online video broadcasting service, offer television services for mobile phones and transmit in High Definition Television (HDTV). The research formulates three main questions: What kind of products does TVC offer via multiple media (DTT, Internet and mobile phones)? How does the cross-media environment affect the organisational culture? And what kind of strategies have the programmes implemented in order profit from the potential of new platforms? Endeavouring to answer the above questions, I have followed a linear development through four main stages. First, I defined general patterns in the existing cross-media television research in order to find the most suitable theoretical framework and methodology, which helped me deploy a first draft of the project. Second, I interviewed professionals from TVC to ensure the possibility of carrying

out my research by adopting the participant-observer role in the channel. Third, I conducted a study of the cross-media offer, taking a sample of the TVC programming on DTT, Internet and mobile phones. Finally, I performed participant observation and semi-structured interviews at TVC and reviewed internal documentation, adopting a methodology associated with ethnographic studies.

## **PRACTICES OF ONLINE JOURNALISTS: TRANSFORMATIONS OF NEWSWORK IN PRINT MEDIA**

Igor Vobič

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In order to contribute to the broader debate on the reorientation of power and knowledge production in late modern society, this dissertation follows paradigmatic shifts in media on journalism research by theoretically and empirically investigating recent changes in the structures of work and the creation of journalistic content. This is accomplished by focusing on the practices of online journalists to identify the manner of structural impact on journalists in evermore heterogeneous, uncertain, flexible, and individualised labour settings and to reflect on contemporary functions of journalism and its political relevance. To explore the specific patterns in which work is transforming in traditional media, the main goal of this dissertation is to deliver theoretical (re)conceptualisations of interlinked notions of work, technology and identity in contemporary journalism. This results in narrower research goals by providing insights into specific social, cultural and technological arrangements of a work environment, investigating the practices of online journalists within them and analyzing online journalists' perceptions of the work they do and of their function in society. In order to do this, I plan to analyze the political-economic, social and cultural organisation of journalistic work, borrowing Michael Schudson's manifold perspective to journalism research. To focus on the dimensions of the specific cases, to compare them, and to contextualise the findings, I plan to use two ethnographic methods: participant observation for a month in each of the selected Slovenian print media organisations and in-depth interviews with the print and online journalists, editors and other journalistic workers from different work environments. In the dissertation, I narrow the research to three case subjects to study the print media, dynamics of work and journalistic practices within them. Delo, Dnevnik,

and *Žurnal Media* are regarded as three of the biggest print media organisations in terms of circulation and readership reach of their daily print newspapers, the number of unique visitors to their news websites, and the number of staff and size of journalistic production. In the last two years, all three organisations have started to integrate the work environments and to reconsider the role of online journalism in the production process. This makes them challenging research subjects in terms of contemporary transformations of journalistic production and their implications for journalistic practices on all platforms.

## MANAGING VIETNAMESE NEWSROOMS: THE ROLE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Hong Vu

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Vietnam is one of the very few communist regimes left in the world. With Vietnam accelerating the procedures to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 2004 and joining it in 2006, despite very strict political censorship, the news media, which are all state-owned, have experienced much more openness. Most newspapers and television/radio stations have become self-financed and market-oriented. The communist-party-run news organisations are still subsidised but the trend is that subsidies are being cut down sharply. Competition is becoming more and more severe. Changes in the business environment will lead to changes in management strategy. This research study seeks to answer the question: How are Vietnamese newspapers strategically coping with the changing environment? As most of the influential factors are economic, the study will focus more on the strategies to improve proficiency and productivity. It will also only focus on newsroom activities. Other activities, such as advertising or distribution, are excluded. However, where appropriate and necessary, the later will also be mentioned to provide a better context to understand the newsroom strategies. Media performance and productivity are influenced by different factors: organisational culture and creativity, management and leadership, etc. Communication is a vital factor, because it is the essence of any institution. Unfortunately, communication has not been given enough attention by both media managers and media researchers, as the researcher's literature review shows. This study will also try to narrow this gap by examining the role of internal communication in the realisa-

tion of newsroom strategies. The main part of the research will be done on two Vietnamese dailies: *Tuoi Tre* (The Youth) and *Tien Phong* (Vanguard). The first is the biggest and most influential newspaper in Vietnam while the second can be considered most representative or typical because of its middle size. The study will employ a combination of research methods: observation, interviews, document analysis, and a questionnaire survey.

## MEDIA AND TIME: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Evrin Yörük

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There are a number of different disciplines that delve into the concept of time, ranging from physics to philosophy and from economics to anthropology. Time is also a subject of interest in the field of media studies, although it still seems to be one of the most ambiguous concepts in media and communication theories. In order to point out some epistemological and methodological problems, this study aims at focusing on different uses of the concept of time in media studies. Considering that time is an under-researched if not overlooked issue in media research, this study tries to provide a theoretical framework to an emerging interest in the field. However, this study is not just an overview of the literature on the concept of time but it also has an important task of generating a new conception of time, namely a political view of time. The two inter-related objectives of this study are to develop a time-centred approach in the field of media and communication from an interdisciplinary perspective and, in doing, so contribute to the development of a new research in the field. In order to do so, a critical reading of theoretical positions and central themes will be provided in light of the following questions: i) How is time conceptualised in current research on media and communication? ii) How does time impact upon our understanding of media? iii) How can we re-conceptualise media studies through thinking about time in relation to our mediated world? This study is divided into three parts in which different approaches to time in media studies are analyzed. The first part focuses on medium-based communication studies; the second part concentrates on studies about media production cycle and time; the third and final part deals with the concept of 'leisure time' in media and communication research.





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WELL DESERVED  
COFFEE BREAK

PHOTO: MAXIMILLIAN HÄNSKA-AHY





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