

Collectivities in change: The mediatization and individualization of community building from a subjective and figurational perspective¹

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Abstract

There is an ongoing discussion in media and communication research about the extent to which mediatization involves shifts in collectivities and community building. However, if mediatization is taken to refer to the changing relationship between media and communication, and to the shifts of culture and society linked to the diffusion of technical means of communication, then we need to examine how we might conceive shifts in community building as part of this changing relationship; or, indeed, whether this involves quite different changes, for individualization in particular. In this chapter we will approach this problem by first considering the way in which the concept of ‘individualization’ at stake here relates to shifts in collectivities, relating this to conceptions of post-traditional communitizations and communities. We make at this point the distinction between communitization as the subjective process of being affectively involved in community building and community as the more stable figuration of those individuals who share with each other such feelings of ‘belonging’ and a ‘common we’. A conceptual distinction between ‘communitization’ and ‘community’ offers us a framework, through which we can then in the following develop a differentiated approach to questions of mediatization. In our conclusion we argue for the dissolution of simplistic contrasting conceptions of change in respect of the mediatization of collectivities.

Keywords: mediatization, individualization, media change, community, communitization, collectivities

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1 Introduction

Changes in media and communications bring with them changes in community building – this is something with which those studying media and communications have long been familiar. We are not here thinking only of historical works that, for example, highlight the way in which ideas of “nation” and “community” depend upon the formation of mass media (cf. Anderson, 1983). Nor is our focus only upon those major studies that link the emergence of a “global village” to the development of new media (McLuhan/Powers, 1992). We also find in small-scale studies a constant emphasis upon changes in the experience of community: firstly, through discussion of the way that a “networked individuality” associated with the internet transforms family and friendships (Rainie/Wellman, 2012, pp. 117-70); or, secondly, when the extent to which online platforms might reasonably be treated as communities is discussed (cf. Deterding, 2008; Eisewicht/Grenz, 2012).

Common to all of these approaches is the question of the extent to which mediatization involves shifts in collectivities (see Couldry/Hepp, 2013, 2016, pp. 168-189). If mediatization is taken to refer to the changing relationship between media and communication, and to the shifts of culture and society linked to the diffusion of technical means of communication (Hepp, 2013, pp. 29-35), then we need to examine how we might conceive shifts in community building as part of this changing relationship, or, indeed, whether this involves quite different changes, for individualization, in particular (Hitzler/Honer, 1994; Hitzler, 2006).

We will approach this problem by first considering the way in which the concept of “individualization” at stake here relates to shifts in collectivities, relating this to conceptions of post-traditional communitizations and communities. We make at this point the distinction between communitization as the subjective process of being affectively involved in community building and community as the more stable figuration of those individuals who share with each other such feelings of ‘belonging’ and a ‘common we’. Even if this anticipates some ideas that will be considered in their relation to mediatization, some general remarks are necessary here in order to establish the sociological framework for a conceptual distinction between “communitization” and “community”, hence developing a differentiated approach to some questions of mediatization. In our conclusion we argue for the dissolution of simplistic contrasting conceptions of change with respect to the mediatization of collectivities.

We consequently seek to develop and clarify the conceptualization of communal change and its connection to mediatization. Although we refer to the work and arguments of others that have been crucial to our thinking, we consider the existing conceptual basis to be inadequate. Our own work on the

mediatization of subjective communitization (Hepp et al., 2014a, Hepp et al., 2014b), in connection with the DFG programme on “Mediatized Worlds” and on the experience of communitization in online poker (Hitzler/Möll, 2012), should contribute to the clarification of the phenomenon at issue here. Clarifying the related terminology, we go back to classics of this field of investigation, mainly Ferdinand Toennies and Max Weber. The reason for this is that their basic distinctions have been an implicit model of orientation up to now (cf. for example, Wittel, 2008). In respect to this we want to relocate such original arguments to the discussion about mediatization.

2 Individualization: The return of a yearning for the past and for a sense of community

Ulrich Beck’s conception of individualization (1992, 1995) lays emphasis not on a *framework for action*, but on a *form* of behaviour in the transition to a new modernity: men and women are set free from inherited identity-forming structures that secure the existence of classes and strata, kinship relations and nuclear families, neighbourhoods, political and religious groups, ethnic and national allegiances and so forth. It is hard to ignore the way in which, while traditional and *direct* distributional struggles lose force, all kinds of other more indirect and unregulated distributional struggles emerge around material goods, conceptions of the world, collective identities, ways of living and quality of life, social spaces, time and resources, principles and questions of detail. These do not any longer easily fit into established analytical frameworks regarding left and right, progressive and conservative, revolutionary and reactionary. There is a new fragmentation in which ever newer, localized and specific conflicts over meaning erupt; new, unstable interpretative coalitions successively form and reform, since the options open to one and all for individual, even idiosyncratic ways of shaping one’s life have increased, and continue to do so.

Expressed in the theoretical language of the conception of ‘reflexive modernization’ (Beck et al., 1994; Beck/Bonß, 2001; Beck/Lau, 2004), the emancipation of the individual from dependency and tutelage, a central project of modernity that is supposed to make possible the shared existence of free and equal men and women, has given rise to an increasing number of unforeseen consequences. In reaction, rather than seeking ever greater liberty, many *yearn* for that which this developmental process had originally sought to negate: for the security of a common existence that rests on trust and acceptance. The essential humanity of “warm” communality is increasingly contrasted with a “cold” and dissociated sociability (Gebhardt, 1999). The liberty of making one’s own choices corresponds with the real *need* to choose for oneself. People rendered “homeless” by this development yearn for a sense of belonging,

while at the same time rejecting the claims that such belonging might impose. As a consequence, the typical contemporary communal form desired today is one that offers the individual a maximal prospect of self-realization linked to the least possible degree of dependence and obligation. We call this new form of community “post-traditional” (Hitzler, 1998; Hitzler et al., 2008). However, we have to be careful here not to describe “post-traditional communities” in an un-critical manner: While being lifted-out of *traditions*, they nevertheless remain marked by conflicts, inequalities, exclusion and gender differences.

We consider the decisive difference between what could be called forms of community “suited to” individualization, on the one hand, and *established* collective forms on the other. This difference involves the fact that participation in the former does not involve those ties and obligations associated with traditional communities. One is *not* born or socialized into these new communities that suit individualization; instead, one seeks them out *oneself* on the basis of some interest, and so feels more or less “at home” in one of them, or in several; at least for a time. What has been labelled as a post-traditional form of community is based on a shared sense of belonging, the coincidence of inclinations, preferences, and passions, together with what is regarded as the “proper” behaviour of those involved. Consequently, the ties binding a community of this kind together are structurally *unstable* – if not in every case, at least as a general rule.

And so the post-traditional form of *comunitization* follows from the fact that the participating individual does not assume obligations, but can only be diverted by involvement of whatever kind (Hitzler, 1999). One principal element of such diversion appears to be the creation of a feeling of collectivity with other people that goes beyond the feeling of belonging; other people who expect one to be pleasant or acceptable (so as a rule like-minded or with a common background). Among these, the post-traditional person seeking a sense of community finds his or her own sense of “cosiness”, at least situationally.

From the analytical standpoint, our attention therefore increasingly shifts not only to new or newly-recognized forms of community and communitization, but to associated effects of diffusion and embedment of modes of behaviour in other medial representations. Their possible transformations likewise come to our attention as important aspects of a process of change. This raises the question of how the individual elements of a changing communal life can be linked to changes in media and communication.

Besides the empirical complexity arising in connection with the investigation of “change” and “inertia” in mediatization, and hence generally in the “continuity” and “discontinuity” of existing forms of community and communitization (see Hepp/Röser, 2014), we also find ourselves faced with a thoroughly opaque conceptual field; for with “community” and “communitization” we are dealing with distinct, and in some cases barely compatible, phenom-

ena. This is not an issue confined to changes in media and communication. This makes it difficult to pinpoint changes in these concepts as registered in a number of empirical studies. Writers as different as Sherry Turkle and Hubert Knoblauch have pointed to this same problem. The former, for instance, is extremely resistant to the inflation of the concept of “community” in connection with online platforms: “Perhaps community should not have a broader but a narrower definition. We used to have a name for a group that got together because its members shared common interests: we called it a club.” (Turkle, 2011, p. 238). Hubert Knoblauch justifies his own reservations regarding empirical analysis of online communities with reference to the lack of conceptual precision in the research that has been done, stating that “[...] the more I have read, the less I have been concerned about empirical questions, and the more about conceptual ones.” (Knoblauch, 2008, p.73)

Such references to the need for clarity, independent of any connection to media and communication, can already be found in the writings of Immanuel Kant (1998, p. 318): “In our language the word community is ambiguous, for it can mean both *communio* and *commercium*.” Translated into the conceptual language we wish to use here, Kant’s distinction involves the need to describe a subject’s perspective (the individual’s experience of communitization) as well as the collectivity to which this experience relates. For the first of these we use the expression “communitization”, while for the latter we use the term “community”. With respect to mediatization, they are related in a manner we need to explore, and this also needs to be reflected with regard to the general transformation of individualization.

We start therefore by seeking to define the more commonly-encountered of these two concepts: constitutive of communities *of any kind*² are: a) demarcation with respect to those who are “not one of us”, however defined; b) a feeling of collectivity, whatever its *origins*; c) the establishment of a shared set of values among members of the community, whatever these values might be; and d) some kind of space that is accessible to members for their interaction with each other.

For the same reason, following a logical path, we begin with the mediatization of communitization as a subjective experience, so that we return from there to the mediatization of *community* as a figuration of collectivity. The resulting clarification should render plausible our presumption that it is necessary to differentiate the various perspectives in empirical analysis more strictly than has hitherto been usual in the study of mediatization.

2 While Hitzler and Pfadenhauer (2008) adhered more strongly to Tönnies conception of “community”, we build here upon the concept of “communitization” sketched by Max Weber in §9 of his “Basic Sociological Concepts” (1972, pp. 21-23). We are generally concerned to link processes in which a sense of community is created with the term “communitization”, whereas “community” relates to the resulting (situational) sense of community in a figuration of actors.

3 The mediatization of communitization as subjective experience

Communitization is a subjective experience that the subject presumes to be reciprocated. Max Weber alluded to this aspect of the idea when defining communitization: “A social relationship will be called a “communitization” (*Vergemeinschaftung*) if and to the extent that the orientation of social action rests – in the individual instance, or on average, or as a pure type – upon a subjectively *felt* (affectual or traditional) *mutual sense of belonging* among those involved.” (Weber, 1972, p. 21 emphases in original). He explicitly distinguishes this concept of communitization from the way in which Toennies differentiated “community and society”, for according to Weber, Toennies’ usage was “much more specific” than that of Weber (1972, p. 22), Toennies being concerned to show that the inherent bond of a community was, historically, increasingly displaced by the deliberate arrangements of society. The associated, and foreshortened, conception of transition – loss of community correlated with the gain of society – is clear, even if Toennies’ conception of community is more complex than generally recognized today.

Toennies had started from a “community of blood” that could form from the mother-child relationship, from family and kin, upon which basis there could then develop a “community of place” and a “community of spirit”. But even the “community of blood” is not itself treated as identical with biological kinship relationships, but arises from the human “sense of bond” – an anthropologically-inflected sense of “sympathy” arising typically among “blood relatives”. He thought that community arose from the supposedly universal human characteristic of a *wish* to bond with other humans on the basis of “positive” emotional, ethnic and consanguinity ties. What Toennies referred to as “communities of fate” (2004, p. 18), communities that one did not choose for oneself but into which one was born – into a parent child relationship, as a hunter-gatherer, kinship networks, tribes, localities – were in fact cultural products like any other human society: constituted, stabilized and reconstituted through ritual.³ In ideal typical terms, this apparently quasi-natural “living [blood] community” might be contrasted with the highly-artificial, cosmologically inflected “community of meaning”, a pure “community of the spirit” detached from the pragmatic demands of everyday life – here we follow the differentiation made by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their essay on “Modernity, Pluralism and the Crisis of Meaning” (1996). However, empirically all forms of community, whether considered diachronically or synchronically, are placed on a continuum between these two extremes “community of

3 Using the term “ritual” here in the sense employed by Émile Durkheim in *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1995)

place” and “community of spirit”; just as are the six forms of community that Max Weber distinguished (1972, pp. 212 et seqq.) – house community, local community, tribe, ethnic, religious and political communities.

Community and communitization have come and gone on the social sciences, but they are fixtures all the same (in place of many examples, see Gläser, 2007; Böckelmann/Morgenroth, 2008; Rosa et al., 2010). Nonetheless, it seems to us worthwhile to begin with Max Weber’s definition. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, his definition is sufficiently open to encompass very different communitizations. The examples that he takes – reaching from small group to nation – make clear that from the subjective point of view “collectivity” and the feeling of being “one of us” are central to communitization, and that this can be applied to quite different social relationships. Secondly, Weber does not link his definition of communitization to *specific* traditional collectivities (such as family or village), but emphasizes that the felt sense of belonging can also have other origins.⁴

Above all, it is Weber’s subject-centred approach to the problem of communitization upon which we here draw: the extent to which, or whether at all, a collectivity is experienced from an individual’s point of view as a communitization depends on the degree to which a subject (an individual acting meaningfully) feels that it has something in common with others, whatever that may be and however the subject understands it. Consequently, a family is, for example, *not* a communitization per se, nor is a workgroup in a firm. Both of these *can* be experienced by a participating subject as communitization, given the existence of the relevant sense of identification.

In this subjective experience of communitization two aspects can be distinguished: first, that of situational experience in which the feeling that someone is “one of us” arises, in which one “feels” a sense of belonging; and secondly, that of the *horizon of meaning*. As proposed by Alfred Schütz and Thomas Luckmann (1973, pp. 31-35), it can be said that everything that we experience, suffer and do is always in the context of a particular subjective horizon of meaning. Hence, besides talking of the *experience* of communitization we can also talk of a subjective *horizon* of communitization. This means that for the subject a general horizon of communitizations arises beyond the situational experience of communitization, within which the subject can recognize and position itself. The horizon of communitization is the “backdrop” against which the situational experience of communitization occurs. On the other hand, it is also the “point of departure” from which situations of communitization can be evoked as experiences.

4 Although we are perhaps over-sensitized to the idea, but in these reflections we already see traces of the idea sketched above of “post-traditional communitization” (Hitzer/Pfadenhauer, 2010), forms of communitization that are currently becoming more important, in which the sense of belonging derives from individual choices in a consumer society with many options (as in Gross, 1994; Prisching, 2009).

One aspect of a subject's horizon of communitization could be that a general sense of belonging is experienced within a family or a group of friends (Hitzler, 2008; Hitzler/Niederbacher, 2010). This sense does, however, depend on its constant actualization in concrete experiences, in the absence of which the sense of belonging fades into the background. A subject will participate in family and other events to experience communitization as a feeling of belonging on a continuing basis. Participants expect that they will draw from such events special experiences beyond the everyday, reinforcing the sense of communitization shared with like-minded others. The attraction of such events, in fact, derives to a great extent from this promise that some kind of *common* experience will result. There is also here the promise that one will witness and participate in something quite special, experienced not as an individual but as part of a collectivity (the event community), and in so doing attract the attention of others to oneself (Hepp/Krönert, 2010, Hitzler/Pfadenhauer, 1998; Forschungskonsortium WJT, 2007; Hitzler et al., 2013a).

On the basis of our own empirical research⁵, we claim that mediatization on a first level relates to this conception of *subjective* communitization, both in regard to the situational experience and the horizon of meaning. It is not difficult to establish that in today's mediatized social world the situational experience takes place in and through media. A rave is a techno event that is inconceivable without media; media are significant components both in the organisation of events and in the communication of particular experiential expectations of the events, while also providing options for experiences during the events (Hitzler/Pfadenhauer, 2002; Hitzler et al., 2011). The symptomatic sense of collectivity is inseparably correlated with dancing together and the associated synchronization of physical movement (Hitzler et al., 2013b). Juvenile communitizations are today typically mediatized, their existence bound up with the continual creation and ascertainment of common interests on the part of their members using communication technologies more or less accessible to all.⁶ This does not only mean that more media and different types of media are used, but that these are subject to constant elaboration and upgrading, attracting ever more attention (Krotz, 2003; Leichner/Steiger, 2009). The internet stands out from all other types of mass media because of its capacity for bidirectional flow, providing users with a cheap means for creating, sharing and participating; as such, it is a significant driver for media development (Ab-

5 For example, on communitization with respect to diasporas (Hepp et al., 2012), on the Techno scene (Hitzler, 2001), on World Youth Day, 2005 in Cologne (see among other others Hitzler/Pfadenhauer, 2007; Hepp/Krönert, 2010), on the City of Culture 2010 (Hitzler, 2013), and on poker (Möll/Hitzler, 2013).

6 The symptomatic medium of communication for juvenile communitizations is the fanzine, in which insiders can express views on the quality of places to meet up and what has happened at different events, talk about new developments, present accessories, talk about leading personalities; in short, satisfying interest in information about a niche.

bott, 1998; Albrecht/Tillmann, 2006). Going online is for young people today an experience seamlessly integrated into their everyday lives (Wilson, 2006), both in respect of the reception and use of media and with regard to the extensive behavioural competences the new media demand (Vogelgesang, 2008), creating in turn virtual communities (Hug, 2006).

There is no doubt that the internet offers a cheap and accessible platform for juveniles seeking the most diverse kinds of desires; not only beyond the street, but also within the traditional media world (Androutopoulos, 2005; Gross, 2006; Kahn/Kellner, 2003). As ever, young people's forms of association and interaction are many and varied (Tillmann/Vollbrecht, 2006). Above all, they involve structures, building global micro-cultures (Hitzler, 2007; Ganguin/Sandler, 2007) that are becoming established in the virtual space of the World Wide Web (Williams, 2006).

But there are, of course, many other forms of mediatized situational communitization experiences; in today's mediatized social world there are all kinds of situational reception communitizations. Here, the experience of communitization in the family or with friends might be gained through, for instance, watching television together – whether a serial, a football game, or another format. Another and quite different example would be the experience of computer gaming, whether with face-to-face groups gathering around a monitor or with a large-scale LAN party. This was especially true of the first decade of the twenty-first century (Vogelgesang, 2003; Ackermann, 2011), and is now especially apparent in isolated participation in live streaming (Kirschner, 2012, 2013).

The *horizon* of communitization is, however, also a phenomenon that is comprehensively mediatized (Hepp, 2013, pp. 121-126). Not only do the most diverse forms of communitization involve situational experiences that are ultimately media-related, but the entire horizon of meaning is saturated with *ideas* of communitization which have, from the subjective standpoint, arisen through the sedimentation of the most diverse kinds of media use (Schütz/Luckmann, 1973, p. 283). To take but one concrete example: the fact that a local fanbase, to which a subject feels that he or she belongs by virtue of a sense of fellow-feeling with other actors, is itself part of a global fanbase with a variety of options for communitization, is something that the individual cannot experience personally and directly. Instead, any such experience of being part of a global micro-culture is gained through the media specific to that fanbase. The situation is analogous when we move from an individual's national sense of identity to more complex collective transnational representations that could be part of the horizon of communitization.

4 The mediatization of community as a collectivity

Long ago Max Weber placed emphasis not only on subjective experience, but also upon its correlate, the representation of a collectivity that was experienced as such. In doing so he brought another concept centre-stage: “It is only when on the basis of this feeling [of communitization] that their behaviour is in some way mutually *oriented* that a social relation is formed among them, not only a relation between each of them and their environment; and it is only when this social relationship is registered as such that a “community” can be said to have formed.” (Weber, 1972 p. 22) Weber thus distinguishes between the feeling of communitization (something which must always be firmly linked to subjective experience) and the enduring community that these reciprocal *existing* feelings create through their action being oriented by them. And so for us it is not only a question of the mediation of subjective experience, but rather the mediatization of a social aggregate, a collectivity. At this point we discuss the whole figuration this collectivity builds, a figuration which is nowadays deeply mediatized (cf. Couldry/Hepp, 2016, pp. 168-89).

This is the point raised by Hubert Knoblauch in the comment cited above. He makes use of Simmel’s concept of form, and characterizes communities as “social forms” (Knoblauch, 2008, p. 77) characterized, first, by a structure composed for the most part of traditional and affective behaviours (or practices); second, by a shared sense of belonging among its members; and third, through the distinction of members from non-members of any kind.

Knoblauch is generally referring like others (for a survey see Hepp, 2013, pp. 102-108) to a transformation of communities qua mediatization. In those times when there was no ongoing diffusion of technical means of communication, communities were more or less exclusively “communities of place” in Toennies’ sense, based on direct communication. An example of this would be a community of believers. After the emergence of communication media that enabled the maintenance of communication and social relationships in multiple places, the community shed its need to be directly experienced at a local level (for instance, the church). This development has been addressed with a number of different concepts. We can here, again drawing upon Toennies, talk of “communities of mind”.

Benedict Anderson’s conception of “imagined communities” (1983, p. 5-7) has a stronger relationship to media and is explicitly related to all communities that are larger than the village with its face-to-face contacts. Here the nation is only one, territorially defined, imagined community, although an obvious one. Knoblauch (2008) shifted emphasis in making a distinction between “knowledge communities” and “communication communities”: the first being based on direct communication, members having common experiences and

so having access to common knowledge; while in the second case, structure, sense of collectivity and distinction are created through a mediatized communication process that transcends specific locations.

There are many examples of this latter form in the literature, ranging from “nation” (Anderson, 1983), fan communities (Jenkins, 1992, 2006), “post-traditional societies” (Hitzler, 1998; Hitzler et al., 2008) or “aesthetic communities” (Bauman, 2001, p. 66), and including “transnational communities” such as the EU (Risse, 2010). And so beyond the conceptual distinctions being made here, there is also a great deal to be said for an emphasis upon the impact of mediatization on the changing manner in which communities are constituted.⁷

If we consider the transformation of communities from the empirical perspective, it becomes evident that “communities of place” with face-to-face contact, or “knowledge communities”, are themselves characterized by mediatization. That is not something confined to raves. Many writers have pointed to village or urban communities, and these too are today created and maintained by media-based communication. There is the parish newsletter, the local newspaper, and often the local radio or TV station. Social events are organised through social media and web pages, presenting the parish and its various activities. Local communities in this way create both connections and distinctions with respect to other mediated communities, such as “Europe”.

Our own research shows that the “communities of mind”, “imagined communities and “communication communities” that transcend place are based in large part upon local groups in which communitization is experienced subjectively: the sense of being “one of us” is evoked on national holidays or among national football events; the communal experience of fan cultures occurs through local events, and even the sense of Europe as a community presupposes that one has locally-based experiences that promote this sense of communitization (Hepp et al., 2011).

5 Conclusion: Subjective experience of communitization between mediatized communities and media-based communities

Given the above, it seems to us that the usual binary conceptual distinctions made in the literature are not adequate for an understanding of material changes in mediatization. We consider that a basic distinction should be made between

⁷ We emphasize the ‘also’ here because we think it would be mistaken to generally attribute changes in the manner in which communities are constituted to mediatization. There are many other sources of change; besides the progressive increase in geographical mobility through the ages there is also the issue of pluralization (Berger/Luckmann, 1996), individualization (Beck/Beck-Gernsheim, 2002), the opening up of multiple options (Gross, 1994), commercialization (Prisching, 2009), and more recently also eventing (Hitzler, 2011).

local communities and *translocal communities*, to both of which mediatization relates, but in different ways (Hepp, 2015, pp. 205-216). By local we mean the location of an everyday lived world. Translocal on the other hand lends emphasis to the fact that even communities that transcend locality still have a local connection, for they are experienced on a local basis. But as a community they relate to a large number of local places. This presumes the existence of communication that transcends locality, and so also mediatization, insofar as this is not created through the mobility of its members. Communication media are required to maintain the structure, sense of belonging together, and sense of distinctiveness of translocal communities. Hence, communications media are *constitutive* for this kind of community. *Communitization* can be direct to both.

But this does not mean that mediatization is only relevant for translocal communities. Local communities are also characterized by new and increasing volumes of mediatization. Even the local communications that constitute these communities are to some degree or other mediated. This makes it seem helpful to revise the existing conceptual armoury, so that we might more precisely approach the contexts in which we are interested. We therefore propose to use the term *mediatized communities* for what results from the mediatization of local communities; and *media-based communities* for those communities in which mediatization processes have only just begun to develop, and which are therefore constitutive for communications media (cf. Couldry/Hepp, 2016, pp. 168-189). Examples for these media-based communities are fan-cultures that emerge from the interest in certain media as content or technology, or online groups when they are not just a 'club' or 'gathering' but become a community. While these collectivities differ fundamentally in their character they all share that they cannot exist without media.

This terminological distinction should help to make clear that, in the case of mediatized communities, processes of communitization can always be "controlled" by direct communication, while this cannot happen with mediatizing communities, or, at least, not in general. Notwithstanding that, the possibility still remains of linking back this kind of community with direct, and therefore local, communication through relevant prospective experiences. Mediatization is therefore closely linked to a more substantial change in communitization and community than simply the movement from one type to another. It therefore appears that there is an empirical question that still needs to be clarified: whether with the advance of mediatization, "imagination" and "knowledge" become transformed in local communitization *as well as* in communities.

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