

Past, future and change: Contemporary analysis of evolving media scapes



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CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS OF EVOLVING
MEDIA SCAPES

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Introduction

Ilija Tomanić Trivundža and Nico Carpentier

1. ABOUT THE BOOK: CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS OF EVOLVING MEDIA SCAPES

Popular discourses on contemporary media scapes are increasingly dominated by predictions of imminent radical change which bear strong millenaristic overtones. In this, they are highly reminiscent of several recent “end of” debates, of which the end of ideology or the death of a nation state are but two prominent examples. Certainly, this cacophony of ecstatic proclamations by zealots of novelty and the melancholy of the prophets of gloom cannot be dismissed that simply as a clash of generations and technologies, or attributed solely to the narcissism of self-perception of current generations to live in epochal times. If anything, these are times of great intellectual ferment in the search for new business models, communication strategies and consumption practices, but as media scholars are increasingly eager to remind the economic and political communities, the “search for new” in itself is not new. The history of media and communication research is as much a history of “epochal changes” and discourses on “epochal changes” as it is a history of social and institutional uses of media.

This book is itself a product of an ongoing intellectual ferment aimed to conceptualise not only processes of change within media, but also the role of media in processes of social change. It is an outcome of the intellectual work of the 2012 ECREA European media and communication doctoral Summer School and aims to promote the underlying idea of the summer school, which is to promote pluralism of theoretical and methodological approaches to studying contemporary (mediated) communication and to establish bridges and dialogue with these diverse and often still culturally enclosed approaches. The book occupies a liminal position in the field of academic books as it presents both work in progress and completed research. It presents a significant part of the intellectual work of the Summer

School, but at the same time it cannot be reduced to a format of conference proceedings since most chapters significantly differ from the work presented at the Summer School. *Past, future and change: Contemporary analysis of evolving media scapes* is a reviewed book, a result of collective endeavour of its many editors, who paid particular effort in supporting the six chapters provided by emerging scholars – the Summer School students.

The main part of the book has four main thematic focuses – *change, journalism, time and memory, and the political* – however most of the chapters, published in this volume, cut across various disciplines and consequently reveal not only the richness of contemporary perspectives on media and communication, but at the same time also highlight the growing need for thorough theoretical understanding of the analysed phenomena and clear definitions of theoretical frameworks and concepts.

The five chapters of the first section address the centrality of *change*. Aukse Balčytienė's chapter looks at Central and Eastern Europe and the interlacement of social, political and media dimensions in shaping the "culture of agreements and social dependency" characteristic for post-communist transitional societies. The issue of media regulation, which plays crucial role in Balčytienė's argument, is also the central focus of Hannu Nieminen's chapter that investigates EU attempts to balance different regulatory interests and means in relation to challenges of globalisation and digitalisation of media and changed consumer behaviour. The third chapter offers an insight not in the process of globalisation itself but in how it is conceptualised in the leading journals in the field, as Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz explores the use of concepts related to trans-border communication in two international and two German journals. Iris Jennes' chapter addresses the changing role of television audiences in the transition to digital technology through their position in the value chain of television production. The closing chapter by Heiner Stahl offers a much welcomed overview of key concepts used in sound studies.

The second section presents six chapters that centre on practices and dilemmas of contemporary journalism. It opens with a chapter by François Heinderyckx who – through the debate on passivity and interactivity of media – warns us against premature dismissal and proclamations of extinction of traditional media. Bertrand Cabadoche's chapter also argues against technological determinism and in favour of a more critical perspective in understanding the relation between ICTs and their social impact using the example of "Arab revolutions". Helle Sjøvaag and

Jenni Mäenpää both address the issue of journalistic ideology. Sjøvaag's chapter does this from a theoretical and macro perspective, while Mäenpää's focuses on one key aspect of journalistic professional ideology – objectivity – and applies it to the practice of photojournalism. To a certain extent, the concluding chapters by Ebba Sundin and Nikola Belakova are also connected to the notion of ideology in the broadest sense. Sundin looks at the role of cultural and national identity in structuring international news. Similarly, Belakova also looks at conceptual level, presenting an outline of an analytical framework explaining the operation of legal rules (e.g. defamation legislation) in constraining journalism in the context of democratisation.

In the third section, the chapter thematise the issues of identity and memory on individual and collective level. Sara Mota looks at changes related to personal and family photography that were brought about not so much through digitalising photography but through digitalising exhibition and sharing of this type of photography. In the second chapter, Manuel Pares i Maicas moves the investigation of identity to collective level, linking it with issues of historical memory and the role of ethics. Irena Reifová, Radim Hladík and Richard Kilborn shift the investigation of the past from history to popular culture. Both address contemporary television series and their mnemonic projects of reconstructing past but provide contrasting studies as nostalgia and memory in the case of Czech television series *Vyprávěj* analysed by Reifová and Hladík is politically more contested terrain than the one analysed by Kilborn in the case of British television series *Life on Mars*. The connection between community and past also features prominently in the closing chapter by Ilija Tomanić Trivundža which analyses the ways in which temporal dimension can be lent to current events through the use of press photographs.

The last six chapters of the book explore the boundaries of the political. Nico Carpentier's chapter offers a discourse theoretical approach to the contested concept of "quality" in relation to cultural domain, which not only exposes complexity and inherent instability of the hegemonic quality discourses but contrasts them with a concept of democratic quality and the ways it is articulated by community media. Sander De Ridder's chapter is an attempt to conceptualise a model for understanding the storytelling activities in social network sites from a cultural media studies perspective. The emphasis on participatory practices is also the central focus of Krista Lepik's and Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt's chapter that looks at how a traditional institution such as Estonian National Museum negoti-

ates issues concerning expertise and knowledge as it opens up space for non-expert participation. Tobias Olsson and Dino Viscovi look at how another traditional institution – journalism – responds to increasing initiatives and demands for user participation and to what extent this is seen (by professionals) as a way to support and vitalize democracy. In charting the boundaries of the political, Giulia Airaghi's chapter on barter is a valuable reminder not only of the interlacement of the political in everyday life but also of the fact that hegemonic and counter hegemonic practices are not necessarily antagonistic, a question that seems increasingly central in the light of the current economic crisis. The section ends with a chapter by Fausto Colombo whose Foucauldian analysis of Web 2.0 reframes the questions on the relationship between power and social control, the "talking about the self", and the relationship between free speech and truth in democracies.

On a meta level, Colombo's argument in the closing chapter is emblematic for all of the 22 chapters presented in this book in two ways. In connection to the central topic of changing media scapes, the authors are not questioning the changes themselves but rather question whether we are posing the right kind of questions in order to understand the changes. And secondly, all of them refuse to look into the future without first looking back. It is precisely this theoretically articulated and historically grounded perspective, authors claim, that enables us to pose not only pertinent but also persistent questions on the nature of communication and the role of media in social processes at the time when everything that is solid melts into air.

The second part of the book contains the abstracts of the PhD projects of all 45 students that participated in the 2012 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 goes to François Heinderyckx for the photographic material.

2. THE SUMMER SCHOOL

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, Barce-

lona, 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 2012, it ran from 12 to 25 August. Together with the University of Ljubljana, 22 universities participated in the consortium: Autonomous University of Barcelona (ES), Charles University (CZ), Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) (HU), Jönköping University (SE), London School of Economics & Political Science (UK), Lund University (SE), University of Ankara (TR), 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) and Loughborough University (UK). In 2012, affiliated partners of the programme were the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), the Finnish National Research School, and the COST Action IS0906 Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies.

The central goals of the Summer School are:

- a) to provide innovative mutual support for doctoral studies in the field of media and communication, with additional support of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA),
- b) to stimulate bilateral and multilateral cooperation between consortium partner universities in the areas of doctoral studies, teaching and research,
- c) to provide critical dialogue between academics on cultural and technological challenges posed by media globalisation and convergence, focusing on socio-political as well as cultural implication of these challenges,
- d) to promote a respectful but critical dialogue between academic researchers, and representatives of civil society, media industry and government institutions.

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 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 ignored. 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.

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 the options that can be used to overcome these problems. Moreover, the workshops and the lectures are aimed 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 recognize 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 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 recognize 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 localized 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 thirteen-day 2012 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 provided the PhD students with more practical training on issues related to making posters, publishing, abstract-writing, comparative research, literature review, oral presentation skills, communication of scientific topics to non-scientific audiences, interactive teaching to larger groups, interrogating sources, and creative on-line writing. They were combined with a number of lectures, which aimed to deal with specific content, focussing on specific theories or concepts. Finally, the working visits gave the participants more insights in Slovenia's media structures, politics, cultures and histories.

3. THE PEOPLE / THE HALL OF FAME

At the 2012 Summer School, 45 PhD students participated.

The yellow flow group consisted of Giulia Airaghi, Guillaume Blanc, Francesco Buscemi, Sander De Ridder, Kenan Demirci, Edgard Eeckman, Margaux Hardy, Anne Wistrup Holmfred, John Hondros, Salla-Maaria

Laaksonen, Marie Legrand, Pierre Munsch, David Smith, Sarah Talboom, and Gintare Zukaite

Dilek Azime Aydin, Nikola Belakova, Fateh Chemerik, Sarah Anne Ganter, Xiao Han, Joanna Kedra, Ville Kumpu, Rita Luís, Jenni Mäenpää, Marek Miil, Adriana Mutu, Zhao Ruhan, Marketa Stechova, Helle Tiikmaa, and Bingqing Xia were the blue flow group.

Kristina Barancovaite-Skindaraviciene, Ergin Safak Dikmen, Iris Jennes, Merle-Marie Kruse, Lexin Lin, Natalija Majsova, Sara Mota, Tereza Pavlickova, Maarit Pedak, Jingwei Piao, Kim Sandholdt, Michela Stumberger, Minttu Tikka, Mariyan Tomov, and Gertjan Willems formed the gree flow group.

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

The 2012 Summer School also had 23 academic lecturers: Stefanie Averbek-Lietz, Aukse Balčytyiene, Michael Bruun Andersen, Bertrand Cabedoche, Bart Cammaerts, Nico Carpentier, Fausto Colombo, David Deacon, François Heinderyckx, Irena Reifová, Anastasia Kavada, Richard Kilborn, Risto Kunelius, Hannu Nieminen, Tobias Olsson, Manuel Parés i Maicas, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Helle Sjøvaag, Slavko Splichal, Heiner Stahl, Burcu Sümer, Ebba Sundin, and Ilija Tomanić Trivundža.

In addition to the activities of the Summer School lecturers, the programme also included a study visit to student radio station *Radio Študent* (www.radiostudent.si/), visit to autonomous cultural centre *Metelkova mesto* (www.metelkovamesto.org/) and a guided tour of *Slovene Ethnographic Museum* (www.etno-muzej.si/). Additionally, two guest lectures – Aleš Debeljak on European and Balkan cultural identities and Slavko Splichal on Research Paradigms in Media Studies – and a round table Social Media and Traditional Journalism: Promises, Realities and Prospects with Slovene journalists and web communication experts Miha Rejc, Matej Praprotnik and Vuk Ćosić. This supplementary programme was organised by the *Slovene Communication Association*.

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

4. THE EVALUATION

The 2012 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:

I really enjoyed the experience of working on an intense level in an open and engaged community.

Comments on my PhD projects were very valuable and in-depth.

Great networking and intercultural experience!

The programme was very well organised and the atmosphere during the lectures and workshops was great. It was valuable in terms of academic achievements.

The Summer School remains a rewarding but very intensive experience because of its duration, which is a reoccurring topic in the evaluations. Improved time management of the lecturers was repeatedly emphasised, as was the preference for lectures tied not with specific research cases but with broader theoretical or methodological aspects.

5. 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 lecturing and providing PhD support. The PhD students themselves have shown an eagerness which can only be admired and applauded. The organisers wish to thank Zarja Protner as well as Igor Vobič and Irena Brinar from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana for their support. Additional thanks goes to Maja Kostric from Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Jasna Babič from Peace Institute and Radio Študent team.

Even this book illustrates the intensity of the ongoing collaborations, with its many contributors and editors. Being produced within an almost impossible time frame just 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 visiēm, 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 and hepinize teşekkürler, and above all, 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 Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana

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

The Slovene Communication Association

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