

A photograph of a person's hands holding a smartphone up to take a picture of a small, patterned object on a table. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The person's arms and hands are visible, and they are wearing a watch on their left wrist. The background shows a table and some other objects, but they are out of focus.

Media Practice and Everyday Agency in Europe

edited by Leif Kramp, Nico Carpentier,
Andreas Hepp, Ilija Tomanić Trivundža,
Hannu Nieminen, Risto Kunelius,
Tobias Olsson, Ebba Sundin
and Richard Kilborn

édition lumière

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTIONS

Leif Kramp, Nico Carpentier and Andreas Hepp
Introduction: Investigating the Everyday Presence of Media..... 9

Anne Kaun, Benjamin de Cleen and Christian Schwarzenegger
Navigating “Academia Incognita”: The European Media and Communication
Doctoral Summer School and ECREA’s Young Scholars Network..... 23

PART 1 RESEARCH

SECTION 1: DYNAMICS OF MEDIATIZATION

Nick Couldry
Mediatization: What Is It?..... 33

Knut Lundby
Notes on Interaction and Mediatization..... 41

Sonia Livingstone
The Mediatization of Childhood and Education: Reflections on The Class.. 55

Friedrich Krotz
From a Social Worlds Perspective to the Analysis of Mediatized Worlds..... 69

Andreas Hepp
Communicative Figurations: Researching Cultures of Mediatization..... 83

Risto Kunelius
Lessons of the Lament: Footnotes on the Mediatization Discourse 101

Dorothee Christiane Meier
Doctor-Patient Relationship in a Digitalised World..... 115

SECTION 2: TRANSFORMATIONS

Minna Saariketo

Imagining Alternative Agency in Techno-Society : Outlining the Basis of Critical Technology Education..... 129

Auksė Balčytienė

The Alchemy of Central and East European Media Transformations: Historical Pathways, Cultures and Consequences 139

Irena Reifová

Ontological Security in the Digital Age: The Case of Elderly People Using New Media 153

Svenja Ottovordemgentschenfelde

Reconfiguring Practices, Identities and Ideologies: Towards Understanding Professionalism in an Age of Post-Industrial Journalism 163

SECTION 3: METHODS

Bertrand Cabedoche

Advantages and Limitations of a Text Analysis to Reveal the Strategic Action of Social Actors. The Example of Cultural Diversity 177

Rosa Franquet

Analysing Media Production: The Benefits and Limits of Using Ethnographic Methodology 195

Erik Knudsen

Media Effects as a Two-Sided Field: Comparing Theories and Research of Framing and Agenda Setting..... 207

Ilija Tomanić Trivundža

Records of Facts or Records of Mystification? Brief Notes on the “Surplus Value” of the Photographic Image 217

Leif Kramp

Media Studies without Memory? Institutional, Economic and Legal Issues of Accessing Television Heritage in the Digital Age 227

Maria Murumaa-Mengel and Andra Siibak

Roles of a Researcher: Reflections after Doing a Case-Study with Youth on a Sensitive Topic 249

François Heinderyckx

Academic Schizophrenia: Communication Scholars and the Double Bind. 261

SECTION 4: THE SOCIAL

Riitta Perälä

Engaging with Media in a Fragmented Media Environment..... 273

Hannu Nieminen and Anna-Laura Markkanen

A Crooked Balance of Interests? Comparing Users' Rights in Printed and Electronic Books 285

Fausto Colombo

Too Easy to Say Blog: Paradoxes of Authenticity on the Web 297

Tobias Olsson

In a Community, or Becoming a Commodity? Critical Reflections on the “Social” in Social Media..... 309

Nico Carpentier

Participation as a Fantasy: A Psychoanalytical Approach to Power-Sharing Fantasies..... 319

Ane Møller Gabrielsen and Ingvild Kvale Sørenssen

Reassembling the Social 331

PART 2**THE EUROPEAN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION DOCTORAL SUMMER SCHOOL 2013 AND ITS PARTICIPANTS**

Jan Babnik..... 335

Gábor Bernáth 336

Ilze Berzina 337

Erna Bodström 338

Yiannis Christidis..... 339

Michael Cotter 340

Joanna Doona..... 341

Victoria Estevez 342

Katharina Fritsche..... 343

Roman Hájek 344

Nele Heise..... 345

Lisette Johnston 346

Slavka Karakusheva..... 347

Erik Knudsen 348

Dorothee Christiane Meier..... 349

Cassandre Molinari 350

Anne Mollen	351
Tatyana Muzyukina.....	352
Svenja Ottovordemgentschenfelde	353
Venetia Papa.....	354
Mari-Liisa Parder	355
Riitta Perälä.....	356
Gina Plana	357
Sanne Margarethe de Fine Licht Raith	358
Miia Rantala.....	359
Cindy Roitsch.....	360
Ulrike Roth.....	361
Nanna Särkkä	362
Minna Saariketo	363
Dana Schurmans	364
Natalie Schwarz	365
Irene Serrano Vázquez.....	366
Katarzyna Sobieraj.....	367
Melodine Sommer.....	368
Ingvild Kvale Sørensen.....	369
Neil Stevenson	370
Mariola Tarrega.....	371
Khaël Velders	372
Zhan Zhang	373
Wenyao Zhao	374
Elisabetta Zuvorac	375

Participation as a Fantasy:¹ A Psychoanalytical Approach to Power-Sharing Fantasies

Nico Carpentier

1. Introduction: Participation's theoretical foundation

Participation has (again) become one of the key concepts of communication and media studies, especially after the popularisation of Web 2.0. At the same time, its theoretical backbone is still rather weak, and in many cases theorisations of the participatory remain locked in utopian/dystopian or potential/real dichotomies. Still, the use of the concept of participation has a long history, and especially in the 1960s and 1970s the debates about participation were omnipresent in a wide variety of societal fields. But this has also caused this concept to feature in a surprising variety of frameworks, which have been transformed through an almost infinite number of materialisations. These processes have not always contributed to the theoretical elaboration of the concept of participation itself. Moreover, the signification of participation is part of a "politics of definition" (Fierlbeck, 1998: 177), since its specific articulation shifts depending on the ideological framework that makes use of it. More particularly, the definition of participation is one of the many societal fields where a political struggle is waged between the minimalist and the maximalist participatory variations of democracy (see Carpentier, 2011). This again adds to the notion's fluidity.

This chapter wants to contribute to these theoretical debates about participation (and deepen them) by taking a slightly unusual path, through use of the psychoanalytical concept of fantasy. In this article it is argued that the impossibility of reaching Pateman's (1970) notion of full participation should not be the end point of this theoretical debate, but can be translated into reflection on the generative powers of the (maximalist) participatory fantasy. We should at the same time acknowledge that this (maximalist) participatory fantasy is affected by a series of other fantasies, including the closely related (and reinforcing) fantasy of agency and freedom, and the more counteracting fantasies of homogeneity and unity, and of leadership and the societal centre. But let's turn to the fantasy of (maximalist) participation first.

Carpentier, N. (2014) 'Participation as a Fantasy: A Psychoanalytical Approach to Power-Sharing Fantasies', pp. 319-330 in L. Kramp/N. Carpentier/A. Hepp/I. Tomanić Trivundža/H. Nieminen/R. Kunelius/T. Olsson/E. Sundin/R. Kilborn (eds.) *Media Practice and Everyday Agency in Europe*. Bremen: edition lumière.

2. The participatory fantasy

Despite participation being a permanent object of struggle, (more maximalist versions of) participation remain(s) driven by a need for control over our individual and collective destinies, within all fields that affect the everyday life of the multitude, including the realms of institutionalised politics and communication processes. What Mouffe (2000) has called the democratic revolution partially fulfils this need, as the levels of control in many societal fields have indeed increased over the past two centuries. But at the same time, a society with totally balanced power relations is an impossible desire, given society's diversity and complexity. Situations of full participation, as described by Pate-man (1970), are utopian (and eutopian) non-places - or better: 'never-to-be places' - which will always be unattainable and empty, but which simultaneously continue to play a key role as the ultimate anchor points and horizons. On the basis of these arguments, and from a more psychoanalytic perspective, participation - and democracy² - can be labelled a fantasy.

The use of the (Lacanian) fantasy concept³ requires immediate clarification, as common sense meanings of this concept tend to be almost exclusively negative. In Lacanian psycho-analytic theory, fantasy is conceptualised as having (among others) a protective role (Lacan, 1979: 41), and remains connected to drive and desire, which also shows fantasy's generative capacities. The basic Lacanian model assumes that when we enter into the symbolic, we lose access to the Real. From that point onwards, we are confronted with a lack and the desire to fill this lack. As dealing with this lack is potentially destructive, the protective role of fantasy comes in, to provide us with "the support that gives consistency to what we call 'reality'" (Žižek, 1995: 44). Fantasy beholds the imaginary promise of the pre-symbolic *jouissance*, of recapturing our lost and impossible enjoyment; it promises us that not only can we achieve unmediated access to reality and truth, but also the unachievable wholeness and the harmonious resolution of social antagonism. However important this fantasy (and the pleasure it generates) might be, it can never bring us access to the Real again. As Lacan (1989: 111) has put it: "'That's not it' is the very cry by which the *jouissance* obtained is distinguished from the *jouissance* expected." This leads us into the paradox of simultaneously desiring an object, and of fearing the impossibility of fulfilling this desire. In order to deal with this impossible desire, and to protect the fantasy, different coping mechanisms are used. These mechanisms range from simple ignoring to referring to the theft of enjoyment, where we believe that the Real and its enjoyment cannot be accessed because its access is blocked by an Other.

If we apply this line of thought to participation, we can then see a (maximalist) participatory fantasy as a discourse which is aimed at reaching a full power equilibrium between all actors in society, in all locations and settings,

at the micro, meso and macro levels of society. It is a situation which Pateman (1970: 71), as mentioned before, has labelled full participation, defining it as “a process where each individual member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome of decisions.” This end point is unreachable and utopian – phantasmagoric – but it arguably also serves as a crucial driving force for attempts to “deepen the democratic revolution” (Mouffe, 1988: 42), for the “democratisation of democracy” (Giddens, 1994: 113) or for a “more participatory culture” (Jenkins in Jenkins and Carpentier, 2013: 2). To use Jenkins’ words: “Participatory culture, in any absolute sense, may be a utopian goal, meaningful in the ways that it motivates our struggles to achieve it and provides yardsticks to measure what we’ve achieved.”

3. Related fantasies in alignment and juxtaposition: The fantasy of universality and homogeneity

The participatory fantasy is obviously not the only one that circulates in society, although we should be careful not to enter into an inflationary use of the fantasy concept. But as a few other key fantasies are also related to the participatory fantasy – and strengthen or threaten it – it is necessary to discuss them here as well. The first one is the fantasy of the universality and homogeneity of political, social, and cultural spaces, which is based on what Stavrakakis (1999: 96) calls “an ethics of harmony”, a desire for reality to be coherent and harmonious. This fantasy defines the (a) social as a whole, whose components are all equal and similar. In the nationalist variation of this fantasy, there is a national community which is an inseparable whole; while in the populist variation, the people are seen as the whole. This fantasy becomes frustrated by a number of contingencies and dislocations. Following Laclau (1996), we can define this universal as an empty place, which does not imply that it does not exist. The very emptiness of the signifier of the universal always requires a particular, so that this particular can be universalised in order to attempt to saturate the universal. The universal thus cannot exist without the particular: “Now, this universality needs – for its expression – to be incarnated in something essentially incommensurable with it: a particularity” (Laclau, 1996: 57).

Consequently, however, the particularity of the universalised particular will also disrupt and frustrate the fantasy of universality and homogeneity. Nevertheless, this fantasy may result in the exclusion of what (or who) is defined as outside. After all, if the Other is seen to threaten a community’s enjoyment, we can then turn against “the Other who stole it from us” (Žižek, 1998: 209). Of course, as Mouffe (2005: 15; emphasis in original) remarks, not every we/they turns into an antagonistic friend/enemy relationship, but we should “acknowledge that, in certain conditions, there is always the possibility that

this we/they can become antagonistic, that is, can turn into a relation of friend/enemy.” Žižek (1993: 201) points to the enjoyment this sense of belonging (in the case of nationalism) generates: “The element which holds together a particular community cannot be reduced to the point of symbolic identification: the bond linking together its members always implies a shared relation toward a Thing, toward Enjoyment incarnated.” A similar process of othering occurs in populism. Laclau (1977: 143) points to this exclusionary logic as follows: “Populism starts at the point where popular-democratic elements are presented as an antagonistic option against the ideology of the dominant bloc.”

This brings us back to the participatory fantasy, as it sometimes becomes articulated with the populist-democratic fantasy, for instance, when ideologies of participation contain fantasies about the disappearing media professional. This democratic-populist fantasy is based on the radicalisation of a cultural-democratic discourse that articulates the media professional as superfluous and about-to-disappear. At a more abstract level, the democratic-populist discourse is based on the replacement of a hierarchical difference with total equality, manifested in the unhampered participation of citizens. This democratic-populist fantasy has two main variations. The celebrative-utopian variation defines the equalisation of society and the disappearance of its elites, as the ultimate objective for the realisation of a ‘truly’ democratic society. Media professionals in this perspective become problematised, and the symbolic power that is attributed to them is seen to be obstructing the process of democratisation. But there is also an anxietatic-dystopian variation, based on the fear that the democratic-populist discourse might actually be realised. One recent example is Keen’s (2007) *The Cult of the Amateur*, where the ‘amateurs’ who produce user-generated content come to be seen as a threat to (expert) tastes, knowledge, and truths.

4. The fantasy of leadership and the social centre

A second fantasy, the fantasy of leadership and the social centre, is based on the idea that societies need leaders who can solve societal problems, as they are omnipotent and omniscient (Gabriel, 1999: 151). Long (2012: 179) refers to the “mixture of emotions” the idea of the leader evokes: on the one hand there is “the presence of authority, power, heroism, and celebrity: the image of a commanding, attractive, perhaps even god-like figure.” This is combined with the “ideas of service, loyalty to a task or cause, and care of followers: the image of the dependable, good shepherd or loving parent” (Long, 2012: 179). As Pelinka (1999: 32) has argued, this desire for leadership is very much part of democracy. He first suggests that the relationship between democracy and leadership might be problematic: “Leadership within democracy [...] would be

a contradiction, if not to existing democracy, then certainly to the imaginary democracy.” But he then corrects this line of thinking: “But the debate on leadership in democracy exhibits characteristics that are much different. [...] It is not characterised by a distrust of leadership, but by a desire for leadership. In its vulgar form this debate is characterised by the call for the ‘strong man’.” This fantasy appears to be structurally different from the universality and homogeneity fantasy, because it is based on difference and privilege, but this is only partially so, as leadership is a guarantee of the unity of the community. In other words, the leader is simultaneously the centre of society (or the organisation, or the group), and also an integral part of it.

This then brings us to the related fantasy of the (power) centre of society, or the seat of power. While in some cases the centre can be seen as the same as the leader, other variations of the fantasy of the centre also exist. One variation is that one particular domain of the social, such as politics, the economy or technology, is (or should be) the privileged centre of society, where all power and all opportunities for change reside⁴. An illustration of this logic can be found in Tismaneanu (2009: 94), who quotes the following words of the “Italian neofascist youth leader” Giuseppe Scopelitti: “We believe the family should be the center of society, and we don’t like to see a Europe that authorizes homosexual marriages.” Less radical voices would articulate particular societal fields, such as politics, the economy or technology, as privileged driving forces of the social, often ending up in determinist positions which are prime locations of the centre fantasy. At a more global level we can also find traces of this fantasy: a critical stance towards the idea that the West performs the role of the (global) centre can be found in Chakrabarti and Dhar (2009: 12), who analyse and then critique “the frame of a privileged centre such as capital/West and a lacking other such as ‘pre-capital’/‘third world’.”

The second variation of the centre fantasy is the idea that there is an all-incorporating symbolic (or cultural) centre in society, which transverses the many different societal fields. More than being merely dominant, this symbolic centre is seen as the heart of the social, clustered around a set of incontestable essentialised discourses that act as its backbone. This variation of the centre fantasy can also be found in academic writings, for instance in the functionalist sociology of Shils (1975: 3), who defined the (cultural) centre as “the center of the order of symbols, of values, of beliefs, which govern the society. It is the center because it is the ultimate and irreducible; and it is felt to be such by many who cannot give explicit articulation to its irreducibility. The central zone partakes of the nature of the sacred.”

The centre fantasy ultimately has to come to terms with the structural emptiness of the seat of power – to use Lefort’s (1988) metaphor. In a more psychoanalytical language, the “lack at the center of society” (Swedlow, 2010: 154) or, in a more discourse-theoretical language, “the antagonism at the cen-

tre of our world" (Flemming, 2008: 20) permanently poses a threat towards the existence of the centre. From a more Foucaultian perspective, all become implicated in the logics of power, which again frustrates the idea of the centre (of power): "In this form of management, power is not totally entrusted to someone who would exercise it alone, over others, in an absolute fashion; rather, this machine is one in which everyone is caught, those who exercise this power as well as those who are subjected to it" (Foucault, 1980: 156). Moreover, the field-as-centre fantasy become frustrated by the workings of overdetermination, where different fields within the social enter into permanent interaction, and prevent one of these fields achieving (permanent) domination (see Althusser, 1982). Finally, the symbolic-centre fantasy also has to face the logics of overdetermination, but at the discursive level. Here, discursive structures are never safe from elements alien to these discourses, which generate a permanent threat of re-articulation and disarticulation, making "a final closure" (Howarth, 1998: 273) impossible to reach. Even hegemonic projects, with their objective of becoming "a horizon", "not one among other objects but an absolute limit which structures a field of intelligibility and [...] thus the condition of possibility of the emergence of any object" (Laclau, 1990: 64) is not safe from this threat. Counter-hegemonic articulations are always looming, avoiding hegemony becoming total (Sayyid and Zac, 1998: 262). As Mouffe (2005: 18) formulated it: "Every hegemonic order is susceptible of being challenged by counter-hegemonic practices, i.e. practices which will attempt to disarticulate the existing order so as to install other forms of hegemony."

The fantasy of the centre connects to the participatory fantasy in a number of ways. Firstly, there is a negative component to this relationship as participatory fantasies are grounding attempts to open up the centre, and limit the restrictive and dominating capacities of traditional forms of leadership. On the other hand, the fantasy of leadership-as-centre can also unsettle participatory processes, as the desire for leadership can disrupt the equal positionings of the actors involved. Negotiating between the leadership-as-centre fantasy and the populist-democratic fantasies, the participatory fantasy can be reconciled with the notion of leadership when reverting to more alternative leadership models, which can - inspired by the work of Lewin and his colleagues (Lewin and Lippitt, 1938; White and Lippitt, 1960)) - be termed democratic leadership. The field-as-centre fantasy also strongly impacts on participatory fantasies, as in some cases (and discourses) specific fields are seen as privileged locations for participatory practices. Here, we can draw on Couldry's (2003) work in regard to (what he labels) the myth of the mediated centre, where the media are seen as the privileged centre. The expectation then becomes that participation in the media (and especially the internet) is a privileged channel to allow for participation in society. This technological-determinist discourse is productive but also problematic as it ignores the complexity of the polis. This limitation does

not mean that participation in the media and participation through the media are irrelevant, but its exclusivity reduces the span of the participatory fantasy and (potentially) even legitimates the absence of participatory processes in other fields. Finally, the symbolic-centre fantasy also rests uneasily with the participatory fantasy, as participation produces both internal and external diversity. As Fraser and Restrepo Estrada (2001: 18) remark (in relation to community radio): “Community radio, through its openness to participation to all sectors and all people in a community/ies, creates a diversity of voices and opinions on the air.” But – very similar to Mouffe’s (1988: 41) debate on the need to hegemonise (radical) democracy – we should also acknowledge that the participatory fantasy has a hegemonic side to it, aiming to hegemonise participation as a project, whilst keeping the exact nature of these participatory practices open.

5. The fantasy of freedom and agency

The third related fantasy is the fantasy of freedom and agency. Here I should start by remarking that freedom and agency are traditionally very related notions, as agency refers to the capacity of individuals for independent action and free choice. The fantasy of freedom and agency consists of the desire for complete and unrestricted freedom, without the presence of any (structural) constraints. In a letter to Tschirnhaus, Spinoza hypothesised that a stone thrown into the air would certainly think – if it had consciousness – it made this movement voluntarily. Spinoza then continues to describe what I would here like to call the fantasy of freedom and agency: “This, then, is that human freedom which all men boast of possessing, and which consists solely in this, that men are conscious of their desire and unaware of the causes by which they are determined” (Spinoza quoted in Nadler, 2001: 328) In a language more geared towards fantasy, Contu (2008: 370) describes this fantasy as follows: “the fantasy of ourselves as liberal, free, and self-relating human beings to whom multiple choices are open and all can be accommodated.” There are many domains where this fantasy of freedom and agency can be found: sexuality (Roberts, 2013: 67), mobility (Sloop and Gunn, 2010: 292), self-expression (Petersen, 2007) etc. The process of individualisation, as one of the key characteristics of present-day society, where specific ways of life become disembedded and re-embedded (Giddens, 1991) can be seen as a key driving force of this fantasy. Giddens places a strong emphasis on the notion of reflexivity, where – after “the hold of tradition was broken” (Giddens, 1991: 155) – the self becomes constituted by the reflexive ordering of self-narratives.

At the same time, from a fantasy-driven perspective, the reflexive self can be seen to be fed by fantasies of control, freedom and agency and the desire to autonomously construct the self.

This fantasy of freedom and agency is permanently frustrated by the workings of structure. As Giddens has emphasised, structure is the counter-weight of agency; or to use Gardner's (2004: 1) summarising words, agency:

"concerns the nature of individual freedom in the face of social constraints, the role of socialisation in the forming of "persons" and the place of particular ways of doing things in the reproduction of culture. In short, it is about the relationships between an individual human organism and everyone and everything that surrounds it."

Structures are patterned social arrangements that are sometimes exclusively defined as limiting individual freedom, a definition which ignores the complexity of the agency/structure relationship. Giddens (1984: 25) emphasises the enabling capacity of structure, together with its constraining nature, but he also makes it clear that structures move beyond the control of individual actors, when he writes that: "Structure is not to be equated with constraint but is always both constraining and enabling. This, of course, does not prevent the structured properties of social systems from stretching away, in time and space, beyond the control of any individual actors." This stretching beyond individual control is exactly the characteristic of structure that frustrates the fantasy of freedom and agency. Partially, this concerns rules and resources, which is Giddens' (1984: 25) definition of structure: "Rules and resources, or sets of transformation relations, organized as properties of social systems." But we should also add (more) discursive structures to the interplay of structure and agency. Again, discursive structures, such as subject positions, are both constraining and enabling. Precisely the contingency of identities and the failure to reach a fully constituted identity creates the space for subjectivity, agency, freedom, and the particularity of human behaviour, but at the same time, the structuring capacity of discourses also produces structural frustrations of the fantasy of freedom and agency, as Faulkner (2011: 61) remarks: "The individual is the fantasy of freedom from society that emerges after ideological subjection. Yet it is portrayed as having come before subjection, as the citizen's free choice that legitimates the state's authority over us."

In many cases, the fantasy of agency strengthens the participatory fantasy, as the notion of participation is articulated with empowerment and activity. In this sense, these two fantasies are co-dependent: the participatory fantasy is built on a belief in the efficacy of one's (political) actions and on the make-ability of the social, or in other words, on the belief that individual agencies and the actions they allow, reach beyond the individual level and 'truly' matter. Participation's normative backbone, whether it is developmental or protective (see Carpentier, 2011: 22-26) is based on the idea of active citizenship and thus

intimately related to human agency, where these citizens are placed in charge of their democratic upbringing or actively seek to protect their interests from power holders. Both fantasies also share the same frustrations, as the workings of a variety of structures create constraints to participatory processes. Participation is limited by material structures, such as, for instance, access to a diversity of resources, whether they are financial, organisational or communicational. Also discursive structures frustrate the participatory fantasy, for instance, through the existence of dominant elitist subject positions (such as the political leader, the cultural expert, the mainstream media journalist) that work against the more maximalist versions of participation.

One final point in this discussion about participatory fantasies, and the cluster of related fantasies, is that the (semi-) realisation of the (maximalist) participatory fantasy also allows for the (increased) circulation of all the fantasies that were discussed in this part of the article, even when these related fantasies are contradictory to the (maximalist) participatory fantasy. Extreme examples, in the case of media participation, are provided by the use of the internet by radical right-wing groups (Caiani and Parenti, 2013), that use the online to live out their nationalist and racist fantasies in ways that can only be described as formally (but not substantively) participatory, at least in relationship to the members of these groups, and to those who are ideologically aligned with them. The analysis of the required re-articulation of democracy and community, performed by these groups, would take us too far, but these examples illustrate the complex relationship between the different fantasies discussed here, and the capacity of specific fields (and organisational structures) to propagate particular articulations of these fantasies. We should keep in mind that fantasies are also discursive structures, which, as any other discourse, can be articulated in a particular way, and can be part of discursive struggles.

6. Conclusion

The theoretical reflection captured in this chapter shows the interaction of a number of crucial fantasies, where the importance of the participatory fantasy is only one part of the equation, albeit an important one. Obviously, participation does matter, and its maximalist versions also play a significant role in society. In some cases, these more maximalist versions of participation are dismissed as naive and impossible to realise, underestimating their importance as a driving force for political action and simultaneously normalising more minimalist versions of participation or practices of non-participation. Instead, we need to pay attention to the constitutive combination of the desire to achieve these more maximalist versions of participation and the ultimate impossibility

of realising stable and permanent materialisations of maximalist participation. Here, I argue that the concept of fantasy allows capture of this tension and to analyse discursive and material practices.

Moreover, this fantasy-based approach to participation makes visible the way other fantasies impose structural limits on these participatory practices (and fantasy), and how a series of drives threatens to reduce participation to its purely formal version. This type of argument first of all illustrates that, in order to deepen the democratic revolution, participation needs to be articulated with a series of other values, such as diversity, multiplicity and democracy. A substantive version of participation thus becomes a requirement. Secondly, the focus on participation as a fantasy also allows the complexity of participatory practices to be shown, as well as the very deeply embedded drives that sometimes work in its favour, and sometimes against it.

Notes

- 1 This chapter is the expanded theoretical framework of an analysis on the “Fantasies of participation and agency in the YouTube comments on a Cypriot Problem documentary”, published in *Information, Communication and Society*.
- 2 See for instance Enwezor et al.’s (2002) edited book: *Democracy unrealized*. A structurally similar – but inverse – argument could be made about totalitarianism.
- 3 As Akdoğan (2012: 14) argues, there are other related concepts for theorising this type of discursive relationship, namely myth and utopia. Like fantasy, myth and utopia have negative connotations (related to naivety and lack of realism). Fantasy is preferred here, as it puts more emphasis on the generative aspects, and (in its more contemporary form) on the fluidity of these phantasmagoric constructions. In contrast to utopia, it is less place-bound in its semantic origins. At the same time, this chapter does not follow the Lacanian orthodoxy, but uses the Lacanian psychoanalytical model as a starting point, while taking on board Klein’s broad notion of fantasy – she uses phantasy – as a social construct (see Klein, 1997; Isaacs, 1948; Roach, 2003:104).
- 4 This implies that determinist positions are often the prime locations of the centre fantasy.

References

- Akdoğan, I. (2012) *Digital-political fantasies in Istanbul. An analysis of the perceived role of ICT in changing institutional politics, activism, and identity*. PhD Thesis. Helsinki: University of Helsinki, http://www.helsinki.fi/crc/Julkaisut/Digital_political_fantasies_in_Istanbul.pdf.
- Caiani, M./Parenti, L. (2013) *European and American extreme right groups and the internet*. Surrey: Ashgate.
- Carpentier, N. (2011) *Media and participation. A site of ideological-democratic struggle*. Bristol: Intellect.
- Chakrabarti, A./Dhar, A. (2009) *Dislocation and resettlement in development. From third world to the world of the third*. London: Routledge.
- Contu, A. (2008) ‘Decaf resistance: On misbehavior, cynicism, and desire in liberal workplaces’. *Management Communication Quarterly* 21(3): 364-379.

- Couldry, N. (2003) *Media rituals. A critical approach*. London: Routledge.
- Enwezor, O./Basualdo, C./Bauer, U.M./Ghez, S./Maharaj, S./Nash, M./Zaya, O. (eds.) (2002) *Democracy unrealized. Documenta11_Platform1*. Kassel: Hatje Cantz.
- Faulkner, J. (2011) *The importance of being innocent. Why we worry about children*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fierlbeck, K. (1998) *Globalizing democracy. Power, legitimacy and the interpretation of democratic ideas*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Flemming, G.C. (2008) 'From Marx to the act'. *International Journal of Žižek Studies* 2(1), <http://www.zizekstudios.org/index.php/ijzs/article/view/65/162>.
- Foucault, M. (1980) 'The eye of power', pp. 146-165 in Colin Gordon (Ed.) *Power/knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.
- Fraser, C./Restrepo Estrada, S. (2001) *Community radio handbook*. Paris: Unesco.
- Gabriel, Y. (1999) *Organizations in depth: The psychoanalysis of organizations*. London: Sage.
- Gardner, A. (2004) *Agency uncovered: Archaeological perspectives on social agency, power and being human*. London: Routledge.
- Giddens, A. (1984) *The constitution of society. Outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self-identity*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Giddens, A. (1994) *Beyond left and right: The future of radical politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Isaacs, S. (1948) 'The nature and function of phantasy'. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 29: 73-97.
- Jenkins, H./Carpentier, N. (2013) 'Theorizing participatory intensities: A conversation about participation and politics'. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 19(3): 265-286.
- Keen, A. (2007) *The cult of the amateur: How today's internet is killing our culture*. New York: Currency.
- Klein, M. (1997) *Envy and gratitude and other works 1946-1963*. London: Vintage.
- Lacan, J. (1979) *The seminar XI. The four fundamental concepts of psycho-analysis* (trans. A. Sheridan). London: Penguin.
- Lacan, J. (1989) *Écrits: a selection* (transl. Alan Sheridan). London and New York: Routledge.
- Laclau, E. (1977) *Politics and ideology in Marxist theory. Capitalism, fascism, populism*. London: New Left Books.
- Laclau, E. (1996) *Emancipation(s)*. London: Verso.
- Lewin, K./Lippitt, R. (1938) 'An experimental approach to the study of autocracy and democracy: A preliminary note'. *Sociometry*, 1: 292-300.
- Long, S. (2012) 'Images of leadership', pp. 179-200 in H. Brunning/M. Perini (Eds.) *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on a Turbulent World*. London: Karnac Books.
- Mouffe, C. (1988) 'Radical democracy: Modern or postmodern', pp. 31-45 in Andrew Ross (Ed.) *Universal abandon? The politics of postmodernism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mouffe, C. (2000) *The democratic paradox*. London: Verso.
- Mouffe, C. (2005) *On the political*. London: Routledge.
- Nadler, S. (2001) *Spinoza: A life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pateman, C. (1970) *Participation and democratic theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pelinka, A. (1999) *Politics of the lesser evil: Leadership, democracy, and Jaruzelski's Poland*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.
- Petersen, J. (2007) 'Freedom of expression as liberal fantasy: the debate over The People vs. Larry Flynt'. *Media, Culture & Society* 29(3): 377-394.
- Roach, C.M. (2003) *Mother / nature: Popular culture and environmental ethics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Roberts, M.L. (2013) *What soldiers do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Sayyid, B./Zac, L. (1998) 'Political analysis in a world without foundations', pp. 249-267 in E. Scarbrough/E. Tanenbaum (Eds.) *Research strategies in the social sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shils, E. (1975) *Center and periphery: Essays in macrosociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sloop, J.M./Gunn, J. (2010) 'Status control: An admonition concerning the publicized privacy of social networking'. *The Communication Review* 13(4): 289-308.
- Stavrakakis, Y. (1999) *Lacan and the political*. London: Routledge.
- Swedlow, W.C. (2010) *Against the personification of democracy: A Lacanian critique of political subjectivity*. London: Continuum.
- Tismaneanu, V. (2009) *Fantasies of salvation: Democracy, nationalism, and myth in Post-Communist Europe*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- White, R.K./Lippitt, R. (1960) *Autocracy and democracy: An experimental inquiry*. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Žižek, S. (1989/1995) *The sublime object of ideology*. London: Verso.
- Žižek, S. (1993) *Tarring with the negative*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Žižek, S. (1998) 'The seven veils of fantasy', pp. 190-218 in D. Nobus (Ed.) *Key concepts of Lacanian psychoanalysis*. London: Rebus Press.

Biography

Nico Carpentier is Associate Professor at the Communication Studies Department of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB - Free University of Brussels) and Lecturer at Charles University in Prague. He is a research fellow at Loughborough University and the Cyprus University of Technology. He is also the international director of the European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School and an executive board member of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). He was vice-president of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) from 2008 to 2012.

Contact: nico.carpentier@vub.ac.be