



*Communicative approaches
to politics and ethics in Europe*

edited by
Nico Carpentier
Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt
Richard Kilborn
Tobias Olsson
Hannu Nieminen
Ebba Sundin
Kaarle Nordenstreng

THE RESEARCHING AND TEACHING COMMUNICATION SERIES

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COMMUNICATIVE APPROACHES TO POLITICS AND ETHICS IN EUROPE

THE INTELLECTUAL WORK OF THE 2009 ECREA
EUROPEAN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION
DOCTORAL SUMMER SCHOOL



TARTU UNIVERSITY
PRESS

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The European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School
is supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme Erasmus
Intensive Programme project
(EUC number: 69935-IC-1-2007-EE-ERASMUS-EUC-1),
the European Communication Research and Education Association
(www.ecrea.eu), the University of Tartu -
the Institute of Journalism and Communication (www.jrnl.ut.ee),
the Danish National Research School for Media,
Communication and Journalism, the Finnish National Research School
and a consortium of 22 universities.

ISSN 1736-4744 (print)
ISBN 978-9949-19-249-6 (print)
ISSN 1736-4752 (PDF)
ISBN 978-9949-19-250-2 (PDF)

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Tartu University Press
www.tyk.ee

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PART ONE

About the Summer School



Potentials and pitfalls of comparative research workshop

© Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt

Introduction:

The intellectual work of the 2009 ECREA European media and communication doctoral Summer School in Tartu

Nico Carpentier

1. THE SUMMER SCHOOL'S HISTORY

The Summer School was established in the early 1990s by a consortium of ten (Western) European universities, initiated by the Universities of Stendhal (Grenoble, France) and Westminster (UK). From then on, these participating universities have organised annual summer schools for communication studies PhD students, which lasted for one or two weeks and took place in a wide range of locations, including Grenoble, Lund, Barcelona, London, and Helsinki. In 2005, the Summer School moved for the first time to the Department of Journalism and Communication of the University of Tartu. In 2009, it ran from 3 to 14 August 2009. During the 2005–2009 period, the consortium was expanded in order to bring 'new' and enlarged Europe's expertise and students into the Summer School tradition. This expansion resulted in a present-day consortium of 23 participating universities and two national doctoral research schools: University of Tartu (ES), University of Bremen (DE), Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest - HU), University of Roskilde (DK), University of Tampere (FI), Lund University (SE), Berlin University of the Arts (DE), Charles University (Prague - CZ), University of Ankara (TR), University of Ljubljana (SI), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (BE), University of Stirling (UK), University of Erfurt (DE), University of Bergen (NO), Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas - LT), Jönköping University (SE), Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan - IT), University of Helsinki (FI), University Stendhal, Grenoble 3 (FR), London School of Economics & Political Science (UK), University of Amsterdam (NL), University of Westminster (London - UK), Autonomous University of Barcelona (ES),

the Danish National Research School and the Finnish national research school.

In line with this process of expansion, the following four objectives were selected for the 2009 Summer School:

- a) to provide an intercultural and multilateral dialogue between academics of new and old EU member states, focusing on communication and media, and their relationships towards politics, ethics and culture, within the context of an enlarged Europe,
- b) to provide mutual support for doctoral studies in Media and Communication at the expanding network of the partner universities and ECREA,
- c) to expand the collaboration to universities not yet members of the network,
- d) to create a respectful but critical dialogue between academic researchers, governments, civil society and media industries focusing on new demands and developments in media within an enlarged Europe and a European knowledge society.

2. THE PEDAGOGICAL AND DIDACTICAL APPROACH OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL

The twelve-day 2009 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 extensive and high-quality feedback. 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.

More than ever before, the training workshops were 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, interviewing, using blogging for teaching, ideological analysis, and visual analysis. They were combined with a number of lectures, which aimed to deal with specific content, but always with the objective of showing how the actual research was developed and carried out. Finally, the working visits gave the participants more insights in Estonia's media structures, politics, cultures and histories.

3. THE PEOPLE / THE HALL OF FAME

At the 2009 Summer School, 44 PhD students participated.

The first flow group consisted of Çiğdem Bozdağ, Mary Charoud, Jean-Philippe De Oliveira, Hanna Domeyer, Olivier Driessens, Aristeia Fotopoulou, Rolf Erik Sundsbäck Halse, Nicole Landeck, Hsiao-wen Lee, Markus Ojala, Mariana Pérez-Cabello, Maarja Siiner, Taavi Tatsi, Nele Van den Cruyce, and Yin-han Wang.

Inesa Birbilaite, Anouk Bouckaert, Vinciane Colson, Eva De Smedt, Ondřej Holomek, Rikke Bjerg Jensen, Heli Lehtelä, Alan Ouakrat, Didem Özkul, Annika Sehl, Joanna Spiteri, Tatana Svrckova, Andreja Trdina, Hanna Weselius, and Anna Zoellner were the second flow group.

Erika Alvarez, Tina Askanius, Jess Baines, Antonio Ciaglia, Martin Danielsson, Annamari Huovinen, Janina Maric, Tatu Matilainen, Sara Minucci, Maria Francesca Murru, Monica Poletti, Suttanipa Srisai, Julie Uldam, and Dmitry Yagodin formed the third group.

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

The 2009 Summer School also had 20 academic lecturers¹: Kees Brants, Michael Bruun Andersen, Bertrand Cabedoche, Nico Carpentier, Nur Betül Çelik, Fausto Colombo, François Heinderyckx, Andreas Hepp, Margit Keller, Richard Kilborn, Risto Kunelius, Marju Lauristin, Denis McQuail, Hannu Nieminen, Tobias Olsson, Manuel Parés i Maicas,

Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Irena Reifová, Ebba Sundin, and Ilija Tomanić Trivundža.

In addition to the activities of the Summer School lecturers, the programme also included a presentation by Indrek Treufeldt at the Estonian Public Broadcasting Service, a visit to the Estonian History Museum, and the screening of a documentary at the Estonian National Museum which all provided an in-depth perspective on Estonia.

Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt was the coordinator of the Summer School, supported by her assistant, Triin Visnapuu, the Program Committee, which consisted of Kaarle Nordenstreng, Peeter Vihalemm, Slavko Splichal, and Nico Carpentier. Tobias Olsson, Hannu Nieminen, Richard Kilborn, Ebba Sundin and Nico Carpentier acted as the Summer School's flow-managers.

4. THE EVALUATION

The 2009 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 liked the format of student feedback and the involvement of participants. There have been very useful and rich discussions and most of all very constructive and positive feedbacks.*
- *I have really enjoyed discussions with lecturers. They were very helpful, engaged and opened finding some time for each of us to comment on our projects.*
- *[Student workshops were] the most interesting part of the summer school! We learn a lot of things from the others. Good exercise to be a "respondent". It is also something we have to learn.*
- *[The Summer school] is a great experience to share knowledge and learn different options about how you can develop new ideas, research, techniques over all. I think it is really important to "hear" and receive a constructive feedback to help you with your current and future research.*

The Summer School remains a rewarding but very intensive experience because of its duration, which is a reoccurring topic in the evaluations.

But the Summer School evaluations have also produced quite some critical advice for future improvements of the Summer School format. Mostly the advice focused on requests for more time to prepare (the individual work during) the workshops and to have more informal (but still structured) conversations between PhD students.

5. THE SUMMER SCHOOL BOOK

A significant part of intellectual work of the 2009 Summer School is included in this book, which takes a liminal position in the field of academic books, oscillating between conference proceedings and a reader, and containing chapters about work in progress and completed research. It remains a reviewed book, but the review process is more aimed at improvement and inclusion (without giving up on quality), and less at critique and selection.

In this book, a first (small) part focuses on the Summer School itself, and deals (apart from this introduction) with a survey of former Summer School participants, written by Benjamin De Cleen, Iñaki Garcia-Blanco and Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt.

The second part of the book has six sections. The first section is entitled Changing communicational spaces and systems, and first has two more general chapters. Hannu Nieminen discusses the crisis within the media system, and describes how a new epistemic regime has rearranged contemporary communicative relations. In the second chapter, Andreas Hepp, Johanna Möller, Katharina Kleinen-von Königslöw, Michael Brüggemann and Swantje Lingenberg show the importance of cultural approaches for analysing the multi-segmented European public sphere. Three other chapters focus on more specific systems. Agnes Aljas and Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt look at the digital museum content, and how this affects the identities of all actors involved. Anna Zoellner looks at the television system, and how in documentary development the balance between commercial and artistic considerations is being reworked. Finally, Rikke Bjerg Jensen's chapter analyses the media military relationships, and how the military attempt to exert soft power over the media.

In the second section, Audience participation and politics, we focus more explicitly on (semi-)participatory practices. Tobias Olsson and Anders Svensson's chapter raises the question of the organised producer (in contrast to the individualised producer), through an analysis of the Swedish *moderskeppet* website. Jess Baines takes a more historical

position, with her analysis of radical and community printshops in London at the 1970s. Anastasia Kavada then moves back to the present, with her analysis of two collective action websites, the European Social Forum and the global movement website Avaaz. Finally, Maria Francesca Murru uses her analysis of the Italian weblog Beppegrillo.it to test the strength of the concept of civic cultures, as a complement to more traditional deliberative democracy approaches.

The third section of the book, Identity politics, ideology and media, further stretches the political, by making use of concepts like identity and ideology. Ebba Sundin's chapter investigates the media's impact on youngsters' cultural belonging, in relation to the local and the global, while Aristeia Fotopoulou tries to unravel how the local, non-local and translocal relate to each other within the context of Brighton queer cultural activism and identity politics. Yin-han Wang's chapter then analyses how the online self-representations of Taiwanese girls both allow and constrain their gender politics. The next three chapters have a stronger emphasis on ideology, but still keep this embedded in everyday day. Indrek Treufeldt's chapter looks at the mechanics of the construction of the Soviet Estonian utopia, while Irena Reifová, Petr Bednařík and Šimon Dominik study the close connection of ideology and romance in Czechoslovak communist television serials. In the last chapter of this section, Nur Betül Çelik deploys discourse theory to analyse the ideological project of Kemalism.

The ethical debate is raised in the fourth section of the book, entitled Media and ethics. First François Heinderyckx deals with journalism ethics in a present-day configuration where some of the '*core assets of the Age of Enlightenment*' are challenged. In the second chapter, Fausto Colombo, focuses on political truthfulness and how Berlusconi balances between lie and gossip. Ilija Tomanić Trivundža then returns to notions of reality and truth, arguing that photojournalism is deeply indebted to a series of irrational metaphors and conceptualisations. Finally, Manuel Parés I Maicas stresses the importance of human rights for communication studies.

In the fifth and final section of part two, called The politics of Academia, the field and/or discipline of communication and media studies is considered from a political-ideological angle. Two chapters focus on the construction of national schools in Europe. Denis McQuail's chapter discusses the phenomenon of national schools within Communication and Media Studies, using the French and English schools as examples. Bertrand Cabedoche then expands the argument with a historicizing perspective on the French Information and

Communication Science development, while Nico Carpentier's chapter looks how the diversity of approaches within Communication and Media Studies are contextualised by a process of Europeanization.

The book ends with part three, which contains the abstracts of the projects of all 44 PhD students that participated in the 2009 Summer School. Throughout the book, a series of pictures selected from the immense Summer School archive are also included. Ilija Tomanić-Trivundža produced the cover. Our special thanks to our photographers: Erika Alvarez, Maria Francesca Murru, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt and Suttanipa Srisai.

6. A FINAL WORD OF THANKS

The Summer School is supported by a wide range of individuals and institutions. The (old and new) consortium partners, ECREA and the EC all provide invaluable support to this long-standing initiative. Lecturers and flow managers have over the years invested a lot of energy in lecturing and providing PhD support. The PhD students themselves have shown an eagerness which can only be admired and applauded. Of course, most of the credit goes to the organisers: the members of the Program Committee, the Faculty of the University of Tartu and especially to the Summer School coordinator, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt and her assistant Triin Visnapuu, who made it all possible. This year our gratitude also goes to Maren Hartmann, who has been a long-standing member of the Program Committee, but reluctantly decided to redraw at the beginning of 2009. She has been (and continues to be) a great supporter of the Summer School. Moreover, we are also grateful towards the University of Ljubljana (and especially Slavko Splichal and Ilija Tomanić Trivundža), who expressed their willingness to host our Summer School for the next three years.

Even this book illustrates the intensity of the ongoing collaborations, with its many contributors and editors.² Being produced within an almost impossible time frame, two and a half months after the end of the Summer School, this book bears witness of the Summer School spirit, which every year creates a unique learning experience. For this, all involved are thanked (in many of the Summer School languages) for their intellectual investment and the (learning) pleasure they have generated: thanks to you all, merci pour vous tous, danke euch allen, bedankt aan iedereen, aitäh kõigile, paldies visiem, gracias a todos, gràcies a tots, tack till er alla, tak til jer alle, kiitos teille kaikille, grazie a

tutti voi, kærar þakkir til ykkar allra, köszönöm mindnyájatoknak, takk til alle sammen, obrigado a todos, go raibh míle maith agaibh, shukran, najlepša hvala vsem, ačiū jums, dziękuję bardzo Wam wszystkim, asante sana and hepinize teşekkürler.

WEBSITES

The European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School

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

The Researching And Teaching Communication Book Series

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

The European Communication Research and Education Association

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

The ECREA Young Scholars Network

<http://yecrea.eu/>

The Centre for Educational Programmes in Archimedes Foundation

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

The University of Tartu

<http://www.ut.ee/>

NOTES

- 1 Anastasia Kavada was our 21st lecturer, but could not make it to the Summer School because of a serious health problem. We have included the article that provided the basis for her (planned) lecture.
- 2 Also our thanks to our language editor, Marcus Denton, for his appreciated work.

The ECREA Summer School survey.

Results and reflections

Benjamin De Cleen, Iñaki Garcia-Blanco and
Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of an online survey with former ECREA Summer School participants, held between September and October 2008. The survey asked former Summer School participants about their Summer School experience, about the lasting benefits of having participated in the Summer School, about their international mobility, and about their ideas on the ECREA Young Scholars Network. These four points are discussed subsequently.

67 people participated in the survey¹. As could be expected the participation rate was highest with the people that participated in the most recent Summer Schools. Older participants have sometimes left the academic world, are more difficult to reach (which points to the need to keep track of participants more systematically), or are perhaps less motivated to participate in the survey.

Table 1: Number of respondents to the Summer School Survey and year and location of the Summer School they participated in

<i>Year</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Resp.</i>
2000	University of Westminster, London, UK	1
2001	University of Westminster, London, UK	0
2002	University of Westminster, London, UK	4
2003	University of Westminster, London, UK	1
2004	University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland	6
2005	Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia	5
2006	Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia	11
2007	Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia	13
2008	Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia	25
<i>Total</i>		<i>66</i>

2. THE SUMMER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

The survey first asked participants to evaluate their experience with the lectures and workshops at the Summer School, and with the social aspects of the Summer School. In general, the survey shows a positive evaluation that concurs with the feedback collected through feedback forms at the end of the Summer School (see Carpentier, 2008; Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt & Carpentier, 2008). The survey confirms that participants have a positive evaluation of lectures and workshops.

Table 2: Quality of lectures

<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Poor	0
More negative than positive	4
Nor positive nor negative	19
More positive than negative	26
Great	17
<i>Total</i>	<i>66</i>

Table 3: Quality of workshops

<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Poor	0
More negative than positive	4
Nor positive nor negative	15
More positive than negative	33
Great	14
<i>Total</i>	<i>66</i>

Respondents especially valued the social aspects of the Summer School highly. This matches the data collected directly after the Summer Schools. In the 2007 evaluation (based on feedback forms filled out by 30 participants) for example, networking (and food) got an average 9/10, whereas student paper discussions and lectures got 8/10. The next part shows that the success of the Summer School as a social event also has positive effects on the longer term.

Table 4: Evaluation of the Summer School as a social event

<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Poor	0
More negative than positive	1
Nor positive nor negative	4
More positive than negative	16
Great	45
<i>Total</i>	<i>66</i>

3. THE ECREA SUMMER SCHOOL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL NETWORK

Not only is the Summer School itself valued very positively as a social event, most of the participants are also still in contact with the people—students and/or lecturers—they met at the Summer School. More than 90% of the participants are still in contact with people they met at the Summer School. More than 60% have both professional and social contacts. 21% is still in touch with people, but only socially. 7,5% stay in contact only professionally with people they met at the Summer School. These numbers clearly show the longer term positive effects of the Summer School as a social event. The high percentage of people that have contacts that are either both professional and social or only social suggests that Summer School encounters surpass the level of the merely professional.

How has the Summer School network benefited participants professionally? 75% of the respondents say that their Summer School contacts have helped them in informal ways. Apart from much valued discussions on the PhD process and the academic world in general, two benefits of the Summer School network are mentioned most often. One is that people met at the Summer School can provide interesting contacts (22 people mention this). The second benefit that is often mentioned is that people that met at the Summer School continue to provide feedback on research and publications after the Summer School (29 people mention this, although it is not always clear whether reference is made to feedback at the Summer School or after). Former students also keep each other informed on literature (11 mentions) and conferences (4 mentions), and some mention that they go to conferences together (3 mentions).

21% of the participants have collaborated with people they met at the Summer School as co-authors of articles or conference papers or in organizing conference panels (and others plan to do so in the future). This is quite a high number taking into account that the Summer School does not focus on any specific sub-discipline of communication studies and participants work on very different topics.

4. THE SUMMER SCHOOL AND THE INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF YOUNG SCHOLARS

A third part of the survey dealt with international mobility. Mobility of students and academic staff has traditionally been considered an asset

both for the individual actually undertaking the research / study period abroad, and for the institutions involved in the exchange. Best practices are shared, networking is enhanced, and the pace for future cooperation between both institutions is set. In the specific case of Europe, increasing the mobility of students and academic staff has also been a policy goal for the European Union, above all since the ERASMUS programme was launched in 1987. The prospects of a European Higher Education Area rely heavily on student and academic staff mobility, both as a policy goal itself and as “*an instrument for achieving the other aims of the Bologna process*” (Reichert & Tauch, 2003: 29). While ERASMUS is considered to be a successful programme with regard to mobility of undergraduate students (159.324 undergraduate students participated in the ERASMUS programme during the 2006/07 academic year²) the mobility of graduate students and academic staff has not been such a successful venture. Assessing the state of the arts of European PhD students’ mobility, however, remains a difficult task, due to the “*striking lack of comprehensive statistics about mobility of researchers*” (European Commission, 2001: 2). In addition, the different labour situations of PhD candidates in different European countries (considered either students or workers), the lack of a unified scheme for PhD students’ mobility, as well as the widespread practice of so-called ‘self-initiated’ mobility³ help to obscure the data about PhD students’ mobility.

The ECREA Summer School is an intensive educative programme offering ECTS credits that can be recognised in the PhD programmes of participants’ home universities (when applicable). It is, thus, officially considered as a mobility experience itself. In addition, the Summer School is also a successful platform for promoting other mobility experiences during the course of the PhD. In this sense, and according to the data retrieved from the ECREA Summer School survey, participants in the Summer School are prone to undertaking research / study periods abroad.

Table 5: Have you undertaken (or plan to undertake) any research period in a foreign institution during your PhD?

Yes	31
No	20
Do not know yet	15
<i>Total</i>	<i>66</i>

The Summer School itself plays a clear role in promoting mobility periods, as 18 participants assured that it was during the Summer School that they realised the extent to which their research could benefit from a research period abroad. In the same sense, the Summer School seems to be a good platform for establishing the necessary links enabling self-initiated mobility experiences (this has been the case for 4 respondents).

37 respondents commented extensively on the main obstacles they found for undertaking a research period abroad during their PhD. 18 students blamed funding as the main obstacle, together with the lack of connections with relevant scholars and / or institutions (mentioned by 10 respondents), and the need to undertake the assigned teaching load at their home institutions (10 mentions as well). 9 respondents considered that organising such a period was extremely time-consuming (and therefore not assumable while developing the PhD research), while 4 missed a clearer, more widespread institutional scheme for mobility at the Graduate level. Only 3 respondents considered their research could not benefit from a research period abroad (mainly because it dealt with national / regional issues), and 2 suggested that their linguistic skills were not enough developed.

5. THE ECREA YOUNG SCHOLARS NETWORK



The final part of the survey focused on YECREA, ECREA's Young Scholars Network. An important finding is that even with people that have participated in the ECREA Summer School, the knowledge of the young scholars network remains rather limited. 62% of the respondents know YECREA.

The survey also asked respondents what they expect from a young scholars network. The suggestions that came out of the open question can be grouped in 6 categories.

– Information dissemination

A first task of a young scholars network identified by the respondents, is to provide its members with information. The respondents would like the network to provide information on: grants, scholarships, PhD positions, job opportunities, as well as on calls for papers for conferences.

– *Networking opportunities*

A second important aspect is networking. The YECREA network should facilitate publications, international mobility, feedback on PhD research and the creation of thematic young scholars networks, and discussion on PhD related matters in general. According to some respondents YECREA should provide in mentoring or career advice.

– *Workshops, conferences, panels, and conference meetings*

A third group of suggestions concerns real life meetings. Many respondents suggest that YECREA should organize workshops focused on specific topics or research methods, some even suggest YECREA conferences. Others mention YECREA panels and other meetings at conferences.

– *Publication opportunities*

The respondents suggest two ways in which a young scholars organization can support the publication opportunities of its members. One is through providing contacts, both students and senior researchers, with whom to publish. This falls under the general networking tasks of the network. A second idea is that of a YECREA young scholars publication.

– *Lobbying*

A fourth, and less often mentioned, task of a young scholars network is lobbying on PhD related matters such as salaries, and travel budgets.

– *Provide financial support*

Related to this is the suggestion that YECREA should fund travel for its members.

6. CONCLUSION

This report presented the results of the first survey conducted with former participants of the ECREA Summer School. The evaluation of the Summer School lectures, workshops, and social activities concurs with the positive evaluations collected through feedback forms at the end of the Summer School. Through the survey it is also becomes possible to assess the longer-term effects of the Summer School. Participants express a positive appreciation of the long-term benefits of the Summer School. The results of the survey show the Summer School's importance for

establishing a social and professional academic network. It also shows how the Summer School promotes PhD student mobility and in some cases provides the students with contacts that can facilitate such mobility. The respondents express a clear appreciation of the Summer School as a real life meeting between young scholars and between young scholars and established scholars.

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NOTES

- 1 One respondent had only participated as lecturer and was not included in the analysis. The authors wish to thank everyone that took the time to fill out the survey.
- 2 Details on the numeric growth of participants in the programme can be found in: European Commission (n/d) "Timeseries Erasmus student mobility (number of outgoing students): 1987/88 – 2006/07". Available from

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/erasmus/statisti/table1.pdf>
(Accessed November 2008).

- 3 Research periods abroad that do not rest on any institutional programme or exchange scheme (Schnitzer & Middendorf, 2005).

PART TWO

Research



Tina Askanius

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SECTION ONE: CHANGING COMMUNICATIONAL SPACES AND SYSTEMS



Estonian public broadcasting history museum

© Maria Francesca Murru

Media in crisis? Social, economic and epistemic dimensions

Hannu Nieminen

1. INTRODUCTION

There is much talk of the crisis of the media today. For some, it is first and foremost the crisis of journalism, which is seen increasingly commercialized and trivialized. For some, it is the crisis in newspaper readership as young people turn more and more to alternative sources of information. For some others, it is an economic crisis of the whole media industry as advertising is moving away from the traditional media. The global recession has made things even worse. However, the predicament of the media industry can be only partly explained by technological and economic factors. I will argue that these developments are linked to a much deeper cultural change which has been coming for a long time and which concerns especially all institutions dealing with production and dissemination of information and knowledge. I call this an epistemic turn. In this article a three level analysis of the crisis of the media will be sketched, consisting of social, economic, and epistemic levels¹.

2. MEDIA'S TWO FUNCTIONS

The talk of the crisis of journalism has long roots (see Sparks & Tulloch, 2000). Today this debate has, however, a new tone of urgency (see e.g. *The Economist*, 16 May 2009; 25 July 2009). Mikael Pentikäinen, the CEO of Sanoma News,² has compared the situation to that of suffering simultaneously of both a major storm and the climate change. The storm stands for the present economic crisis, which eats especially advertisement revenue, while the climate change represents here a permanent change in business conditions. The latter is characterized by the fact that media contents are increasingly transferred to online environment where

they are freely available to anybody. The problem is that this does not generate income, which would cover the costs of their production.

In order to fully understand the sense of emergency that the captains of media industry feel, it is worth reminding us that the media has historically formed around two functions: social and economic³. The social function refers to the media's role in liberal democracy, which is thought to include the tasks of informing and orienting citizens for the processes of will formation and decision making. This again is based on the assumedly shared normative order and common culture, which expands the media's social function to cover also important cultural and moral dimension. The economic function, on the other hand, refers to the fact that the media as an industry is like any other branch of commodity production, and thus basically oriented into profitable business and commercial success. Although media products differ to some degree from other commodities, the basic logics of commodity production must apply also in media industries.

Principally, social and economic functions are thought to complement each other, as the social function cannot realize without necessary economic conditions. At the same time they are in constant tension, as economically profitable contents are not always preferable from the social point of view.

1. *The social function* of the media is perhaps best exemplified by the newspaper press in the form that it developed and existed from the late 18th century to the mid-20th century. Newspapers and moral journals were elemental in the social and political emancipation of European middle classes. With the assistance of the printed press, national public spheres started to get their shape in different European countries. The press was necessary in establishing common frames of reference for the population and creating the feeling of national unity (see Habermas, 1989; Calhoun, 1992).

In promoting the national public sphere the media has historically been an organic element in endorsing social and political stability or, in other words, democratic legitimacy. Now the question that worries many elite members is if the media is today able to provide this aim any more. There are two interrelated worrying issues. The first concerns the decrease in the audiences of news journalism. In the USA, in 1995 the total circulation of newspapers was 59 million, while in 2008 it was 49 million copies. During the same time span the audiences for the main networks' news programmes dropped by 17 per cent. The development has been similar in other liberal democracies. Respectively, there has

been an increase in the consumption of less serious entertainment media, which implies that fewer people share the viewpoints and concerns of quality papers. (The Economist 16 May 2009; Picard, 2004.) The second is related to the decrease of the quantity of serious journalism in quality papers, and, respectively, to the increase of commercially motivated contents, implying a decline in journalistic standards (see Picard, 2004: 60).

The net result is that many elite members feel that the media have given too much in to commercial pressures and that they have neglected their social mission. In the long run this undermines social cohesion and may endanger overall social and political stability:

The decline of once-great newspapers and news programmes is not without cost. It means the end of a certain kind of civic sensibility that was built on broad agreement about what is important and what is not (The Economist, 16 May 2009, 75; see also Sparks & Tulloch, 2000: 28).

2. *The economic function* is another side of the media business. Several scholars have argued that if the balance was earlier on the side of media's social mission, in the last twenty years or so it has tipped in favour of their economic function (see van Cuilenberg & McQuail, 2002; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). One reason for this is obviously that the media has traditionally been good business. At the same time when many other industries have struggled with trade cycles, the business in media has generally stayed highly profitable⁴.

The problem is, however, that at the same time when the economic function has taken the first place, general conditions for media business have changed. To put it in rough economic terms, there is a declining market demand for the products that the news media has traditionally supplied and simultaneously, there has developed an increasing demand for the products of the entertainment media, supplied by among others, television and film companies, games industry, internet service providers etc.

The anatomy of the economic crisis of the media can be described briefly:

- there are less readers and watchers interested in news journalism – that is, both the circulation of quality newspapers and the audience figures of news-oriented FTA-television channels have been in decline in Europe even before the 2008 financial crisis;
- this has affected newspapers' income from the sales – both single copy sale and subscriptions;

- as the audience figures have declined, the advertisers have found other more cost-effective channels (the internet, direct marketing), resulting in the decline in the advertisement revenue; this decline has rapidly accelerated from the autumn 2008 and it is still continuing;
- media industry has less money to produce labour-intensive quality journalism, which has meant, in the short term, cuts in costs and redundancies as well as new means in producing cheaper contents (multi-use, recycling, outsourcing, etc.).

It should be noted, however, that there is either no crisis or very little in the media which functions on different business model or models. This is the case with most of television subscription channels (Sky, Canal Plus etc.), which are not dependent on either advertisements or single copy sales. The same goes with the media services produced for and marketed through the internet (such as music and other entertainment). The magazine industry, although heavily dependent on advertising revenue, has not suffered so hard. Despite the crisis, many special issue magazines have been able to increase their readership. Many local newspapers are not affected by the crisis but have been able to keep both their circulation and their local advertisement basis on the level before the crisis (see *The Economist* 25 July 2009, 29-30; HS 10 July 2009; HS 4 August, 2009).

3. AUDIENCES DUMBED DOWN AND FRAGMENTED?

I take as my starting point the fact that the audiences of news media are in decline, and have been for some time now. As stated earlier, many elite members worry because they see it as a threat to democracy and social stability. Firstly, I will discuss what is the reason for this decline (why the decline) and secondly, why we should be worried about this (why to worry).

Why do people read and watch less newspapers and quality journalism both in newspapers and in television? A patent answer by the representatives of the media industry combines two explanatory factors, an external and an internal. Firstly, as a consequence of new technologies (ICT) there is today a multiplicity of channels, which means that the traditional news oriented media (newspapers) has been challenged by the new and more entertainment oriented media (the internet). And secondly, because non-serious or entertaining content is more popular

and brings bigger profits to media companies, also the traditional media has been compelled to adapt to this development and reduce their amount of quality journalism. As stated above, the latter has often been referred to as tabloidization and commercialization of the media – which is another way to say that an increasing part of the media has given up their social mission (see Sparks & Tulloch, 2000).

However, neither of these explanations does answer to the main question, which concerns the basic social and political relevance of the news media. If we think, as the concerned elite members do, that news media is the main source of relevant information, and that it offers the citizens the main connection to the national public sphere, why do people against their own interests – and against the “rational choice” assumption – seem to reject both relevant information and connection to national community? Secondly, why should we worry about that – what is so disturbing to the elite about this development? Here we come to the democratic argument, which is, in my mind, at the core of the debate. Again, this includes two sides.

The basic idea of liberal democracy is that citizens make informed choices concerning issues that they feel that are relevant to them. It is the role of the media to inform citizens of the alternatives and offer the basic social, political and cultural orientation for common will formation – and here the media refers to news journalism and quality newspapers. From this follows that if citizens do not follow the media they do not get the relevant information, that is, they are not well informed and prone to make ill informed, that is, wrong decisions. Or, which is the same thing, if they follow the wrong media – tabloids, celebrity news and gossips – they are “dumbed down” (see Aslama, 2003).

On the other hand, there is the problem of fragmentation: Because of the audiences are today dispersed between the multiplicity of channels, the public sphere – elemental to the shared citizenship – is jeopardized. Because people do not read and watch any more the same news and they do not have the same interpretations of world events. Citizens do not share common concerns any more and their life worlds become divided. Popular attachment to basic democratic values and goals suffers, which naturally this is detrimental to social cohesion and stability: *“Public opinion will, rather be shaped by thousands of different voices, with as many different focuses and points of view. As a result, people will have less in common to chat about around the water-cooler”* (The Economist, 16 May 2009: 16).

In this way, audience fragmentation can promote problems for the legitimacy of social system: in the lack of common cultural framework, cultural and social ghettos and outcast groups may develop – right

wing organizations, hate groups, etc. The traditional moral fabric of society gets thinner and weaker.

4. EPISTEMIC TURN

By now I hope that my argument has become clear: That journalism – as quality newspapers present it – is based on a specific kind of epistemic order. In its core is the assumption that the news media aims to deliver “the truth”, that is, the true or objective picture or interpretation of the states in the world. Even if one newspaper or one source is not as itself sufficient in giving a full and impartial picture, the plurality of the media can offer this. The result is not only technical mediation but also informed and relevant interpretation, based on journalists’ professional expertise.

In the core of the journalistic ideology is the notion that the journalist knows it best; that there is something that makes journalists as professionals authorized representatives of “truth” – or the best that we have in respect to the trueness; and that there are certain rules that, if followed correctly, provide the required professionalism (journalism ethics) (see Eide, 2008).

In a sense, this assumption represents an idea of a system of centralized truth production. As I earlier described, the media – in the form of both the newspaper press and the public service broadcasting – have been elemental part of the nation building process, in the creation of the national public sphere. In this sense, the media has been and still is at the centre of the national system of truth production – together with the education system – not only in the less democratic countries but very much also in liberal democracies. This is what I call the epistemic regime or, using Foucault’s term, the regime of truth (Foucault, 1980). It forms the basis for the functioning of all social institutions – social, political, economic, cultural – in a given country or group of countries.

What I mean by the old epistemic regime is the way of seeing the world as naturally organized into a system of nation states. This means that not only political systems but also markets and media systems are organically connected to national frameworks. This symbiosis between the media and the political and economic systems has served most Western European nations well, promoting social stability and liberal democracy. In most European countries, as well as in the US, the newspaper press was active in the mass political mobilization, necessary for the consolidation of liberal democracy in the late-19th and early-20th

centuries. A central part of democratization process was an attempt for integration of the whole population to the nation-building project, and in the main, the media served this aim well. This is what we have called the social mission of the media. In essence, it has aimed at social and cultural pacification and stabilization in the name of national interests. Media's role in serving the two masters of political and economic systems worked well as long as the news media could facilitate and balance for the both functions.

Nancy Fraser, among others, has called the European system of nation states as the "postWestphalian" order (Fraser, 2007). The basic problem with this is that even if the world system based on the (European) conception of the nation state has earlier been capable in producing social and political stability, although with the price of colonialism and global military superiority, this is not any more the case. Due to increasing complexity and mutual global interdependence nation states as political entities, are not any more able to control the necessary resources and conditions needed for stability.

Here we come to Jürgen Habermas' thesis on legitimacy crisis which he presented already early in 1970s, after the turbulent 1960s (Habermas, 1973). To put it brief, his core thesis is that social stability can be peacefully safeguarded as long as the political-economic system can provide citizens with results that meet their expectations. In his analysis, the Western world was arriving to the situation where the economic growth could not provide any more for peoples' expectations. This would undermine the legitimacy of the political system and bring social and political instability.

Today this kind of legitimacy crisis seems evident. For several decades now, public trust in national politics has been declining. As state budgets have been slashed in almost all European countries - in the form of tax relieves, cuts in public service, privatization - there is less resources left for redistribution and for effective solving such problems as housing, employment, health care, education, public transport etc. Politics is not seen to provide solutions to peoples' everyday problems - there is a kind of "erosion of citizenship" (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2007: 14-15). This renders also the news journalism, which relies still much on political reporting and political analysis, superficial and detached from peoples' normal life.

This has developed into a major dilemma for social and political theory. If the nation state cannot any more provide for democracy, what kind of structures can we foresee that could bring about democracy in wider transnational or even global frameworks? Is it possible to think of

the public sphere in European or even global terms? (see e.g. Habermas, 2006 a, b; Beck, 2006; Fossum & Schlesinger, 2007; Fraser, 2007; Held & McGrew, 2007; Archibugi, 2008). The main concern in the academic debate is that while no other political structure – the UN, the EU – has been able to develop to substitute nation states as the provider of stability. Instead, the economic system, in the form of the market, has increasingly taken over the role as the coordinator and controller of global structures.

In the neo-liberal political environment there is very little that news journalism can do in order to solve its main problem, its detachment from the mass readership. The assumptions of the concerned elite groups, cited at the start of this article, reflect the fact that they represent an outdated epistemic regime. They still believe that quality journalism serves nation's interests, and by this, also citizens' best interests, as if the political system still had the same relevance that it had in the "old world" (before the 1980s), and as if news journalism still serves as the guardian of liberal democracy against external interest, and fulfils citizens' informational needs.

5. THE FATE OF RELEVANT INFORMATION

But what about the fears of the elites? Should we take them seriously? The first premise that I attributed to those elite groups who are worried of the loss of the social mission of the media, that people need quality journalism, is easy to criticize as old-fashioned conservative paternalism. Also, that the national elite thinks that they know best what is good for citizens. This does not, however, undermine the basic unease which concerns democratic will formation. If people do not follow the news media, where do they get their knowledge concerning their political choices? Is the decline in the audiences of quality press also a decline of democratic participation?

Here I start from what we deem as relevant information. My argument is that people tend to make reasoned decisions in important matters concerning their lives. They make choices, which they assess best alternatives for themselves in each situation, based on both their experience and the information available for them in each situation. To be available means in this context that people seek relevant information from where it is best at their hand, according to their abilities and resources. The media and news journalism are only one potential source. From many studies, we know that the primary sources where people

seek relevant information are first and foremost friends and relatives, then people whom they know and whom they trust, after this different information services. Increasingly they are also internet-based, such as Google, or different specialized discussion boards (see Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2007).

From this point of view, the traditional news media has always been used as one important source of relevant information, as far as it has proven to be useful and trustworthy from the viewpoint of people's concerns. The news media can give the first impetus, leading people to comment the issue in a form or another, or to look for more information and orientation elsewhere. Even in the online environment, the internet news service often offers the topic and its first interpretation, which then is discussed and assessed in the news service's discussion forum or its blogosphere. The information is not only what the original piece of news has included, but all the corrections and additions that the members of online audience have made⁵. Does this represent a change in the epistemic order?

It seems plausible that the more complex society and people's everyday life become, and the faster the everyday life choices and decisions have to be made, the less the traditional universal newspaper seen as a department store of information can offer solutions to people's epistemic needs (see *The Economist*, 16 May 2009: 73–74).

Another important theme concerns the claim that the decline in the news media leads to the dispersion of the national public sphere, and that as the audiences get fragmented there is a loss in civic solidarity, elemental for democracy (see e.g. Calhoun, 2008). There are several problems with this claim, however. The first is the assumption that the national public sphere is constructed around the issues that the news media deems relevant, and that this sphere disperses, that is, the issues lose their relevance, if and when the quality journalism declines. It may well be that there develop other venues to discuss and other ways to address these issues, that their relevance is not after all dependent on the existence of news media.

The second problem is that all evidence seems to show that the claims of the demise of the public sphere are much exaggerated. Despite of fragmented audience, all different channels bring us the same main headlines and general news stories: We all knew of the death of Michael Jackson within a few minutes after it was announced. We all knew of the school shootings in Finland even when the situations were still hot. We all knew of the crash of the French airplane in the Atlantic in a few

minutes, etc. Apparently, the same goes with domestic news in all countries.

What appears to be the dividing and fragmenting factor are not the news and their main interpretations, but different life experiences and expectations as well as diverse cultural tastes and traditions, which separate media consumers between the channels and entertainment contents as well as between different use and consumption patterns. This means that there might be an erosion of the liberal-democratic national public sphere but it is not a result of media or media technology. It does not mean that there is less public sphere today than there was earlier. As new kind of communities and commonalities develop, a number of public spheres, connected with national, transnational as well as global networks and fora emerge and become more visible.

6. BRIEF CONCLUSION

The media has now – finally – met with the phenomenon which has for long been discussed and debated in social theory and social sciences, called here the epistemic turn⁶.

What can we say about the characteristics of the new epistemic regime? Much has been written about the democratizing and empowering implication of the internet and the new social media. Much of it can be labelled as idealistic and representing technological optimism. What I predict is that the new epistemic regime concerns the re-arrangement of communicative relations:

- The news media has not any more the status of the primary definer of world events. Citizens access their primary information as well as interpretations through different channels and from multiple sources, of which the news media is only one source.
- The old concept of universal newspaper (or department store model) has become outmoded, while some features may continue to gather larger audiences (news), especially cultural, entertainment and human interest contents divide audiences today to numerous sub-audiences which cannot be catered by a single medium.
- The traditional concept of news with fixed interpretation and a closure is transforming into a new concept based on flow and continuation. News is a process, the combination of the original information and its commentaries and amendments.

- The traditional concept of the national public sphere with a national audience, produced and served by the news media (newspapers, television channels) has already transformed to a multi-layered sphere of communication networks which are based on shared concerns, common tastes, cultural affinities etc., and which can be as well national as local, transnational and global in their reach.
- The traditional political system with one decision making centre (national parliaments and governments) will make way to functional division between decision making structures on different levels, whose competence is dependent of the nature of the problem and whose decision makers are all those people concerned or directly by it.

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NOTES

- 1 Material for this article has been gathered in the summer of 2009. As the economic recession continues, the situation of the media and journalism may change in ways that could not be seen at the time of writing.
- 2 Sanoma Group is the biggest media house in Nordic countries. Sanoma News is its newspaper arm. See <http://www.sanoma.com/content.aspx?f=2110>.
- 3 The functions are often referred in different terms (see van Cuilenberg & McQuail, 2002; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Napoli, 2001) but principally they mean the same thing.
- 4 In Finland the media companies have continued to make better than average results, despite the deep recession in 2008–2009. Most newspapers are still financially strong and assessed as good investments where the risk is low and the return is good. (See HS, 10 July 2009; Talouselämä, 29 May 2009.)
- 5 For descriptions of how people use online news services, see SK, 27 July 2009; Talouselämä, 12 June 2009; FT, 13 July 2009; Hintikka, 2009.
- 6 The phenomenon has been addressed by many different concepts, including anti-foundationalism, postmodernism, cultural turn, discourse theory of truth, deconstructivism, etc.

Political discourse cultures in Europe: Explaining the multi-segmentation of the European public sphere through a transnational and transcultural perspective

Andreas Hepp, Johanna Möller, Katharina Kleinen-von
Königslöw, Michael Brüggemann, Swantje Lingenberg

1. THE 'THEORETICAL HORIZON' OF COMPARATIVE MEDIA RESEARCH

Reflecting on the current state of transnational and transcultural comparative media research, we can ascertain a certain paradox. On the one hand, there are many especially theory-driven publications on the high complexity of communicative landscapes in a 'global media age'. Arjun Appadurai speaks about the complexity of global mediascapes (Appadurai, 1996: 33), understanding them as "*fluid, irregular shapes*" of mediated communicative flows. Or Ien Ang has discussed the indeterminacy as a result of the "*too many, unpredictable determinations*" (Ang, 1996: 172 – emphasis in original) of global media culture. Based on arguments like these, a discussion is emerging about de-westernising (Curran & Park, 2000) and internationalising (Thussu, 2009) media and communication studies that is seen as necessary to address the translocal communicative connections of the present global media age.

On the other hand, we notice a striking narrowness in the methodological approach of much comparative media and communication research. Typically we find a methodological basis that has been called a "*container theory of society*" (Beck, 2000: 23), resulting in "*methodological nationalism*" (Beck, 2000: 64): The nation state is considered as a 'container' of a certain media system, media market and media culture. Comparative media and communication research is therefore structured

in a “*binary comparative semantic*” (Hepp & Couldry, 2009: 37), comparing two or more ‘containers’ and their ‘contents’ with each other: Comparative media and communication research in Europe and beyond invariably boils down to comparing ‘one country’ (and its media system, market and culture) with another. As we have outlined elsewhere (Hepp & Couldry, 2009: 37–41), we need a much more sophisticated transcultural comparative approach that at the same time reflects the complexity of present media landscapes and accepts the still existing relevance of the nation, especially in the field of political communication.

The transcultural comparative semantic we want to propose takes the existence of global media capitalism as its starting point. Across different states, global media capitalism becomes a structuring force in the sense that in different regions of the world media communication is more and more considered as an ‘exchange of economic goods’, and not merely as a communication process with the aim of a better reciprocal understanding (cf. Hesmondhalgh, 2007). Nevertheless, we have to bear in mind that because of its over-determination, this global media capitalism does not standardise the articulation of meaning. Quite often, global media capitalism seems to be rather a source of ongoing cultural fragmentation, contestation and misunderstanding – not only *between* national cultures but also *across* them. However, within global media capitalism, political (media) systems are the most territorially related entities because the legitimacy of political decision-making is still to a high degree state-related. Nevertheless, as soon as questions of media culture come to the fore, we have to have in mind that cultural thickenings can either be broadly territorialised (as with national cultures, articulated with reference to a state and its territory) or they can transgress states and their territories (as with a transnational professionalisation of journalism) (cf. Mancini, 2007).

Within this chapter, our aim is to demonstrate that a more sophisticated comparative approach of this kind not only reflects the theoretical discussions within cultural and social sciences. Moreover, it also helps to explain ‘what’s going on’ with the possibilities and impossibilities of a European public sphere. Therefore, we develop a four-step argument: First, on the basis of a long-term content analysis of media debates we want to explore how far we have to understand the European public sphere as multi-segmented. Second, and in the frame of a transcultural comparative semantic, we outline a concept of ‘political discourse cultures’ as an explanatory tool for understanding these processes of multi-segmentation. Based on this concept, third, we can capture different cultural patterns of ‘nationalisation’ and ‘addressing’

within European political communication. Finally, we discuss this research as a model that can generally widen our perspective on comparative media research.

2. THE MULTI-SEGMENTATION OF A 'EUROPEAN PUBLIC SPHERE'

Although the concept of the public sphere was conceived of in the 18th century and has only been further theorised since the 1960s (Habermas, 1989), within a short time it rose to become a key concept for research on political communication. Without going into too much detail, we want to define *public sphere* in an overall empirical orientation as a general accessible thickening of political 'forums' networks, legitimating political decision-making and actions (Ferree et al., 2002). Therefore, a public sphere is a space of political communication, "*characterised by a higher density internally than that across borders*" (Peters, 2008: 218).

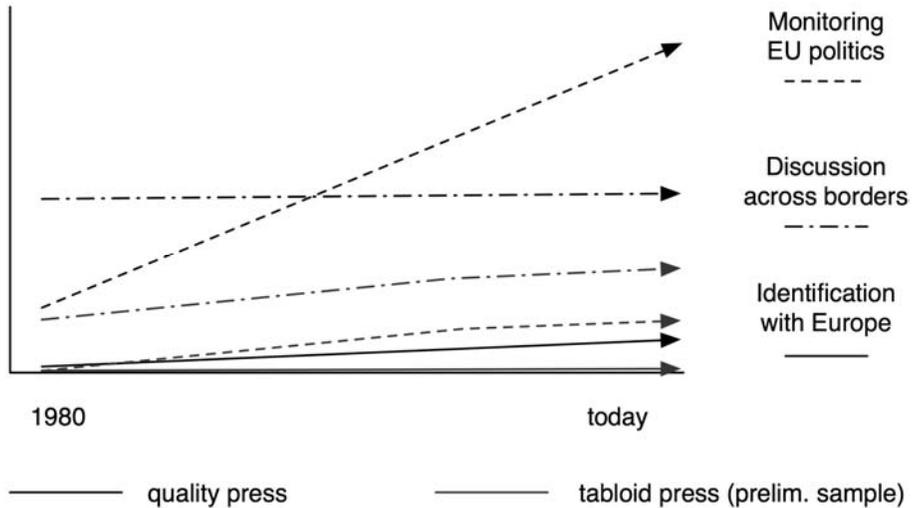
Such an understanding of public sphere makes it possible to theorise national public spheres within Europe as well as a transnational public sphere without one precluding the other: While national public spheres remain as national thickenings of political communication, we can understand the European public sphere as a certain thickening that 'layers' in a lesser intensity across these national public spheres. Thus we can investigate empirically the articulation of a European public sphere across three dimensions of the transnationalisation of national public spheres (cf. Wessler, et al., 2008: 10f.):

- *Vertical dimension*, in the case of the European public sphere a shared monitoring of EU politics.
- *Horizontal dimension*, which means a shared discussion about each other across national borders.
- *Collective identification*, especially the expression of a shared sense of belonging, for example through European we-references.

Based on these considerations we have conducted content analyses of the most important 'quality' and 'tabloid' newspapers in six European countries (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Poland) over two constructed weeks in the years 1982, 1989, 1996, 2003 and 2008 (cf. Wessler et al., 2008: 26–32)¹. We focus on the press because quality newspapers can be considered as containing the most transnationalised media content, much more than for example television news (cf. Groothues,

2004; Kevin, 2003), while tabloids can be understood as their opposite in this aspect. Additionally, a focus on print media makes historical content analyses possible. The core component of our content analyses were discursive articles in the political section of the newspapers.

Figure 1: The Multi-Segmented European Public Sphere



The complex results of our analysis can best be condensed using the concept of a *multi-segmented European public sphere* (see Figure 1). In the vertical dimension, we have across all countries especially within the quality press (and on a lower level within the tabloid press) – an increasing monitoring of EU politics. In the horizontal dimension, we find in the quality press a high-level stagnation of cross-border discussion (that is a media coverage about other European countries), in the tabloid press an increase starting from a much lower level. And in relation to an identification with Europe, we find a certain amount of identification in the quality press (expressed in the use of a shared ‘we’), but nearly no identification in the tabloid papers. We understand these results as a *multi-segmentation* as, first of all, across all countries a European public sphere exists in the sense of a thickening of the monitoring of EU politics. However, this thickening remains *segmented in relation to nations* (first the vertical monitoring of EU politics remains in the frame of a national reporting, second the horizontal discussion does not increase) as well as *segmented in relation to the kind of media outlet* (the quality press is much more Europeanised than the tabloid press).

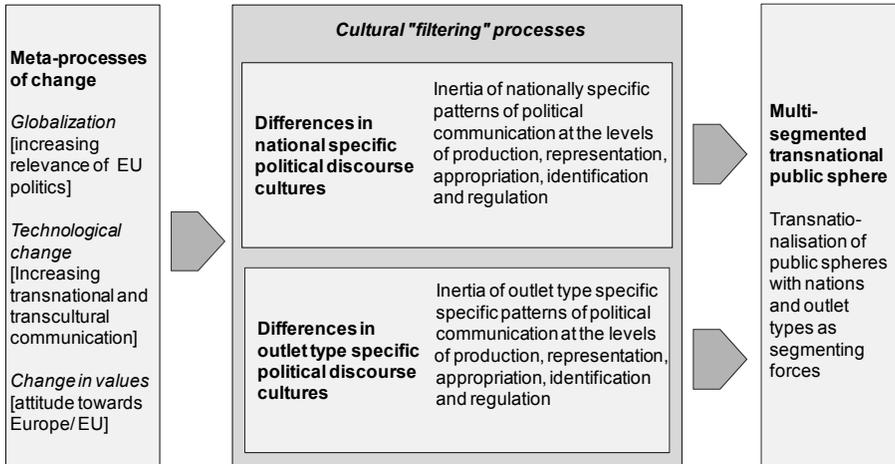
3. 'POLITICAL DISCOURSE CULTURES' AS AN EXPLANATION

We would like to propose that these results of a multi-segmented European public sphere can best be explained culturally. An argumentation simply within political economy falls short, as newspapers across *all* the different researched countries are in private ownership and we do not have differences with respect to state, public or private ownership. Additionally, a shared transnational ownership, as is the case of the Polish *Fakt* and the German *Bild* – both part of the Springer press consortium – does not result for example in shared transnational coverage. Moreover, language is – though highly important – not a sufficient explanation, as national segmentation also occurs between countries with the same language (Austria and Germany). However, as Bernhard Peters (2008: 246) has argued, “*public spheres have a social and cultural foundation that extends well beyond the framework of media markets and media organisations*”. In our perspective this ‘foundation’ can be theorised as ‘political discourse culture’ (Hepp & Wessler, 2009). In core, we understand a political discourse culture as a specific thickening of cultural patterns producing, representing and appropriating political communication as well as related cultural patterns of regulation and identification. These cultural patterns are much more stable and inert than the – in some cases highly situative – political discourses on a certain topic, constituting in their totality the communicative spaces of national and transnational public spheres.

Bearing this in mind, we are – at least theoretically – confronted with two possible kinds of inertia in relation to political discourse cultures in Europe:

- 1/ *Inertia of national political discourse cultures*: A ‘stability’ of national cultural patterns of political discourse that might explain the national segmentation.
- 2/ *Inertia of political outlet type specific discourse cultures*: A ‘stability’ of cultural patterns in relation to certain types of outlets that might explain a segmentation on this level.

Besides that, we have at least the possible development of pan-European shared cultural patterns of political communication that might be the foundation of a more stable European public sphere in the future. Such an approach helps to explain the present multi-segmentation of public spheres in Europe (see Figur2 below).

Figure 2 Explaining the multi-segmented European public sphere

This figure visualises the complex interrelationship between meta-processes of changing political communication, the inertia of political discourse cultures and the resulting multi-segmented, transnational European public sphere. On the one hand, we argue that each country in Europe is confronted with comparable meta-processes of change. That is, first, an increasing globalisation, which is, beside other consequences, reflected politically in the project of the European Union that concentrates more and more of the fundamental political decisions. Because of this, we have a gaining national relevance of European Union politics, which explains the increasing transnationally shared monitoring of EU politics. Second, a technological change is taking place, offering easier possibilities of transnational and transcultural communication via different satellite technologies and digital media. These technological conditions affect any transnationalisation of national public spheres. Finally, a change in values in relation to political attitudes occurs. This becomes evident especially in Europe, where a large number of images of the 'other' nation have dispersed since World War II and the breakdown of the former Eastern Bloc.

However, these meta-processes do not automatically compel a transnational communicative space, such as a European public sphere. Our research outcomes display a double inertia of political discourse cultures: First, we found differences in nation-specific political discourse cultures – that is: inertia of national patterns of political communication. Second, differences in outlet types (types of newspapers) point towards specific political discourse cultures – that is: inertia of outlet-related

patterns of political communication at the same levels. These different kinds of inertia 'filter' the meta-processes of change nationally as well as transnationally and have as a result a multi-segmented European public sphere. While the first kind of filtering process roots in the stability of national patterns of political communication, mediated by the national traditions of political decision making (cf. Pfetsch, 2001), the second kind of filtering process is related to a transnational and transcultural professionalism in journalism that is more determined by the type of media outlet than by the journalists' national context (cf. Mancini, 2007).

Such a scheme is of course highly simplifying, but because of its simplification it gives us an orientation for empirical research on cultural patterns of political communication in Europe.

4. CULTURAL PATTERNS OF 'NATIONALISATION' AND 'ADDRESSING'

Analysing these two filtering processes, we first of all focused on the level of production, where we can concretise them to processes of 'nationalisation' and 'addressing' in and across our researched European countries. More specifically, we observed and interviewed EU and foreign affairs editors from quality and tabloid dailies, as well as from regional newspapers. This broad sample aimed at discovering national specifics by comparison of country-specific political discourse cultures and, second, at investigating overlapping outlet specificities - possibly transnational patterns of news production. Both, investigation and analysis put the emphasis on EU-related and other foreign coverage. Thus, filtering processes of nationalisation and (outlet related) addressing display the contrast of national and transnational elements within daily journalistic practice.

1. Nationalisation as a journalistic practice means framing news content in a way that a reader living in a given country will be able to relate its content to his own experiences. In order to identify nationalisation practices in our interview data with journalists on the media coverage practices, we considered a limited set of codes related to journalistic decision-making and article production processes - these are *preferred topics*, *importance of reporting on EU*, *importance of reporting on EU countries* and *importance of reporting on other foreign news*. Considering these codes, one finds that nationalisation patterns become evident in the repeating and consistent references to national paradigms, mainly regarding EU,

but also foreign news coverage. To put it more precisely, topics make it to a newspaper's agenda, as journalists are able to link them to experiences and problem constellations readers feel familiar with in their given national context. Throughout the whole sample, journalists repeatedly point out that on the one hand EU politics have an increasing impact on people's daily life, but still topics purely focusing on EU related matters do not prevail on news agendas. One of the Polish interviewees puts it clearly: "*Reporting on Europe in the first place is boring*". Leaving out topics with an unquestionably high news value, preferred EU-related material links transnational events to national matters and experiences. This is true in the case of tabloids as well as in the case of quality and regional newspapers. While the former focus on questions formulated, for example, by an editor of the German *BILD* "*Will this or that EU decision directly affect the reader?*", the latter aim at pointing out processes relevant for the political situation readers live with.

Focusing more on non-EU foreign coverage, the significance of national paradigms becomes even more evident. Generally, those topics make it to the newspaper's agenda, which relates a foreign story directly to situations readers feel especially familiar or exceptionally irritated with. These moments of either emphatic comparison are characteristic with regard to every sample unit. Consequently, the Polish press was exceptionally interested in the case of civil war in Georgia. The suffering of Georgian people from Russian suppression reminds Polish readers of their own dependence on the former world power – a senior editor of the *Gazeta Wyborcza* summarizes: "*Russia always wins through!*"

Despite these nationalisation processes, conceptualized as emphatic moments of national comparison, our analysis suggests another nationalisation pattern: the 'everyday soaking' of the paper with EU-related coverage and content. By this we mean first that the EU has become part of everyday reality to an extent that coverage related to it can no longer be categorized as foreign, economic or national news. The French quality newspaper *Le Monde* and its departmental structures provide an illustrative example. Coverage on the Lisbon Treaty debate had to be realized by the national as well as the international department, resulting in negotiations between them. Since then, EU coverage has become an integral part of the national reporting. Among other things, this resulted in the newspaper section 'Europe-France'. One of the senior editors highlights that giving birth to this new section reflects the increasing difficulty of covering national politics without instantly comparing this to events outside France. A similar case can be found in the Polish *Gazeta*

Wyborcza. The editors created a regular section with a flexible title; one day it reports everyday life in Poland in the section 'Welcome to Poland'. Another day the focus is on Poles or people from other European countries experiencing their everyday life as Europeans. These articles are published under the headline 'Welcome to Europe'. Second, this pattern of 'soaking' includes the increasing significance of EU references within media content – facts, information and aspects related to the EU appear regularly *as part*, not *as object* of articles or comments. The EU has, as a foreign news editor of the German *FAZ* puts it, become "*an area of political action*" – the question of being part of readers' natural surrounding seems to be answered. Under these conditions an EU 'soaking' of national and other news coverage seems corollary.

The aforementioned two patterns depict, albeit in a reduced way, the interweaving of nationalisation and Europeanisation processes. The relevance of national paradigms for EU coverage as well as the simultaneous 'soaking' of newspaper structures and press content by EU references throughout the investigated sample shed light on a more complex idea of the emergence of Europeanised public spheres. Europeanisation seems to be more comprehensive, while taking into account processes of nationalisation at the same time.

2. Besides nationalisation patterns, journalistic practices differ among newspaper types. Our analysis allowed for the construction of four outlet types, differing by their way of addressing publics – 'analyst', 'ambassador', 'reporter' and 'caterer'². These are not limited to specific countries, but cover all the newspapers included in our sample. In order to shed light on a further segmentation determining Europeanisation processes (various levels of Europeanisation in the case of different outlet types), we found a categorization which moves beyond the simplifying distinction of quality and tabloid newspapers. The key category *self-conception newspaper* was crucial in order to clarify a newspaper's rationale behind their EU and foreign news coverage.

A newspaper fitting the type 'analyst' puts emphasis on an extensive discussion of political processes. Here, 'extensive' means the newspaper aims at regarding central topics from different standpoints, in different sections and in different forms – even within a single issue. An extreme example is the German *FAZ*, regularly presenting a wide scope of various journalistic approaches: "*We often have very heterogeneous ideas within the newspaper concerning specific topics, whatever it may be, either, education policy, retail-price maintenance for books, or the war in Iraq*". This approach is also true in the case of EU coverage. In contrast, the

'ambassador' puts high emphasis on explaining political processes with regard to a specific ideology. Thus, journalists working in a newspaper that fits this type, often use a pedagogical approach on EU and foreign affairs topics, linked to an explicit pro-EU position. One example is the Polish *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which, in the words of the editor-in-chief of the foreign department, regularly highlights its supportive position towards Europe – nowadays mainly in terms of the European idea: *"We try to be a European newspaper. [...] It means to be open to Europe and to the world. Not to be limited only to Polish problems"*. Another example is the case of the French daily *Le Parisien*, as well as the regional newspaper *Ouest France*. One of the editors highlights the importance of addressing people and explaining to them the political world they live in: *"It's necessary to be didactic and pedagogical at the same time, so that the people can understand a little bit of what is happening. There are very fascinating topics [...] Europe: it's still necessary to explain it to me"*. The third type, the 'reporter', neither presents the ambition of extensive coverage, nor do journalists feel the necessity of explaining the world to the people – this kind of newspaper contains a reduced and compact coverage of political processes. Foreign and EU news is covered on a basic level and is thus part of the news service the daily provides. This very economic way of reporting foreign and EU news is often realized by regional newspapers, such as the German *WAZ* or the Polish *Dziennik Zachodni*. The 'caterer', last but not least, plays primarily to the (perceived) audience interests. Newspapers such as the German *BILD* or the Polish *Fakt*, provide their readers mainly with EU and foreign affairs soft news. International coverage is only of interest if the news is shocking, sensational or if they allow strong emphatic comparisons.

There is one main conclusion resulting from seeing European newspapers through the lens of this typology of addressing publics. In order to understand the possible emergence of a European public sphere one needs a more sophisticated understanding of newspapers' self-conceptions and missions. The hitherto predominant distinction of quality and tabloid press limits the understanding of public spheres to the simple contrast of some papers pushing and other papers hindering the emergence of a European public sphere. Instead, we find four types of 'addressing' – the 'analyst', 'ambassador', 'reporter' and 'caterer'. All these types occur transnationally.

Relating this back to our more general reflections, we see how far cultural patterns of 'nationalisation' and 'addressing' in journalistic practice help to explain why we are confronted with a *multi-segmented* European public sphere: This is articulated on the bases of stable

national political discourse cultures, while across them outlet-type specific political discourse cultures develop. To what extent the latter might not only bring about an additional segmentation but also – substantiated in their transnational character – contribute to a European public sphere remains an open question.

5. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS?

The aim of our chapter was twofold: Basically we tried to demonstrate the way a cultural approach helps to explain the multi-segmentation of a European public sphere. Beyond this empirical argumentation, we framed this as an example, demonstrating that such a cultural explanation cannot remain in a binary comparative semantic, but must take cultural patterns beyond the national seriously. Considering this, three aspects can be learned from this kind of research on a more general level.

- 1/ 'Open comparison': In all, our research can be understood as a cue to conduct comparative research in a much more open manner than is usually realised within media and communication studies. Therefore, we must be 'open' when comparing different cultural patterns, and in this process reflect very carefully which patterns are 'national' and which patterns are stable 'beyond' this national level. Only such an open comparison makes it possible to investigate 'what's going on' in the field of transnational and transcultural communication.
- 2/ 'Cultural complexity': Our research as we understand it demonstrates the multi-layering of the cultural thickenings we are confronted with when analysing transnational and transcultural communication. On a theoretical level, the implication of this is that we need more sophisticated understandings of 'culture' and its relation to media communication than we mostly find in comparative media research, with its tendency to theorise (media) culture more or less on a national level.
- 3/ 'Translocality of the media': This brings us to our third argument, and that is to reflect culture and media communication translocally, a fundamental approach others also argue for (cf. for example Carpentier, 2008). This means to realise that the specificity of media communication lies in its opportunity to construct communicative relations beyond the local across space (and time). For many years this translocal connectivity had been national-territorial and was strongly related to the construction of the

nation state. However, in the present we are confronted with a much higher complexity of communicative relations that can also be related to the construction of the supra-national (in our case the EU) or to deterritorial communities (political movements, youth scenes etc.).

Therefore, the present translocality of the media refers back to a more open comparison and a reflection of the related cultural complexity. This said, we hope that our study can function beyond its concrete results as an invitation for an open comparative media and communication research that analyses the present cultural complexity critically.

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NOTES

- 1 While the content analysis for the quality press has been completed, the content analysis for the tabloid press is still in progress. So all respective arguments are based on a preliminary sample.
- 2 The terms 'reporter' and 'ambassador' were first introduced by Heikkilä and Kunelius (2008). However, they theorise them in a different way than we do.

Digital cultural heritage. Challenging museums, archives and users

Agnes Aljas and Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt¹

1. INTRODUCTION

Several studies claim that today's museums think too little in terms of who the users of their online sites are, why people go there, and how museums could better adapt to their needs (Farber and Radensky, 2008; Roberto, 2008; Salgado, 2008; Samis, 2008). At the same time, there is a strong consensus that online spaces are very important for the pre- and after museum visit experience (Filippini-Fantoni and Bowen, 2007; Fisher and Twiss-Garrity, 2007; Durbin, 2008). Besides extending the museum experience online, Estonian museums are also facing the task of digitizing increasing amounts of artefacts (texts, photos, films, objects, etc.) to be placed in online digital storage spaces. Estonia has a Digital Cultural Heritage strategy (Eesti..., 2003), according to which the aim of the memory institutions, such as museums, is to transfer the cultural heritage in an uniform way to (almost) everyone, to widen and expand the user groups, and to introduce the cultural heritage outside of the state borders and language space. As we learn from the Estonian perspective, the cultural heritage is defined by state apparatuses and official institutions, by administrators and cultural engineers, whose task it is to reproduce national culture and promote the identification of citizens with that culture. In most of the cases this is done in line with Bendix (2000: 38), where heritage can be distinguished from other ways of aligning the past with the present by "*its capacity to hide the complexities of history and politics*".

Museums are facing many challenges through digitizing their materials. In many ways, these challenges correspond to those that museums have been facing for centuries now; the focus is on the relationship between the users and the collections of the museums, and modern technologies are only one possible intermediary for these

relationships. The classical roles of the museum are collecting, preserving, research and basic interpretations. In general, museums – especially if they are publicly funded – are seen as being obliged to give things back to society in order to “justify their existence”. According to Flemming (2007), this could be seen as the social responsibility of the museum. To Flemming, this responsibility is met when staff commits themselves to identifying and meeting the needs of the public, and when they place this at the top of their priorities (Fleming, 2007). Digitization and making the cultural heritage materials available online – as subscribed by Estonian Digital Cultural Heritage strategy (Eesti..., 2003) – could be seen as one possible way of taking care of those responsibilities. In a country where public services to an increasing extent are provided in online environments, museums face a similar pressure to do so by both users and administrators.

This article aims to explore the dynamics between employees of the cultural institutions as providers of the digital content and youth groups as potential target audiences for it. In order to do so it draws on several different sets of data. In 2008, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted in four different memory institutions in Tartu² (the second biggest town in Estonia) aiming at opening up the discussion about digitizing and communicating cultural heritage. In addition to that, two focus group interviews³ were conducted with young people (one with secondary school pupils and another with university students and young researchers) in order to explore how they would like to use the cultural heritage.

For the memory institutions the digitization of cultural heritage materials is understood as fulfilling three basic needs for them. It serves: 1) as an aid in preservation, 2) as a way of opening access to wider publics, and 3) as a way to invite audiences to become active participants in introducing, learning and become involved in the cultural heritage – either through given interpretations, or through an invitation to the community to offer its own meanings to the cultural heritage materials stored in the museums. At the same time, for the young audiences, cultural heritage is most often seen as necessary for their understanding of the past, and the collective memory, in the context of research projects and school papers. As memory institutions the museums are understood as the systematic and safe keepers of the heritage for future generations, which is in line with the first two aims of the memory institutions’ digitalization projects, but notably much less in accordance with the participatory focus.

In the following chapter we analyse data gathered from museum professionals and young groups of potential audiences in the light of these three main aspects – preservation, opening access and participation for publics.

2. PRESERVATION AND PUBLICATION OF COLLECTIONS ONLINE

We presume that the museums and their collections exist for their users and visitors. Museums have defined the needs of the public in traditional contexts and known environments, such as exhibitions. But in addition the museums should nowadays also think in the same way about their visitors in the online environment. Many studies have however indicated that museums do not actually try to understand the users of their databases as they are creating online databases about museum collections (Farber and Radensky, 2008; Roberto, 2008; Salgado, 2008; Samis, 2008). Very often the basic idea of the database is simply to create a web-based version of the museum's objects gallery. Similarly, Estonian museums and archives see the creation of improved preservation possibilities, and the reduction of damages caused by usage, as the primary objective of digitization. So far the digitization has been focussed primarily on the materials most often used by researchers. Thus, one could argue that in these cases, digitization is very much a user driven activity. This kind of digitization practice has enabled Estonian National Archive to claim that 90% of their most used sources are available online. In addition, contract work materials are digitized on a current basis for exhibitions and publications. Materials, which the users have not yet discovered in a collection or have not shown interest in, are not a priority for digitization, first of all due to the lack of necessary financial resources and time for the process. The memory institutions also have fewer resources to focus on what Roberto (2008) and Samis (2008) have stressed as vital, that the museum's objects in the 'web of data' should not only be information sources, but also offer interpretation.

I think that much currently depends on financial possibilities. There are ideas and thoughts and another thing is that people should cooperate in respect of financial possibilities. And cooperation between institutions inevitably takes time (ELM).

However, this kind of practice leads to an unsystematic and often project-based digitization process. More often, the interviews indicate that digitization is first and foremost perceived as a technical process of generating digital files of the documents and much less attention is paid to the information architecture, interpretations and systematization of these works. Consequently, in all memory institutions the first step has been to introduce a web-based ordering and delivery system. This requires a precise order from the client, which potentially makes things easier for the user of the collections, but it also challenges them to have greater pre-knowledge of the collections.

So far, all the cultural heritage digitization strategies have remained on paper, and the lack of real cooperation between major institutions has not enhanced a uniform development. Various institutions have created several different databases from similar material, but these do not form an integral whole, nor do they enable the users to find information in one place in a more convenient way.

Between archives, we have already learnt that users are not interested whether the thing they are looking for is in the state archives, history archives, film archives – users are interested in using the information (NAE).

Similarly, a shortcoming cited by focus group members to orientation in databases of memory institutions is the lack of a single unified system and the complexity in finding databases. In practice, finding and using many museum or archive databases requires guidance from a teacher or advisor because memory institutions lack visibility in search engine results.

I was a senior-year student in upper secondary school, when ERNI was introduced and it wasn't really a finished product. My literature teacher demonstrated it. For me it was interesting but it was completely different and there were texts that I would not otherwise have read or viewed and it was very interesting. For me, it was a real eye-opener and in some sense I have been using these texts to this day. (2F2)

This indicates that proper guidance to the online databases can be inspiring for the user, but only a few focus group members have continued to use the databases found. The use of the databases is above all made more difficult by the lack of knowledge about the content

offered in the database, which makes it difficult to perform a search; moreover, the data structure is too complicated for consistent use.

In the web-based presentation of collections, experts have so far placed less importance in the desire to increase the openness and recognition of memory institutions. Therefore, increasing the number of users and facilitating access to collections through publication via the web can be considered as the second objective of digitization. The superiority of the original artefact is still considered more important than the interpretations and value generated through its digital representations.

Users will definitely be glad, if they can see it [data on the Internet – authors]. Because users are very lazy... we would, of course, like to see users checking out those things on the web and having access, but also coming here. I can understand users – archives are open on workdays and in working hours, and like this all archives. One has to be retired, on childcare leave or unemployed to be able to go and study archive materials and original documents (ELM).

In many ways, the museum and archive workers in Estonia still portray the object-centeredness of the Victorian museums, where viewing the glass caskets was more relevant than the experiences and relationships with the museum user and the artefacts. This is also reflected in the view that online databases are only incentives for the user to find their way to the original artefacts stored in the museums or archives.

3. WIDENING ACCESS THROUGH ESTABLISHED DATABASES AND POTENTIAL NEW ONES

Depending on the topic of every exhibition, the expectations of various target groups, as well as the relevant context, are taken into account, and the ideal viewer (or visitor) has envisaged quite clearly. The same logic has not been applied, however, when it comes to online exhibitions or databases of the museum or archive's information.

One objective in the creation of databases in the Estonian National Archives has been to improve the availability of collections to hobbyists in addition to researchers.

[T]he physical research hall in this house has approximately 20 workplaces and 40–50 people pass through there every day. Sometimes less and sometimes more. Now we have opened a virtual research hall and I think we will

have about sixty users early in the morning [...] and at best times we will have over 500 users simultaneously from all over the world. Archive using possibilities have increased tremendously (NAE).

The database search systems and the presentation of materials corresponds to the system of collections, the meta-data added to the information has been selected on the basis of the needs of the 'ordinary user' of the databases. In the context of databases, the term 'ordinary user' first of all means researchers of various levels and target groups with specific interest – teachers, students, media and museum workers. The common attitude is that users are already from the very start highly knowledgeable, motivated and interested in museums and studying the cultural heritage via the web. And if museums loads something up the users will come anyway.

Feedback from the users of databases has so far been completely neglected and in the few instances some comments have been made, they are in general positive. This has given grounds to presuming, that the databases are user-friendly and finding the necessary information is easy. There is no information about various user groups and the following is a rather common answer:

But we haven't received much feedback on who the ordinary user of databases is. It is clear that the media uses it, various portals, teachers – from them, we have received feedback – when they are asking whether they can use it, or telling us that they have found this or that fault and could we please fix it (ELM).

Cultural heritage institutions' professionals see that the web environment could bring people with no research or museum interest to museums, particularly younger age groups. Digitalised collections and search systems make it possible to attract interest and bring wider user groups to museums and originals. Similarly, the participants in the two focus groups assume that good and user-friendly databases would help to bring them closer to the museums' activities. Users were asked to describe ideal web portals that would draw them to museums, and five principles can be summarized from their discussions.

1/ A memory institution must have a presence on the Web along with all of its content, as it is often not possible for users to visit the institution.

Here the indication is that although the professionals would like to see the online collections as leading to the physical museum, or archive

experience, the youth focus group participants see that as a less important factor. The museum professionals do not believe that digitization will weaken users' interest in originals. They are therefore confident that no virtual exhibition or database can replace a three dimensional original copy, or an old photograph, film or document. A digital database is first of all seen as an incentive to interest the user and spark the desire to see the actual original. At the same time the interviewees admit that many users will probably not make it any further than the databases. However, for the participants of the youth focus groups the museum database should be able to sustain the online representations on its own.

2/ A database must contain an introduction to its structure and data, containing abundant illustrations, video material and interviews.

When digitizing materials, museums often focus on one type of things at a time - for instance, all glass-plated photos, all maps etc, while users would much rather have materials that are interlinked together through a story. Here the digital museum can almost be seen as evoking a rebirth of the whole concept of the museum, in a similar way as the Victorian museum as a storage space of objects was revolutionized through Neurath's revolution in early 20th century (Henning, 2006).

3/ The data (i.e. list of sources, digitized sources) must also include interpretations, context and background information that would help create associations and create a whole, besides containing links/references to other related databases.

While in the museum context, professionals see digitization as an aim of its own and have the objects to tell their story, young users are much more interested in having that work done for them through provision of the materials that are already interlinked and contextualized by interpretations.

4/ Multifaceted information should be structured pursuant to the user profiles so that it would be possible to distinguish between information that is relevant for researchers and for users, who just try to find interesting things, and so avoid information "noise".

Here the young participants of the focus groups indicate a clear understanding of the differences of the potential audiences of the digital heritage materials. The possibility of various user levels distance itself from the heritage professional's view, where all the database users are perceived to be professionals and equally interested and knowledgeable

in all the aspects. As in our focus groups, two different potential audiences – 1) secondary school pupils and 2) university students and young researchers acknowledged that interests in different subject matters vary, the differentiation of user profiles seems like a good (albeit time and resource-consuming) solution.

5/ Various cultural heritage databases should be consolidated in one environment and the structure should be unified.

The super-database of all Estonian cultural heritage materials seems to be a common wish for all – bureaucrats who have drafted the digital heritage policy, museum workers and potential users. However, today the lack of resources, strategic planning and conceptualised understanding of the needs of the public and museums stands in a way of having this dream come true.

4. ENGAGING USERS IN THE CREATION OF COLLECTIONS

The third objective of digitization is to engage users in the collection of digital materials and the creation of cultural heritage via the web. Henning (2006: 130) sees that internet in its database like structure would enable to re-enact the Foucauldian dream of the return of curiosity and thus also the age of curiosity cabinets in the history of the museums. Yet in many ways, despite the opening up and participatory proclamations of the Estonian digitization policies, in reality, the actual digitization of the materials ends up focused on keeping the “*Victorian era class caskets*” even in the digital form. The cultural institutions are still seeking solutions for participatory engagement that would satisfy all the parties. Although the most natural thing in Estonian digital space is online commentaries – and users are used to seeing them in a variety of forms and environments – there is still a distinct disinterest in participating in the museums’ online activities. This is by no means helped by the fact that museums are looking for quality materials. For the professionals, however, quality is not always reflected in those hastily scribbled remarks of the online commentaries tradition. The high standards and strict rules applied to the items ‘worthy’ of museums’ attention raises the entry possibilities for the participatory projects in some cases to unreachable levels.

At one point we were having a whole lot of trouble with it; because spam robots discovered it and we had 300 comments along the lines of 'see beautiful girls here'. Then we solved it by restricting comments from abroad. /.../ But we did create the option, hoping that people will write down their customs. But we need to think about how to change it. Because back then it wasn't so common to comment on every article, saying that it is stupid. Today, this is much more common (ELM).

Saldago (2008) and Farber and Radensky (2008) have shown in their studies that users are more prepared to interact with the museums in the context of new technologies and web-databases, but only if the systems are user-friendly. So the most important thing in creating the web-databases is the understanding of the users' need and their potential motivations in using the materials. It is also important to trust users and the public in creating the new cultural heritage, and to help them to establish environments for communication. However, as Durbin (2008) has shown in her paper on Web 2.0, modern online possibilities should not be viewed as neither technology nor experiment, but rather as an opportunity for museums to interact with the public in new ways.

All the professionals interviewed understand that it is of no use for the museum if the users collect materials on their own and have no option to add them in the museum collection. The creation of such possibilities requires both in the work organisation of institutions and separate management of materials and communication with users. At the same time, professionals have expectations of the users, that upon adding materials to the web-based databases of museums, the have to be compatible with the collection systems of memory institutions – knowledgeable of the cataloguing and meta-data information. On the other hand, experts find that the collection of users' digital material has helped them to better understand the users' needs, and has also made it possible to observe and understand their activity patterns in the internet environment. In many cases, the interviewees think that users have not yet developed a habit of contributing to memory institutions and at the moment electronic contributions have become less personal than information received in written form.

Well, when we were collecting school heritage, it differed from 1992 most of all by the fact that [at that time] there was an option to reply electronically... People could get questionnaires both by e-mail and from the computer. But the material we received on paper was more properly and purposefully prepared, because anything can happen on the Net... People write a little bit and anonymously, but there is no anonymity on paper... if it is organised

and assisted by teachers – you can't always check that with computers (ELM).

The contradicting results indicate that although there is a willingness – and need – to listen to the user as a source of modern heritage materials, there is also a perceived lack of skills of the “ordinary people” to participate in the museum activities.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Every memory institution understands its main role as storing and preserving its collections. Digitization is one way of maintaining the ideal storage conditions for the museum, or archive objects by making use of their digital copies, thus enabling the storage of the original. At the same time, all over the world, the user of the museum has been increasingly in the focus and museums are becoming more and more user-centred instead of being centred on their collections. Creating and interpreting the cultural heritage has been distanced from the experts and curators and also the community whose cultural heritage is at stake, is seen as a main interpreter. But not always does the community grasp its role as given. In the discussions with the cultural heritage institutions' professionals and members of young audiences, who are foreseen as the key target groups for the digital collections of the museums, the audience members are keen on searching and looking at the heritage materials, preferably across various collections, but would rather have the interpretations with the material. While the technological opportunities, call it web 2.0 or something else, are more and more available, the role of the user is equally fuzzy for the Estonian museum and archive employees and young members of the potential audiences. It is often felt that we first have to sort out the data – digitize, organise, make available and only then can we have a look at the interpretations.

The key focus of the interviews – with both professionals and users – has been around making the digitized materials available to the users. This inevitably boils down to the question of maximally effective information architecture. With increasing amounts of information available online both users and producers of the online materials feel that searchability, clarity and variety of the information is vital. However, in many cases, museum and archive professionals feel that users should master the traditional practices of cataloguing and key-wording the artefacts rather than having the museums and archives adapting those to

new conditions. Although no one assumes that the cultural heritage must compete with social networking sites or You Tube, one should face the fact that memory institutions are seen as aspects of the entertainment sector and that young people today are first and foremost familiar with the aforementioned online environments. This proposes a challenge for the memory institutions to grasp the possibilities offered by those online spaces, while still maintaining the traditional values and conceptions necessary for their professional identities. Many of the museum and archive experts feel that as existing cataloguing systems and database structures have worked for the museums for past nearly a hundred years they should remain like that. Others understand the challenge of opening up the museums and need to adapt to less experienced users' knowledge.

Despite the fact that traditionally the logic of the different memory institutions differ - museums see their role as more focused on interpretations, while the primary focus of the archives is of the storage and availability - the users of the heritage materials online do not care for the institutional background. For them, the key concern is the availability of the materials and the assistance that professionals can provide in interpretations of these materials.

In conclusion, we can say that in many ways, the online spaces and databases of the museums and archives provide a multitude of challenges. First role of the digital cultural heritage is to aid with the storage and to save the artefacts for the future. At the same time, institutions are not that interested in updating their own practices of cataloguing and meta-data and may thus miss out on the opportunity to increase the usability of the materials once they have been digitized. Secondly, although the need for relevant and easy-to-use online spaces is understood, the underlying assumption is still that people should need to come to the museum to see the originals, not only make use of the digital copies. Thirdly, there is need for mutual education for increasing the participatory possibilities of the museums and archives in order to grasp the potentials and opportunities hailed by the new technologies.

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NOTES

- 1 Authors are grateful for the support of ETF research grant no. 7162 and no. 8006.
- 2 Four interviews from Estonian National Museum - referred as ENM, six interviews from Estonian Literary Museum - referred as ELM, one interview from Estonian Sports Museum - referred as ESM and , one interview from The National Archives of Estonia - referred as NAE when quoting
- 3 Referred as 1 for the pupil's focus group and 2 for the students and researcher's focus group, F or M for the gender of speaker and number for the order around table.

'It's a business, that's just how it is ...': Documentary development in Great Britain and Germany

Anna Zoellner

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s liberalisation and commercialisation processes have caused dramatic changes and a growing economic determinism in Western television production. Financial pressures and competition have increased, whilst television programmes have become internationally traded commodities (see Havens, 2006; Moran, 2005), judged by ratings figures and marked by a related preference for entertainment and popular programming. This impacts strongly on the conditions in which television producers operate and consequently influences the kind of programmes they produce. Television documentary, as other programming genres, has been strongly affected by the increased financial pressure. Historically an underfunded area of television production with small production margins and limited prospects to generate additional income, producers struggle more than ever with sinking budgets, rising production costs and reduced broadcasting opportunities (see Kilborn, 2003).

Such developments are not restricted to a single nation state; in fact, they are the results of global developments in the media industries. Focusing on the conditions in British and German broadcasting, this article examines how independent documentary producers experience the current production context and how they develop new programme ideas within this framework. A particular focus is placed on the power relationship between broadcasters and independent producers and the economic imperatives it entails. A general similarity between the television systems in Great Britain and Germany is largely rooted in the fact that the current German broadcasting system was modelled on the

British public service broadcasting (PSB) concept after 1945, although organised in a federal and not a centralised structure (Hickethier, 1998; Wilke, 1999). Main features in both systems include the duality of public service and commercial broadcasting, and the existence of a broadcaster-publisher system where documentaries are produced both in-house by television networks and are contracted out to external, independent production companies¹. Largely facilitated by relatively wealthy public service channels with their remit to inform, educate and entertain, Great Britain and Germany possess a strong documentary tradition as part of their television schedules (Zoellner, 2002). However, both countries have also experienced a recent political and economic liberalisation and have gone through a period of commercialisation that has heightened economic pressure and competition. This presents a threat to PSB and its ideals. It also has a negative impact on documentary as a genre, since public service television represents the main funding and distribution body for documentary producers in these two national contexts. Due to their usually relatively modest rating success documentaries have low commercial priority for broadcasters and are threatened by a sole focus on economic criteria.

This particular industry setting creates three theoretical starting points: (1) First of all, documentary producers have the power to select and shape content for mass media exposure. They can offer issues and people a public platform and therefore perform a kind of gatekeeper role. (2) This power of selection is unevenly distributed within the broadcaster-publisher system where independent producers compete for a production contract with a network. In this system the commissioning editors make the final decisions and exercise substantial creative control, submitting the independents to significant economic and editorial dependency. Combined with (3) the economic characteristics of a commercialised and liberalised industry context, this raises the question of how the power structures of television production and their economic imperatives impact on the creation of new documentaries. I argue that the producers' dependency on broadcasting networks as a funding body and distribution platform intensifies the economic pressures of the broadcasting system with negative consequences for the form and content of television documentaries. The arguments made in this article are based on a media-ethnographic study² that follows in the tradition of production studies such as Dornfeld's (1998), Silverstone's (1985) and Elliott's (1972) work on documentary production. Rather than focusing on the production of a particular programme or film, as these authors have done, I am interested in a specific stage in the production process:

the project development phase. In this stage new programme ideas are selected for realisation, decisions about the form and content of these ideas are made and funding for their production is secured. The lack of transparency regarding these selection processes, their importance for the successive production process and the lack of research in this area call for examination.

2. INDEPENDENTS AS PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

The similarities in their broadcasting systems have led to strong parallels in the production processes and strategies in the two studied countries. The uneven power balance in the broadcaster-independent relationship limits independent producers' potential for agency, as commissioning editors have the sole decision power over the realisation of project ideas. In addition, a very high number of independent producers are competing for the attention of a handful of commissioning editors. Independents therefore aim to improve their power position and 'attractiveness' as a business partner in their negotiation with broadcasters. Editors receive hundreds of programme ideas and proposals every week and therefore need to prioritise and pre-select project ideas. In order to influence the decisions and selections made by commissioning editors in their favour, independent producers need to stand out from the competition and be perceived as reliable 'suppliers' of programming content. In this process they employ various tools and strategies; one of which is to pay very close attention to broadcasters' programming preferences when making development decisions concerning the content and form of new programmes.

Producers attempt to match their programme proposals closely with the requirements and preferences of commissioning editors in order to improve their chances of getting a commission. A keen eye will be kept on allocation of resources, especially with regard to the number of staff deployed and time expended since project development in independent companies is nearly always fully internally funded. They therefore exclude seemingly divergent programme ideas from the start as "*they don't have a chance anyhow*" (HoD (D), Int. 15/12/08). The existent and growing financial precariousness of the independent production sector for documentaries thus facilitates the prevalence of commercial objectives over artistic autonomy, as independents' primary aim is to please their broadcaster-client. The British Head of Development (HoD), for example, considers the orientation of proposals to broadcasters'

expectations as one of his main responsibilities. He describes his role as follows:

[To] come up with ideas, ideas that will work, ideas that commissioning editors want. Knowing what the commissioning editor wants, and trying to second-guess what they want. Knowing what other companies are doing so that we can kind of spin our ideas to make [them] stand out a little bit more (...) [E]ssentially, we are selling to them, so we need to know what they want and we have to do it effectively. (HoD (UK), Int. 15/10/07)

Independent producers tend to see themselves as service providers who operate in a business structure they have little influence on. They accept this role with an attitude of *"It's a business, that's just how it is"* and claim that they are *"trying to make [programmes] as good as we can and to make them as high quality as we can for the good of the rest of the company"*, as one British producer explained when discussing the company's move to high-volume, self-shooting documentary series over their traditional profile of more in-depth narrative one-off documentaries (Executive Producer A (UK), Int. 23/03/08). The economic success of their company becomes a priority for producers that outweighs any personal preferences they may have regarding the documentary genre. Personal detachment and reinterpretation processes support this shift on an individual level. All workers observed in this study differentiated between their professional role and their personal preferences when assessing documentaries. Personally, they tend to have higher expectations and appear quite critically minded as became apparent in the daily conversations about existing TV documentary programmes that colleagues had in the office. As professionals, however, they apply different standards in seeking to adjust to what they consider to be achievable in their particular production context. In this process, they elevate routine tasks and the matching of broadcaster preferences to an occupational ideal and a creative challenge and disregard their own preferences (Elliott, 1979). The executive producer/CEO of the German company describes this prevalence of economy over personal taste as being *"realistic"* in the current production climate:

I am completely realistic about broadcasters. What is possible there is connected with many restrictions. Of course, it's a business; I also see it that way. I've got to say, in the first instance it is a business and one just has to try to serve his business partners as well as possible, and that's something one has to be able to do first of all. I'd say it's an art in itself. I am pleased

enough if I manage just that. What I am interested in personally, that's a different matter. (CEO/Executive Producer (D), Int. 01/12/08)

Occupational standards and values furthermore allow programme-makers to distance themselves from the content they produce (Elliott, 1972b). This makes it easier for them to adapt to the constraints of their work situation and tends to reduce the number of problems they have in resolving the tension between art and commerce (see Banks, 2007). In a re-interpretation process of their personal ideals, they prioritise professional skills and competence based on shared industry standards as occupational values – even if this implies a reduction of artistic autonomy and ambition. Producers' priorities are also influenced by their role in a company and are altered with the transition from filmmaker to manager. In both of the studied companies the executive producers/partners were former filmmakers or producer/directors (PD), in some cases they assumed both roles with as concomitant reduction in their directing responsibilities. In their executive role their main objective is the creation of programmes of a quality that meets the broadcasting requirements. The type of documentary and its subject matter are, correspondingly, of a slightly lower order of priority. As two of the British executives observe:

I actually get a huge amount of satisfaction out of making a series like [observational wildlife series] which I never thought I'd say. I am not interested in animals particularly, I've never particularly enjoyed making presenter-led programmes as a PD is not what I really, really enjoy. But the thing is, if it's your own company, you get a thrill out of virtually everything you do, because we just enjoy making a success of it. (...) I really loved doing it and it's something that I probably naturally wouldn't watch, you know. (Executive Producer B (UK), Int. 23/03/08)

When you're looking at your career in isolation as a producer/director you want to do films which are individually stamped. When you are actually a director of an independent company, you sort of relax from that a little bit and you're happy to say, 'We're a broad-based, mainstream factual programme maker'. I am as proud of some of those things... (Executive Producer C (UK), Int. 10/04/08)

Nevertheless, independent documentary producers still have strong beliefs and opinions about documentary which are highly significant for their work. Without exception, all the observed workers were fascinated and motivated by the reality aspect of the genre. Its representation of

something that is 'real' remains an important and normative feature for documentary producers, especially in contrast to fiction programming³. Notions such as: "*it is not made up*", "*you can't fake it*", "*you know it really happened*", "*truth is stranger than fiction*", and, "*you can't bend reality*" were very common among the observed workers both in Great Britain and Germany when they were asked about what they liked about documentary. These were further accompanied by social purpose ideals such as that of educating viewers, providing them with information about the world they live in and contributing to press freedom. This passion is part of the documentary makers' motivation to proceed in this area of production, despite its low profit margins and underfinanced state compared to other television genres.

3. NATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN REGULATION AND INTERNATIONAL POSITIONING

The service-nature of independent documentary production described in the previous section is largely identical in both countries studied, although there are differences in the commissioning specifics, for example, in scheduling, in size of budget and in broadcaster profiles. Significant differences exist, however, in the regulatory and financial support for independent documentary producers, and in their position within the international documentary market. Despite the strong systemic similarities in the independent-broadcaster relationship in both countries, these disparities create slightly different economic conditions for independent producers in Great Britain and Germany with consequences for their capacity to operate both within national and international television markets.

Policy intervention can help to strengthen the economic power of independent producers as the weaker actor in the commissioning system. However, the motivation behind this support does not lie in the protectionism of cultural production but rather in the support of independent production companies as capitalist enterprises. Cultural industries, including television, are seen as a key economic sector in the 'information society' that offers potential for significant revenue (Hesmondhalgh, 2008; Banks, 2007). The UK has a long tradition of independent production within the enterprise discourse. Channel 4, for instance, was explicitly created in 1982 to act as a commissioner and distribution platform for independent producers. Although both countries have comparable national legislation, regulatory and funding

bodies, there are differences in the legislative support for independents. In Great Britain specific regulations are in place to strengthen the independent production sector economically as, for example, in the form of fixed quotas for independent and regional production and the Terms of Trade regulation that is unique to the British production context. An executive producer in the British company describes the economic importance of this regulation as follows:

Terms of Trade came under an act of Parliament, the Broadcasting act 2002, which meant that, whereas up to then, any broadcaster held on to the rights and the copyright, and after that, it meant that production companies held the copyright. That means that prior to 2002, you know, we made films for BBC, ITV, Five, Channel 4, they would sell it and if we were lucky we would get some small share of the net profit of that down the road. Now we own them, we sell them and we give a small percentage of the profit to the broadcaster, it is completely turned on its head. So that means the money that we can make from our programmes, from the intellectual property that we have is enormous compared to what it would have been five years ago. (...) Wherever I travel in the world, they're incredibly jealous of that deal. (Executive Producer A (UK), Int. 23/03/08)

Independent production is also part of the public service remit of German broadcasters, but there are no specific quotas in place and all rights on a commissioned programme (including the raw footage) are transferred to the network. Some German producers are keen to introduce policies similar to the Terms of Trade, others (including the CEO and HoD in the observed German company) are sceptical about the use of such a regulation, in view of the fact that it has facilitated the creation of superindies in Great Britain. Their main objection or fear is that broadcasters will be forced to reduce their already low budgets as a trade-off for their agreement to such a deal – even though this did not happen in the UK when this particular regulation was introduced. So far the only opportunity for German producers to keep some rights to their programmes is through co-production and involvement of funding bodies that require the retainment of rights.

Another reason for the scepticism of German documentary makers towards the Terms of Trade regulation is rooted in the fact that not all programmes are equally suitable for international distribution, in particular domestic German topics compared to the international potential of British programming. The UK has a traditional reputation for innovative and high-quality documentary programming, mainly influenced by the international distribution of BBC programmes. (Whether this reputation

is always justified is a different matter). In addition, they have a language and cultural advantage with good distribution opportunities especially in English-speaking countries including the US. There is a higher interest on the global television market in British programming, even if it has a domestic focus, than there is in German productions. One of the consequences of this is German producers tend to follow British programme developments more closely and that German broadcasters will also have a tendency to embrace and copy successful British or other international trends in documentary programming, for example, with regard to the use of reconstructions, of hybridisation and the employment of other formatting and presentational ideas. This strong orientation can even lead to an adaptation of trends that are conflicting with national culture or preference. For example, the currently popular use of presenters (often a celebrity) in British documentaries is a trend that broadcasters in Germany have repeatedly tried to implement even though German audiences actually do not respond enthusiastically. There is a national difference in celebrity and presenter culture with a lower degree of popularity of national celebrities and a lack of suitable presenter personalities in the German context. Nevertheless, German broadcasters continue their attempts with the aim to copy British audience success. The CEO in the observed German company predicts that *"it will probably work eventually"* although, *"it is not really that German"*. They see this trend not so much as a generic development but more as an economically motivated marketing tool that is has been externally and which may, eventually alter nationally defined viewing traditions.

All workers in the observed German company clearly expressed the view that the UK was the biggest innovator in documentary. They had knowledge of British developments in television and cinema documentary. Conversely a knowledge of German programming was widely absent in the British company except for a few successful festival films. At the same time, German producers consider the British television market to be relatively closed with a tendency to *"make everything themselves"*. They considered it *"improbable"* that they would ever sell to or even (co-)produce with British broadcasters. By contrast, German documentary producers and broadcasters are more open to international co-productions which offer an entry into the global television market and film festivals (if a topic seemed likely to be of interest to transnational audiences). Producers welcome co-production opportunities for various reasons. For example, German budgets are generally lower than British ones and co-productions can offer the means for higher

production value and more creative options. International co-productions, especially with festival distribution, further raise a producers' industry status – which seems to be of less importance for British television documentary producers. On the other hand, co-productions are far more complex, difficult and time-consuming in their production and financing structure.

4. CONCLUSION

Independent producers' economic dependency on broadcaster networks and the consequent prevalence of a client-provider relationship reduce their artistic autonomy and creativity. The high impact of economic constraints and the dependence on ratings as the dominant measure of success favour commercial considerations in documentary development over artistic ones. The similarity of structures and processes in the British and German context indicate a trans-national standardisation of production whilst the service-character of independent production in both countries demonstrates a reduction of independents' creative input in comparison to broadcaster influences on content and form. Workers deal with this situation through the acceptance and re-interpretation of values in the context of professionalism. The trans-national similarity discernible in both countries is accompanied by a common focus on the international television market for documentary. This focus seems to mirror the already long established international exchange in the festival and cinema culture of documentary, however, rather than implying an interest in developments of a more artistic kind. The international orientation of television production is solely commercially motivated in the search for the next successful trend and the aim to perform well in the international television markets. Again, commerce seems to dominate over artistic objectives especially in the development process. Programme ideas that rely on a familiar 'recipe' that has already proven economically viable are almost always given precedence.

Documentary as a genre is bound to evolve and change but the tendencies described in this article indicate a reduced potential for variation in content and form through the standardisation and commercialisation of production and development, as well as a loss or replacement of traditional documentary forms in reaction to the increased commercial focus of television. Producers predict a trend to 'bigger and better' versus 'cheap and quick', with a small percentage of expensive, high production value documentaries that are widely

marketed and promoted within national and international markets and a large number of underfunded 'small', domestic programmes. In both countries there are predictions of ever increasing economic pressure as a reaction to the decline in the social importance of television in the current multimedia context. On the other hand, some executives expect a return to the 'classic', 'traditional' forms of TV documentary in television as audiences grow ever more weary of formatted predictability.

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NOTES

- 1 For more information on the German and British broadcasting systems and their history see for example Hood (1994), Curran and Seaton (2003), Mahle (1984), Noam (1991), Schwarzkopf (1999) and Stuiber (1998).
- 2 An ethnographic study in two medium-sized, independent production companies in the UK and Germany combined 10 weeks of participant observation and interviews with practitioners in each company. Both companies are specialised in documentary programming and receive commissions from all major (mainly public service) national broadcasters. They were founded by a group of directors/PDs, have a small development team and are placed in a regional setting with a local broadcaster. For reasons of confidentiality both companies and their workers are anonymous.
- 3 Its relationship with realism and authenticity is central to many publications about documentary. See for example, Kilborn (2003), Corner (2001), Winston (2000), Arriens (1999), Hattendorf (1994) and Hohenberger (1988). Although documentary filmmakers and producers influence the reality they document and a certain element of staging is always involved in the course of production, they still distance themselves from fiction and the altered set-up of reality TV.

British military media strategies: New wars – new ways

Rikke Bjerg Jensen

*...the overall relationship between the MOD [Ministry of Defence] and the media should be looked at afresh, to rebuild trust, and to rebuild a relationship where each respects the different needs and perspectives of the other. **The MOD cannot control the media: what it must do is to control its own narrative.** But there needs to be recognition that there has been a decline of trust, and a worsening of the relationship.*

Tony Hall, *Review of Media Access to Personnel* (2007)¹.

1. INTRODUCTION

Soldiers are frequently depicted in the media. Their families use the media. What people think about soldiers and the conflicts they are engaged in is shaped (at least partially) by the media. How politicians finance and use military power is influenced by the media. So it is hardly surprising that 'The military' – the whole institutional structure of the forces from soldiers in the front line through commanding officers in the field and at home, through international coalitions of forces like NATO through to the military's organisational structures and political direction in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) attempt to use the media and are developing increasingly sophisticated media strategies. What perhaps is surprising is how little academic attention has been paid to this aspect of this very significant contemporary media practise. The military aims to influence the media to control its image, to gain public support for its actions and to express its concerns in policy discussions.

This is not new. What is perhaps new, however, is the scale of such media activity and the way in which media management has moved up the military agenda and into the heart of any military campaign.

“Considerations of media impact now play a part in tactical decisions that lie at the very heart of conflicts” (Seaton, 2005: 144). It is clear that such tactics and strategies are necessary for military operations to be carried out with the highest possible success rate. They are essential in a world where the military is constantly facing new challenges.

There is a reason, or reasons, for this shift in military thinking about the media; a response to shifts taking place both internally and externally, over which the military has only limited or no control. Firstly, new wars are complex. They are complicated and the context in which they are being waged is now more a matter of choice than necessity (Seaton, 2005: 135). Today, most wars are not being fought because they are strategically indispensable; Britain’s survival is not at stake. Instead, new wars often become ‘wars of choice’, or conflicts of choice (Laity, 2000), in which Britain feels morally obliged to take part. Justifying this kind of war thus becomes complicated, from a military perspective.

Today, there is rarely such a thing as outright victory. So the military has limited aims, limited objectives and therefore the measure of success is in itself questionable. Because of the potential of the media to define success, within a warfare paradigm that has had to abandon the idea of absolute victory in favour of limited success, the publicity side of military activity becomes increasingly powerful. This accentuates the influence of the media when nothing is certain – the messenger and the gloss he or she puts on it become increasingly important.

However, it also needs to be recognised that there has been a revolution in media practice which has made reporting more complex and complicated. Reporters have limited resources, and since wars are expensive to cover, they have limited access to the front line. The specially trained defence correspondent is also dying out meaning that journalistic understanding of wars is diminishing. This, however, might prove advantageous from a military perspective: unspecialised journalists might be easier to manage². At the same time, adversaries are using the media in very sophisticated ways, challenging or even forcing the military to counteract such activity.

In an attempt to define the new warfare environment, new theories of war are best put by General Sir Rupert Smith³ who in his book ‘The Utility of Force’ (2005) calls for a complete paradigm shift from what militaries see as normal war to ‘*war amongst the people*’⁴, in which boundaries between the people and militaristic fighters become almost obsolete. The media are indispensable, but generally uncontrollable as the means of conveying narratives about war in what is ‘*not so much the global village as the global theatre of war, with audience participation*’ (Smith,

2005: 289)⁵. Because of the specific characteristics of this new kind of wars and of the new media environment, the media operational doctrines and strategies, that will form the base for the discussion in this chapter, are very different from those of any other period in time. Even as the British military has always thought about the media and even as the development of media strategies is not new, the strategies currently in place are a response to very complex war and media environments.

2. NEW APPROACH TO NEW WARS

First of all, military media operations are now situated at the highest level inside the MOD. In fact, when a crisis occurs a media operations cell⁶ is established within the Defence Crisis Management Organisation (DCMO), which manages all complex emergencies. In light of this, it is evident that the military takes its media operations very seriously, which has also led the MOD to inaugurate a new overarching military media structure which has the overall goal of fostering support for the British Armed Forces and for the military institution itself. The need for a manageable set of standards that structure the interaction with the media, in an attempt to achieve favourable coverage, are thus emerging as key components to military thinking in relation to media operations. Because wars are now complicated, because media activity is complicated, the military's response to such realities has had to become complicated.

The military is an old and traditional institution, rooted in a strong military culture, and any change to such an institution is not expected to succeed if it challenges the core identity of the organisation (Nagl, 2005: 215–216). It is, however, also an institution that has been pushed to change by both external and internal factors. The new conflict climate has driven the military to take on an Effects-Based Approach⁷, situated within the Government's Comprehensive Approach⁸, acknowledged in the 2003 Defence White Paper. This approach has forced the military to think about, not only its military activities (such as firing weapons), but also its media operations (Farrell, 2008: 795) and to focus on effects on a broad scale. Embracing this approach might also show that the military is equating its media activities with military action. The two are, and have for the most part been, intertwined to some extent.

Officially, military media strategies function as an extension of the wider operational strategies within both the MOD and within the strategic pan-Government approach to security in the twenty-first century. Even as departments such as the Foreign and Commonwealth

Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DFID) have worked against this new Comprehensive Approach, as they are sceptical about being associated with military activity in particular⁹, within the military at least there is evidence of innovation, both in the adaptation to effects-based thinking and in the conceptual situating of military operations within larger, civilian-led, interagency campaigns.

In line with the transformation processes currently underway in the military, the Comprehensive Approach recognises that the '*military instrument*', as part of a Comprehensive Approach, "*cannot operate in isolation and successful operations and enduring outcomes will involve a wide range of contributors and influences*" (JDN 4/05). One of the main contributors is the formation of an extensive Information Strategy (JDN 7/06)¹⁰. The importance of establishing "*a coherent, consistent narrative and context within which successful achievement of objectives [can] be recorded and reported by a wide range of audiences and which [will] enable successful rebuttal of hostile or false information*" (JDP 3-45.1), is central to the way in which current communication, media and information operations are planned and carried out. The MOD has developed an Information Strategy that is dynamic and holds the capability to adjust to any given situation in response to shifts within the society. This is sophisticated thinking on the military's part. But it also shows the control that it holds over personnel, media outlets and audiences is all-encompassing, even if the MOD says that it is an "*open Department of State*" (DGMC, revised 2009).

As media operations are increasingly becoming an essential element of military activity, the size of such operations has increased accordingly. A wide range of media management agencies and directorates¹¹ have been established within the MOD, in recent years, to manage narratives and control information flow. The number of media-related staff has also increased. Yet in the 2007 version of the 'Defence Communication Strategy' the MOD admits to having no indication of the number of people engaged in military communications work, or their costs for that matter (DGMC, 2007), which suggests that media and communications staff were present in large numbers. It is more than likely that this number has increased over the last two years, with the intensified need for managing media output.

The MOD does not hide the fact that the public relations machine of the military is essential in winning public, political and financial support. Boosting the reputation of the Armed Forces and of the defence community as a whole by "*showing that [the] Armed Forces are equipped for the task placed upon them*" (DGMC, revised 2009) is highlighted as one of

the main priorities of the military approach to communication strategies. In line with this, the British military has proven to be very good at managing its media operations since it has acknowledged that it “*must make [its] narrative compelling, and use all available means to deliver it, if it is to reach an audience that is bombarded with information 24 hours a day from a vast array of sources*” (DGMC, revised 2009)¹². The British military has been very successful in its media operations, resulting in British support for the troops and their efforts even if support for the war itself might be limited¹³. Lessons from previous wars highlight the importance of winning public support for the deployed troops as a minimum. The best example, or the worst as the case may be, of how the lack of public support can have devastating consequences for the soldiers and for the overall war effort, is the American experience in the Vietnam War, where both public support and the war itself were lost (e.g. Hammond, 1998). Stressing the importance of support for the soldiers, if not for the war itself, has become a central element of the way in which the British military structures its media operations.

From what has been examined here it is clear that the British military puts a lot of emphasis on structuring its media operations in order to secure public support. Media operations are now planned at the heart of a military campaign. While aiming to secure public support for the deployed troops through extensive media operational guidelines and activity¹⁴, the reality is that soldiers are facing genuine operational difficulties as they find themselves in the middle of high impact conflicts where media operations might not be the most pressing issue on their minds. Still, the military always acts, always responds to (what is deemed) a problem or a crisis. It is in its nature. However, the response that comes might not always be the right one.

3. NEW AUDIENCES

The different strategies and media operational initiatives that have been inaugurated by the MOD in recent years, and outlined here, have been implemented as an attempt to reach and influence specific audiences. The realities of modern warfare, where the military has to accept limited success and where the media are experiencing a decline in resources, has forced the MOD into thinking about audiences and about how to ‘spin’ stories in an attempt to boost the military’s public image. In this context, the most influential audience, identified by the British military, encompasses a rather limited group of UK politicians, who hold financial

and political power to secure backing for military activity. This strategically important group also comprises members of think-tanks, academics, analysts and journalists (JDP 3–45.1). Nevertheless, the MOD does not ignore the impact of general public opinion on political decision-making, which means a substantial amount of its media operation strategies are aimed at securing and maintaining support within the larger UK population.

The sensitive, dependant audience such as families and friends are key audiences for military media operations as they hold great power in upholding spirit and stamina among the deployed soldiers. Well-established communication channels are in place between the soldiers and their families. In this respect, the rapid development in media technology has forced the military to change its ways of communicating with families and also change the ways in which news of casualties is communicated.

News of casualties goes through a very well established chain with set procedures...While the families are being tracked down all phone lines and internet links are cut to avoid the family/press hearing through other means. This system works both ways, so if something bad happens to a family member one will get sent home on compassionate leave¹⁵.

Even as the military has a well-established set of communication networks that are meant to keep dependants fully informed, the reality is that television news, radio broadcasts and the printed media often reach families before the military, which means that such media become a central focus of military media strategies. Reaching this audience is arguably one of the most important aspects of media operations because they have a very direct effect on the moral of the soldiers.

In the new kind of warfare Britain is unlikely to carry out war fighting operations without a coalition of allies. The coalition audience thus becomes important for UK forces¹⁶. Another set of audiences to consider in this context is the wide-ranging international audience. The universality of modern media means that groups within the 'wider' global audience are likely to have access to many of the same sources of news and information as the home or adversary audiences. However, the different context in which they are being shown and received will most probably affect the impact of the actual source and thus be reflected in the response. In addition, the regional population is usually considered to be the principal audience for British military media operations at the operational level, together with the local audience. Modern media

present opportunities directly to address the leadership, armed forces and population of an adversary. Similarly, countering adversary media content is also high on the agenda of the UK military (JDP 3-45.1), especially in a reality where the adversary is becoming increasingly media-sophisticated with the likely potential of influencing the local and regional population.

Soldiers are constantly pushing the military to change its media strategies in relation to the use of new media. The fact that soldiers have rapidly adopted new communication technologies when these have been introduced, has forced the military to change its policies on such technologies¹⁷. Furthermore, on operations, deployed soldiers become avid news watchers, listeners and readers, turning into satellite television, BBC World Service and the internet, when in camp at least:

We try to follow the news but it's difficult when out on patrol, which could last from between one to five weeks. When out we basically don't get any news. When in camp there are papers, usually about a week old by the time they reach us, so we have a chance to catch up on old news. Also the Army has its own TV channel called BFBS which does news but with a defence angle, so tends to be a little more glowing about what we do than regular media. There's also Sky news 24 and BBC 24 when in camp, so it is very possible to stay in touch¹⁸.

Deployed forces are able to follow military activity as it unfolds through the media while being surrounded by the realities of it. This fact has also pushed the military to consider the effect on this internal audience. "Media Ops staff should be sensitive to the effects of media coverage on the Service personnel in the Joint Operations Area (JOA)" (JDP 3-45.1), acknowledging the need to consider the media influence on soldiers on operation.

The focus on audiences that has been described here creates a range of problems for the military. First of all, the fact is that when a conflict is underway all audiences have to be addressed at the same time, especially in the current warfare climate where asymmetric tactics are used which have to be dealt with both on a local and regional level, as well as on a national and international level. By focusing on one audience at a given time the military risks alienating another audience. Attempting to promote defence issues and to influence an audience will always be a delicate matter that needs careful planning, which is not always a possibility during complex conflict situations.

4. CONCLUSION

In light of all of the above, this is the stage at which the British military finds itself today, in relation to media operations. At a stage where the military has attempted to rethink its media strategies to meet the challenges presented by the new kind of wars, in particular. This is not a new feature of military activity. The military has incorporated media operations into its overall campaign strategy, throughout history¹⁹. What is new, however, is that not only has the MOD put in place a range of new doctrines and strategies, it has adopted a new effects-based approach to media operations in this particular warfare and media environment.

Media operations are taken very seriously and they are dealt with at the highest level. In relation to the individual soldier, the very strict and limiting provision for engaging with the media may foster a skewed understanding of the media function. By controlling every move that the soldier makes towards the media, the military gives breeding ground for mistrust and misconceptions, which have notoriously been the problem of military-media relations in previous conflicts. The notion of the media as 'the enemy' is never far off when by default the military tends to be suspicious of the media and their agenda.

Today, the British public might find itself worse off in relation to understanding what is going on during modern conflicts in which UK Forces are involved. On the surface the British military appears to have become more open than previously and it seems to be engaging with the media to a larger extent. However, the examined doctrines and strategies reveal a different picture and bear witness to the fact that the MOD is now managing every stage of media operations: from the way in which soldiers respond to interviews with the media, to how audiences are targeted at different levels. Previously at least, the military did not try to hide the fact that they wanted to keep things from the public. Today the MOD wants to be seen as an open Department of State, while still seeming to be resorting to tactics of avoidance. This may be a result of the nature of the military, however, which tends to act quickly in response to a problem. This is also underlined by the fact that many of the new media operational strategies have been put in place as lessons learned in Iraq in particular, where public support for the war was limited. The military realised that there was a problem, they 'fixed' this problem by putting in place an overarching media structure in an attempt to change public perception.

As a final thought, should we be worried by such extensive military media activities? Well, perhaps we should. The military now seems to be controlling every aspect of media activity during war it has the political and financial backing to invest in media operations and advanced media technology, while media institutions are suffering from a decline in resources. The new kind of wars means specialist knowledge is required to understand the complexities of these wars. In the current media climate such expert knowledge is increasingly likely to come from the military itself and yet independent witness is the only guarantee in a democracy of scrutiny. Or perhaps we should not worry. The military needs to have a strategy in order to carry out its function. It needs to have a media strategy in order to inform the public and politicians to whom the military is accountable within a democratic society. What the military does is dangerous and it is important. War is complex and needs to be explained and dealt with in appropriate ways. From the military perspective, the risks of having a limited media strategy may simply be too high.

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This chapter is mainly based on official military doctrines and policy papers. Most of such documents come in the form of Joint Discussion Notes (JDN), Joint Warfare Publications (JWP) and Joint Doctrine Publications (JDP), which are official documents that demonstrate current thoughts on best practice in relation to specific defence issues. Other official documents used here are strategic doctrines such as the Defence Communication Strategy and the Information Strategy.

Most of the official sources have been issued by the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), which is a Ministry of Defence think-tank and which was established as a result of the 1998 Strategic Defence Review. The DCDC provides the intellectual bases that inform decisions in defence policy.

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NOTES

- 1 In 2007, Tony Hall was commissioned by the then Defence Secretary, Des Browne, to conduct a review of media access to personnel, including the issue of media payment, in the wake of the return of fifteen Royal Navy/Royal Marine personnel who had been detained by Iran and known to have been selling stories for considerable amounts of cash.
- 2 The MOD Green Book on 'MOD Working Arrangements with the Media', published in November 2008, is central to the practical relationship between media and military during conflict. The book outlines the framework for all media-related operations.
- 3 Smith has become one of the main new wars theorists. He is one of the most senior international practitioners in the use of force and has served forty years in the British Army.
- 4 David Betz (2007) also takes up this argument in 'Redesigning Land Forces for Wars Amongst the People'.
- 5 Martin Shaw (2005) refers to 'global surveillance war', in which a conflict is fought under the critical gaze not only of the people among whom it is being waged and the people in intervening nations but of the world as a whole.
- 6 The media operations cell is part of the Directorate General Media and Communication (DGMC) which is the central hub for all strategic media operational planning.
- 7 The 2006 version of the Effects-Based Approach reinforces the notion of an 'effects-based philosophy'.
- 8 The Comprehensive Approach is a cross-Government approach which is defined as "*commonly understood principles and collaborative processes that enhance the likelihood of favourable and enduring outcomes within a particular situation*" (JDN 4/05).
- 9 Both the FCO and DFID are involved in humanitarian and disaster aid and being associated with military activity, and funding for military operations, may prove counter-productive and dangerous in light of the very different agendas of the two sides.

- 10 The Information Strategy is defined as *"Information activity coordinated across Government that influences decisions, opinions and outcomes..."* The aim of the Strategy is *"to secure popular and political support for the UK's policy objectives"* (JDP 3-45.1).
- 11 The Directorate General Media and Communication (DGMC) is the central hub for all media operations at the strategic level. The Defence Media Operations Centre (DMOC), on the other hand, takes care of the operational side of the MOD's media strategic approach. In addition, there are more than thirty agencies, directorates and centres within the MOD that deal with media and communication, to some extent.
- 12 Even as this type of doctrinal statements, and the media operations carried out by the British military in general, can be described as a propaganda tool to some extent, the phrase has been left out in this discussion because of pre-established connotations. In the current British context, it obscures the discussion more that it enlightens.
- 13 A recent ICM poll carried out for the Guardian and BBC Newsnight shows that forty-six per cent of Britons support the war in Afghanistan. The poll also suggests that *"people appear reluctant to turn against a conflict while soldiers are fighting and dying on the front line, and the increasingly high-profile nature of the war appears to be strengthening public backing"* (The Guardian, 13 July 2009).
- 14 The manual - 'Contact with the Media and Communicating in Public' (2008) - outlines how Service personnel should interact with the media (if at all).
- 15 Email correspondence with Officer, Light Dragoons (Helmand, Afghanistan).
- 16 For a discussion on the internationalisation of the British Forces see for instance Soeters, Poponete and Page (2006) or Farrell (2008).
- 17 Social interaction sites such as Facebook and MySpace are blocked within all military compounds - on and off the battlefield.
- 18 Email correspondence with Officer, Light Dragoons.
- 19 During WWI, for instance, the military had in place a powerful media strategy which controlled news outlet and aimed to foster support for the British war efforts.

SECTION TWO: AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION AND POLITICS



Blackboard snapshot from joint workshop preparation

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Organized producers of net culture: Theoretical approach and empirical illustrations

Tobias Olsson and Anders Svensson

1. THE RE-INVENTION OF INTERNET'S NEWNESS

During the last couple of years there have been a lot of 'points' within both research on as well as public debates about the internet in general and the web in particular . In both contexts the internet has been understood as a developing medium, on its continuous move from its early 1.0-versions to newer, better and more interesting 2.0, or even 3.0-versions. To some extent the ongoing, discursive re-invention of new versions has been the result of efforts to understand what is in fact new with the web. By pointing towards new point-versions - like 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005) - it becomes more obvious that the medium itself is changing in important respects; that the internet is potentially more interactive than it was ten years ago, and that there has been a change in the very technical platforms on which the internet is built.

In spite of these actual developments of the medium it is hard for a researcher within the field not to also interpret these point-shifts as somewhat rhetorical too - to continuously infer a sense of newness around the internet has its obvious advantages. For instance, it sometimes makes research approaches look more exiting (and new) than they really are: *"We know a great deal about the construction of user identities in the 1.0-era, but what about Web 2.0?"* or *"What does the Web 2.0 - and the fact that it is more interactive than Web 1.0 - mean to the public sphere?"*. Furthermore, the re-inventions also make it possible to reuse old arguments, redressing them in a new point-outfit: *"With Web 2.0 we see the advent of the true internet culture, where all users participate in a collaborative formation of new worlds" or "the Web 2.0 brings learning to new levels"*.

One of the areas in which these tendencies to reinvent approaches and arguments by using various 'point-formulations' have been most obvious is in the debates about the internet's political significance (Olsson & Dahlgren, forthcoming). This became specifically obvious during Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2008, which already from the very beginning was surrounded by stories and comments about the central part played by social media and/or Web 2.0 within his campaign. His campaign was rendered headlines such as "*Obama brought his campaign to 2.0-level*" and "*Obama hops on the Web 2.0 Bandwagon*". Whether one agrees with these popular analyses or not, one thing is for sure: Even though the specific applications differ between the two eras, there were (and still are) obvious similarities between these interpretations of the Web 2.0's significance for Obama's campaign and the claims made in the 1990s about what the internet (always with a capital 'I' by that time) would mean to politics. Back then the killer application for the so called new way of doing politics was called e-mail, today they are called *Facebook* and blogging. In the 1990s the internet was often claimed to offer new ways of presenting one's political message. Today, however, the Web 2.0 is said to come with a new way of offering political participation. In the 1990s there was a lot of excitement about the fact that websites offered new possibilities of expressing one's opinions and identity, and today strikingly similar opinions are moulded about people's abilities to start their own blogs – they offer a space for presenting oneself and one's views on various issues.

2. RE-INVENTING INTERNET THEORIES

Also on a more overarching, theoretical level a similar reinvention of arguments about the web and/or the internet has occurred. More than a decade ago, as the internet and its potential societal/cultural significance started to become an object of academic inquiries, there was a view of the new, emerging information and communication technology as a potential creator of a new and hitherto unseen culture. This culture was often referred to through seemingly exiting and *Neuromancer*-inspired (see Gibson, 1984) concepts such as *Cyberculture* (Bell & Kennedy, 2000), but also *Virtual Culture* (Jones, 1997), and most evidently – *Internet Culture* (Porter, 1997). David Porter's way of describing this *Internet Culture* was very telling and typical for this line of theorizing, around this time in the history of internet research. He stated that:

The culture that the Net embodies [...] is a product of the peculiar conditions of virtual acquaintance that prevail online, a collective adaptation to the high frequency of anonymous, experimental, and even fleeting encounters familiar to anyone who has ventured into a newsgroup debate. [...] In a medium of disembodied voices and decontextualized points of view [...] the experience of ambiguity and misreading is bound to be less an exception than the norm. It is the collective response to this experience of ambiguity, the gradual process of adaptation to the semiotic universe of free-floating electronic alibis that constitutes the unique culture of the Internet (Porter, 1997: XI–XII).

These early – at least in terms of web age – definitions of the culture emerging on the internet have been continuously (and rightfully so) criticised from different points of theoretical departure. The most common lines of criticism have associated these views of the new ICT and the emerging culture with technologically deterministic propositions. The ideas about a specific culture developing on and around the internet treated the internet as an active agent on its own, developing its own cultural logics and consequences.

Another almost equally frequent line of criticism has been to critically interrogate two fallacies affiliated with technologically deterministic perspectives – to either romanticise the new ICT and its potential cultural significance (“*this is a technology creating exactly that culture that we have been hoping for*”) or to disclaim it by reading its consequences off its inherent cultural logic (“*with this medium we will get whole generations of young people constantly attached to the screen*”).

A third but also related weakness in these early approaches to the internet (or the web) was their general lack of social contextualization of the internet as a medium. Within these notions of internet culture, web culture or cyberculture the internet was often treated as a world on its own, something out of reach for and apart from the rest of the world. Typically enough this other world was quite often referred to as ‘the offline world’. As a consequence, little attention was paid to, for instance, users’ real world appropriations of their online experiences, or to the fact that most online experiences actually could be characterized as fairly simple – and straightforward – consumption of pre-produced content, handed down by various organized interests.

More contemporary relatives to these earlier theories have transformed themselves. They have been less obviously technologically deterministic and especially more careful in paying close attention to the ways in which recent changes in the web’s technological form have made it more interactive; how the developed internet technology have

enhanced the users' abilities to be active and constructive co-producers of web content. This technological shift – as well as the possibilities it brings about for the users to become active partners in a in continuous co-production of web content (and other cultural forms) – is being given special attention in theoretical conceptualizations connecting the internet in general and the web in particular to notions such as *participatory culture* (cf. Deuze, 2006; Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins & Deuze, 2008) and/or *convergence culture* (Jenkins, 2008). What both concepts have in common is that they stress the important part played by new, more interactive web technology in creating the necessary cultural infrastructure for users' active participation in various forms of co-production and social networking.

3. MINDING THE *PRODUCERS* IN THE 2.0-ERA

In spite of this theoretical transformation, as well as other efforts to qualify and develop the earlier internet theories, a number of the problems attached to the previous understandings of the internet still remain within contemporary research, and the research project upon which this chapter is based is an effort to start compensating for one of them: the lack of research attention and analytical efforts paid to understanding the important part played by strong, resource rich *producers* of content within the cultures affiliated with the internet. These producers – which we refer to as *organized producers*¹ (a notion that can be compared to everyday users' actions as participating *disorganized producers* of internet content, or *prod-users*) – of net culture work consciously and very strategically in their efforts to become a part of the increasingly interactive web's supposedly participatory (and converging) cultures. Sometimes they even provide the users with the very platforms on which everyday users' very 'participatory practices' are being played out. As a consequence, this project aims at starting to fill out some of the blind spots around these organized producers by studying a number of them using ethnographically inspired methods: What are their strategies? What images of young people inspire their work? How do they think about and shape their points of interaction (web applications) with young people and the 'net culture'? And how do they go about, more concretely, in involving and engaging young users?

4. SOCIAL SHAPING OF TECHNOLOGIES BECOMES THE CIRCUIT OF CULTURE

These organized producers are looked upon and analysed from a theoretical point of departure that is inspired by ideas and concepts usually subsumed under the overarching heading *Social Shaping of Technologies (SST)* (cf. MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999/1985; Lie & Sørensen, 1996; Gitelman, 2006). Within media studies *SST* collects a wide ranging repertoire of studies. The research tradition includes Brian Winston's (Winston, 1998), and Patrice Flichy's (Flichy, 1995) studies of the dynamics of technological development, as well as ethnographic close readings of the appropriation of new media among various groups of users (cf. Silverstone & Hirsch, 1992; Miller & Slater, 2000; Bakardjieva, 2005). Other strands of research within the tradition analyse the social shaping at the producer stage, which seek to answer what ideas and ideologies are encoded into specific applications of new media (Olsson, 2008). Still other studies analyse the shaping of new ICTs through political regulation, and centre on the ideological battles surrounding them (Goodwin & Spittle, 2002), or how the politics of market regulation shape the emergence of ICTs in society (Sussman, 1997). These seemingly very different studies do, however, share an important assumption: that it is both possible and useful to 'open up technologies' and analyse their social dimensions, often as an explicit criticism of technologically-deterministic propositions about ICTs' societal 'effects' (Williams, 1974).

Within this field of studies, important analytical efforts were made during the 1990s, especially within cultural studies-inspired research of new media. Drawing on Stuart Hall's communication model (Hall, 1980) a number of researchers (for instance Woolgar, 1996; Mackay, 1997; Slevin, 2000) started to expand cultural studies' interest in media texts to also include media technologies. Parts of this work have successfully been modelled in the form of *the circuit of culture* (Du Gay, 1997), which can be made use of as an analytical point of departure. This model stresses that cultural artefacts, such as internet, has to be understood and analysed including at least five different dimensions: use, identity, representation, regulation and – not least – production. Additionally, the model suggests taking all these dimensions into consideration in analytical efforts to understand new media. Also the research project on which this chapter is based aims at understanding 'the production' of net culture. However, it does that with the ambition to also analytically (as well as empirically to some extent) understand the production with

reference to the other dimensions in the circuit (use, identity, representation, regulation).

The reminder of this chapter will illustrate parts of this approach by offering empirical examples and initial analyses from the first out of five case studies conducted within the research project *Organized Producers of Young Net Cultures: Actors, Practices, Ambitions*². What about the website www.moderskeppet.se as an organized producer?

5. WWW.MODERSKEPET.SE:

ILLUSTRATIONS AND INITIAL ANALYSES

5.1. *The website – A short description*

When visitors log in at the home page of Moderskeppet (The Mother Ship; see <http://www.moderskeppet.se>), they meet a simple structure and easy read design. For people culturally rooted in the West, the eye is irresistibly directed towards the top left corner, caused by the logo, the red-colored 'home'-button, and the explicit message "*Vi lär dig Photoshop*" ("*We teach you Photoshop*"). The legitimacy of this assertion is supported by the denomination 'Certified instructor' of Photoshop assisted with Adobe's logo, and underlined with the statement "*Sveriges största webbplats om Photoshop*" ("*Sweden's largest web site on Photoshop*").

Of the seven navigation buttons, right to the home-button, the first six – Webb-TV, Quick tips, Blog, Guides, Ground course, and Undergraduate courses – all of them link to offers free of charge. At moderskeppet.se you can learn a lot about digital image editing, and Photoshop, without paying a single euro. The last button in the row leads the visitor to the store with DVD-videos for sale.

When the visitors scroll down the homepage they meet the philosophy of Moderskeppet expressed in the sentence "*Lära sig Photoshop ska vara roligt*" ("*Learning Photoshop should be amusing*"). Besides this solicitude it is emphasized that almost everything on the home page is for free. Some of Moderskeppet's further advantages are mentioned, like the high visiting frequency, that the site frequently is updated and improved, and the blog – awarded the best Swedish blog in 2008 on technology.

Figure 1: Home page of moderskeppet.se

Är du studerande? [Vi har allt du behöver veta om Adobes studentpriser](#) - Massor att spara för den som vet hur.

Moderskeppet.se
Det är skoj att lära sig Photoshop

Kontakt Ladda ner För lärare Webbkartor Om Moderskeppet

Hem Webb-TV Snabba tips Blogg Guider Grundkurs Högscolekurser Köp DVD-kurs

Vi lär dig Photoshop

Bli en bättre bildbehandlare med vår hjälp

Adobe **CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR**
Photoshop®

*Haj där kära besökare!!
Vi är fortfarande på semester. Lillsyran packar dock DVD:er om du vill köpa en.
Om du har semesterbilder att fira med så har vi massor med tuffa trick. Vi listade alla sommar guider i senaste nyhetsbrevet. Missade du det? Klicka på infokort!
Relateade inläggningar: Mattias*

Sommarguider till Photoshop
Vårt nyhetsbrev är alltid fyllt med spännande trick som hjälper dig att få bättre bilder. Senaste brevet hade sommatema. [Läs det nu.](#)

Vår Webb-TV
Nu över 40 avsnitt. Se vår WebbTV och lär dig coola trick för dina bilder.

Senaste:
Tips 252: [Vänsterhandens viloläge](#)
Blogg: [En kursbok med lite ålder](#)
WebbTV: [En hel mapp med jpg](#)

Sveriges största webbplats om Photoshop. Är du ny här?
[Vad är Adobe Photoshop?](#)
[Så lär du dig Photoshop](#)
[Detta är Moderskeppet.se](#)
[Vad är Photoshop Elements?](#)
[Vad är Lightroom?](#)
[Så köper du Photoshop](#)
[Spara upp till 80% med studentrabatt](#)
Med vårt nyhetsbrev missar du inga nya guider. Din e-post:
[Vad är nyhetsbrevet?](#)

Lär dig bildbehandla från början!
Gratis nybörjarkurs på video
Vi lär dig Grunderna i Photoshop

Kunskap på ett perfekt sätt!
Lär dig i våra DVD-kurser
En riktig lärare du kan pausa, spola och se om.

Everything on the website could be regarded as implicit marketing of Moderskeppet, not least the services free of charge, but in the bottom fields on the home page this has been given a much more explicit expression. Here visitors are requested to buy products from Moderskeppet's cooperate partners, to link their blogs and home pages to Moderskeppet, and finally to advertise on Moderskeppet's website. The focus is on offering visitors free services and to subsequently make them investing in Moderskeppet's commercial operations.

Figure 2: “Learning Photoshop should be amusing”

Lära sig Photoshop ska vara roligt

Att du ska bli duktigare och smartare med foton i Photoshop, det är vårt mål. Därför finns Moderskeppet.

Vi tycker Photoshop är ett fint ord. Säg det gärna högt. Det låter lite som bakelse eller regnbåge.

Moderskeppet har fokus på foto i Photoshop. Allt är gratis och skrivet med pedagogisk omtanke.

Vi som driver Moderskeppet heter Mattias, Fredrik, Anders och Mikael. Vi utbildar bland annat i bildbehandling på [Högskolan i Jönköping](#) och skriver [Photoshopguider för tidningen Kamera & Bild](#). Enkelt, samlat och på svenska.

[Mer om oss.](#)

Idag är det 80.000 besökare i månaden (Google Analytics) och innehållet växer för alla med intresse för bildbehandling och digitalfoto.

Moderskeppet växer dagligen med uppdateringar, förbättringar och genom en [blogg inom Photoshop, digitalfoto och bildbehandling](#). Nu över 1000 inlägg.

Använd i andra länder

Vi skriver inte på svår svenska. [Selsagat kan du lære deg Photoshop på svensk](#).

Stöd Moderskeppet när du shoppar online

Om du ska dropa din surt förvärvade pengar i en onlineshop, så kan du stödja Moderskeppet samtidigt. Detta genom att följa våra samarbetslänkar. Då får vi en viss (liten) procent av det du shoppar för.

[Adobe Europe Store](#)

[Adlibris](#) | [Bokus](#) | [Apples shop](#) | [Dell](#) | [Inkclub](#) | [Scandinavian Photo](#) | [iTunes](#)

Ett annat sätt att stödja Moderskeppet är att länka hit från din webbplats / blogg. Då hittar fler hit.



Copyright © Pixondu AB 2003-2009 | [Om Moderskeppet](#)

[XHTML](#) | [Kontakt](#) | Moderskeppet är en del av företaget [Pixondu AB](#) | [Vår webbplats om Photoshop Elements](#) |

[Moderskeppets trafik mäts på Sis-index](#). Du kan köpa [annonsering via Talsweep](#)

5.2. The website and its users from the producer's point of view

As Moderskeppet's founder, *Mattias Karlsson* is at the heart of our case.³ On behalf of his central position in the operations he is the most important source of knowledge of all aspects of Moderskeppet. Mattias Karlsson is an educated secondary-school teacher and he has worked as a lecturer in ICT related issues on the university. From this background he draws on both positive and negative academic experiences for improving the operations and communication of Moderskeppet. First of all he finds it important to display academic substance but not necessarily neither academic form nor its information overload. Another academic tradition Mattias Karlsson is eager to leave behind, is the tendency to discuss issues over and over again. All decisions, concerning for instance Moderskeppet's strategies, are reached after short but effective discussions, otherwise the issue is dropped.

Of the more positive academic experiences are the pedagogical qualities. Mattias Karlsson's view of the website is first and foremost pedagogical, and as a consequence, user-oriented. Much effort is therefore invested in working with the rhetoric of the homepage, the products, and the different courses. The key sentence, "*Learning Photoshop should be amusing*", is not mainly pointing towards entertainment, but rather user adapted visual and textual rhetoric and management of the software. Pedagogy is also in focus when recruiting new personnel. The company has today more than a handful part time employees, four full time employees, and is about to employ three more. What they look for are people with a passion for educating others. Mattias Karlsson explains their recruitment strategy:

A more important quality for becoming a Moderskeppet colleague, than being skilled with the technology or keen to produce videos, is the passion in teaching, to teach the users to improve their capabilities in digital photo editing, to make them feel that we give them new knowledge.

Also in the treatment of the users Mattias Karlsson draws on experiences from the academic world. For universities the students are often a mass of people with who a one-way power relation usually is predominant: universities offer and provide students with an education, which is a relation that basically positions students as grateful receivers of value rather than the other way around. Moderskeppet's intention, however, is to invert this power relation by making the users understand that Moderskeppet's staff are grateful because the users guaranty their existence. By making the users feel important, besides providing them with relevant information and products, Moderskeppet aims at turning their users from strangers via friends, not only into customers (Godin, 1999), but ultimately into 'evangelists'. The mission of the evangelists is to promote Moderskeppet's qualities in relevant occasions and constitute Moderskeppet's most important channel for marketing of the site. The evangelists can be interpreted as warriors in Moderskeppet's tribe, a concept that Mattias Karlsson use metaphorically to describe Moderskeppet's relation with their users.

The concept of 'Tribe' is of course descended from Seth Godin; watch his clip at <http://sethgodin.typepad.com>. Despite the rather weak academic acknowledgement of his ideas, they are still an important source of inspiration for Moderskeppet. In Godin's perspective all human beings are part of different tribes, formed around common concerns. Godin's concept also involves a 'Leader' - Moderskeppet uses

the term 'Chief' - whose mission is to connect the members, organize the tribe and lead it to make a change. Another closely related concept that is often used by Moderskeppet is 'Myth' - through its 'myth' the users' should maintain their mental conceptions about Moderskeppet. In terms of myth there is an obvious similarity between Moderskeppet and other companies associated with the internet. Like many other internet companies Moderskeppet very often gets inscribed in the mythology of Silicon Valley (English-Lueck, 2002; Elmbrant, 2005), involving ideas of its premises, employees and habits. These notions involve companies run by young and idealist computer addicts, for who work and leisure time converges in simple locations - a refrigerator filled with Coke is the most significant metonymy. Moderskeppet finds more advantages than problems with maintaining some of these notions. These notions make their users feel familiar with the company.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The title of Godin's (1999) book is *Permission Marketing*, which means anticipated, personal and relevant marketing. The contrasting mass media driven logic of marketing, "*Interruption Marketing*", is not anticipated, rarely personal, and only sometimes relevant. Permission marketing is a term that was adopted very early on by Moderskeppet, partly determined through reading of Godin, partly by the logic of internet. Another important source of inspiration, when Moderskeppet some years ago took up their operations in a niche-market, was Chris Anderson's (Anderson, 2006) book *Long Tail*. Anderson describes how the internet will change the basic conditions for business. According to Anderson a frequency distribution with a long tail means the realization of profit out of selling small volumes of hard-to-find items to many customers, instead of large volumes of a reduced number of popular items. The group that purchases a large number of 'non-hit' items constitutes the Long Tail. Anderson forecasts the death of the 'hit', and means that business in the future will address the long-tail-consumers.

If we return to the homepage of Moderskeppet, the dominant impression is not that they sell products, but that they offer services free of charge. This is a conscious strategy, in their own words a "*strategy of humanism*", which has succeeded in that it has attracted continuously additional visitors, users, and students. In this regard Moderskeppet's business strategy could be compared to a very ancient phenomenon, the gift economy. A gift economy is an economy founded on regularly giving goods and services, without any outspoken agreement for

immediate rewards. One example of the system has been described by the anthropologist Malinowski (1920) at the Trobriand Islands in eastern Papua Guinea. Moderskeppet's reward is an increasing number of customers and a reputation for keeping low prices on their products. As a consequence they have become nationally leading within their niche, selling relative large volumes of nowadays popular items. Moderskeppet's brotherly and ancient business strategy has in essence rendered Chris Anderson's Long Tail concept less valid in Moderskeppet's case. Theoretically, Anderson (2006) describes an ultimate change for business caused by the internet. The case of Moderskeppet shows that this change is neither symmetric nor definitive.

This fusion of an ancient and a contemporary economy – giving away services for free and getting customers in reward – is neither the only example of Moderskeppet's strategies as an organized producer, nor the only explanation to its rapid expansion as a company. We can for instance also establish that the academic experiences of the leading actors have been important in this respect. These experiences have been systematically reflected on, and made into a resource within the company. In both regards, Moderskeppet offers obvious examples of social shaping of technologies at the producer stage, how certain ideas, sprung from the ideological position of the producers, become encoded into Moderskeppet's website and its approach to its users (Olsson, 2008). Furthermore, referring back to the analytical model – the circuit of culture – these ideas also hold an interesting and somewhat peculiar view of the website's users: they ought to be turned into evangelists and – hence – parts of an effective marketing strategy. Whether or not this user identity, as it is suggested by the producers, really becomes adopted by users themselves, is of course a different question. Nevertheless this view of the users offers a promising – and not least interesting – analytical starting point for our further endeavors in trying to grasp Moderskeppet as an organized producer.

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NOTES

- 1 Organized producers is a tentative conceptualization which this research project aims at starting to develop through a number of empirical studies (see below). Hence, at this early phase of our research we need to allow ourselves to be somewhat sketchy in our definition of the very concept itself. It is in essence the project's very theoretical ambition to develop this concept further.
- 2 The selected organized producers are: a) www.moderskeppet.se, b) www.ungilund.se, c) www.stallet.se, d) www.svt.se, e) www.smp.se. The selection of producers has been made in order to cover a number of different societal spheres: private corporations (a, c, e), public service organizations (d), commercial company from the sphere of traditional media (e), and politics (b). The research project is funded for four years (2009–2013) by the Swedish Knowledge Foundation's research programme "Young Net Cultures".
- 3 All citations and quotes within this part of the text are brought from an interview with Mattias Karlsson, unless the running text indicates otherwise.

The freedom of the press belongs to those who control the press¹: The emergence of radical and community printshops in 1970s London

Jess Baines

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Analogue, alternative, participatory – Printshops in the 1970s

An exhibition last year at the London Print Studio, *AgitPop: Activist Graphics, Images and Pop Culture 1968–2008* was packed with political posters, mostly screen printed, some produced by individuals but many by now defunct London-based print collectives. The accompanying catalogue makes reference to the fact that many activist posters are uncredited to “a single artist or designer”, intended instead as “collective expressions of a movement” (Taylor, 2008: 8) but offers no discussion about any of the actual collectives involved. In the last few years a number of books devoted to activist graphics and posters have been published in the UK, notably Liz McQuiston’s three large volumes (1993; 1997; 2004). These surveys are important introductions and records of activist visual culture. However, they scarcely touch on a larger, more complex – and elusive – history of alternative print-media production. This absence is mirrored in alternative media studies, admittedly an emergent field; historical precedents for the democratic and participatory practices of contemporary activist media, digital or otherwise, may acknowledge some 1970s video projects, pirate radio, photocopied fanzines (of course), ‘community’ or activist publications where the DIY always stops short of the printing process. And it is not surprising that the *Alternative Media Handbook* (Coyer et al., 2007), which aims to bridge the scholar/activist divide and be both an academic text and a manual, barely mentions print,

given that digital technologies are, for many of us, so much more accessible, distributable and – to some extent – cheap. New technologies have facilitated the citizen designer, journalist, film maker with new resources to produce alternative discourses and to reach out to a wider public, and the living power of the network is indisputable. However, little over 30 years ago direct access to printing technology was also perceived as facilitating political, contestatory and empowering alternatives to the forms and practices of dominant media and culture.

The poster collectives referred to above were part of a broader network of ‘alternative’ printshops that proliferated across Britain (and elsewhere), but especially London, in the 1970s and 1980s. The founding objective of all of them was to produce, provide or facilitate the cheap and safe printing of ‘radical’ materials. Although initially most were informed by a DIY/self-help ethos, three types of activity emerged: service printers (hereafter referred to as radical printshops) – they did it for you; community/self-help/print resource centres – you did it with their help; poster collectives – self contained groups set up to design and print political posters. (The London Print Studio mentioned above started life in 1974 as Paddington Printshop – a collectively-run community arts/self-help printing facility for activist organisations) A 1986 publication on then existing UK community printshops (*Printing is Easy...?* by Kenna et al.) lists 32 organisations, which by the authors’ own admission is incomplete and does not include “*radical groups that operate wholly commercially*” (Kenna et al., 1986: 7). In fact by this time in London alone, there were actually at least 30 such workshops, constituting a kind of micro-sector.

Those printshops that started in the 1970s invariably did so on a voluntary basis, often in a domestic basement or other rent-free space with home made, scrounged or donated equipment. By the 1980s almost all had become places of paid employment, in rented premises, using standard industrial printing equipment, still collectively run – usually with a flat pay structure, mostly registered as worker co-operatives and members of the national print unions. They became places of paid employment either through focussing on being service printers with primarily radical, community, or otherwise sympathetic clients or in the case of the community/self-help presses and poster collectives through arts council and local authority funding.

The ‘radical printshop’ itself was not a new phenomenon; radical printers have been in existence in the UK since at least the 17th century – printing (often at the cost of imprisonment) heretical texts, pornography, the pamphlets of ‘proto-socialists’ (Levellers, Diggers, Ranters) and so on

(Brockway, 1980; McCalman, 1988; Gilmartin, 1996). In the 19th century émigré anarchists set up printshops in London (Rocker & Leftwich, 2005) and the UK Communist Party (CPGB) has always had its own printing press (Morning Litho), as did later the Socialist Workers Party (SW Litho). However the radical and community printshops that are the object of this study came out of a different historical constellation of technological possibility and political and cultural imperatives; one(s) which constituted their relationship to both organisation, skill, participation, aesthetics, finance – and concurrent shifts in radical politics and social movements, quite differently.

1.2. Conditions of appearance – and (speculatively) disappearance

Firstly the availability of two particular printing technologies was instrumental to the formation of the radical and community printshops; screen printing and offset litho. Screen printing is a relatively simple technology, where at its most basic, the equipment can be made by hand. This process had been taken up by artists in the 1950s and 1960s, facilitating its presence in art schools, where many members, especially of those involved in community presses and poster collectives, first encountered it. Offsetlitho – especially small offset started to become widely available in the 1960s. This process, unlike its forerunners, letterpress and gravure, did not require a long apprenticeship, it could be learnt through a manual, was relatively cheap and allowed a huge freedom in terms of the way artwork could be generated (Fountain, 1988). Not only did it perfectly complement the new processes of phototypesetting, but for the amateur, artwork could be made by drawing in black ink and pasting typewritten copy. In his chapter on the development of offset litho in *Changing the Word, the Printing Industry in Transition*, Alan Marshall (1983: 36) describes the alternative/community press movement as an offshoot of the development of offset litho. Marshall also makes the link between the underground press of the 1960s – who did not have their own printing presses (and continually ran into difficulties finding printers) and the emergence of the more explicitly political radical and community press scene.

Secondly, then, the emergence of the printshops needs to be understood as a constitutive part of the proliferation of post-1968 radical politics, a period which not only saw the reinvigoration of a libertarian left but also feminism, the rise of ‘community activism’ and the extension of political concerns to cultural ones (Marcuse, 1979: 3). The printshops did not just ‘produce’ radical content, but attempted to enact their

politics within the printshops themselves. Although political perspectives of members shared some common left/libertarian ground; anti-capitalist and state (to varying degrees), anti-hierarchy, pro-feminist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist and so on, they were by no means unified. The printshops were reflective of the fractured and fractious politics of the post 1968 left, in all its dimensions – political antagonisms existed between anarchists, between Trotskyites, ecologists, between feminists and queers; never mind between them all. It might be argued that the printshops made manifest in microcosm the agonistic pluralism of radical democracy (Mouffe, 2000).

By the mid 1990s however most of these printshops had either closed, been incorporated into other organisations or acquired conventional (hierarchical) management structures. At the time of writing only two collectives survive (Calverts and Aldgate Press), both London-based offset litho printing businesses. Speculative explanations for this situation points to a number of interrelated factors: print is no longer the essential media form for radical communications; an increased self-sufficiency of potential clients; a lack of necessary business acumen; a decreasing pool of individuals that considered radical printing a desirable vocation; an actual decrease in numbers of typical client groupings; cuts in local government funding and for London organisations, the closure of the Greater London Council; interpersonal and political conflicts within individual presses; finally and related to all of the above, shifting priorities within radical politics in Britain across the time period of the early 1970s to mid 1990s.

What I propose now is not, at this stage, a discussion of the demise of the printshops but rather a further exploration of the some of the specific cultural, political and operational contexts and contingencies that informed their instigation and practices. The focus is around the notion of ‘cultural democracy’ in order to illustrate and discuss the printshops’ attempts to articulate a radical democratic conception of cultural production.

2. CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

Our print shouldn't follow their conceptions/their form because our messages (content) are so different. The lies of mass media create a form directly opposed to ours (...) Elevate the language & images of everyday life into meaningful ideas (...) New forms are needed to convey new ideas. Beyond the advertiser's styles and the professionals preconceptions. And these new forms will only come as new situations arise, as real communication occurs. As the

readers become producers what they produce will be totally different (Zeitlyn, 1974: 29).

This quote comes from one of the earliest UK self-help [DIY] print manuals. It speaks the language of the 'cultural democracy' movement: the term for a significant oppositional current within various UK community arts and publishing projects of the 1970s and 1980s. These projects aimed to 'democratise culture' not by providing increased access to 'official' culture ('high' art and literature) – that is by democratising consumption, but by democratising production, which in turn was not about 'freedom of expression' per se but more radically: "... *democratic agreement on the nature of public expression and democratic control over the means of public expression*" (Culture and Democracy, The Manifesto, 1986: 52). The cultural democracy movement made, in McGuigan's (1992: 57) words, an "*uncompromising case against the 'dominant culture' of both 'art' and 'mass media'*". To quote from above manifesto again: "... *the ruling culture impose their needs, their behaviour and their values on the rest of the population, while maintaining that these values are an objective measurement of civilised behaviour...*" (McGuigan, 1992: 28). And furthermore, "*We must abolish any 'standards of excellence' which presume to be universal while being arranged and implemented by the most wealthy, mobile and 'educated' within society*" (McGuigan, 1992: 53).

The other unmistakable presence in Zeitlyn's quote (and the rhetoric of the 'cultural democracy' movement generally) is Enzensberger's (1970) essay; *Constituents of a Theory of the Media*, which perhaps unsurprisingly – amongst the guides to typography, ink and Soviet design – is recommended in the back section (along with Walter Benjamin's (1936) *Author as Producer* and Paulo Friere's (1970) *Pedagogy of Oppressed*, texts that – including Enzensberger's – still continue to appear as touchstones for contemporary alternative media studies). Although Enzensberger's focus is the radical potential of electronic media, he makes numerous points that resonate with the formative aspirations of the printshops. I will touch on only a few. Critiquing the New Left's reductive attitude towards mass media forms (agents of manipulation and pacification) Enzensberger (1970: 18) writes of their potential instead to mobilize, "*to make men (sic) ... [a]s free as dancers, as aware as football players, as surprising as guerrillas*". Or as Hesmondhalgh (2000: 117) more prosaically puts it "*as initiators of action*". As for media manipulation, Enzensberger returns to its etymology of 'handling' – "*a technical treatment with a particular goal in mind*" and in this case a political goal, therefore "*A revolutionary plan should not require the manipulators to*

disappear; on the contrary; it must make everyone a manipulator" (i.e. 'a producer') (Enzensberger, 1970: 20). Enzensberger also lists a number of desirable features for an emancipatory use of media, all of which connect (within the limitations of print) with the early aims and practices of the radical and community printshops; decentralised, mobilizing, receivers as transmitters (readers as producers), interaction and feedback, political learning, collective production and self-organisation (Enzensberger, 1970: 26). He also gave a clear directive to the artist/author: they must work towards their *"own redundancy as a specialist"* by becoming *"an agent of the masses"*, and can only become lost in them, *"when they themselves become authors, the authors of history"* (Enzensberger, 1970: 36). I do not know how widely read this essay of Enzensberger's was at the time, not do I wish to give him some foundational authority, however, despite the focus on electronic media, it is a near manifesto for the early radical and community printshops.

3. LOST ARTISTS

The problematisation of the role of the artist, and its attendant cultural baggage was a clear concern of the community printshops and the poster collectives, as the following two quotes, from different organisations indicate:

In most respects we have rejected the traditional cultural role of the artist. The artist is a kind of emblem of freedom, someone who is negatively free to do anything in the name of art. The manner in which an alternative practice is constructed and developed is problematic. There is no easy answer; the question can only be resolved over a protracted period and in conjunction with the unfolding of the class struggle (Poster Film Collective, 1986: 18).

It's taken us several years to get over the ideas drummed into us at art school – like the idea of an artist having some magical quality – the creator. Deciding to work collectively is a way of challenging the idea of the artist as a self-engrossed individualist (See Red, 1980: 53).

The See Red quote also needs to be seen in the context of the emergent feminist art-historical critique of both the figure and function of the artist *and* the category of art (Ricketts & Phelan, 2001). The relationship of the 'old' British left to art is also of importance and while not entirely distinct from Enzensberger's Marxist critique (individualist, elitist, bourgeois distraction), resonated with a particularly British strain of anti-

intellectualism. These were attitudes that would become recharged in the 1980s by rise of identity politics – which in itself had a profound effect on some of the printshops. However it was not just the historic figure of the artist that needed to be undermined, the new community artist also began to be perceived as suspect, as the following quote from one of the printshops forcefully expresses:

For printshops [there is] a tension between knocking out cheap jobs for people with fuck all money and a lot to say, and churning out the turgid work of community artists who seek to gain some authenticity by latching on to some bureaucratic scheme to sponsor the representation of the dispossessed. Self-expression only has a value in itself for those with nothing worth expressing (Union Place, 1986: 22).

4. FOUND FORMS

As regards ‘new forms for new ideas’; this notion has its seeds in the aborted trajectory of the discussions and experiments of the socialist avant-gardes in 1920s Europe and Russia/USSR. So prior to Brecht, Benjamin – although of course referred to by them – (and Enzensberger), there was a belief that radical aesthetic forms not only represented a radically new way of perceiving the world but that they could also create it. (Along with concomitant evaluation of the role of the artist and art – provoking a turn by some towards ‘technology’ and ‘industrial production’, a move that has more specific affinity with the radical service printers than the community/poster workshops²). However the experimental forms of the Russian avant-garde especially were subject to fierce criticism from workers for their “*distortions of reality*” and formalism; Alexander Rodchenko – a Russian avant-garde artist – was expelled from the October group for “*propagating a taste alien to that of the proletariat*” (Burgin, 1980: 50). This was the contradiction of modernist or avant-garde aesthetics; in liberating itself from bourgeois conscription it became utterly removed from popular taste, only to return (in Bourdieusian terms) as a sign of distinction for the cultured; a point the printshops were no doubt more than aware of. In actuality the “*new forms for new ideas*” – in terms of graphics, tended to either draw on particular vernaculars: montage, comic strips, ‘folk-art’, satirical engravings and/or reflect radical ‘pop’ aesthetics from the posters of the Cuban revolution, to 1960s psychedelia and the cut-and-paste of punk (McQuiston, 1993; Taylor, 2008). There was no ‘standard’ in either sense

of the word; much depended on the tastes, skills and background of the makers – and available technology.

However, initially at least, there was some consistency in terms of an ideological resistance to 'slickness'. In a 1980 interview in the UK feminist magazine *Spare Rib*, the See Red (1980: 55) collective were asked if they had not used photographs in their early posters because of a prevailing radical climate against "*slick or professional*" aesthetics. (Six years later See Red commented that "*the political poster ... become less popular in recent years*" and there had been a move to "*more subtle images that are nicer to live with*" (Kenna et al., 1986: 33). In the same volume (See Red, 1980: 57) the Docklands Community Poster Project state that: "*We believe it is not enough for a socialist cultural practice to be a crude mirror image of its capitalist counterparts, a kind of left advertising agency, using easy slogans that gloss over the complexity of issues*". What this meant in practice was that many posters contained large amounts of 'explanatory' text – a practice of much UK 'critical' art photography of the late 1970s and 1980s (Walker, 2002).

The challenge to dominant cultural forms was perhaps the most apparent – and contentious, both internally and externally, in relation to the commitment of community presses to the 'ordinary' voice and its self-expression in print. When the Arts Council (UK) began to be a potential source of financial support for community arts and publishing projects, the issue of 'standards' or 'quality' came to the fore. Richard Hoggart (1980), pitting himself against the proponents of the cultural democracy movement, described their attack on 'universal standards of excellence' as prompting a 'crisis of relativism'. It was all very well for the 'culturally excluded' to express themselves, but was it any 'good'? Rejected for an Arts Council grant on grounds of 'quality', one of the members of the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP) wrote this to the general secretary in 1980:

We want the chance to develop our own standards possible and intelligible to people who work long un-intellectual, ill paid hours; to people whose intelligence cannot simply be high jacked from the circumstances – the scope and the limitation – they share with most of the un-literary public. These circumstances may not favour the codes and constructs of conventional literature, but they evoke new forms fitted to a content that literature largely ignores (or older forms) that the literature of today has overlaid (Morley & Warpole, 1982: 134).

Bourdieu (1990: 155) makes the point that in the fields of production the 'legitimate competence' of the professional is undermined by the 'peoples' attempts to 'do it' for themselves. (Which was Hoggart's concern - and part of the radical intention of 'cultural democracy'). Bourdieu warns however that upholding and valorising 'the popular' (the illegitimate) cannot deny that the very conceptualisation as such is an "effect of domination"; and that ultimately this logic "leads stigmatised people to claim the stigma as the sign of their identity" - and that is an "insoluble contradiction". As is evidenced in Morley and Warpole's (1980) *The Republic of Letters: Working Class Writing and Local Publishing* this contradiction was indeed of concern amongst worker-writer groups and the community presses that supported them.

5. WHERE ARE 'WE'?

At this juncture, I want to return again briefly to Zeitlyn's quote and address the explicit claim (via 'our') to the 'we', i.e. 'we the people'. (Enzensberger's 'masses' have disappeared - and their agent apparently among them.) By the time of the instigation of the radical and community printshops, traditional leftist notions of 'the people' as 'the working class' had become somewhat more complicated. Although the 'we' is still invoked as an identity of resistance (Burke, 1998) the then emergent range of political identifications and interests mentioned in the previous section meant for a much more differentiated sense of its constitution. So for example an entry for a self-help press in the 1975 edition of *Print: How You Can Do It* (Zeitlyn: 51) states:

The sort of things that really need printing are squatters posters and handbooks, community papers, stuff for black groups, for school kids and for women and men fighting in the workplace (particularly where they are not in the union or have been sold out by the union).

'The people' invoked are heterogeneous, what is in common is marginalisation - and 'resistance'. The fact that the 'we' (or the 'our') continued to be used in the communications of left/libertarian/community politics was, one could argue, an attempted performative or plea for unity given the emergence of multiple agendas - some of which, particularly anti-racism and feminism, were highly critical of universalistic notions of an undifferentiated 'we'. The issue of what claim the actual memberships of the printshops had to the 'representation' of a

heterogeneous 'oppressed' was to surface with the intensification of identity politics - and some would argue the destruction of 'class politics' - in the 1980s.

During this period, many of the radical printshops and community presses attempted to perform some kind of 'positive discrimination' towards potential new members. For the community presses (and poster workshops), who can be considered 'cultural producers' rather than 'printers' and who almost all received operational and wage grants, (by then from the Labour Left run Greater London Council) the issue became, in some cases, a constitutive one. One of the clearest cases in point is that of the Lenthall Road Workshop (established in 1976 as a feminist community screen-printing and photography workshop). By the mid 1980s the workshop had made it a policy that the members of the collective should reflect the class and ethnic background of the area in which the workshop was situated (Hackney). In part this was to try and encourage the greater use of the facilities by local black and working class women. In 1986 the collective stated:

We prioritise work with women, working class and minority groups for whom communication has a special relevance. Being female or a member of any of the minority groups has traditionally meant exclusion from whole areas of public life, becoming 'invisible' or being represented (or misrepresented) as seen from a 'mainstream' point of view... We have no official hierarchy, but unofficial hierarchies are hard to eliminate... [G]raduations of social class can sometimes produce delusions of 'natural leadership' (...) this has to some extent been ironed out by having a group the majority of whom are 'working' as opposed to 'ruling' class (Lenthall Road, 1986: 36).

From discussions with former members of the See Red collective, it is also apparent that the issue of 'positive discrimination' was not just about representation but providing economic opportunity. The 'voluntarism' of the early printshops was perceived by some as exclusionary, requiring economic self-sufficiency and no dependants. It could be argued however that at that point in time the printshops were to some extent supported by the "squatting and claiming" culture of the libertarian left (Landry et al., 1981: 14) - which in principle was open to all, although in reality was dominated by middle class ex-students. With grants for reasonable wages, the community presses could address another barrier to 'cultural production'. In turn, the grant-giving policies of the Greater London Council and other local Labour Left authorities can be seen as contributing to the increasing 'professionalisation' of

radical politics in the UK in the 1980s (Lent, 2001), a cause for critical concern as earlier expressed in the quote from Union Place printshop.

For the radical (service) printshops, the situation was somewhat different, given their income was generated through their own labour. They were not part of the broader community arts scene – although there was clearly traffic of both workers and ‘users’ between the two – but were rather the radical component of the printing industry. Issues of accountability and representation were not quite so pertinent although access to the printing trade was, given both its historic domination by white (working class) men and the highly exclusionary practices of the print unions. These printshops, some of which had emerged out of the self-help/community print scene, all used offset-lithography and increasingly ‘large offset’ which required a far greater degree of technical knowledge and skill than the screen-printing processes used by the community presses/poster collectives. This meant that it took a considerable amount of time and financial commitment – especially given that most printshops (radical and community) had flat pay structures, to train a printer. From my conversations with past and present radical printshop members, a varied picture emerges; some had a coherent policy about training women on the presses, others operated a ‘positive discrimination if we can’ approach and others perceived such practices as politically irrelevant. Needless to say these positions shifted around during the life of a given press, depending variously on the attitudes of the current workers and what they perceived to be the priorities of the press and, often, its economic circumstances.

6. CONCLUSION

The radical and community printshops facilitated the majority of radical media production in Britain for at least a 20 year period. Through the selective theme of ‘cultural democracy’, I have attempted to demonstrate how they also represented via their own constitutions and practices, some of the significant developments, debates and formations within British radical politics/social movements of the time. In their attempts to claim the means of media and cultural production they challenged dominant discourses about what could be said, by whom and how. Through the politicization of their organizational and production processes they struggled to enact a radical democratic practice. It may be argued that the printing press is an inherently authoritarian technology³; it demands consistent bodies, consumables, premises – and that the

inability to contend with the implications of this contributed to the printshops demise. The internet, with its *"capacity to transform time, space, costs and the very roles of (...) producers and consumers"* (Bennett, 2003: 20), clearly offers the potential for a more (although not inherently) democratic mode of media and cultural practice. Within media studies there is significant critical interest in how the internet *"may be constitutive of alternative political communities"*, new political identities and *"ultimately new radical democratic cultures"* (Dahlberg & Siaper, 2007: 11). There may not be 'lessons learnt' nor an enhanced understanding of contemporary radical communications from the histories of the radical/community printshops. However, critically revisiting their aspirations and practices does I hope, offer not only a contribution to the historical contextualization of alternative media activity but also a thickening of the conceptualisation – and analysis – of radical democratic practice.

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- joint workshop

NOTES

- 1 This is the text of a 1979 poster by the feminist poster collective See Red. The image consisted of a photograph of two women running presses at the offset-litho collective Women in Print. The slogan is a productivist (and feminist) rendition of A.J. Liebling's well known 'The freedom of the press belongs to the man that owns one.'

- 2 Enzensberger (1970: 19) critically notes that students in the May '68 uprising in Paris ran to the old hand presses of the art school to print their posters, rather than "*carrying out their agitation among the workers in a modern offset press*".
- 3 In response to the anarchists critique of authority and their exhortation that it needed to be removed from every sphere of existence, in 1872 Frederick Engels wrote the tract *On Authority* in which he argues that modern industrial processes are *inherently* authoritarian.

Collective action and the social web: Comparing the architecture of Avaaz.org and Openesf.net

Anastasia Kavada

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing popularity of internet tools that allow the collaborative creation of content, sharing with other users, as well as self-publishing and social networking has rekindled debates around the potential of the internet for political participation. This chapter critically assesses this potential by focusing on two contrasting case studies of collective action: the European Social Forum and global movement website Avaaz. Characterized by different goals, political cultures and organizing practices, the two case studies serve as an illustration of the diverse ways in which activist groups appropriate web 2.0 applications. To provide a solid basis for this comparison, the chapter first discusses the capabilities of web 2.0 for transnational collective action and reviews previous research on the adoption of the internet by political organizations.

2. WEB 2.0 AND TRANSNATIONAL COLLECTIVE ACTION

Criticized as a marketing ploy by companies aiming to profit from the users' unpaid labour (Scholz, 2008), the term web 2.0 has nonetheless become ubiquitous. The term marks a fundamental shift in our view of the web: from a relatively static page that transmits information one-way to a platform for collaboration, coordination and interaction (O'Reilly, 2004). This stems from developments in web standards and infrastructure that have allowed websites to incorporate more sophisticated interactive components (Gillan et al., 2008). Treating users as co-creators rather than consumers of content, the success of web 2.0 platforms depends on the way they are designed to orchestrate and manage this

ecosystem of contributors. This 'architecture of participation' (O'Reilly, 2004) defines the roles and relationships of platform users, affecting who speaks and when and who has access to which information. Rules of governance, membership and communication are also encoded in the software supporting the platform (Noveck, 2005) and/or formally stated in documents governing its use, such as terms of service agreements.

The 'social web' enables users to participate in diverse modes of content production and management including the creation, sharing, visualization, remixing, archiving and tagging of information. Quoting Boczkowski, Neff and Stark (2004: 182) call this form of media production "*distributed construction*". The content generated on the platform comprises not only information created by users, but also information about them. The latter can be displayed in personal profiles or captured automatically through user-tracking and data-mining tools (Stanoevska-Slabeva, 2002). Web 2.0 elements also allow users to interact with each other through the platform, to network, coordinate and make decisions. Polls, surveys, task lists or calendar matching are important tools in this respect.

With their emphasis on collaboration and interactivity, web 2.0 technologies fit well with the current framework of theorizing the internet and transnational collective action. Research has suggested that the decentralized structure of the internet and its capability for multi-directional horizontal communication facilitates the creation of loose and flexible activist networks that increasingly operate on the international level (Bennett, 2004; della Porta & Mosca, 2005; Kavada, 2009). These are lightweight and often short-lived configurations with limited hierarchies and increased individual autonomy (Flanagin et al., 2006). They are also marked by ideological diversity, managing to unite heterogeneous participants in actions that easily shift from the national to the transnational level (Bennett, 2005).

Web 2.0 can be thought to reinforce this capacity for 'networked protest' as, compared to the more one-way broadcasting model of web pages, it allows coordination and the lateral distribution of content. Writings on the subject have enthused about the ability of blogs, Twitter posts and social bookmarking services to point users to protest-relevant content or to reveal information that would otherwise be suppressed or ignored. Web 2.0 tools further aid users in connecting and organizing with like-minded others. They also provide opportunities for both strong and weak participation with regards to the degree of commitment or the amount of time and resources that people can dedicate to their political activity (Chadwick, 2009; Fuster Morell, 2009).

This explains the rapid adoption of the 'social web' by activist groups whose websites increasingly contain more web 2.0 elements. However, political organizations differ in their appropriation of communication technology. Research on the use of the web by political actors has shown that the rules, values and aesthetic codes inscribed in the design of a website reflect the strategies pursued by the web producers and their cultures of organizing (Foot & Schneider, 2006). At the same time, the design of a website influences its potential for collective action, enabling or constraining particular activities. Yet, as the following section demonstrates, the way political organizations adopt interactive features and deal with user contribution depends on their resources, organizing structure and political culture.

3. POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND WEB INTERACTIVITY

The tension "*between a desire to maintain control over messages and resources and the generally decentralizing dynamic of Web-based communication*" (Foot & Schneider, 2006: 6) defines organizational attitudes towards the more interactive aspects of the internet. Thus, the reluctance of political groups to embrace social technologies often stems from an unwillingness to cede control to the user (Iozzi & Bennett quoted in Foot & Schneider, 2006: 6). While this is particularly evident in more conventional political actors, social movements and non-governmental organizations have not necessarily fared much better in terms of web interactivity. For instance, in their study of the British anti-war movement, Gillan et al. (2008) have shown that the resources needed to maintain a more interactive website, as well as the inability to control the quality of discussions limited the adoption of more interactive features.

Furthermore, Pickerill's (2004) research on environmental organizations has suggested that groups with decentralized and flexible structures experiment more with the internet than those with bureaucratic or rigid processes. The degree of experimentation also depends on the size and age of the organization. Thus, 'old' organizations such as trade unions have a tendency to simply extend their offline activities online, paying less attention to the interactive aspects of the technology (Mosca, 2007).

The link between views of democracy and attitudes towards the internet has also been highlighted in Coleman's (2008) research on youth e-citizenship. Distinguishing between two opposing strategies of e-citizenship, one emphasizing management and the other autonomy, he

demonstrated that each is connected with different conceptions of digital technology. While proponents of managed e-citizenship used new communication technologies to address the 'democratic deficit' by giving a voice to the public, those associated with autonomous e-citizenship aimed to establish new democratic networks rather than engage with official politics. While the former viewed the internet as an enclave that should be moderated and protected, the latter were appreciative of the more anarchic and decentralized elements of the internet. Focusing on the organizing process of the 2004 European Social Forum, Kavada (2007) has pointed to similar dynamics.

Therefore, depending on their resources, strategy, organizational structure and political culture, political actors display different attitudes towards the involvement of the user in content creation and management. Continuing this line of enquiry, this chapter examines two case studies that represent different types of collective action: the European Social Forum and Avaaz. Both are self-described social movements¹, focused on multiple issues and attracting participants from different countries. They also stem from the same grievances with the global political system: the neoliberal agenda of global political institutions, their lack of transparency and accountability, as well as the increasing power of sub-political actors such as multinational corporations. Additional similarities refer to the targets of their collective action that include corporations, global institutions, economic blocs and various levels of government. However, the two movements have adopted different tactics and strategies for effecting change. In turn, these seem to be related with contrasting internet strategies and reflected on the 'architecture of participation' of their web platforms².

4. OPENESF: OPENNESS AND DISTRIBUTED CONSTRUCTION

The European Social Forum (ESF) constitutes one of the main convergence spaces of the Global Justice Movement in Europe. The first ESF took place in Florence in 2002, while subsequent ESFs were held in Paris (2003), London (2004), Athens (2006) and Malmö (2008). According to the Chapter of Principles of its global counterpart – the World Social Forum – the ESF is “*an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences, and interlinking for effective action*” (World Social Forum Organizing Committee, 2001). The ‘open space’ idea emphasizes the role of the WSF as a “*public square*” (Whitaker, 2004: 113) characterized by a belief in

participatory democracy, an aversion to hierarchies and an emphasis on the inclusiveness of equals. Thus, following Coleman's (2008) terms, the ESF is guided by a view of democracy as a political and cultural aspiration.

Launched in the end of November 2007, the OpenESF platform aims to provide a permanent networking space for participants in the forum by allowing registered users to create a profile, set up a project or participate in already existing groups. Users can register by simply providing their name and email address, meaning that the requirements for joining the platform are minimal. Projects can refer to the preparation of the European Social Forum or to any proposal for social transformation as long as it conforms to the WSF Charter of Principles. As of August 2009 the platform had 970 registered members and 199 projects.

Every project is provided with a set of communication tools that offer both coordination and content management services, including blogs, discussion lists, wiki pages and task lists. Authorizing all project members to contribute content to these applications, the platform facilitates a participatory and horizontal process of informing and framing. For projects that are completely open to the public, all registered users, not only project members, can add content and use the project tools.

Each project space is also assigned a unique pathway that can be used in external communications. Thus for non-private projects, their pages on the platform also constitute their public profile. These comprise not only messages targeted to the wider public but also their internal communications, such as their discussion list or wiki pages. Using Goffman's (1959) terminology, one could argue that the profile of the project comprises a view of both its backstage and front stage activities. If the front stage consists of content created for public consumption, then the backstage includes the internal processes through which these messages are created. Allowing an insight into the backstage is not a common practice in web campaigning. Constituting "*strategic forms of collective action*" (Baringhorst, 2009: 24), most campaigns follow an "*undemocratic top-down structure*" that is "*far apart from the ideal of discursive, communicative action envisaged in notions of deliberative democracy*". However, on the OpenESF platform projects are publicly displayed as 'works-in-progress', signalling a more open philosophy of political organizing.

The framing of the whole platform, as presented on the homepage, follows a similar 'work-in-progress' logic. Apart from a short description of OpenESF and links to the main ESF bodies and websites, the

homepage features new projects and those that were more recently updated. This implies a bottom-up process of framing, where the presentation of the platform emerges as a result of its members' activities rather than being imposed from the top. The platform thus presents the movement as a 'space under construction' in a way that respects the forums' belief in the inclusiveness of equals, plurality and diversity.

The same philosophy permeates the coordination services offered on the project level. Affording lateral, reciprocal and many-to-many communication, the coordination tools encourage flatter hierarchies. Still, project creators are invested with more authority since they are responsible for the initial framing of the group and can control who becomes a member of the project. Thus, the rule and coordination mechanisms of the platform tend to afford a polycentric structure (Gerlach, 2001) with multiple leaders each one wielding influence on specific projects but unable to exercise control on the whole platform.

Furthermore, registered users can create a profile on the platform that may be eponymous or pseudonymous, individual or organizational. The profile page is designed to represent participants as activists by shunning personal information and focusing instead on the causes that they are interested in and the projects they belong to. Users can also upload their photograph and have a short text describing them. Profiles further include the date when users joined OpenESF, as well as a history of their activity on the platform. This information facilitates the building of interpersonal trust by offering cues "*that are reliable yet not costly to assess*" (Donath, 2008: 238) in terms of the users' experience, reliability and potential for cooperation.

Aiming to encourage networking around common issues, the design of the platform facilitates community-building by providing tools that afford lateral, reciprocal and many-to-many communication. Discussion lists and wiki pages are suited to a process of 'interactive broadcasting' that according to Etzioni and Etzioni (1999) is necessary for fostering feelings of community. Members can broadcast information to everyone else on the project and receive "*communal feedback*", sensing how other members are reacting to the same message. This enables a process of "*mutual persuasion*" (Etzioni & Etzioni, 1999: 244) where participants can more easily develop common positions. Yet, while the platform offers ample tools for internal communication, engagement with non-users of the platform is rather limited. For instance, OpenESF does not facilitate project members to automatically email contacts from their address books, to do fundraising or to run petitions.

Thus, the OpenESF is a platform designed for ‘movement entrepreneurs’ (Garrett, 2006), providing a high degree of autonomy to its members and the freedom to design collective action in ways that are not sanctioned by a central authority (Flanagin et al., 2006).

5. AVAAZ: OUTWARD ORIENTATION AND CENTRAL COORDINATION OF INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Avaaz is a ‘new global web movement’ (Avaaz, 2009) launched in January 2007 as a response to the democratic deficit of global decision-making. It is thus driven by a view of democracy as a system in crisis that can and should be reformed. Its aim is “*to bring people-powered politics to international decision-making*” (Avaaz, 2009) by articulating global public opinion. Avaaz campaigns have focused on a wide range of issues including peace in the Middle East, climate change, the Burma uprising, the situation in Zimbabwe and Tibet, as well as the war in Iraq.

At the time of writing in August 2009, Avaaz counts more than 3.3 million participants. Co-founded by MoveOn, Res Publica and GetUp.org.au, Avaaz tends to replicate the organizing model of its founders on an international level. It is coordinated by a small professional team of global campaigners based in different countries including Canada, Spain, the USA, the UK, Australia, Argentina and Brazil. Campaigners are responsible for defining the priorities of Avaaz and for developing its messages with the help of expert advisors.

The Avaaz strategy involves rapid response to urgent problems by mobilizing large numbers of subscribers to donate money or sign petitions. Members are further encouraged to participate in offline Avaaz events, such as protests or demonstrations. The Avaaz core tool is an email alerts list that operates in 13 languages. Subscription to the email list is open to everyone and ensures automatic affiliation to the organization.

To serve its strategy of rapid mass mobilization, Avaaz has designed a website that allows numerous participants to undertake easy, brief and small actions. Reflecting the outward orientation of Avaaz, its platform also contains features that help its members to spread the message of campaigns through email and content sharing sites. It includes a ‘Tell your Friends’ application in petition and campaign pages, allowing supporters to email their contacts about actions they have undertaken with Avaaz. Furthermore, Avaaz members are prompted to bookmark and share petitions and campaign information through platforms like

Digg, Reddit and Delicious. All of these tools turn Avaaz supporters into communicators, encouraging them to diffuse the message of its campaigns to their own networks or to guiding others in discovering information about Avaaz activities.

Avaaz members can also express their interest in volunteering for the organization by filling in a contact form on the website. While volunteers can be potentially entrusted with important organizing and coordinating tasks, such as helping with research or shooting videos, the division of labour is decided by the Avaaz core team. Supporters can only articulate their intention to volunteer through the platform as there is no system through which they can take responsibility for tasks in a bottom-up manner.

This more centralized system of coordination is further reflected in the processes of informing and framing afforded by the platform. Content creation and management tend to be the preserve of Avaaz campaigners who write the blog and decide on the framing of issues in the campaigns pages. Following the established practices of web campaigning, the Avaaz platform does not offer a view of its backstage. Information about its internal workings is missing and while team members appear with their own names in emails and blog posts, the Avaaz website does not comprise their biography.

Avaaz supporters are offered an opportunity to contribute content to the website either by commenting on blog posts or by using the 'Give advice or comment' application. Thus far, more than 2300 comments have been sent to Avaaz through this form. However, commentators have to be approved by the Avaaz administration team before their first post gets published, allowing Avaaz to monitor the content posted on the website.

Even though these comments may offer suggestions and advice for new campaigns, their publication on the website seems to serve the purpose of community-building. Submitted by users living in different countries and speaking various languages, the comments are testament to Avaaz's diverse and international membership. Other features that increase this sense of involvement include graphical representations of the number of people who have contributed money or signed a petition. Photographs from offline events organized by Avaaz further provide visitors with a sense of context, depicting the outcome of the actions taken online in a tangible way. However, the design of the platform constrains the development of interpersonal trust since it tends to afford one-to-many and non-reciprocal communication. According to Flanagan et al. (2006: 34), this form of interaction tends to cultivate "*affiliative*" ties

characterized by *“a sense of common connection that occurs absent direct communication or other known linkages among individuals”*.

Therefore, the mode of engagement outlined for Avaaz supporters belongs mainly to the institutional type. Within this mode *“individuals are embedded in a larger system that controls opportunities for engagement”* (Flanagin et al., 2006: 37) and are expected to follow its rules and practices. While Avaaz utilizes the potential of web platforms to harness the small contributions of supporters, it places less emphasis on community-building and on developing a more direct relationship with its members.

6. CONCLUSION

With their emphasis on interactivity, collaboration and the ‘distributed construction’ of content, web 2.0 applications seem to be compatible with the loose, networked and multi-issue nature of recent collective action. Yet, political organizations have diverse attitudes towards the decentralizing aspects of the internet that in turn reflect their different strategies and political cultures.

Focusing on two contrasting case studies, OpenESF.net and Avaaz.org, this chapter has shown how these different strategies are inscribed in the ‘architecture of participation’ of the groups’ websites. Conceived as an open networking space, OpenESF allowed registered users to organize in a bottom-up way. It thus facilitated a distributed process of content creation and management. It also rendered the backstage of non-private projects transparent to the public, privileging a view of the movement as ‘a space under construction’. Conversely, the design of the Avaaz platform ensured that its core team retained central control of the framing and informing process. The Avaaz website further adhered to established campaign practices where the backstage remains inaccessible to the public (Baringhorst, 2009).

However, Avaaz’s outward orientation was reflected on the design of its platform which prompted supporters to become ‘communicators’ of the Avaaz message in their own right. OpenESF, on the other hand, was more inward-looking as its ‘architecture of participation’ afforded community-building and the development of direct relationships between its registered users. The Avaaz website was more suited to the development of affiliative ties (Flanagin et al., 2006) and a sense of abstract community mediated through comments, photographs and graphical representations.

Ultimately, the design of the two platforms facilitates two different modes of engagement. The OpenESF platform is a space built for movement entrepreneurs (Garrett, 2006) emphasizing the autonomy of individual users. The Avaaz platform in contrast provides the basis for institutional engagement, encouraging its supporters to make small, easy and frequent contributions that are centrally coordinated by the Avaaz core team.

Based on a systematic observation of the two platforms, this chapter can offer only tentative conclusions. Keeping in mind that the design of a platform enables and constrains its uses but does not determine them, further research should examine the experiences of users and the practices of those designing and maintaining the platforms. It is also worth noting that while this chapter focused on the incorporation of web 2.0 in the organizations' own websites, political groups currently use a variety of platforms for their campaigning needs. These may fulfil complementary functions to an organizations own website. For instance, the Avaaz Facebook page allows its supporters more visibility and involvement in content creation. Exploring the tensions and complementarities between the diverse platforms making up the 'web sphere' (Foot & Schneider, 2006) of an organization can constitute an important step in understanding the affordances of web 2.0 for collective action.

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NOTES

- 1 The term 'self-described' is deliberate here. While the Global Justice Movement – the movement that set up the European Social Forum – fits current definitions of social movements, this is not necessarily the same for Avaaz. For Chadwick (2006: 124), MoveOn – the American organization that inspired Avaaz – represents "*a genuinely novel form of hybrid political organization*" as it combines traditional mobilization techniques with a decentralized organizing structure that is characteristic of social movements.
- 2 The fieldwork consisted of a systematic and continuous observation of the selected web platforms starting from January 2009.

New media – new public spheres? An analysis of online shared spaces becoming public agoras

Maria Francesca Murru

1. INTRODUCTION

The notions of deliberation and the frame of the discourse theory of democracy (Habermas, 1996), have inspired a substantial strand of studies focused on the internet's democratic potential (See e.g. Kellner (1999), Rheingold (1993), and Wilhelm (1999)). The central accomplishment of these various contributions lies in the assessment of the extent to which dialogical exchanges taking place in the cyberspace conform to the normative requirements of the 'counter-factual ideal' of public sphere (Dryzek, 1990). However, the contradictions that appear when analyzing practical research findings from a comparative global view, pose a dilemma that deals more with theoretical assumptions rather than with the empirical methods applied.

The basic aim of the chapter is to organize critical discussion of the feasibility to consider deliberation as the unique normative benchmark for the assessment of the democratic potential of new media. For this purpose, two major lines of reasoning will be developed. On one hand, the theoretical roots of the concept of deliberation and the long wave of criticisms drawn out by them, will be explored in order to underscore the intrinsic shortages of the notion. On the other hand, it will be argued that the empirical experiences coming from the web make the ideal of the deliberative public sphere even less useful in order to understand the political dimension that is taking place on it.

Consequently, a 'cultural turn' of the analytic perspective will be proposed. Drawing from the model of 'civic cultures', developed by Dahlgren (2009), the article will end by suggesting a set of parameters for the analysis of online communication processes *within* their social and

cultural preconditions, rather than *against* the reductive normative ideal of deliberation. This will be illuminated by an empirical case study.

2. INTERNET AND THE 'IDEAL SPEECH SITUATION': AN ELECTIVE AFFINITY

One of the main points in the definition of the deliberative views of democracy is its differentiation from the communitarian/republican model of public sphere. The first point of divergence concerns the role of subjectivity in the dialogue. While communitarianism assumes a self-determining subject already community-focused and characterized by pre-discursive values and wills, deliberative model posits a subject that becomes public-oriented only by means of that particular rational dialogue within which all pre-discursive interests and values become available and open to critique. The second difference deals with the purpose of politics. According to the republican model, the good of politics is the "*articulation of a substantive vision of ethical life*" (Benhabib, 1996: 6) among citizens, by the means of the "*hermeneutical process of self-explication of a shared form of life or collective identity*" (Habermas, 1996: 24) which takes place in the public sphere. Starting from the recognition of the co-existence of multiple and often not compatible definitions of the good life, the deliberative model of democracy moves the order of the discourse towards a more general level, where ethics are replaced by the "*moral questions of justice and instrumental questions of power and coercion*" (Benhabib, 1996: 6).

From these distinctions, a vast array of formal prescriptions comes out, essentially focused on the ideal requirements to which a dialogic exchange must conform in order to work as authentic democratic deliberation. Difference and disagreement among participants are the first and foremost features of deliberation. According to Bohman, the expected outcome, consisting of a consensus-based decision recognized by both parties as correct, justified and rational, depends on the observance of a procedure which embodies the following norms:

the inclusion of everyone affected by a decision, substantial political equality, (...) the free and open exchange of information and reasons sufficient to acquire an understanding of both the issue in question and the opinions of others (Bohman, 1996: 16).

Put in more concrete terms, speakers have to bracket their self-interest and should be committed solely to the common good. The full transparency of motivations, needs and interests is required, together with a neutralization of imbalances in status and power between participants. As expressed by Habermas (1975:108), “*no force except that of better argument is exercised*”.

The internet appears to offer a paramount communicative configuration for the concrete achievement of these ideal requirements, for it seemingly provides adequate solutions to the bottlenecks of mass mediated communications and at the same time facilitates the extension of deliberation process across a wide public, temporally and spatially dispersed. In online contexts anyone can potentially take the role of speaker with practically no cost, thus multiplying the source of news and freeing the flux of communication and information from any sort of system control (economic or political). Moreover, in line with the great emphasis on anonymity that has characterized the ‘second phase’ of cyberculture studies (Silver, 2000) the internet is often praised for its possibility to liberate us from the power inequality and social hierarchies that exist offline. The hypothetical “*blindness of cyberspace to bodily identity*” (Dahlberg, 2001a:14) and status cues, is supposed to weaken the tendency to conform to the majority and at the same time to lessen stereotyping and prejudice.

That ‘elective affinity’ between the Habermasian concept of deliberation and cyberspace, in its virtuality de-contextualized from offline experiences, has lead many scholars to evaluate the democratic potential of the internet through the assessment of the quantity and quality of rational critical debate taking place on it. For this purpose, content analyses of online conversations have been conducted by means of a set of analytical parameters inspired by the theoretical requirements of an ideal deliberative dialogue. Exchange and critique of reasoned moral-practical validity claims, reflexivity, ideal role taking, sincerity, discursive inclusion and equality, are some of the empirical categories that have been used (Graham, 2003; Dahlberg, 2001b; Tsaliki, 2002).

However, if analyzed from a comparative global view, the final results of empirical research bring out some contradictions. Some studies reveal in fact successful debates, marked by high level of reflexivity, heterogeneity, and openness (Schneider, 1996; Stromer-Galley, 2002; Tsaliki, 2002). In other cases, on the contrary, analyses have shown great polarization of debate, lack of respectful listening to others and minimal commitment to working with differences (Dahlberg, 2001b). According to Witschge (2008), there are two main issues that can be addressed in

relation to these findings. First of all, there is a constant technological deterministic bias, orienting analysis towards the search for a generalizing effect of new media on political processes. But, as shown by the great variety of findings, we cannot find something resembling to this univocal phenomenon, because *"different technologies and different user contexts may produce different experiences of Internet communication"* (Witschge, 2008: 76). The second point is linked to the methodological heterogeneity between the research projects. Not only various and differing notions of democratic discussion are taken into account, but also different methods are formulated to operationalize these theoretical assumptions.

While these two points can undoubtedly explain the contradictory and inconclusive research findings, it is plausible to suppose that a more fundamental issue is at stake in this kind of theoretical approach. More specifically, what is called into question is the opportunity to consider deliberation as the key process of political participation through the net, and more generally, the expediency to consider it as the unique normative horizon for the assessment of democratic potentials of new media. The following paragraph will explore these questions further.

3. COMMUNICATIVE RATIONALITY AND SURROUNDING CRITICISMS

First of all, when analyzing the concept of deliberation and its heuristic efficiency, we cannot disregard its theoretical roots and all the criticisms that they have received over the years. Although within flexible interpretative frames, the notion of deliberation finds its normative benchmark in the concept of the 'ideal speech situation', as formulated by Habermas (1984). Drawing on the speech act theory of Austin, he mobilizes the 'universal pragmatics' of language according to which the rational consensus is potentially contained in all the validity claims that speakers raise and accept during the intersubjective process of dialogue.

It is possible to resume the rich strand of criticism elicited by this model in three main points. First of all, the concept of 'ideal speech situation' and all the theoretical consequences deriving from it, have been criticized because they offer a very poor description of communication processes. According to Peters (1993), Habermas' version of ideal intersubjectivity is culturally encoded, influenced by the Enlightenment and by the iconoclast spirit of Puritanism. The main shortage is the establishment of a false and misleading opposition between conver-

sation, linear and transparent dialogical exchange on the one hand, and rhetoric, narration and representation on the other hand, the latter representing the 'dark' side of language, dealing with fascination, deception and suggestion. This kind of criticism comes from both communication and political science scholars (Silverstone, 2007; Young, 1996) whose observations converge in stressing the relevance that other communication processes like rhetoric and storytelling can have to the democratic function in addition to critical argument.

The second point has to do with the issue of power that is completely removed by the ideal transparency of dialogue and exclusively placed in the realm of the 'system' (economic and political). As Kohn (2000: 411) puts it, drawing on Wittgenstein's theories, "*language reflects prior hierarchies and differences between speakers and social groupings*", being itself a form of symbolic power not equally distributed among the population.

These insights about discursive power lead directly to the third point of criticism. The 'ideal speech situation' in fact implies a citizen who with a strong sense of duty, accepts to renounce to his historical placement in order to embrace a subject-less and procedural ideal of communication. Drawing on Wittgenstein's notion of language games, Chantal Mouffe (2000) refutes this assumption, arguing that an agreement on language can only arise from an agreement on the forms of life. Following this line of reasoning, the nature of 'discourse ethics', identified by Habermas as formal and procedural, reveals to be in fact more substantive than it appears at a first glance. As Bourdieu contended, the intersubjective agreement does not happen in a social vacuum, but it is always a "*meeting of habitus*" (Bourdieu, 2000; Crossley, 2004). The notion of 'habitus' suggests that not only linguistic codes are at stake, but also and mostly the web of assumptions, connotations, sensibilities that are involved in communication and shape the meaning of what is said.

The three points of criticisms conduct to the reframing of the notion of deliberative communication that has been so relevant in much of the recent debates about the democratic potential of the net. First of all, deliberation appears to be as only one among the various possible ways of communication in public sphere. It constitutes a process and a moment of rational-critical debate that is surely essential to democracy, but it cannot represent the sole normative benchmark. The second remark concerns the background of deliberation that needs to be taken into account. "*Realizing abstractions such as reciprocity, equality and opportunity is usually a process of historical struggle rather than a theoretical consensus*" (Kohn, 2000: 426). Consequently deliberation appears to be always the result of historical contingencies and of specific social and

cultural preconditions that make rational critical debate significant for certain people and meaningless for other.

These reflections have precise consequences in relation to empirical research. Not only do they ask for a wider overview entailing the multiplicity of communication processes serving political purposes, but more deeply, they suggest a different orientation of the analysis in order to grasp all the involved communication processes *within* their social and cultural preconditions, rather than *against* the reductive normative ideal of deliberation.

4. LIVING PUBLIC SPHERES BENEATH THE SURFACE OF DELIBERATION

The shift just proposed seems to be coherent with some recent attempts to partially reframe the basic elements of 'deliberative democracy', weakening the rigid distinctions with communitarism introduced by Habermas. In fact, even among the advocates of deliberation, it is possible to find some voices asserting the need to take much more seriously the substantive presuppositions of procedural democracies (Benhabib, 1996; Cohen, 1996; Young, 1996). They criticize Habermas' version of deliberative democracy not only for cutting political processes too cleanly away from cultural forms of communication, but also for assuming a misleading "*cordon sanitaire around political discourse such as to block off the articulation of issues of collective identity and visions of the good life*" (Benhabib, 1996: 7).

Moreover, a more flexible analytical frame is undoubtedly more adequate to make sense of the pluralized and fragmented online environment. In fact only rarely we can find in cyberspace an authentic orientation towards consensus and inclusive compromise. More often a 'cyber-balkanization' is observed, nurturing a pessimistic projection of a public sphere permanently split up in a myriad of disconnected cultural enclaves (Sunstein, 2001). In addition, the distinction between private and public dimension is very easily overcome both in formal and substantive dimensions of online discourses, which makes the ideal of deliberative public sphere even less compatible with the political dimension that is taking place on the net.

In my view, the change of perspective required by these empirical and theoretical instances can benefit in a significant way from the analytic frame of 'civic cultures' that has been developed by Peter Dahlgren in recent years (2002, 2009). From this perspective, 'civic

cultures' are thought as the ensemble of factors that can promote or hinder political participation. They consist of patterns of meanings, practices, communication, organized in an integrated circuit of six dimensions of mutual reciprocity: knowledge, values, trust, spaces, practices and identities. Two main conceptual points are worth to be underscored. First of all, the notion of public sphere is envisaged within the larger frame of civic agency and citizenship is primarily seen as a mode of individual and collective action. Secondly and consequently, the analytical gaze moves towards the identification of the relational, communicative and identity resources that citizens need and put forward in order to participate actively to the public sphere.

When analyzing the political dimension developing in and through the internet, the first corollary of this cultural turn is that we start to observe the web not as the ideal context where the "*emancipation potential built into communication structures*" (Habermas, 1987: 390) could finally come true, but as a platform for the development and the fulfillment of multiple civic cultures. The internet becomes a non-neutral frame, very much intertwined with the 'offline', where resources for the political agency are offered, exploited and further elaborated in a circuit of mutual reinforcement. Even from this holistic point of view, communication processes still remain at the core of analysis; they offer a mirror from which to observe the civic cultures in accordance with the mutual reciprocity that bind together the six dimensions, and they constitute at the same time one of the moments in which these same 'cultures' enter in 'turmoil', being elaborated, consolidated and transformed.

In the next paragraph I will further examine the six parameters structuring the storehouse of assets which civic cultures draw upon. To that purpose, the analysis will be supported by the references to an empirical case study that will show succinctly how the model can be conveniently used to study what is concretely happening in the living public spheres of the internet.

5. SEARCHING FOR CIVIC CULTURES

Beppegrillo.it is an Italian weblog acting as a communicative platform for the development of a civic and political movement which is led by Beppe Grillo, a well-known comedian. The blog was born in January 2005, as a support of the tour that Beppe Grillo was doing in the theatres of almost all regions of Italy. The shows consisted in long monologues characterized by an ironic register and mainly focused on political issues.

The blog grew very rapidly, and by now it has become one of the most visited and commented in Italy and also in the global blogosphere where, according to Technorati, is included among the 20 most read blogs of the world (see e.g. Technorati, 2006).

In the meantime also the movement progressively grew, gaining more and more media visibility. It has gradually taken up a more explicit political orientation with the organization of two very successful public demonstrations combined with collecting signatures for some draft laws, and the presentation of civic lists at the local elections in April 2008. The blog has now a well established structure. Its 'counter-hegemonic' stance represents one of the main identity claims postulated by the founder and his supporters. It is constantly updated by a daily new post signed by Beppe Grillo and contains on the homepage the archives of the main campaigns promoted in the past by the movement, supporting in this way the creation of a collective and shared memory.

In what follows I will analyze the Beppegrillo.it, searching for the specific civic culture for which it is a medium, a greenhouse and a showcase. In this regard, the six parameters proposed by Dahlgren will be used and articulated as sensitizing concepts through which getting light to the main issues involved in this self-styled 'counter-public sphere' (Fraser, 1992).

Knowledge

That citizen need knowledge in order to participate politically is obvious and basic. (...) To speak of knowledge in this regard presupposes that it builds upon the raw material of information and that information is in some way made meaningful to become knowledge. (Dahlgren, 2009: 108).

This analytic category could be translated to precise research questions with the aim of clarifying the aspects of the blog more related to the informative field that it constructs and offers to the readers. What types of knowledge do circulate in the blogs and how is it disseminated? What are the contents and the most important topics? How close are they to the 'mainstream' media agenda? Is there a temporal variability in the topics worth considering? A thorough answer to these questions is beyond the aim of this contribution; however, it is possible to argue that the weblog has been in the frontline in a lot of hot topics of the national public debate in these recent years, like corporate corruption, finance, environment, freedom of speech and the media, with some of these topics working over the years as the bricks with which the core identity

of the movement has been built, others being progressively marginalized and omitted.

Practices and communicative spaces

A viable and growing democracy must be embodied in concrete, recurring practices – individual, group and collective – relevant for diverse situations. Such practices help generate personal and social meaning to the ideals of democracy. (Dahlgren, 2009: 116.)

The aim of the second topic is to describe how the technological frame of the weblog is translated into a social and discursive space. More specifically, the purpose is to map the communication patterns taking place in a medium that has been defined as ‘semi-participatory’ (Carpentier, 2007: 88–89) because of its “*lack of focus on micro-participation – and on the reduction of power imbalances at the organizational level*”. The focus will be on the vertical dimension established between the ‘holder’ of the blog and the ‘guests’ posting comments, on the horizontal dimension of the grassroots discussion created around the various comments of the blog’s posts (testing if they can potentially assume a deliberative form) and on the prospective linkages between these two dimensions.

In the studied case, for instance, the posts of the ‘holder’ do not usually give any feedback to the comments, neither do they summarize them. As far as the horizontal dimension is concerned, the grassroots discussion appears to be shaped like an archipelago structure, with a main substantive cluster of comments linked each others, and some less numerous clusters, more isolated and with a less intensive internal connection.

Identity

As a foundation for agency, identities can be seen as the centerpiece of civic cultures, with the other five dimensions contributing, reciprocally, to shaping the conditions of its existence. (Dahlgren, 2009: 119.)

This identity finds its actualization in a sense of belonging to a political community and in some kind of empowerment that citizens experience as consequence of their political actions. Drawing from various kinds of political belongings, Beppe Grillo’s weblog seems to propose a model of citizenship based on a sense of so-called ‘antipolitics’ whose main features have to be sought in a mix of populism and a deep mistrust

towards the economic, political and cultural establishment of the country. One of the most interesting aspect of studying identity processes through a weblog consists in the fact that it becomes possible to observe the dialectic between the proposal of identification advanced by the 'main voice' of the weblog and the grassroots feedback that it gathers from the various comments.

Exploring the field of identity is not an easy task and requires a constant matching with the protean instances of empirical ground. However, it is possible to start from some analytical hypothesis, destined to be further verified. First of all, we can imagine the discourse of political identities as structured along the two nodal points (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) of *values* and *trust* (considered in Dalhgren's original model as separate dimensions of civic cultures). Values represent the rules of the game and correspond in democratic systems to equality, freedom, justice, transparency of government power, etc. etc. Trust is vital in representative democracy and in complex societies. It does not deal uniquely with the generalized expectations of reciprocity that we accord on the basis of some kind of communitarian affinity, but it has to do also with the accountability of intermediate institutions and the degree of credibility attributed to them.

It is plausible to suppose that these nodal points could be internally articulated along two collateral dimensions. First of all, they could be expressed in their individual (the citizen as member of cultural community, of nation or/and political movement) and collective facets (the civic movement in this case). In second place, the dimension of temporality can effect identity both in a deep dimension of 'a-historical' values and configuration of trust (obviously they are fully historical, but they are postulated in the discourse as the foundational principles of society and for this reason, the memories of their origin has been erased; a typical example in this sense are the universal rights, (Alejandro, 1993: 15-18)) and in a 'secular dimension' placing actors in real historical time (in this case the boundaries are given by the contingent topics of the political agenda set by the blog).

6. CONCLUSIONS

The main argument in this article has been the proposal of a cultural turn in the analysis of online public spheres. Its content has been focused on the attempt to ground it theoretically and empirically. At the end of this exploratory path, two main remarks are still worth being made.

The first is a general reflection about the heuristic potentialities of the model of civic cultures. It seems to me that a further advantage is linked to the fact that its original assumptions offer a real antidote to technological determinism. If it is true that technology only makes sense within a social context from which it receives symbolic and pragmatic meanings (Lievrouw, 2002), we can think of civic cultures as the field for 'heterogeneous networks' (according to the definition given by Actor Network Theory; Callon and Latour, 1991) or less abstractly, as a 'community of practices' (Wenger, 1998) within which specific ways of using and interpreting technologies are carried out in order to achieve political and civic purposes.

The second and final remark, points to the fact that the notion of civic cultures gradually has brought the analysis farther and farther away from the demand for 'authenticity' typical of deliberative model of democracy, projecting it more closely into the perspective of 'strong' and 'radical' democracy (Mouffe, 2000). Not only do they share the same emphasis on identity and on the subjective dimension of citizenship, but more in general the radical model of politics appears perfectly complementary to an approach that, in order to search for the socio-cultural preconditions of political agency, keeps open the boundaries between the 'political' and the 'non-political'.

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SECTION THREE: IDENTITY POLITICS, IDEOLOGY AND MEDIA



Ondřej Holomek and Lenin in the garden of the Estonian history museum

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Cultural identity in local, national and global perspectives. Reflections on variables

Ebba Sundin

1. INTRODUCTION

When I look back on my own childhood and the geographical part of Sweden, I remember thinking that I belonged to the end of the world. Standing on the shore, viewing the sea, I felt that there was nothing beyond the turn of the globe. I had only vague ideas of the countries on the other side of the water, the Soviet Union and Poland. They were closed and the world might as well be flat with an edge and thereby an ending at sea. Or there could have been a big wall in the horizon.

In my early 20s I decided to leave this end of the world and move to a part that I considered being at the centre of the world. Or at least, the image of the world from media's content, news as well as entertainment, made me think that the real centre of the world existed in North America. American TV-series, movies, news dominated the flow even if there were other parts of the world represented.

Growing up in the end of the world is not a unique feeling that some Swedes in the southeast corner like myself had during the 1970s. It is probably a feeling adolescents still adapt around the world. And growing up with the world on TV and movies, have probably made this feeling even stronger. To complete my own experience, I had been in "the centre of the world" for about one week when a Russian submarine was grounded in the southeast archipelago of Sweden. For days, I could watch the breaking news on American TV, reporting from my end of the world. From that moment, my worldview was completely changed. I came to the conclusion that there are no ends of the world and the centre is anywhere, everywhere and elsewhere.

Among a variety of aspects the research field of media and communication has been concentrated on how individuals are shaping identity through media's content and how the news media serve as democratic tools. The traditional media were developed within national borders that gave them a certain role in the shaping of cultural and national identities and belongings among individuals. This role came early, as pointed out by Raymond (1999) and Conboy (2004) who emphasizes the early English newspapers and newsbooks in the 17th century that "*played an important part in constructing readers' sense of neighbourly and national identity*" (Raymond, 1999: 130).

For almost two decades, the strong national link within media has gradually weakened with the development of new communication technology. Even if the media environment still has the character of being local, national and global for many years, the communication patterns have changed completely with the new technology. Children grow up with completely new conditions with the possibility to be a part of the global communication flow on an everyday basis that was not possible just 25 years ago.

One question one might ask is if this is changing the view of cultural belonging. And if so, what role do local and national media play for cultural and national belonging in this new context? Are young media users interested in what is going on in a local context in the same time as they identify themselves to belong to a more global context? And if this is formulated into a research project, what kind of aspects is necessary to take into considerations? What would be appropriate theoretical frameworks and what methodological considerations such as appropriate variables might be suggested?

2. ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

In one perspective, the centre may be the place where we find our cultural identity or the cultural identity we strive for. Media's role in this complex situation is fairly covered in research, and with the development of new communication technology the need for new studies is apparent. Thompson's social theory of media was developed from a sociological perspective as a critique from the common neglect among social theorist to consider media's role in the development of the modern society (Thompson, 1995).

Thompson states that the development of communication media has some bearing on individuals' sense of belonging. And this sense of

belonging is based on traditions of history and place. But media become more and more important because individuals are not only dependent on the local traditions they face in life but to a high extent the mediated and delocalized traditions and this transformation of tradition is linked in a fundamental way to the development of communication media. And no longer are the local history transmitted from face-to-face communication but learned from media in form of newspapers, books and the internet. In his introduction to *The Media and Modernity*, Thompson raises two questions, worthwhile to reflect on in preparing a research design for a study with the aim to find answers to what young people make of their sense of belonging in a global media world:

Is there a sense in which the media have breathed new life into traditions, uprooting them from their contexts of origin, embedded them in cultural diaspora and providing individuals with sources of identity which are no longer linked to particular locales? [...] What is it like to live in a world where capacity to experience events is no longer determined by the possibility of encountering them on the time-space paths of daily life? (Thompson, 1995: 6).

The Media and Modernity was published in 1995 and therefore one might ask if the continued development of new communication technology has made the questions even more relevant today than 15 years ago. Two important concepts from Thompson's work is the hermeneutic aspect (the means of making sense of the world) and the identity aspect (the creation of a sense of belonging) while traditions are linked to both of these aspect. According to Thompson, the new mediated traditions with no limits have created a cultural landscape of enormous complexity and diversity. Individuals experience life in *microworlds* formed by individual interests and priorities.

Another framework worth noting here is the sense-making methodology (Dervin and Frenette, 2001). The central point in the methodology is that individuals face gaps in life and need to build bridges consisting of ideas, beliefs, values, memories, stories etc. to overcome the gaps. To study media's role in this bridge building might be useful in cultural perspectives, as well in a local as a global focus.

Dervin and Frenette (2001: 76) explains "*every sense-maker is inherently a social theorist*":

Ordinary human beings are assumed to be capable of discussing the connections they see between past and present and between present and future, between self and one's own struggles, between self and others, and between self and society.

By comparing individuals' sense-making patterns of homogeneity or diversity will appear and this could be one way to catch reflections on cultural identity among young media consumers.

One of the big challenges to add to 'older' theories and frameworks is the one of the impact of new communication technology. Caron and Caronia (2007: 15-16) talk about the delocalization and multilocalization of the individual and they state that "*space begins to move, and the 'where' loses its immobility of a specific location to become a sort of aura that accompanies the user*". Furthermore, Caron and Caronia state that virtually individuals are at several places at the same time and there is a constantly passing from different 'worlds', different roles and even different identities.

Similar thoughts are captured in *Elsewhere, U.S.A.* by Conley (2009). He is talking about the Elsewhere Society where people are 'here' but in the same time somewhere else. The new communication technology has a major impact in creating this new society and cultures.

The feeling of being here, elsewhere or nowhere is subjective to the individual, just as the feeling of cultural belonging and identity. The world is divided into different regions, some of them natural because of land and sea, and some constructed for political, cultural and financial reasons.

The Nordic Region is one part of the world. It has natural geographical boundaries and also by long tradition political and cultural ties. But the picture of the Nordic Region can always be questioned. The region belongs to Europe with the geographical exception of Greenland, that is a part of the North American continent. Within the region, there are ties to other countries as well, both politically and culturally.

3. THE CASE OF THE NORDIC BOUNDARIES

The Nordic Region consists of five countries and three autonomous territories. Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland are the five countries with a total population of almost 25 millions (Norden, 2009). The language situation has been one of the linking factors in the region. Swedish, Danish and Norwegian are close enough for mutual under-

standing. Icelandic is a Scandinavian language that is not so similar as the other ones. On the other hand, for a long period of time, Danish was taught in Icelandic schools. In Finland, there is a population with Swedish as their mother tongue, and the Swedish language was also a part of the curriculum in Finnish schools. Lately, this has changed both in Iceland and Finland, and therefore one can no longer be sure to get by with any of the larger Scandinavian languages in every part of the region.

The autonomous territories are Greenland and the Faroe Islands, parts of the Kingdom of Denmark, and Åland, part of the republic of Finland. Politically, Greenland and the Faroe Islands are not members of EU. Åland is a member but with special regulations. The total population of the territories is circa 130,000 inhabitants. Also the language situation is special in the territories. In the Faroe Islands, people speak Faroese, a language that is closer to Icelandic than any other of the Scandinavian languages. But Danish is a part of the curriculum in schools. The official language in Greenland is Greenlandic. Also in Greenland, Danish is taught in schools. Danish people living in the Faroe Islands or Greenland do not necessarily know the official language of the territory. In Åland, all inhabitants speak Swedish while the curriculum does not require that they also must learn Finnish during the school years.

Connected to the language variable is the national media situation. All of the territories have their own media in forms of newspapers, radio and TV broadcasting. This has been one of the Nordic strategies to promote cultural democracy (Duelund, 2003). For example, Faroese Radio started to broadcast regularly in 1956 and by 1970, they had their own studios to make recordings. The Danish Broadcasting Corporation produces programs in Greenlandic. Since the 1960s, there has been a struggle for media independency and the necessity to be able to view Swedish TV in Åland. Duelund (2003: 431) states that the *“direct political control of the media is justified solely by the fact that it has been necessary to avoid Finnish media domination”*.

In all three territories there have been local and national media around for a quite some time, strengthening the cultural conditions at place. But with the broadening concept of media with the mix of local, national and global media, one of Thompson's (1995: 6) can be asked in a new light: *“What is it like to live in a world where capacity to experience events is no longer determined by the possibility of encountering them on the time-space paths of daily life?”* Or in a more specific way: What role do media (local and global) play for cultural and national identity/belonging for young people growing up in self-governing areas like the ones within the Nordic Region?

4. REFLECTIONS FROM THE WORKSHOP

During the ECREA Summer School in 2009, the issue of cultural identity in local, national and global perspectives were at issue during one of the workshops. The students were divided into six groups and they were asked to discuss the following four areas:

Approach: What variables do you find most important to consider in designing a research project about cultural identity and media?

Problems: Can you identify any particular problems?

General knowledge: Can we learn something in general (i.e. in other parts of the world) from a specific study like this?

Relevance: From Thompson to new communication technology... does it make sense to study the sense of belonging within media studies?

Four of the groups contributed the workshop with written protocols of their discussions. In this part of the chapter, the results from the workshop will be presented and discussed.

To start with, it is interesting to see what the students made of the specific case chosen to illustrate the research question. One group discussed it from the Faroe Island perspective, while the other groups decided to start from other cultural settings, for example one group took its starting-point from Russian-speaking Estonian youth living in Tallinn, while another group made their choice to be multilinguistic countries like Belgium. No matter what cultural context the student chose to use for their discussion, the variables are more or less the same in the groups. Since the presentation only mentioned young media users, age was of course at target. What do we mean by young media users? Children and adolescents up to 18 or 20 years of age? Or is the age definition based on cultural ideas and stretched towards what used to be considered middle-aged? This was one concern in the discussion among some of the students. One group wrote that the most important variables in this particular case were centred on two main fields, namely society and media. Within society we find variables like native language, political system, educational system, political geography and demography. The media variables discussed were for example general media landscape and usage, and the amount of foreign important media content in relations to nationally/regionally produced media content. Language, media use and media access were variables discussed by all groups as it appears in their protocols. Among a variety of other variables, it can be

noted that one of the groups also stressed the level of education and class as important variables to consider in the approach to study cultural identity.

What problems could be identified? One mentioned by more than one group was the researcher's belonging to another cultural context and therefore biased of another cultural identity. Along with this were the problems of language skills and in-depth understanding of the other group's cultural context. The groups also discussed the problem of defining cultural identity and the difficulties that identities are multi-layered and multi-faceted.

Is it then of any worth to set up studies targeting the role of media in the construction of cultural identities? It seems that all the groups, despite all difficulties, thought that studies of this kind could bring to general knowledge and they were therefore relevant. Different settings could be compared and there was also a question of learning to avoid research problems in the future. No group did neglect media's role in forming cultural identities and sense of belonging. This was particular stressed in the protocols when it came to the question of relevance.

The aim of the workshop was to stress an awareness of the difficulties to define concepts, especially ones when multiple interpretations. The outcome of the discussions was very positive, with the discussion of what cultural identity really is, and also how age is defined. It is not too uncommon to fall into pitfalls when we use concepts that we might take for granted. It is interesting to see how the students change their cases to cover a more variety of the complex scene of cultural identity studies.

In everyday life most people do not reflect on their own sense of belonging. But we all have our cultural shopping carts that we bring along us. Some new cultural habits or attitudes are picked up while others are dropped during the journey of life. This could be a cause from media exposure or when travelling outside the own cultural settings. Adding to this is also the virtual cultures where individuals can find new senses of belongings that are not restricted to any physical place. Even though, cultural identities can be discussed on different layers, there are still problems to consider. One of the groups captured it with the following words: *"There are different levels of identity – for example on community, local, national or European level and even a virtual reality level. They are not necessarily congruent and can contradict each other within the media discourse."*

To conclude, to define and study cultural identities is a difficult task but nevertheless, an important one that is a matter of course with the tradition of media and communication studies. Therefore, the role of

local and national media in the matter of cultural and national belonging needs to be studied in this new context of global media and communication technology, not only in remote and isolated places but everywhere and elsewhere.

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Translocal connectivity and political identity: Brighton queer cultural activism

Aristea Fotopoulou

1. INTRODUCTION

Queer Mutiny Brighton (QM) and Westhill Wotever (WW) are groups that produce queer cultural activism with an anti-capitalist twist. Their media practices are here examined using 'translocality' (Appadurai, 1995; Carpentier, 2007, 2008; Hepp, 2008) as a conceptual framework. In particular, the groups' hostility to online connectivity which spans beyond-the-local, holds Brighton as the reference point for their identity. At the same time, they transgress the local by participating and promoting actions from around the world. The embeddedness of commercial digital media in their everyday lives, and their concurrent hostility to new media technologies, signifies a point of tension for the participants. The groups channel this tension through processes of 're-territorialization' (Morley, 2001), namely by setting clear boundaries and emphasising the everyday. The nostalgia for 'safe' spaces that takes place is interpreted as an intended 'production of locality' (Appadurai, 1995) which addresses the insecurity felt in an environment of increased connectivity. Even though this locality cannot be realised, such tendencies illustrate how translocal connectivity and fluidity are appropriated by fragile media cultures. Furthermore, the attempted production of a face-to-face queer 'neighbourhood' outside the dominant realm indicates the importance of queer politics that challenge normative LGBT practices and identities.

2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

My focus in this study of QM and WW is the meaning-making processes and the mediated political/cultural identities that result from the

groups' activities. In order to overcome thinking in local/global binaries, I am using the concept of 'translocality' or 'the translocal'. Translocality has currently been employed within frameworks of connectivity and networks. Work in the field (Carpentier, 2007; 2008; Hepp, 2008) aims to understand the cultural processes of globalization like, for instance, the complex connectivity which results from mobile media use. The concept is applied in media, cultural and communication studies with different attitudes and expectations. Andrea Hepp (2008) builds his conceptualisation of translocal media cultures and uses the translocal to explain how localities connect through the media. The translocal here is an analytical tool that stresses the significance of the local and the everyday on the one hand, but understands that contemporary intensified connectivity changes localities. For Hepp, translocal connections across various territories signify the emergence of communicative 'deterritorialization'. This is not necessarily physical deterritorialization, as everyday face-to-face communication still happens at the local level and cultural practices still determine the possibilities of access to the translocal.

In earlier analysis of 'neighbourhoods', Arjun Appadurai (1995) introduces translocality in order to explain the initiation of neighbourhoods formation in places where populations are transient. Neighbourhoods for Appadurai are life-worlds. They are actual situated localities which provide the context for their subjects' production and reproduction. In other words, they render social action meaningful. At the same time, they produce contexts, often in the form of ethnoscapes. Appadurai understands this production as an exercise of power over a hostile environment and against which local practices take place. Through this dialectic, the very production of locality (as a set of contexts and a generator of contexts) changes. In territories where tourists and locals intersect, the instability of social relations hinders the creation of 'neighbourhoods'. Communities there are between the local and the beyond-the-local (the national for example), they are translocal.

Nico Carpentier (2008) employs the idea of beyond-the-local in the concept of the translocal to study Wi-Fi community projects. He focuses on the reach these practices have outside the localised and their potential as rhizomatic media. The difference to the glocal (Robertson, 1995) for Carpentier (2008: 247) lies in the concept's suitability to address "the local as the point of departure". The work suggests that the translocal can avoid the creation of binaries (for example autonomous/ mainstream, local/global), which is often the case with alternative and community media approaches. Carpentier (2007) further uses the

translocal as an expansion of the local urban communication in his work on community media. He views translocal networks as the result of the rhizomatic connections between community media organizations and considers the necessity of such presences. Carpentier envisages a Mouffian network where social struggles meet but, at the same time, is careful to point out the difficulties community media encounter in their effort for a translocal identity.

Mediatization and identity are central to this discussion. For Hepp all media cultures are translocal phenomena since they are articulated as 'disembedded' communication processes. Translocality is the consequence of their 'communicative deterritorialization'. It is important that not only the meaning making processes are dislodged from the everyday local environment, but also that meaning making processes and the construction of everyday life are mediated. It might be useful here to refer to David Morley (2001) and his scepticism about the destabilising effects of globalization. In his work on belonging, Morley insists on a materialist version of media and cultural studies which focuses on physical movement (where he refers both to patterns of mobility and patterns of settlement). He accepts the processes of physical and communicative deterritorialisation but also those of 'reterritorialisation' whereby boundaries are re-constituted. These boundaries can address the need to regulate for example home use of technologies, and may signify a return to traditional forms of place-based identity.

Thinking about reterritorialization and translocal (media) cultures is pertinent to my chapter. Reterritorialization here is understood as an intentional activity whereby translocal cultures use media technologies for the production of locality. Media cultures rely on the media for their meaning-making and thus their identity. Reterritorialization does not anchor identity back to the sense of place and history, in other words, it does not withdraw communities back to the closed local. It rather refers to the practices that signify exercises of power over what seems an increasingly unsafe environment for them. In what follows, I analyse QM and WW as translocal cultures that meet the non-local, translocal and local through mediation and produce their identity in this de/reterritorialization process.

3. CASE STUDY: QUEER MUTINY BRIGHTON AND WESTHILL WOTEVER

3.1. Background

Brighton's LGBT rights history is linked to University activism, with notable dates back to the 1971 establishment of the Sussex Gay Liberation Front (SGLF). The Brighton Lesbian Group (BLG) was active from 1976 till 1982, but radical lesbian and feminist politics imbued Brighton's lesbian presence throughout the eighties. Lesbians got involved in the National Abortion Campaign, set up Brighton Women's Centre and Brighton Lesbian Line. Since Section 28¹ appeared, the Brighton Area Action Against Section 28 demonstrated against the clause, while in 1990 they disrupted the Princess Diana address to the International Congress for the Family. The campaign went on to introduce the first Brighton Pride March in 1991 which gradually started to attract major sponsorship. By 2001, the event had on board pubs, clubs and drag artists and reported 60,000 visitors. During the nineties Brighton saw the establishment of a strong commercial nightclub scene around the Gay Village and the publishing of its own free gay magazine, G-Scene. Indications of hate crime and increase in the transgender population led to special provisions by Brighton Council, like the Police and Public Safety Committee. Today, the LGBT community sector works along with academic research projects and networks like the BSSN and Count Me In Too!, the commercial sector and the Council for the needs of the community.

Queer Mutiny Brighton first came into existence in 2005. Its media included an email list, hosted at [riseup.net](#)² – and a website which is in the form of a wiki³. This first formation created three zines and various cultural events like film viewings. It used the Cowley Club, Brighton's autonomous social centre⁴ as a meeting space and it supported campaigns from the wider community linked to Queeruption.⁵ Their first zine came out in Spring 2006 and has a 'fuck authority' sign on the front page. It defines the group as:

Queer Mutiny is a random group of radical queer activists who get together to: Meet each other. Share ideas. Work together. Challenge norms of gender and sexuality. Plan/organise actions and campaigns. Create a safe space for like minded people to gather. (Queer Mutiny Brighton Zine, 2006: 1).

Their polemic attitude, similar to that of Gay Shame in the US, is further illustrated in the quote:

Against consumerism, assimilation, representation and the rest of shit that claims to be the 'gay lifestyle'. Against capital, patriarchy, racism and business as usual (Queer Mutiny Brighton Zine, 2006: 1).

In the zine, the group's identity is constructed in antithesis to the Brighton LGBT commercial scene. "*Brighton is a transient village*" (Queer Mutiny Brighton Zine, 2006: 3), where wealthy gay people spend money and move away. The queer 'mutineers' aim to challenge LGBT privileges and create a local queer community. In the middle part, the zine features a pornographic photo session entitled 'Black Bloc Porn', a stylistically aggressive session with the group members in masks and holding guns. At the same time, the group's anti-war position is communicated with a controversial intervention at Pride parade in 2005, when they invaded the march and disrupted the recruitment stalls of the British Army and Navy. In the zines that followed, the group moves from the idea of building a community and a 'safe space' to actually building a movement⁶ and getting ready for 'the revolution'.

Some of the people that called the first meeting for the second formation in January 2009, were members in the old group. Most of the people however have moved away from Brighton. The people I interviewed⁷ also organise Brighton Wotever at Westhill Community Hall. They have, from May 2007 to March 2009, organised 6 events, mainly of music and Drag King performances, and several workshops about gender and sexuality. They operate independently of the London Wotever World⁸ but "*use the Wotever name and ethos*" (Club Wotever 2003–2008 Zine, 2008: 18)⁹.

3.2. *Translocal connectivity and political identity*

The local LGBT scene offers the core resource for the construction of a common identity for the groups. In the QM's 2009 Manifesto it is stated:

We experience feeling marginalised and fetishised within LGBT spaces, within which we are 'supposed' to feel safe. We give two fingers up to happy clappy gay culture. We want to participate in and ourselves create DIY independent culture (Queer Mutiny Manifesto, 2009: 1).

The group stresses the participatory character of their practices and how this is central to their struggles. Their aim is to create a community

alternative to the 'mainstream'. QM can be understood as a translocal culture because it strives to produce a neighbourhood that is context-generated (LGBT Brighton history, the contemporary Kemp Town village, the QM history) but, at the same time, generates a context against which these local practices are believed to take place (LGBT normativity, commercialisation of the scene, Brighton Pride). In Appadurai's example of refugee camps, it is the nation state that represents the macro and the hegemonic. In the example of QM the macro is the 'pink pound', the economic force that shapes identities and conventions on the one hand, and, on the other, the anti-discriminatory policies of the Council which determine the operation of various organisations.

The participants' identity is constructed in relation to other identities which are not local. Taking part in actions with a non-local dimension indicates, for the participants, the difference between the QM Group today, and the one that happened in 2005. In a way, it is implied that the actions and events they now organise, either through QM or WW, are not 'really' activism. They give reference to direct action, including squatting and sabotaging at a local level, but at the same time feel part of a network with wider political interests.

I was involved in Manchester, [...] and lots of 'Reclaim the Streets' and lots of environmental and peace activism and anti-capitalism and that sort of stuff (Francis, 2009).

They view their community as more involved into 'soft activism' rather than part of the beyond-the-local, the 'real world':

What we do with Westhill is a bit ... I find it like ... a soft activism in that kind of sense. And I'm not the kind of person who would put on my hood and fight the police ... even though I want to maybe ... (Christian, 2009).

In the meetings however, QM discusses Proposition 8 and taking part at G20 protest. Moreover, the participants' queer identity is determined by their mobility. They moved to Brighton from other 'more conservative' places around the UK in order to be queer. A participant calls Brighton a 'liberal, charming place' and contrasts it to the working class area he grew up in. References to the participants' current and previous localities, and the stress they put in non-territorial articulations of their identity, transgresses the local as the reference point for meaning making.

The group's communicative connectivity with the 'real world' beyond their territory is mainly done through email lists. Nevertheless, the

group meetings and the interviews stress 'educating' (which happen with zines, flyers, workshops and shows) and connecting at a face-to-face, everyday level. These events, seen as activism, are subsequently advertised by media like Facebook or appear in the program of Pride. Both QM and WW use digital media practices according to the logic of advertising and marketing. Difference between activist media and marketing becomes increasingly blurred when one participant states: "Well, activism. Ahmm...I think facebook is the most important thing to talk about" (Drew, 2009).

Meanwhile, as a member of the Cowley Entertainment Collective, one of the WW organisers has started incorporating Facebook to promote events. The idea behind this venture is that it might attract more 'mainstream' people into the Cowley Club. This is a transgression of the autonomous activist model of alternative media which does not use corporate media. Not only is the presence of the Cowley Club in Facebook not seen as 'selling out', it is heralded as a strategic movement that will potentially reach out to the wider population. The members use texting, email lists (mainly the QM list, which is Brighton operated, and the LaDidah list, which is not local), discussion forums, Facebook and the wiki. These are media particularly suitable for a two-way interaction. Nevertheless, it has been observed that they are predominately used in a non-interactive way, in the sense that it is not expected that someone will respond to texts or posts. Moreover, these media forms are not seen as public spaces of dialogue and their participatory element does not apply to 'virtual' version of the community.

Even though the QM email list has members that have moved from Brighton to places like Australia or Israel, the list functions as a node of translocal connections especially when messages from other non-local groups are disseminated. In a similar way, QM's presence in email lists that are not local but share the same interests, signifies the increasing connectivity of media translocal cultures. Since participants of QM and WW understand lists like tools and spaces with advertising potential, it is interesting to see what happened when dialogue emerged in the Ladidah list. In November 2008, one of the organisers announced 'Westhill Wotever v. Sex' party taking place on the 6th of December 2008. Immediately, a user wrote:

I wish this wasn't clashing with EID¹⁰, otherwise I would be there. It might be an idea next time to bear that in mind? (Momo, 2008).

From then on, a rich discussion grew around issues of race and exclusion, anti-muslim attitudes and alternative religious celebrations for queer people and their families. There was a reflection on the predominance of whiteness in most queer spaces and it eventually linked to a 3-day-event, called 'Race Privilege, Identity'¹¹. The Brighton Wotever Crew did not respond or take part in the conversation that evolved around their event. In the interviews, participants interpreted the discussion on the Ladidah list as a 'personal debate' rather than a public exchange of ideas. They also remarked about 'who' talks in the list. Anonymity is presented as a problem and talking to the list seems like cowardliness. In contrast, LaDidah list members that exposed themselves in the context of the EID issue, put emphasis to the courage it takes to write about these concerns for a wider public. Clearly, when it comes to online communication, the problem for QM and WW respondents is trust. Progressively however, it is the contrasting demands of face-to-face communication and local physical participation, from the one hand, and the practical aspects of using the internet for that participation (benefits of speed, networking) that make this a particularly challenging field for them.

I'm into using Facebook and internet to bring people together, rather to draw them apart, and I think the Internet can be used as a substitute for communication which I'm really not into. I prefer communicating on a more personal level. I think it's great for telling people about things... [...]

And generally, I just rather see people in reality [laughs]. I'm not one of these people who spend hours on the Internet [...]. I don't spend hours emailing people and stuff like that (Francis, 2009).

Participants' accounts of what happened on the Ladidah list are indicative of the politics of the formations examined (for example difficulty in handling issues of diversity). What is more important however is that the non-local is used as a discrediting and protective concept: The participants seem to perceive the EID discussion as a personal attack from people who, since not local to Brighton, should not criticize the way events are organised. In a 'transient village', like Brighton, QM and WW seek to produce their 'neighbourhood' through the logics of the local and the translocal. The EID issue illustrates how the group tries to eliminate the threat of a too intense openness and instability by anchoring to locality. The Ladidah email list can be thought as the outer edges of a territory, closer to the borders where insecurity generates territorial claims more strongly. In this claiming of identity, participants emphasise what they have in common with the rest of

Brighton, like being 'predominately white'. As Morley (2001) points out, in a context of intense globalisation, the importance of being rooted and of creating a sense of home seems to have increased. In this sense, for QM and WW, the appropriation of new media like email lists and Facebook, in a translocal way that makes them meaningful within local contexts, plays a pivotal role in the production of this locality. Locality functions as a force counter to globalisation which provides the necessary sense of place for the members and allows them to belong in a fixed community. The groups appropriate commercial media for their own purposes and they reach beyond the local while trying to produce an everyday alternative. In eccentric parties and eclectic music events, they create their own opportunities for cultural capital investment and production.

We are a little elitist with our music policy, but we have to be a bit strict to prevent it becoming another mediocre 'gay alternative disco' of the kind churned out by Ghetto¹² (Stephan, 2009).

The translocal however remains a crucial feature. The return to the local, to the everyday and to stable relationships fails to produce a totally closed locality. Within the QM and WW, as well as throughout the Brighton context, there is an increased instability of social relations with people moving in and out constantly, making it a translocal community *par excellence*. The participants' nostalgia for home and security is also prevalent in repetitive references to 'safe spaces'. The groups step out of the void to less 'central', less commercial places, where 'community' is believed to reside. As a translocal media culture, QM and WW defends its locality, boundaries, 'home' and territory in an environment of communicative connectivity, where it is forced to mediate these boundaries. Their hostility is the result of a power struggle that additionally tries to negotiate increasing uncertainty and fluidity of boundaries.

4. CONCLUSION

In the previous discussion, QM and WW are conceptualised as translocal media cultures due to their identity being: context generated from their locality and context generated beyond the territorial.

Moreover, it has been illustrated, using the EID issue, how their translocal identity is at threat within conditions of deterritorialized connectivity. As a result, the groups' identity anchors to the local, in an

attempt to create a queer face-to-face neighbourhood, in Appadurai's sense. Neither the nostalgia nor the reactionary response to media technologies that is observed in QM and WW attitudes is however politically problematic. This is because the attempted production of neighbourhood is not happening with regards to the essential identity of a place. The anchoring of QM and WW to locality is not an anchoring to the past.

As this is itself a 'community' that moved to Brighton and does not share or is not particularly interested in the LGBT activist and cultural past of the city which makes it a 'gay capital' today, their sense of identity and place is not linked to history. On the contrary, the anchoring to locality for the group provides an alternative to an essentialist 'we' that could be otherwise easily claimed in the Brighton context. In other words, far from being politically problematic, this attempt to locality is indeed a rejection of homogenised notions of 'imagined communities': As there cannot be a locality without history, this neighbourhood cannot be realised and the nostalgia cannot be actualised. Moreover, the reactionary and withdrawing attitudes towards the 'mainstream' disrupts the imaginary of unity and political homogeneity that is often projected for Brighton or LGBT politics.

In short, QM and WW produce their translocal identity through a de/reterritorialization process. The media function both as exit points from and as anchors to the local. This is a dialectic process that always fails to establish a neighbourhood, but whose claim of boundaries and difference is an essential property of political life.

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NOTES

- 1 The 1988 law prohibited councils and schools from acknowledging 'the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'.
- 2 Riseup.net is hosted by the Riseup Collective, an autonomous Seattle-based body with world wide members. They provide communication and computer resources to social movements and activists (Riseup Collective, 2009).
- 3 The Queer Mutiny Brighton Wiki is an open-source based page. Its links include Facebook Groups of various sub-formations like 'In Every Home... a Heartache', and Webpages of Queer Mutiny groups throughout the UK, Queeruption London, Indymedia (Queer Mutiny Brighton Wiki, 2009).
- 4 Brighton bases most of its activist action around the Cowley Club and disseminates information with the weekly independent A4- format newsletter 'schNEWS'
- 5 The first Queeruption gathering took place in London in 1998 and was announced as 'Three days of Action, Art and Anarchy for queers of all sexualities'. It had a strong anti-consumerist agenda.

- 6 In the line of Queeruption texts, like Tom Thomson's 'Envisioning an anarchist alternative to queer political co-optation' where he speaks of the Philadelphia ACT UP! as the example to follow.
- 7 The current short study comprises of qualitative interviewing, online ethnography and participant observation. I used the QM e-mail list to contact potential participants from old members that were active in the list during 2005–2007, and members of the formation that came together in January 2009. I did in depth interviews with three members, who have also attended QM 2005 formation. These are Drew (2 hours), Christian (7 hours) and Francis (2 hours). The wider network of the three main participants included the organisers of BiFest Brighton 2009, 'Slut Disco', 'In everyhome a heartache' and 'Out of the Bedroom and Into the Streets' parties, whom I contacted online. Participant observation took place at the Queer Mutiny meetings for approximately 6 weeks. Online ethnography included the QM email list and the Ladidah list. The QM e-mail list has approximately 100 members and the Facebook Group 50 members. Online, I became Facebook Friend with most of the members I met at the meetings. I accessed their network of Friends and Facebook Groups, their web links, their photographs and the events they attended or organised.
- 8 Which organises its own nights at the Marlborough Theatre. The first Wotever Club night happened in London on August 2003 and has, since then expanded to the Wotever Bar, Film Wotever, Klub Fukk, Wotever Brighton and Wotever Glasgow.
- 9 The story of Brighton Wotever at Westhill seems to end with the Queer Ceilidh event at the Winter Pride 2009, after which the Crew organised an event at the Cowley Club and henceforth operate under the name 'Brighton Wotever Crew'.
- 10 Eid al-Adha ('Festival of Sacrifice') is a religious festival celebrated by Muslims.
- 11 24–26th April 2009, St. Werburghs Community Centre, Bristol (Race Priviledge Identity, 2009).
- 12 Ghetto is a dancing club which hosts 'diverse nights for boys and girls and their straight friends' like lesbian mud wrestling (Ghetto Brighton, 2009).

'Posing into being': An exploratory study of Taiwanese girls self-portraiture online

Yin-han Wang

In reality my eyes are not big, (ha), but when I portray myself, my eyes just spontaneously get bigger. So my friends all say that I have killer looks in self-portraits, and that I post them on my Wretch album to deceive people....I used to purposely open my eyes wider, and then it just became a habit. (Cecilia¹, 16 years old)

1. INTRODUCTION

Children and young people coming of age in the era of Web 2.0 are on the forefront of incorporating digital and social media into part of their everyday lives. Various scholars (Stern, 2008; Livingstone, 2008) who research into young people's engagement with digital media have acknowledged cyberspace as a place for youth to assert, explore, and experiment with identity, where "*respite can be achieved and issues explored in comparative safety*" (Abbott, 1998: 97). Young people's increased involvement in digital content creation has spawned numerous trends and generated various cultures. In Taiwan, one of the distinctive cultures of young people (especially girls) is that of self-portraiture. Earlier usage of the term 'self-portrait' is imported from the Japanese term 'amateur self-portrait', referring to amateurs (mostly females) taking photos of themselves that are often sexually-suggestive (Yeh, 2007). But as camera phones and digital cameras gained currency, self-portraiture gradually became a practice popular among young people, and is often called 'internet self-portraiture' when the self-portraits are posted online.

Despite the fact that there are diverse styles of self-portraits, this photographic self-representation is nevertheless, in popular imagination, often associated with soft-porn and/or hyper-cuteness. These two stereotypes were the starting point of my inquiry: For teenage girls who

are in an active phase of identity construction, how might the seeing and making of such self-portraits play a role in their life, especially in relation to gender identity? The discussion here is based on a pilot study that seeks to identify preliminary themes as to why girls practice self-portraiture on social-networking sites such as *Wretch* (www.wretch.cc), and what the representation strategies are.

2. IDENTITY AND GIRLHOOD

A classic account of youth identity in psychology is offered by Erikson (1982: 75), who sees adolescence as a “*psychosocial moratorium: a period of sexual and cognitive maturation and yet a sanctioned postponement of definitive commitment*”, in which adolescents explore and experiment with various identifications and roles in developing their own coherent interests and values. And it is through seeking social validation that adolescents repudiate some roles and configure those socially accepted into a *final* identity. Psychological account of this sort builds on the assumptions that children are natural, rather than social, and that maturation to a finished, complete stage is inevitable. The assumption that children are under-developed and hence incompetent has led some to criticize this approach for seeing children as ‘human becomings’ rather than human beings (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). Yet, despite the criticism, psychological concepts remain useful for our interpretations of youthful online activities (Buckingham, 2008). For instance, Subrahmanyam, Garcia, Harsono, Li and Lipana (2009) suggest that adolescents may use their online engagement to cope with three important developmental tasks: the construction of psychosocial identity, the adjustment and formulation of sexual identity, and the establishment of interpersonal relationships with peers and romantic partners. These findings are instructive in signposting the issues researchers should attend to when studying young people and the internet.

Another perspective on identity from social theories comes from Giddens (1991), who proposes that in the late-traditional society, every individual is now responsible for making conscious choices about a wide range life decisions, from occupation to relationships – a task he terms as the ‘reflexive project of self’. “*The identity of the self*”, he states, “*in contrast to the self as a generic phenomenon, presumes reflexive awareness*” (Giddens, 1991: 52). The self is composed of a series of biographical narratives that one continuously creates, sustains, reflects on, revises, and reorders. A stable self-identity is achieved by keeping a set of coherent, satisfactory

narratives about the self. Contrary to psychological accounts of identity formation, Giddens does not see adolescence as the stage in which a permanent identity is formed; instead, he construes identity as fluid and the reflexive project as ongoing throughout the course of life. To him, this new freedom of choice, and the multitude of possibilities on offer by consumer culture to an individual is an overall positive democratization process (Buckingham, 2008).

In defining identity, one way is through gender. While an essentialist perspective sees gender as a biological given, another perspective conceives of gender as something one brings into being through the everyday 'doing' of gender. The latter view is most notably represented by Butler (1990: 25), who argues: "*There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; ... identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results*". In other words, there is no fixed, knowable category of gender that one abides by; rather, gender is actualized through a series of ongoing performances of gender. Butler (2003: 394) further explains: "*... gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis*".

For instance, when a girl puts on lipstick, rather than thinking it as a knowable *female subject* putting on lipstick, Butler suggests seeing the act as a 'girling' action that produces the subject of a *female*. In short, femininity is something one does, not what one is or possesses. However, it should be noted that Butler does not mean performativity in a theatrical sense that one can choose to act a different gender at will, rather, performativity is reiterative citations of norms. Arguing along the same line, Nayak and Kehily (2008: 5) propose viewing gender as a "*lived process of negotiation that occurs within a matrix of social and historical forces*". A gender identity that appears coherent, then, is the result of what they call "*gender achievements*", behind which lies the painstaking efforts of making identity appear as what it supposed to be like. In the context of this study, the important question then, is to investigate how girls take part in the 'girling' or 'un-girling' process through self-portraiture, what norms they 'cite' (or not), and why.

3. MEDIA, THE 'VOICE' AND THE STRUCTURE

In the recent years, scholars have broadened the focus of analysis of girls' cultural activities to include their cultural production with the media, ranging from zines production, website construction, blog writing, etc.

(c.f. Mazzarella and Pecora, 2007). Various scholars argue that, in order to see the complexity in youthful engagement, rather than fixating on media effect, it might be more constructive to investigate media's role as cultural resources from which young people draw intertextual elements from different media contents for their ongoing identity work. For instance, in Buckingham and Bragg's (2003: 71) study with children, they find that for some, the media actually function as resources from which youth draw "*categories of self-definition around which to mobilize and negotiate, to claim as their own or disrupt*". Similarly, Nayak and Kehily (2008: 135) find that magazines are something that youth could "*talk with*" and "*think with*". This intertextual cross-referencing and use of media content is especially noticeable in youthful online production. Chandler and Young (1998) borrow Levi-Strauss's notion of *bricolage* to describe youthful homepage production, arguing that it is through the interaction - 'inclusion, allusion, omission, adaptation and arrangement' - with cultural elements in the media that one constructs and reflects the identity. Weber and Mitchell (2008: 27) also coin the term 'identities-in-action' to describe that "*like digital cultural production, identity processes are multifaceted and in flux, incorporating old and new images*".

The discussion thus far has sought to illustrate that young people play an active role in their identity work and media engagements, reflecting the concern of the sociology of childhood that conceives of children and young people as agents shaping and being shaped by social surroundings (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). Yet, to avoid essentializing agency (Prout, 2000), it is important to note that the 'discovery' and acknowledgment of girls' agentic role in cultural production are by no means equivalent to resistance or subversion, and that articulating subjectivity by engaging in the subject position of media producer is only the first step toward empowerment. Therefore, Livingstone (2009: 32) suggests, to achieve a balanced examination one should pay heed to "*how children exert agency online ... in the context of resisting certain structures and pressures while succumbing to others*".

A key structural force that constitutes the backdrop, as well as functions as a means of youthful online consumption and production is consumer cultures (Willett, 2008). McRobbie (2009) recently employs the term 'female individualisation' to argue that commercial domains such as media, beauty, fashion, body culture, etc. now replace the traditional patriarchal authority as the new 'governmentality' that, through references to feminist discourses of empowerment such as agency and independence, impose a particular set of feminine cultural norms onto young women, and encourages them to self-regulate and work toward

"self-perfectibility" (McRobbie, 2009: 63). Yet, difficult questions about homogenous beauty ideals, constraints, and inequality are then side-stepped. Gill (2008: 44) compellingly questions: "*If it were the outcome of girls' individual idiosyncratic preferences, surely there would be greater diversity, rather than growing homogeneity...?*"

The commercial context in which girls' self-portraiture takes place is an important structural element which enables the content creation in the first place by providing the service, and yet also frames the individualization within the popular discourse of beauty as meaning cute, sexy, and slim. Ever since the inception in 1999, *Wretch Album*² has been well-known for its collection of 'beautiful chicks' (*jheng` mei*) photos. When Yahoo bought up *Wretch* in 2007, its marketing strategy has centered on the promotion of consumerist values such as celebrities and beauties. In 2008, *Wretch* formally appointed a staff member as 'beautiful chicks hunter' (also known as 'Editor R'), whose job involves selecting from *Wretch Album*, everyday, the albums of 8 'beautiful chicks' and put them on the *Wretch Album* front page. Starting from March 2009, *Wretch* launched an official blog titled '*Wretch loves beautiful chicks*'³, in which the 'Editor R' writes about the 'beautiful chicks' or posts content produced by the girls themselves. In the *Wretch* 'office blog', the editor himself wrote that "*Frontpage is the façade of a website, of course we would bring in beautiful chicks to show their face...we editors' job is to find out the content that users wish to see the most*" (Editor R, 2008).

Through the promotional activities around 'beautiful chicks', *Wretch* avidly encourages self-exposure, self-perfection, and beauty. Its advertisements and official activities are permeated with the discourse of 'becoming a beautiful chick', suggesting that beauty is a desirable quality and that through individual efforts in make-up, poses, facial expression, camera angle, lighting and gadgets, 'this project of becoming a self-portrait "beautiful chick"' is indeed achievable. Posing into being a 'beautiful chick', then, becomes an online stylized enactment of a particular femininity which operates as the 'technology of the self' (Foucault, 1982) that serves to regulate the identity of being, not simply a girl, but a 'beautiful chick'. It is against this backdrop of commercialism and narrow definition of beauty that I wish to examine girls' practice of self-portraiture.

4. METHOD

The following discussion is based on a pilot study of five Taiwanese teenage girls who post self-portraits on *Wretch Album*. The study, conducted in April 2007, comprised of five interviews through Instant Messaging software⁴, and the analysis of six self-portraits randomly selected from each girl's album (totaling 30). The purpose of the interviews was to hear what girls have to say about the why and how of self-portraiture on *Wretch*. Instant Messaging (IM) software was employed as the interviewing tool with the aim of simulating the communication environment in which young people express themselves conveniently and comfortably in their everyday life. Furthermore, it was assumed that the awkwardness of talking about sensitive issues, especially those related to appearance and sexuality, could be somewhat alleviated by the anonymity of IM (Stern, 2007).

Additionally, a set of content analysis categories⁵ was used to identify common representational patterns in girls' self-portraits that might otherwise be neglected without systematic coding, and also to ground the girls' verbal accounts in the visual practice for a more comprehensive understanding. Together, interviewing and content analysis complement each other in depicting a more comprehensive picture of their self-portrait practice.

Table 1: Details of participating girls

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sampling method</i> ⁶	<i>Years of Internet Use</i>	<i>Years of Self-portraiture</i>	<i>Visitors (as of 12 April 2008)</i>
Smiley	18	'hot'	8	3	18440
Minnie	17	personal network	5	3	3203
Bing	14	'random'	6	2	37989
Liz	16	'hot'	10	4	66076
Cecilia	16	'random'	5	3	54366

5. SELF-PRESENTATION: BETWEEN THE IDEAL AND THE REAL

All girls have at least five years of experience with the internet, and report to have on average three years of experience with self-portraiture. At first, self-portraiture did not appear to them as a straightforward term, as Bing puts it, "*I was probably wondering...self-portraiture...what is it?*". It

was also perceived as a novelty that “*sounded somewhat pornographic. XD [an emoticon that, when rotated 90° clockwise, appears as a person laughing with eyes squeezed]*” (Minnie). Later when they learnt about self-portraiture by watching others’ self-portraits, they realized that self-portraiture was not all about “*showing-off, or porno*” (Liz), and developed their own reasons for self-portraiture. For instance, Bing first started self-portraying thinking it “*should be able to attract some visitors [to her album] XD*”. Liz thinks “*there’s a lot to play with*”, such as angle or lighting. Smiley uses self-portraits to keep an archive of memory.

In Cecilia’s reflexive account, she talks about self-portraiture as a way to fully present the diverse sides of her which do not come out in everyday interaction with people other than close friends:

... [Self-portraiture] is a kind of self-expression and self-introduction....Because it’s new, fun, and unique....I can do a lot of facial expressions...and use eyes to express my emotions. Usually I’m like... expressionless=horrible, cold-blooded; smile faintly=no eyes, eyes narrowed; angry= glare at people...I don’t like it, and don’t feel comfortable, can’t relax...can’t fully express what I want to say...Self-portraiture is kind of like a vent for facial expressions...I’d make those faces that people don’t usually see (Cecilia).

Cecilia’s use of self-portraiture to bring out the repressed emotions and expressions reflects what Buhrmester and Prager (1995) theorize as adolescent developmental need to express oneself as “*an emotional or cathartic release of pent-up feelings*” (as cited in Stern, 2002: 230). It appears that Cecilia wishes to present the, in Goffman’s (1959) term, ‘back-stage’ self that is hidden from the front-stage self. However, later on Cecilia offered a seemingly contradictory, yet reflexive, account saying “*but even I myself feel that the photos are a different me...it feels like...photos can deceive people*”, because the real her is not as pretty as the photos, but her photos portray her as having ‘killer’ looks. Here it appears that for Cecilia there are four kinds of ‘self’: in everyday life, the front-stage is a more reserved self, while the back-stage is the expressive self; but in her self-portraits posted online, the front-stage is the expressive, pretty self, while the back-stage is the not-so-good-looking but still expressive self. To her, none of these are necessary real or unreal, but are all her ‘identities-in-action’.

Interestingly, for Minnie and Cecilia who say to present the ‘real’ self in self-portraits, they both title the albums or name the photos with self-denigrating terms so that the audience could mind the gap between the

photogenic self and the 'real' self . For instance, Minnie's one and only self-portrait album is titled 'Danger' because "*my appearance is horrid and I want to warn people...of it being not so okay*". In a similar vein, Cecilia titles her self-portrait albums as 'long hair monster' and 'no compensation for [your] life if [you] get scared to death'.

6. POSING INTO BEING...A GIRL?

Self-portraiture involves playing with facial expressions, hands, body poses, dress style, camera angle, etc., which are opportunities for girls to tweak their self-representation, especially presenting an ideal image of self. Camera angle appears to be crucial in the composition of a photo as it determines the perspective in which these girls are framed. When asked "*what suggestion would you give to someone who self-portrays for the first time*", Liz says "*finding a good angle is the key, as it can highlight or conceal*". Smiley and Cecilia both elaborate on the ideal angle being the downward angle, as it makes one's face appear smaller, the eyes bigger, and makes one look slimmer, resulting in a look that conforms to the beauty ideal in Taiwan.

In addition, the content analysis of the 30 self-portraits reveals that, in terms of facial expression, 14 photos show the girls making a stereotypically feminine cute/vulnerable look, 4 photos show them appear expressionless - a less conventional feminine look, and 2 photos show them with a funny/dramatic look. In terms of specific mouth area movement, 10 photos show the girls puckering or pouting the lips as if being childlike and cute, another 10 photos show no mouth area movement, while 8 photos show a reserved smile. In terms of hand movements, of the 9 photos in which hand movements are visible, 7 show the girls touching the face or the mouth - a stereotypically feminine act, which, according to Goffman (1979), seeks to suggest the delicacy and fragility of femininity. In terms of body pose struck, the 7 photos that demonstrate particular body poses included space-reducing poses and body canting, again, poses that are stereotypically associated with femininity. Lastly, in terms of camera focus and mode of dress, only one photo portrays the girl in a pair of super-short shorts revealing most of her thighs, while the rest all show the girls in everyday outfits with the camera focusing on the face.

While girls undoubtedly portray themselves in a variety of ways, in each girl's 6 self-portraits analyzed, there is at least one photo of them making a cute/vulnerable look or touching the face/mouth. In the

interviews, 'posing cute' also emerged, collectively, as one of the must-do poses that needs not be questioned. When asked why they pose in such ways, Smiley says *"there is no particular reason. They're all natural poses"*; Minnie says *"I don't know, just suddenly thought of doing it...just for fun"*. Bing also says:

[Referring to sticking the tongue out] Well, it's probably like...feels cuter. =.= " I don't know either. It [the tongue] just spontaneously sticks out. XD ...[Q: What about putting the hand on top of head?] It's a habitual motion!! (Bing.)

What is intriguing here is that such contrived poses which result in a cute/vulnerable look commonly linked with femininity and child-likeness is described by the girls as poses that just 'happen' at that moment, almost as a given. In contrast, Liz and Cecilia both are aware that the mouth movements of puckering and sticking one's tongue out are acts of *"playing cute"*, *"like what Rainie Yang [a popular Taiwanese entertainer who calls herself "the founder of cute-playing religion"] does"*, Liz adds. Also, recalling Cecilia's remarks in the beginning, it seems that the stylized performance that enacts a particular kind of normative girlish image – cute femininity – has become, to some girls, a technology of self that collectively 'regulate' their presentation and representation of self. And it is through their intertextual referencing and reiterative citations of such femininity that *"conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition"* (Butler, 1993: 12).

7. CHANGING AND GROWING UP

Pervading some girls' discussions about a good self-portrait is an aspiration toward being seen as a mature person, reflecting their awareness of the changes in their identity development. For example, Liz thinks the good-looking self-portraits are those that portray her as being cute or being mature. Similarly, Bing takes delight in being mistaken as a high school student in real life, and in her self-portrait she likes to adopt the angle that *"covers up my round face so my jaw looks pointier...and I look more mature"*. Cecilia speaks profoundly of every photo as *"having a life, a feeling...that reminds me of my self and thought at that time"*. Then she elaborates:

I used to be an ugly-duckling, very unconfident ... so I had my hair dyed and perm at 13 hoping to cast off the old self ... at the same time I became rebellious ... but it is from these changes that I gradually establish confidence and courage ... to become tough. Afterwards, I need to change myself bit by bit, and then look back at the old self to know what I was like ...

To her, self-portraiture is not simply about presenting the superficial changes in appearance, but about documenting and reflecting the psychological changes she went through in different stages of life, and ultimately, about presenting herself as “*mature, becoming more feminine...so people don't have to worry about me*”. She has therefore deleted the albums from her ‘rebellious period’, and instead, posted an album entitled ‘I strive to become mature’, containing self-portraits of her wearing skirts at home. This is her announcement to friends that she has finally overcome her resistance to skirts resulting from being sexually harassed in her childhood, “*so my friends won't force me to go shopping in skirts with them*”. As such, posting self-portraits on *Wretch* is a way for her to work on becoming more feminine while being in a space free of physical harassment.

8. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have discussed how Taiwanese young girls employ internet self-portraiture as a meaningful practice in their everyday life, aiding their self-expression, self-esteem and social networking. Through playing with facial expressions, gestures, and the technical representational methods, some girls gather a sense of who they are, and manage how they like to be seen. Prominent in the analysis of the self-portraits and interviews is an over-arching theme of striving for the ‘cute feminine girl’ ideal, despite the fact that visual self-expression is a creative ‘reflexive project of the self’ in nature. Behind girls’ accounts lie a cultural sentiment of preferable femininity that function both as cultural resources and as structural force that frames the girls’ perception of femininity, and comes to bear on their collective self-portraiture practices. This suggests that the shifting media engagement from *consumption* to *production*, from *representation* to *self-(re)presentation* facilitates changes in the construction of gender identities from being *reproduced* to being *produced* by girls themselves in specific contexts under specific discourses (Kehily, 2004), thus signifying changes in the operation of relations between power and individuals in Web 2.0. On the one hand, internet self-portraiture is a private agentic practice because girls are able to

experiment as an independent individual in their photo-shooting. On the other hand, it is a public performance in the sense that girls may need to negotiate their self-identity with normative institutional values (be they commercial, familial, media, or cultural) to enact a role deemed socially acceptable by her audiences online. The dynamics in the process – the negotiation and deliberation involved in the production and presentation of self-portraits – means that both agency self-representation and the structural constraints within which self-portraiture takes place need to be taken into account for a balanced perspective on the practice popular to many girls (or young people) nowadays.

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NOTES

- 1 All girls are given pseudonyms in lieu of the actual screen names they used on their *Wretch* album.
- 2 <http://www.wretch.cc/album>
- 3 <http://www.wretch.cc/blog/wretchbeauty>
- 4 All interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. Quotes from the girls cited in this chapter are translated by the author. Emoticons used by the girls are also retained in the quotes.
- 5 The self-portraits were (re)coded in August, 2009, using the code book that the author developed for a study of larger analysis of 2000 self-portraits of Taiwanese teenagers on *Wretch*.
- 6 On *Wretch Album* front page, one can choose to view the albums grouped as 'hot' (high visitor rate), or 'random' (selected by *Wretch* using criteria unknown to the public)

Constructing alternative nationhood: Television of Soviet Estonia against Finnish capitalism

Indrek Treufeldt

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea of counter fighting the western influence and especially with so-called Finnish mentality was one of the most important reasons to start with television broadcasting in Soviet-time Estonia. As Estonian and Finnish languages are quite close, Soviet authorities expected that Finns would be anxious consumers of the new media, television, especially, as Finland had not yet started with regular TV programmes. As secret decision made by Central Committee of Communist Party of Estonia shortly before the sudden death of Joseph Stalin (5 March 1953) motivated the establishment of a new media institution as a way of “*strengthening ideological work with Estonian population*”¹. The need to do ideological work with the Finnish audience and to react to the problem of the negative influence from foreign radio stations (so-called *voices* – like Voice of America and BBC) was often discussed during the meetings of the Central Bureau of the Estonian Communist Party. The formal decision about establishing Estonian Television was made on September 19th 1953 by the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union. Among other things, Estonian Television’s broadcasts in Finnish provided a certain alternative view of the current events. Those programmes also constructed a specific imagined nationhood. Broadcasts demonstrated different achievements of Soviet society through a direct propagandistic description but at the same time, they also were meant to envisage an idealistic model of nationhood, a positive picture of Soviet Estonia. In this chapter the texts of those early broadcasts are analysed qualitatively. For that the idea of so-called *objectivation frame* is used, which means, that

by linguistic tools some elements of texts are objectified and are meant to be taken for granted.

2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Just 80 kilometres of sea (the Gulf of Finland) separates two the neighbouring countries Finland and Estonia. Estonia took her first steps in radio broadcasting together with other European countries. On the 18th of December 1926 regular radio broadcasts started. The first direct broadcast from abroad was exactly from the capital of Finland (28 February 1935). Estonians and Finns held first joint conference of radio broadcasting 25–26 April 1935, and joint broadcasts were arranged in November and December 1938.

As one of the consequences of the Second World War, Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union. Property was expropriated and Estonian industry was integrated into the All-Union economy. Political as well as cultural life was quickly sovietised and to a great extent managed from Moscow. Massive deportations of Estonians were arranged by Soviet Union in 1941 and 1949. After Nikita Khrushchev's secret speech on February 25, 1956 at the Twentieth Party Congress, a process of de-Stalinization started as: *"Recognition of a need for change, typically conducted under the phrase of returning to the original purity of the revolution under Lenin"*. In Estonia, changes were mainly marked by changes in economic sphere. During the 1950s, Soviet authorities used Estonia for experimentation in industrial management, as Kionka (1991: 44) points out: *"one notable characteristic of Estonia's post-Stalin economy is the republic's role as a laboratory for economic experiments"*. Also after 1956, the number of Estonians in the Communist Party started to increase.

At the same time, Finland maintained its independence after the war but according to an armistice agreement they had to pay huge war reparations to the Soviet Union in the form of goods. In 1947, following Soviet pressure, Finland rejected the Marshall Aid. In 1948 Finland and the Soviet Union signed a Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance. The first regular radio broadcasts in Finnish only started under the Soviet rule, on the 14th of March 1947, as a part of Soviet propaganda.

So-called Tallinn Television Studio (predecessor of Estonian Television) started with television broadcasts in the summer of 1955. Already on the second year of its activity – on the 3rd of October 1956 – the studio started to distribute programmes in the Finnish language. Finland's

National Broadcasting Company started its regular TV broadcasting on the 6th of October 1956. It seems that on the ideological front there was a competition – finally Soviet Estonia’s broadcasting corporation was able to start first with Finnish language programs – just a few days before. On the 3rd of October Estonian Television offered newsreels ‘Estonia nowadays’, which was in Finnish and after that, programs in Finnish were broadcasted twice a week

The texts of Finnish language broadcasts of Estonian Television reflect the main priorities of Soviet foreign policy. The 20th Party Congress endorsed the commitment of the Party to the flourishing (*ratsvet* in Russian) of nations. At the same time, “*it was also increasingly evident that this was to occur concomitantly with encouraging their ‘coming together’ (sblizhenie)*” (Smith, 1991: 7). Soviet texts from the 1950s construct an image of ‘brotherly alliance’ of Soviet nations, which could be a model for other countries still waiting (as put by Khrushchev) for the victory of socialism.

3. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS: CONSTRUCTING REALITY THROUGH MEDIA

In this chapter the focus is on examining the logic of media texts. However, the investigation of normative documents, such as decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, budget allocation plans, and thematic plans for programs², allow us to collect some information in order to describe the context and will thus help us in making adequate conclusions. The main objective here is to use the tools of textual analysis in an historic context.

As stated by the Decree of the Minister of culture of the Soviet Union, Finnish language broadcasts should include best chronicles and documentaries and also performances of Finnish public figures with progressive views³. This would help to construct an alternative collective reality which promotes Soviet values. Those broadcasts create another imaged community, which corresponds to Benedict Anderson’s concept of nations as imagined communities. Anderson (1991: 6) claims that nations are based on vernacular “*print-communities*”, which are finite, sovereign and can be perceived as horizontally distributed across class. Soviet media tried to construct an image of Soviet nationhood in order to develop a Soviet interpretation of events.

The process of *objectivation*, as a collective perception and interpretation was thoroughly examined by Alfred Schütz. He explained that:

subjective knowledge can be translated into the 'idealizing' and 'anonymous' interpretative matrices of system of signs, and it can be again transformed into subjective knowledge by means of an appropriately meaningful retranslation (Schütz, Luckmann, 1974: 281).

In case of *objectivation*, the subjective basis is left implicit. Schütz also used the term of *anonymization*. From the point of functional grammar, the implicit model of the omniscient narrator, a general 'say-er' is used (Halliday, 2004: 626). In the transformation process, text becomes more non-dialogical, which is considered as absolute, even authoritative. Typically, Soviet texts avoid ambivalence – presuppositions must be easily perceived, and conclusions are planned ahead.

There are two important elements of the objectivation frame:

- Tools that express unity, sameness – it can be called 'OUR-ness'. This is a specific reference point, related to personal, spatial or temporal references. It is an imagined position indicating whose voice is presented in texts as a reference point.
- Background beliefs, relating to an utterance are not explicitly described, assumptions about the truth is taken for granted. Those can be called 'presuppositions'.

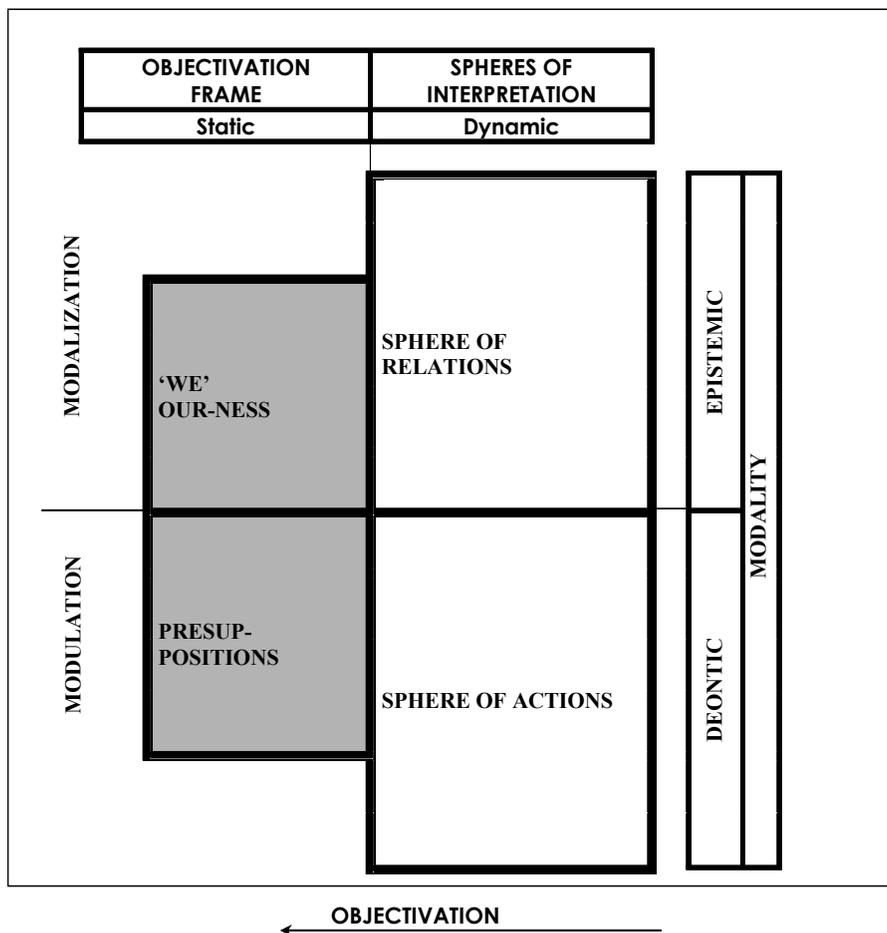
Above described 'OUR-ness' and 'presuppositions' could be considered as a static part of reality construction; those are more stable or permanent parts of the discourse. These static elements reflect areas that can be described as taken-for-granted. These elements are part of the metaphoric modality that marks fixed representations of reality. Soviet collective consciousness creates different relations with objects perceived in reality, depending on possibility, impossibility and necessity.

According to the modal logic, there are two spheres, based "*on epistemic and deontic modality*" (Halliday, 2004: 618).

- By using different speech acts as discursive strategies, a net of relations can be established. Some subjects (e.g. nations, persons, but also abstract terms) are handled as close and active, some of them are described as distant and passive, thus creating a 'sphere of relations'.
- Texts can reveal specific actions. With such process, for instance, some possibilities or necessities are expressed, but some are not, this means that those are avoided or dismantled. Wodak et al. (1994: 33) distinguishes specific discursive strategies, such as "*construction, perpetuation or justification, transformation and demontage.*" Partly, those strategies form 'a sphere of actions'.

With static and dynamic elements of interpretation an overall model for textual analysis can be described, as seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: A model for analysing journalistic interpretation of reality⁴.



5. DESCRIPTION OF THE EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

There is no audiovisual material preserved from the 1950s, nevertheless all scripts are available in the Estonian Historical Archives⁵. In most cases, both Estonian and Finnish texts are presented. To some extent standard or somehow *pre-cooked* newsreels were modified. On the one hand, centrally produced official documentaries (newsreels) reflected

general Soviet standpoints on various issues, so that Finns could learn another understanding of events when they saw the newsreel. On the other hand, single broadcasts, specifically produced for the Finnish audience were much more customized, i.e. corresponded to their propaganda needs: programs such as 'From Pages of the History of Soviet Estonia' ('Sivuja Neuvosto-Eestin historiasta').

Also the original correspondence with viewers in Finland can be examined. In some letters people were asking to broadcast some popular songs, while in other cases they are looking for missing friends or relatives. Having active feedback and making the programme based on the feedback (e.g. music selection) was often promoted, in reality the number of letters was not remarkable and music was selected according to the official Soviet taste.

6. ANALYSING THE SOVIET OBJECTIVATION FRAME

6.1. *Analysing our-ness*

In many cases it seems that direct expression of authoritarian voice is avoided or vice versa – it is so overwhelming, that there is no place for any other position. That is the case when already the name of a broadcast sounds as a declaration, as for instance a broadcast with a title: 'Nations' cooperation and friendship is strengthening'. In the introductory text the title is repeated – it becomes a declaration or dogma of its own, a framework for a program broadcasted. Such kind of declaration of Soviet values is remarkable in case of entertainment. Here is an introductory text before a concert program called 'Songs and dances of Soviet nations':

Every nation creates cultural values and the whole artistic life is based on those values. The Soviet Union is a multinational state, where every nation represents its national culture. Thus, with this short concert today, we would like to introduce songs and dances from some Soviet nations (broadcasted 14 Oktober 1956).

When analysing 'deixis' ('pointing' via language) it is clear that the usage of abstract *we* is typical – it marks abstract and anonymous official position – real names of authors of texts do not have any significance. 'We' (together with expressions like our republic, our nation) represents a positive position of Soviet Estonia, as can be seen in a text on a Soviet agricultural fair in Moscow.

And also here are many visitors, who would like to get acquainted with steps of improvement of our republic in the development of national economy (broadcasted 14 October 1956).

'We' means 'the State' but also clear inclusion – there is no chance to enter into a debate with the State. 'We' is undialogical, authorized, an official position, a phenomena related to official truth.

Another usage of abstract 'we', marking concrete aspirations of Soviet foreign policy, can be found in a voice-over for the program 'Nations' cooperation and friendship is strengthening':

We wish those little ones – Imam and Muhammad, who were finished off in one of the schools in the capital of Egypt, could have looked proudly to the future like millions of other children in the world (broadcasted 28 October 1956).

Here are two cases of an abstract reference point – an abstract 'we' makes reference to the tragic consequence of the Suez crisis and two of its young victims (just a photo is shown in film footage), but there is also another abstract collective actor involved – 'millions of children'.

Sometimes the abstract mass, sharing the Soviet viewpoint is labelled with the word progressive: progressive (forward-looking) nations, progressive scientists. Thus a special metaphor for a particular camp of humankind is created. The Soviet objectivation frame forms specific collective identities, which act as abstract subjects in texts. It is easy to attribute those ideas to anonymous abstract masses (as 'millions of children', 'millions of workers').

The most ambitious is the term 'Soviet nation' (also 'Soviet people'). In the western context the term Soviet was often referred to as Russia, its largest constituent state. In USSR such a connotation was carefully avoided. The term 'Soviet nation' is an entity on its own – a concrete goal and subject, as the Communist party often described the historic process of forming the Soviet nation. Thus the 'Soviet nation' was indeed an ideological idealization, a high-level, holy instrument to express some very basic values, for instance in sentences like:

Soviet people are sure, that war can be avoided and has to be avoided (broadcast 28 October 1956).

Such a construction of 'our-ness' establishes a good ground for presenting official doctrines. For the Finnish audience, there are multiple

identities presented – progressive humankind, Soviet nation and Soviet Estonia.

6.2. *Analysing presuppositions*

Analysing presuppositions means to explain what the speaker assumes to be the case prior to the statement, something that is taken for granted. It is quite difficult – one has to analyse text critically, taking specific discourses into consideration. One type of presuppositions could be called ‘existential presuppositions’. It is possible to deduce the existence of the Soviet nation, as it is an essential part of many statements. Some of the existential presuppositions are metaphors, such like: ‘brother-nation’ – a specific metaphor to mark Soviet republics who are living in the brotherly alliance, created by free will.

There is another type of factive presuppositions, which can be seen by analysing speech acts containing specific verbs such as ‘conclude, ‘regret’ or ‘acknowledge’. In fact presuppositions can be identified through modalities – relations are often built as projections of different relations, also as actions.

Here are some examples of the most dominant presuppositions:

- Previous regimes did not correspond to the people’s needs in Estonia
- Estonia has been suffering from slavery, foreign dependence and spurious freedom.

Only with the aid from foreign capital Estonia was changed into a bourgeois-democratic republic, which of course cannot content the needs and demands of the majority of working people who had much bigger aims (broadcast 7 November 1956).

- Life goes according to decisions of the Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Texts often refer to separate decisions, but those are also presented as facts, things that are already in effect, and ideas that are seen as taken for granted. For instance a newsreel ‘Soviet Estonia No 35’ describes living conditions of a new student-home in a small Estonian town Rakvere:

Based on the decisions of the 20th congress of the Central communist party, 75 thousand students start their studies this year (broadcast 3.10.1956).

7. ANALYSING MODALITIES

Besides objectivation, there are some other tendencies that are conveyed in the texts, like specific relations and intrinsic forces. Viewers are positioned to favour or disfavour a particular attitudinal stance, as explained by White (2006: 38): “*media constructs a particular model of the social and moral order – a model of what is normal and aberrant, beneficial and harmful, praiseworthy and blameworthy and so on*”. Here the apparatus of modalities serves Soviet propaganda. For a qualitative textual analysis the level of a clause or sentence is essential. The modal assessment can be handled more widely, as a semantic domain extending across more than one grammatical environment – one should regard the context and different discourses. ‘Modality’ can be seen as the relationship it sets “*up between author and representations – what authors commit themselves to in terms of truth or necessity*” (Fairclough, 2003: 219). But in case of early Estonian television texts, authors are not revealed, and a specific journalistic identity cannot be traced. The anonymous ‘we’ is the most favoured position, but dealing with the official ‘we’ does not need any moderation or negotiation. There is also the phenomenon of the collectivisation of actors – marking actors as some collective bodies: ‘the staff of the factory’, ‘university and its scientists’, ‘pupils of the school’, etc. Also states or countries are personified, with positive or negative denotation.

7.1. Sphere of relations

There is a large spectrum of actors and subjects involved in the texts. In case of Finnish-language texts of Estonian Television, the passive voice is used a lot. It puts an abstract collective actor to the foreground. Thus a specific hierarchy of actors is formed – some of them are closer, some of them more distant. Functional tools of language contribute to the feeling of distance – some actors can be subjects but also different attributes can be used as subjects.

Here is a description of the visit of a Finnish delegation:

It is attempted to show to our dear guests as extensively as possible Estonia's modern life. While guests were travelling by car in Soviet Estonia they made themselves familiar with our peasants' life. (broadcasted 28 November 1956)

Different actors are involved – *we* as a superior official position, Soviet Estonia. Then abstract guests – a delegation. In general both words, Finland and Estonia, are used in passive constructions – they are not main performers or initiators of different activities. Of course Finland (Suomi) is a special case – she is constructed as a kindred people, but not one statement describes any Finnish initiatives. Estonia represents part of the Soviet Union – the main rhetoric is aimed to show actions and position of the socialist state.

There is an abstract actor that is often used in texts – ‘foreign capital’ – to describe the dependency of Estonia before the arrival of the Soviet rule. At the same time more general terms like ‘capitalism’ and ‘capitalists’ are not used so much; probably in case of the Finnish audience a specific ideological brainwashing is avoided. The main idea is to show Estonia being dependent on foreign influence before the WW2. Texts manipulate by using abstract actors and avoid direct blaming in order to keep a positive attitude in texts. Typical abstractions are: ‘imperialists’, ‘imperialistic interests’ but also a metaphorical actor – ‘danger of war’.

There is a great many individuals mentioned in texts by name, usually as episodic examples of good workers, professionals, public figures. At the same time it seems that activities of high-ranking officials are not that much stressed. It could be seen as some kind of evidence of (or reaction against) the de-stalinization in the Soviet society.

7.2. *Sphere of actions*

In general, news texts describe Soviet reality in a positive way – most utterances directly state prosperity and success, as a self-evident fact. Any kind of ambiguity is intentionally avoided. This general positive picture also means that in most cases conflicts are avoided, as a potential source of critical or negative conclusions. But there are conflicts that also help to shape and reinforce specific ideological positions through a specific way of managing conflicts. Conflicts provoke certain actions and also form a specific sphere of actions.

Typical strategies are:

- to build a conflict between personal abilities and reality, to show the heroism or effectiveness of workers or people;
- to build a conflict between former disabilities and achievements at present and in the future, as a dialectical development;
- to build a conflict with the past, to demonstrate the historic development or positive actions of the State;

- to build a conflict between the irrelevant perception of reality or simply to exaggerate.

8. IN CONCLUSION – CONSTRUCTING ALTERNATIVE NATIONHOOD

The analytic model of four integrated components enables me to compile a matrix that illustrates the main features of Soviet propaganda i.e. a specific action aimed at influencing the opinion or behaviour of people.

It is always a question, to what extent 'real' or 'objective reality' can be described by journalists, but at least according to the normative canons objectivity is a particular form of media practice and also a particular attitude towards the task of information collection, processing and dissemination (McQuail, 2005). Van Dijk adds another dimension by saying: *"if journalist value truth and reliability of reporting, then this is an ideological specification of the cultural value of truth and reliability"* (Van Dijk, 1998: 83). Texts reflect those ideological values. For sure, Soviet media attempt to follow formal rules of news journalism – specific genres and formats and also a mechanism how to describe selected occurrences as objective or taken for granted, using objectivation. There is another ideological functionality, which Peter R.R. White called evaluative semantics, meaning that media consumers are positioned to favour or disfavour a particular attitudinal stance. *"Media constructs a particular model of the social and moral order – a model of what is normal and aberrant, beneficial and harmful, praiseworthy and blameworthy and so on"* (White, 2006: 38). Evaluative semantics is a powerful tool for propaganda, a term often described as an antipode for 'normal communication'.

Table 2: Main features of Soviet propaganda, delivered by broadcasts of Estonian Television⁶.

<i>OBJECTIVATION FRAME</i>	<i>SPHERES OF INFLUENCE</i>
<i>OUR-NESS</i>	<i>SPHERE OF RELATIONS</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We-the State ▪ Soviet people ▪ Abstract progressive mass, progressively thinking people 	<p>Mainly positive actors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Episodic individuals (workers, good professionals) <p>Passive actors, rather objects than subjects, positive in most cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Soviet Estonia, also Estonia ▪ Finland as kindred nation ▪ Brother-nations ▪ Other carefully selected nations (elite-nations) <p>Negative and abstract actors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foreign capital ▪ Capitalists ▪ Imperialists, Imperialistic interests ▪ Danger of war
<i>MAIN PRESUPPOSITIONS</i>	<i>SPHERE OF ACTION</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Life is arranged according to the decisions of Communist Party ▪ Past did not correspond to Estonia's needs ▪ Just work brings happiness 	<p>Constructing conflicts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Between violent past and happy present ▪ Between individual perception and real progress

Soviet journalism uses strictly controlled interpretive matrices, idealizing carefully selected ideas and creating impressions of specific self-evidences. The emerging television news journalism tried to construct Soviet reality and expressed the discourse of implementing the goals of Marxism-Leninism. Journalistic texts generated by Estonian Television also implicitly reflect the general principles of Soviet conflict management. It means that clear conflicts were avoided in most news texts or transferred in a 'safe' context. Such a safe context was first of all related to the personal sphere of Soviet citizens; with a general message that each individual could give his/her contribution for the improvement of the

society or that the present should be perceived as better as the past. Conflicts were also manifested when capitalist countries were described as 'hostile territories' for Soviet rulers.

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NOTES

- 1 Postanovlenije "O postroike televizionnovo tsentra v gorode Talline" (in Russian), Secret protocol No. 19 of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Estonia 12.02.1953. (Decision on establishing Television Centre in Tallinn).
- 2 See records of the Estonian Communist Party (ECP): No. 1-146, 1-5, 8460, also Protocols of the ECP Central Committee bureau meetings.
- 3 Decree issued by the minister of culture of the SU (Prikaz Ministra Kultury SSSR, Moskva, No. 616. 12.09.1956.
- 4 Text is taken to describe reality as objective (as taken for granted or as a fixed truth). There are elements for building relations and revealing actions by two

different kinds of modality. The entire process of journalistic interpretation can be termed 'metaphorical modality'.

- 5 Texts of Finnish language broadcasts of ETV are available in Estonian Historic Archives: ERA.R-1590.2.26-29.
- 6 Certain presuppositions could be revealed on the basis of texts, also attitudinal stance towards different actors and objects, also discursive strategies, which are mainly used for building conflicts.

Articulation of ideology and romance¹. Storyline dynamics in Czechoslovak communist television serials 1975–1989

Irena Reifová, Petr Bednařík and Šimon Dominik

1. INTRODUCTION

During the period of Czechoslovak ‘normalization’ (1968–1989), domestic living spaces became an important site of everyday life². As David Morley claims, home territories are far from being innocent, neutral spaces isolated from social operations (Morley, 2000). The family living room decorated with floral curtains, plush coverings and with the flickering bluish light emanating from an Orava television set all vividly epitomize the social climate of those times – a politically motivated withdrawal from a public sphere permeated by communist party newspeak and the retreat into private or personal spaces. It was in this environment that the population consumed the so-called ‘normalization television serials’ this chapter will explore. Launched during the 1970s and 1980s these drama serials soon became a cult genre of the period.

2. DETERMINING THE KEY ELEMENTS OF IDEOLOGICAL AND MELODRAMATIC STORYLINES

Very few communist television serials produced in 1968–1989 exhibit manifestly ideological storylines. Propagandist motifs were usually worked into sub-narratives depicting turbulence in the characters’ personal lives³. Though outlines of the serials’ themes had to meet with political approval and the work was subject to constant supervision in the course of the production process), screenwriters did not usually have to refrain from including ‘soap-like’, romantic and psychological motifs – provided that these had been previously authorized by the communist party administration.

In Czechoslovakia, the exclusive political capital of communist *apparatchiks* drew on the Constitution itself, more precisely on its *fourth article* implementing the so-called leading role of the communist party⁴. Therefore, when analysing 'normalization' television serials, we can assume that any item that can be seen to legitimate the leading role of the communist party in Czechoslovak society should be taken as an ideological element. Thus, ideological storyline elements should be specified in terms of how party policy is justified, glorified or merely echoed in the serials' subject matter, in the depiction of characters and in the plots and settings of these works.

We understand melodramatic storylines as romantic (i.e. with respect to the management of relationships) narrative elements that are located in male-female relationships. This decision is empirically grounded in the fact that one of the serials' storylines is almost always constructed around alpha-male and alpha-female characters, even though the declared role of these works was to promote communist policy, not to produce human affairs drama. This is, for instance, also the case with the serial that will be the subject of consideration below: city communist mayor Bavor and the woman – or rather 'female position' – beside him are the alpha-couple in *Muž na radnici* (further referred to as MR) (*Man at City-hall*, 1976). Romantic couples are constitutive of melodramatic storylines in many other 'normalization' television serials. For instance, a shop assistant named Anna and her customer-partner Karel hold this position in *Žena za pultem* (further referred to as MR) (*Woman behind the Counter*, 1977). Hobson regards a larger family or small community setting as typical soap-opera settings; Liebes and Livingstone make further sub-divisions by speaking of dynastic, community and dyadic soap-operas (Hobson, 2003: 53; Liebes and Livingstone, 1998: 237). Relying on these delimitations, we would like to suggest that Czechoslovak communist television serials accordingly make use of both ideological and melodramatic storylines. Ideological storylines usually develop in a collective (most frequently in a workplace community) environment, while melodramatic lines are to be found in stories of romantic couples (though even here one can find traces of melodrama e.g. in parent-child relationships or between fellows).

3. MUŽ NA RADNICI (MAN AT CITY-HALL): NORMALIZATION SERIALS AS AN IDEOLOGICAL CHORAL AND MELODRAMATIC LYRICISM

MR (CST, 1976) was one of the early serial dramas from the 1970s which provides an example of the narrative coordination of melodramatic and ideological storylines. The script was written by Jaroslav Dietl who is considered to be the outstanding screenwriter in the field of TV serial drama in Czechoslovak Television history.

3.1. *Ideological line and political surveillance*

Using basic methods of television historiography, we can reconstruct the circumstances of the production and of the ideological supervision of this work (Godfrey, 2006). The serial *MR* was conceived as a television contribution to the election campaign of 1976, although these elections were not free. The desire to have the serial aired during the pre-election campaign was reflected in a very rushed pre-production phase, as well as a rush during the filming itself. The shooting was conducted at a very rapid tempo in 68 days between 15th March and 20th June 1976. The producers even managed to complete the filming one-month ahead of schedule. The rapidity of the entire production process is documented in a letter signed by the production manager, the editor and the director addressed to the CST general director-deputy Milena Balášová at the end of May 1976:

We need most urgently to be able to draw on the maximum number of resources to be able to edit all eleven episodes and also so that we can get a good idea of the quality and of the political implications of the entire serial. (...) We would like to point out that (...) it is intended as a contribution to one of the important campaigns in the election of representative bodies at the very beginning of September⁵.

In the archive of Czech Television, we located one undated and unsigned document with a handwritten requirement for four edits in four episodes which probably comes from the time at which approval projections were made, and which is perhaps related to topics discussed at them. Out of these instructions, three were actually implemented. Two of them are motivated on artistic grounds, but one of them is almost certainly politically inspired. According to the script, in the seventh episode, one character is supposed to utter the following statement: “Well, you know,

*such a construction requires enthusiasm and stamina. It's not enough simply to be there like some factory worker"*⁶. The edits for the final episode removed the comparison to working in a factory, which may have been seen as a disparaging reference by those who wholly approved of members of the working class. The ideological story-line in the drama *MR* links factors associated with the work and the political efforts of the main character, which the story defines as a struggle for change.

The drama is set in the period of 1971–1976. The main character is Frantisek Bavor, the chairman of the City National Committee in a fictitious city named Starý Kunštát. When the story begins, he is a National Committee deputy but he has no official position, and he is working as a technician in a factory. Starý Kunštát is described as a place with a number of partially built structures from the 1960s which the present city leaders are unable to complete. The party authorities are therefore insisting on a change in the city administration. The serial clearly emphasizes that only the arrival of new people in 1971 will bring about the necessary change Chairman Bavor begins to champion the concept of a radical reconstruction of the city. He wants to have the historical centre demolished and to have them replaced by panel buildings. An important feature of Bavor's character is his loyalty to what he considers needs to be done even in situations where this makes him unpopular. Within Bavor's sphere of action, the story focuses on events where the chairman is seen attempting to push forward with his plans. Bavor persuades the town citizens of the necessity to demolish the old buildings. He reasons that the interests of the collective should be put above the interests of individuals. Furthermore, the narrative centres on the basic story conflict (Bavor's struggle for the demolition of old buildings and their replacement by the panel housing development) and is based on one of the most typical binary oppositions in modern society, between on the one hand an old-fashioned and backward-looking attitude and perspective and on the other one that is progressive and forward-looking. Bavor reasons that every sensible and logically thinking person should understand that when it is necessary to gain space for building several hundred flats, the owner of the older property should sell their house for a price determined by the state authorities and then move into a panel house.

In this regard, the dramatic narrative links fiction and reality. In the 1970s, there was a boom in housing construction in Czechoslovakia – no fewer than 1 263 000 new flats were built (Kalinová, 2006: 21). Most of these took the form of panel housing blocks. – Given the prevailing conditions in Czechoslovakia at that time, panel flats represented a

higher standard of living with warm water and central heating. In unified housing developments, it was possible within a relatively short time to accommodate a large number of people. For the part this represented part of strategic plan to combat civil discontent in exchange for basic life security. In principle, it was an equivalent to the Hungarian 'goulash socialism' (Varga, 2008: 81). The central committee of the communist party needed to offer more acceptable accommodation to young families because the number of registered births had significantly increased during the first half of the 1970s⁷. The communist regime knew that without an increase in housing construction, the discontent among young people might grow, so it promoted housing construction even at the cost of demolishing existing housing schemes, and significantly altering the external appearance of a number of towns.

In the dramas that we have analysed, ideological content (defined by a general support for the leading role played by the communist party) is mixed with a goal-directed agitation (perceived as converting the audience to a particular idea). Through the words and actions of the main character Frantisek Bavor, *MR* explicitly supports the process which was taking place in the fictitious story as well as in the 'real-existing socialism' at the same time. As Koukoutsaki distinguishes i.a. a 'social drama' within her innovated typology of serial sub-genres, the case of Czechoslovak normalization serials would be a 'social-political' drama (Koukoutsaki, 2003: 720). Social issues are always presented in relation to the political policy or strategy which would offer a solution to the problem.

3.2. CONVERGENCE/DIVERGENCE OF IDEOLOGICAL AND MELODRAMATIC LINE

In addition to the ideological line (relating to the public and/or political spheres), there is also a melodramatic line (relating to the personal, the poetic and the private) in *MR*, just as in other 'normalization' serial dramas. The screenwriter arranges for the protagonist to go through many personal problems which are centered on the main heterosexual couple, in this case on Bavor, the alpha male and the female, or, better, 'female position(s)', alongside him. It is noteworthy that while 'the alpha male' remains the protagonist throughout the drama, the 'alpha female position' is occupied by three different women as the narrative develops. His wife/ archetypal love Ludmila dies at the end of the first episode in a road accident. Bavor replaces her with the rather superficial dress-

maker Jitka whom he leaves after they have a disagreement and after he discovers that she has been unfaithful. Slowly he falls in love with the third woman who then takes up the alpha female position. Kateřina is one of the city dwellers-in-need and is a poetic and sensitive soul. Within the secondary storylines, and linked with the characters in the main melodramatic line, Bavor's children play a significant role. Bavor's daughter Bohunka lacks experience (and also, as becomes clear, a mother's advice) and she falls in love with a wastrel named Vít. But Vít is attempting to further his career in motor racing and Bohunka soon finds herself a single mother. However, her father's assistant and the man responsible for the demolition work, Mikuláš, gradually gains her confidence and she later enters into a relationship with him. Bavor's son Přemek tries to take advantage of his father's high position to further his school career, but Bavor rejects all such attempts. .

Ideological and melodramatic storylines do not slide over each other. They are not discrete, but rather interweave, the one with the other. Given this tendency to intersect, the storylines are to some extent mutually dependent on each other. In terms of causal relations between events, events contained within the ideological line are given priority. Developments within the melodramatic storyline are often merely a consequence of the more efficacious ideological line or else they are more generally illustrative of value judgments expressed by the ideological line in the form of particular genre picture. The relation of a cause and effect between the ideological and melodramatic line can be graphically illustrated by a table showing points of concurrence in individual episodes. (Table 1)

Table 1: Points of concurrence in individual episodes

Episode	Ideological line <i>causes</i>	Melodramatic line <i>effects</i>
1 Accident	It is the year 1971. Bavor is working in a factory and he is a deputy of the City National Committee. Citizens complain that the city is becoming run down.	Bavor's wife Ludmila dies in a road accident when she drives into a broken piece of scaffolding attached to a house awaiting reconstruction.
2 Embitterment	At a civil committee meeting, Bavor criticizes the leaders of the City National Committee.	Bavor's colleague Vlasta (also a deputy of City National Committee) admires his resolve. She is platonically in love with him.

3 Place to stay	Bavor takes up the office of chairman of the City National Committee. He launches an enquiry among the city dwellers that reveals them to be sceptical of any changes.	For the first time, Bavor as the City National Committee chairman is visited by Kateřina Hanáková who was thrown out of her flat by her husband. She attracts Bavor through her gentleness and sensitivity.
6 Rebellion	Bavor champions the demolition of the city centre, with consequent loss of popularity.	Bavor's second wife Jitka gets a chief position in a tailor's shop, and Bavor is afraid of being suspected of favoritism'
7 Son	The city reconstruction project is still being met with opposition. The city organizes a plenary meeting of citizens in which young people in favour of the demolition and the new housing construction gain the ascendancy.	Bavor meets Kateřina Hanáková again. She belongs to the group who are objecting to the city reconstruction, because her parents would lose their family house.
8 New Year's Eve	The reconstruction programme starts with the demolition of an old pub in which meetings had often taken place. However, the construction is still beset by many difficulties.	Bavor has a quarrel with his wife Jitka. She accuses him that in the entire project, he is only interested in his personal fame. After the quarrel, Jitka leaves Bavor.
9 Crusade	Word spreads through the city that the old teacher Hanák has committed suicide because of the compulsory house sale. But it turns out that Hanák died of a heart attack.	The death of Kateřina Hanáková's father brings Kateřina and Bavor together again in an intimate and understanding dialogue.
11 Meeting	The new housing estate is finished and there is a ceremony where it is handed over to the citizens of the city.	Bavor together with Kateřina (as well as Bavor's daughter Bohunka with Mikuláš) begin a new life in flats that form part of the new housing estate.

Events occurring within the ideological line have stronger narrative power. They move the story forward, and also tend to have an enhanced role as far as narrative causality is concerned. By contrast, events contained within the melodramatic story line have a greater dramatic (and often lyrical) value. Up to the present day, certain components of the melodramatic storylines in Jaroslav Dietl's serial are acknowledged to be the best that television screenwriting has to offer⁸. Particular praise is accorded to the emotional realism of characters, to the potential for viewer identification, and to the ambiguity and psychological persuasiveness of characters and to their inter-personal relationships . . . As far as Dietl's melodramatic lines are concerned, we can detect certain features of what western television studies have characterised as 'quality television': "(...) a form of television which is seen as more literate and with more stylistic complexity and more psychological depth than ordinary television fare" (Feuer quoted in Akass and McCabe, 2007: 8).

In our opinion, the political refinement of Jaroslav Dietl's serials is embedded precisely in this seeming 'divergence' of the ideological and melodramatic storyline. As if the story gave to the audience the choice of separating 'the wheat from the chaff', and of focusing only on seemingly apolitical and emotionally-realistic sections and thus effectively to de-emphasize the more ideologically loaded content elements. At those moments when the screenwriter breaks the rule of keeping the lines divergent (i.e. mixes the ideological and melodramatic levels), the propagandistic aspiration becomes too blatant and the sequences in question take on an unwanted comical aspect and sometimes become downright farcical. A typical example is the following dialogue between Bavor's secretary Hlavica and his mistress, who is also a National Committee clerk. The exchange occurs when he is breaking up with her out of fear that she will blackmail him and that the entire reconstruction plan will be jeopardised.

Hlavica: *"I wanted to tell you that now is an historic turning point. Everything is at stake. Maybe even this very night. At moments like these, it becomes clear who is a good communist and who is not."*

Bara: *"Why are you telling me that? What does it have to do with me?"*

Hlavica: *"I am telling you that because I must not fail."*

Bara: *"Fail in what?"*

Hlavica: *"By not succeeding with the whole idea of this project and by disappointing Frantisek and history in general. Bara, I have to break up with you."*

(Episode 6)

In most episodes, however, a more sophisticated relation of seeming divergence exists between developments within the ideological and melodramatic storylines. They diverge in content but converge in the manner in which the fundamentally intersecting lines are narratively organised. From the latter point of view, both lines are closely coordinated and linked by relation of causes (to be found in events within the ideological line) and consequences (narratively projected in the form of melodramatic storyline components). In respect of content, though, both lines may be independent of each other. Ideological line components work with political significance, and melodramatic line components work with emotional significance. A level on which both lines articulate is a deeper layer of the story structure, and it only becomes visible on much closer scrutiny, as Althusser would have said, only as a result of 'symptomatic' reading. Elements of 'poetics' (emotions/relations-oriented parts of narration), however, are by no means autonomous in these serials, and they only make sense as an appendix, consequence or illustration of elements from the world of 'politics' (ideas/actions-oriented parts of narration). Bavor's archetypal love and first wife Ludmila, for instance, does not die at the end of the first episode in isolation from the rest of the story. This particular melodramatic event (death of the first alpha female) is only a function of the ideological line dynamics. The city is falling apart and Ludmila pays for this with her life when she drives into a rotten piece of scaffolding. In other words: if it had not been needed to re-establish the eroded equilibrium of the ideological line (the city is falling apart because it is being badly governed; in 1971, the city is still in the hands of a weak and inconsistent communist regime from the time of the attempts at liberal reform), the tragic event within the melodramatic line (the death of the main hero's wife) would not have happened.

Drawing upon Ma's application of Newcomb's original delineation of 'choric' and 'lyric' drama, we want to conclude that the specific subordination of the 'lyrical' part of the drama to its 'choric' purpose is one of the narrative strategies which contribute to affirmation of the dominant ideology within a television text. Choric drama is understood as an artistic representation which fully identifies itself with the dominant ideology of a society, whereas lyrical drama tends to negotiate with the system through individual, personalized voices (Newcomb and Alley, 1984: 96; Ma, 1995: 46). The lyrical voice is a tangible presence in these communist serials and it is also the main reason why serial dramas of this kind are popular with audiences. This has continued to be the case right up to contemporary Czech television culture where re-runs of

communist television 'cult' serials are a significant feature. At the same time, in these narratives the lyrical part is – without the viewers' recognition – fundamentally subordinated to the choric, political, ideological storyline. The melodramatic line legitimizes the ideological line and both enter into a form of collaboration. The fundamental meaning emerges as a result of this mutual relationship.

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NOTES

- 1 A revised version of this chapter will appear in the edited volume 'Uncertain Entertainment'. The authors want to acknowledge the editors Peter Goddard and Rob Turnock and Manchester University Press for their kind permission to use the unedited version of the chapter.

- 2 Normalization is a name commonly given to the period 1969–1989. It was characterized by the restoration of the conditions prevailing before the reform period led by Alexander Dubcek (culminating in the *Prague Spring*) and the subsequent preservation of this 'new' status quo.
- 3 *Gottwald* (CST, 1986, director: Evžen Sokolovsk, 5 episodes) – a period version of the life-story of the first Czechoslovak president after the communist takeover in 1948, Klement Gottwald – may be an example of television serials with ideological story-line predominance.
- 4 Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialistic Republic, law No. 100/1960 Coll., chapter I, article 4: “*The communist party is a leading force in the society and the state; it is a working class vanguard, voluntary combat union of the most active citizens among workers, farmers and intelligentsia.*” URL: (consulted in November 2008) http://www.psp.cz/docs/texts/constitution_1960.html
- 5 The letter to Milena Balášová from 21 May, 1976, APF ČT, Red 281.
- 6 MR, script of the 7th episode, scene 2, page 6.
- 7 That happened partly in connection with pro-population measures (convenient marriage loans, extended maternity leave) – and besides that, the family was a form of self-fulfilment for many people because they rather resigned or had to resign from their careers or from participation in the public sphere.
- 8 See for instance Tamchyna, Robert. *Jaroslav Dietl*. URL (consulted in November 2008) http://www.rozhlas.cz/historie/vyroci/_zprava/8352.

Analysing Kemalism through discourse theory

Nur Betül Çelik

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to develop an approach which provides methodological justifications for an analysis of the hegemonic construction of Kemalist discourse in the context of Turkish political history. The proposed approach, basing itself on Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory and their concept of hegemony, attempts to display the discursive construction of Kemalist identity and the ways in which the discursive formations articulate themselves into a collective imaginary of identity. To realize this objective, the chapter is divided in three sections. The first section delineates the key concepts and assumptions of the discourse theory. The second one is organized around the question of why Kemalism should be analyzed through the key concepts and tools of discourse theory, and attempts to justify the theoretical position taken concerning this question. It also explains the basic assumptions behind the thesis that Kemalism is to be understood as a hegemonic discursive formation. The final section focuses on the theoretical and empirical implications of the proposed approach to Kemalist discourse.

2. OUTLINING DISCOURSE THEORY

My reference here is to the discourse theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, elaborated in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* in 1985. The theory has had a considerable influence for many areas other than political analysis, such as democracy theory, media and cultural studies, social movement theory, discourse theory in general, or regulation theory (Critchley and Marchant, 2004: 3), and contributed to the 'discursive turn' in social sciences.

Laclau and Mouffe's work is commonly labelled as 'discourse theory' and/or 'discourse analysis'. However, both labels seems problematic in the sense that while the former may cause a risk of conflating Laclau and Mouffe's work with the discourse theory of Habermas, the latter bears a risk of reducing their research programme into "*the linguistic techniques utilized in more or less formal descriptions of the different discursive forms used in communication*" (Torfing, 1999: 12). For any discussion on the question of labelling is also a discussion on the question of boundaries, it is important to distinguish Laclau and Mouffe's theory from similar approaches. Acknowledging the risk of conflation, Laclau carefully differentiates their position from Habermas's (1990). While Habermas attempts to ground liberal democracy, modern emancipation and the reconciling power of reason in the idea of unconstrained communication, Laclau and Mouffe stress an unrepresentable kernel of negativity as constructive of the social. Basing their argument on the social's fundamental lack of final closure they are able to claim that the social fails to provide an ultimate grounding for the forms of reason, ethics and democracy associated with modernity (Torfing, 1999: 11). However, this lack of ultimate grounding does not lead them to irrationality, nihilism, or totalitarianism. It does not mean the abandonment of any emancipatory project. The openness of the social is the very condition for formulating liberation projects based on contingent forms of reason and ethics hitherto restrained by the rationalist 'dictatorship' of Enlightenment (Laclau, 1990: 3-4).

Discourse analysis is also employed to identify Laclau and Mouffe's research programme. However, this is also problematic since it is a common name for linguistic techniques used for the analysis of discursive forms. Even though Laclau and Mouffe have not rejected utilizing such techniques within their research project, it is important to acknowledge the distinction between formal linguistic techniques and Laclau and Mouffe's theoretical propositions. That is to say, Laclau and Mouffe's research programme cannot be reduced into a technical analysis of discourse viewed narrowly as speech or text. It rather comprises the application of discourse theory to empirical case studies. In order to deal with this tension, Carpentier and De Cleen (2007) discuss the distinction between discourse-as-language and discourse-as-representation, which allows them to distinguish the more linguistically-oriented Discourse Analysis (DA) from Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA), which takes Laclau and Mouffe's theoretical propositions as starting points.

2.1. *Discourse, discursivity and articulation*

Following Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe replace the concept of 'ideology' with 'discourse' in an attempt to overcome the paradoxes of Althusserian theory of ideology. They prefer 'discourse' because it indicates the articulatory character of social practices, and thus supports the idea that none of those practices has primacy over the others and exists independent of the influence of other practices. It is their main argument that any object can only be constructed discursively by articulatory practices. They do not accept the existence of a non-discursive reality as the limit of discursive formations. For them, the limits of any discursive formation can only be shown by other discursive formations. It is obvious that they do not define 'discourse' as a realm of representation or reflection of an external reality as its limits (Howarth, 1996: 4-5). Nevertheless, Laclau and Mouffe do not deny the existence of an external reality independent from the individual's will. Instead they reject the claim that objects can construct themselves as meaningful objects outside the discursive formations (1985: 108).

The social is entirely reconceptualised by Laclau and Mouffe in terms of discursivity: Social identity loses all points of anchorage in a deeper reality since it is constructed through discursive articulation. For them, the social is a realm of discursive differences and articulatory practices.

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

Laclau and Mouffe explain the premises of this definition in terms of the coherence of the discursive formation, the dimensions and the extensions of the discursive, and the openness and contingency of a discursive formation. Firstly the type of coherence attributed to a discursive formation is to be conceived as close to the kind of unity that is characterised by the Foucauldian notion of regularity in dispersion. In terms of dispersion, one needs to determine a point of reference with respect to which the elements can be thought of as dispersed. From the perspective of regularity, a discourse can be thought as the ensemble of differential positions. However, this ensemble does not express any underlying principle external to itself. Discourse then, is a configuration which in certain contexts of exteriority can be signified as an ensemble of dispersed elements.

Laclau and Mouffe also suggest that articulation would be possible given that no 'element' would reduce into an 'internal'¹ moment of a given system. The openness and contingency of discourses should be conceived as a premise. No discursive formation is a closed totality; in other words, the transformation from elements to moments can never be complete (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105–110). Following the footsteps of the post-structuralist and post-analytical philosophies, Laclau and Mouffe establish a very similar argument to that of the impossibility of an ultimate fixation of meaning. They argue that it is impossible for a social formation to fully hegemonize all meanings in a given field of discursivity (Howarth, 1996: 6).

2.2. *The primacy of the political and hegemony*

Here we must start by pointing out a dilemma of discourse theory, resulting from the tension between two contradictory assumptions – one of which is derived from structuralism and the other from post-structuralism. Laclau and Mouffe, on the one hand, acknowledge the structuralist thesis that all identities are differential and their existence depends upon a system of differences. Yet on the other hand, they claim (following the post-structuralist critique) that this system of differences can never achieve a closed totality because the plurality of meaning cannot be reduced into one signified. A crucial question for political and social theory arises here: If all social forms are contingent, if the transition from *elements* to *moments* is never complete, and finally if the differential system from which all identities derive their existence is never able to achieve an ultimate closure, how is then any identity or social formation possible?

Laclau and Mouffe's answer this question by giving primacy to the political. For them, all social relations and practices involve in the exercise of power, and their formation is an act of radical institution, which involves the construction of *antagonisms* and the drawing of *political frontiers* between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 9). Thus, discourses and the identities generated by them are inherently political entities as they are constructed by political practices. No social system then, being under the constant threat of the elements that were once excluded, can manage ultimately to consolidate itself as a separate position (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 122).

Social antagonisms disclose the limit points of social formations. In other words, antagonisms reveal the irreconcilable negativity at the heart

of all social identity and objectivity. Antagonism is conceived as “a process by which the social (...) becomes homogenized into a chain of equivalence vis-à-vis a purely negative constitutive outside” (Critchley and Marchant, 2004: 4). That is to say, “antagonisms are not internal but external to society; or rather, they constitute the limits of the society, the latter’s impossibility of fully constituting itself” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 125).

In order to show in what ways the limits of the social is discursively constructed, Laclau and Mouffe introduced the categories of equivalence and difference. For example, in a country under oppression, the oppressor becomes a constitutive outside for the oppressed social identities, establishing a chain of equivalences amongst them, to constitute a historical bloc. Here “the differences amongst them cancel one other out insofar as they are used to express something identical underlying them all” (1985: 127). Hegemony then is to be conceived “as an effort to discursively construct out of a terrain of differences the ‘historical bloc’ of a specific hegemonic formation” (Critchley and Marchant, 2004: 4).

Social antagonism emerges because social agents can never manage to attain fully their identity. An antagonism occurs when “the presence of [an] ‘Other’ prevents me from being totally myself. The relation arises not from full totalities, but from the impossibility of their constitution” (1985: 125). Given this, discourse analyst seeks to explore “the different forms of this impossibility, and the mechanisms by which the blockage of identity is constructed in antagonistic terms by social agents” (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 10).

In this regard, the concepts of subject position and political subjectivity are of central importance for discourse theorists. Laclau and Mouffe distinguish between ‘subject positions’ and ‘political subjectivity’. The former is related to the positioning of subjects within a discursive structure, and indicates the multiple forms by which agents are produced as social actors, whereas the latter concerns the way in which social actors act. The actions of subjects are made possible by the contingency of discursive formations through which a subject obtains its identity.

Laclau proposes the category of *dislocation* as a further explanation of the emergence of the subjects’ actions. Dislocation is the decentring process that disrupts identities and discourses and renders the contingency of discursive structures visible. It is also through dislocations that a lack at the level of meaning is created, and new discursive formations, which attempt to suture the dislocated structure, are stimulated. The decentring of the structure thus compels the subjects to act. In this regard, “the political subject is forced to take decisions – or

identify with certain political projects and the discourses they articulate- when social identities are in crisis and structures need to be recreated" (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 14).

The concept of hegemony accounts for the articulation of different identities and subjectivities into a common project and the creation of a new social order out of a variety of dislocated elements. For discourse theorists, the former suggests the category of hegemonic *practices* as an exemplary form of political activity, while the latter concerns the category of hegemonic *formations* as outcomes of political projects endeavouring to create new forms of social order.

While retaining from Gramscian theory the notions of hegemony as the logic of articulation and the political centrality of the frontier effects, Laclau and Mouffe move beyond it with their insistence on the plurality of the political space and the instability of political frontiers. A social field criss-crossed by antagonisms and the presence of elements can be articulated by opposed political projects are the preconditions of hegemonic practices. For Laclau and Mouffe, "*[i]t is because hegemony supposes the incomplete and open character of the social, that it can take place only in a field dominated by articulatory practices"* (1985: 134). Hegemonic practices mainly aim to construct and fix the nodal points that form the basis of concrete social orders by articulating as many available elements as possible (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000: 15; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 134-145).

3. DISCOURSE, ANALYSIS AND KEMALISM

To call a discourse hegemonic is to indicate that this discourse constitutes a surface of inscription into which elements of a specific discursive field can be articulated. In this regard, Kemalism - the founding ideology of the republican Turkish state- has to be treated as a hegemonic formation insofar as it manages to be a surface of inscription into which different social identities can articulate their demands. Using Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, I suggest analysing Kemalism as a discourse, that is, a horizon of multiplicity of practices, meanings and conventions through which a certain sense of reality and understanding of society can be constructed. Discourse theory provides the analyst with the tools to account for the articulatory character of Kemalism and develop an understanding of the hegemonic role it plays in Turkish politics. This approach aims to disclose the ways in which the nodal points are constructed by Kemalist practices in a political context that is

marked by a crisis of identity formation, and an increasing instability of political frontiers. It also allows the analyst to situate Kemalism's failure in totally hegemonising the elements of the discursive field, a failure which has become more discernible with the proliferation of social identities since the 1990s.

Kemalism has a mythical dimension that is understood as providing the core of any discourse struggling for hegemony insofar as myth functions to suggest a new representational structure in order to suture a dislocated field. In other words, when a society faces with the collapse of its hegemonic order - such an event was the collapse of the Ottoman Empire- then its structural dislocation has to be administered through the formation of a new myth if social coherence is to be restored (Laclau, 1990: 61). Moreover, Kemalist myth, insofar as it succeeded in dominating the discursive field, has transformed into a collective imaginary that reveals the limits of the discursive formation of a 'Turkish identity'. However, like all collective imaginaries, Kemalist imaginary is contingent and subject to the dislocatory effects of the social and political excess. An analysis of the constitution of Kemalist myth must be followed by an analysis of its expansion into an imaginary horizon for the absolute representation of Turkish identity and, most importantly, of the various dislocations of its hegemonic project and of the attempts to reconstitute repeatedly its imaginary dimension (Celik, 2000: 194-195).

Kemalism, in this sense, is subjected to a double reading. The first and most encountered strategy of reading is a textual analysis which focuses on the internal logic of Kemalist discourse. Although its significance cannot be denied, this type of analysis has its own limits in the sense that it often involves in repeating the same conclusion with different conceptual apparatus, that is, Kemalism is nothing but a project of modernisation. This strategy of reading cannot grasp the constitutive role of Kemalism in processes of identity formation. Hence, a textual analysis is to be complemented with a more comprehensive research strategy. This new strategy, taking its roots in discourse theory, unfolds itself along two axes: It firstly focuses on the founding moment of Kemalist hegemony. It secondly displays the plurality of Kemalism, dwelling on the axes along which constitutive inconsistencies work, the traces of other discursive formations that become visible through those inconsistencies, and the operation of the logics of equivalence and difference in the hegemonic constitution of Kemalist discourse. Such strategy thus requires focusing on not only the emergence of Kemalism as a hegemonic formation but also the complex processes that effected its hegemonic constitution.

4. METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This section unfolds the implications of the proposed strategy in two subsections: The first one comprises an analysis of discursive representations of the Kemalist 'revolution'. The second involves in the deconstruction of the identification between Kemalism and modernisation.

4.1. *The Kemalist 'revolution': An articulatory moment*

The official historiography in Turkey conceives 'Turkish revolution' in terms of the radical difference between the old and the new. In this conception, the founding moment of the Republic is a *revolutionary* moment, a *rupture*, which puts an end to the darkness and obscurantism of the past. This is a strategic moment within the discourse, which renders impossible for any element to acquire a meaning detached from the 'Turkish revolution'. The discourse creates a total identity between the history of Turkey and the 'Turkish revolution'. This identification as a particular strategy of justification conceives history as the successive alignment of closures and reduces social practice into a mechanical relationship between those closures. Therefore, it is essential to develop an approach which is sensitive to the dialectical relationship between continuity and discontinuity in order to conceptualise the constitutive role that this particular discursive strategy played in the construction of the Turkish national identity and all alternative identities. Thus, I propose to conceive the Turkish revolution not as a *radical break* or an *ordinary moment* in history, but rather as a *historical moment of articulation*.

Hegemony, when considered from the point of the social production of empty signifiers² as the signifiers of an absent totality, designates the struggle and demands of a particular group with their function of filling this lack. Furthermore, by identifying the objectives of this particular group with society at large it also transforms the group's struggle to the surface of inscription through which all struggles will be expressed (Laclau, 1995: 44) In this regard, the signifiers of revolution and foundation in the Kemalist discursive field indicate the emergence of a new order as an empty signifier, or a signifier of the absence of 'order'. 'Revolution', 'liberation', 'independence' and 'unity', each as an empty signifier, played a central role in the hegemonic constitution of the Kemalist discourse. The crucial point here concerns the question of discursive strategies through which Kemalist objectives and demands are universalised and become the very expression of all social and

political objectives and demands. Such question entails an understanding that designates Kemalism as a surface of inscription.

4.2. *Kemalism as a project of modernisation*

It is a common intellectual endeavour to identify Kemalism's ideological investment with a project of modernisation. To trace the hegemonic constitution of Western modernity in the Kemalist discourse eventually leads to an approach in which Kemalism simply becomes the bearer of the hegemony of Western modernity. This approach cannot situate the constitution of Kemalist hegemony in its specificity and reveal its historically constitutive function. In deconstructing Kemalism, it would be inadequate just to disclose the ontological centrality of being and its Western character in the Kemalist discourse. In short, considering Kemalism as a modernisation project blinds the analyst to the other traces within its discursive formation by compromising it to the global hegemony of the West. By saying this, I deny neither the centrality of the oppositions of West/East, and rationality/irrationality in the Kemalist discursive formation nor that Kemalism has targeted modernising the society fully. My intention is rather to emphasise that Kemalism is more than a modernisation project. As Ögün puts forward, "*in the flow of time,*" Kemalism "*as a highly cohesive construction has become the only legitimising element of the socio-political culture*" (Ögün, 1997: 103). The mechanisms through which diverse discursive formations legitimise themselves are better understood if the connection between the centrality of Kemalism and the plurality of its discursive formation is revealed.

Kemalism attempted to hegemonise the political field with a promise to create a nation. It presented itself as the only agent of the creation of a nation, and a modernised, rational, secular political community. The identification of the whole society with Kemalist ideals was the condition of being a nation. This was a process in which Kemalism, by identifying itself with modernity and nation, universalised its particular objectives. Kemalism defined *nation* as an inclusive category and promised to integrate all the excluded elements into its unity. This was an act of hegemony in Laclau's sense. In this act, 'national unity' and 'modernity' acted as empty signifiers indicating the absence of their presence. Such identification between 'national unity', 'modernity' and the Kemalist struggle produced a surface of inscription through which all discourses with nationalist and modernist ideals expressed themselves. As a result, the chain of equivalences unified around it emptied Kemalism, and blurred its connections with its actual content and its original beneficiary.

For this reason only it is necessary to conceive Kemalism not as a particular and original ideology or a project defined with a fixed content, but rather as a plurality of meanings which always calls in its diverse interpretations.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. Kemalism as founding moment is primarily a *break*. Nevertheless, this break has to be situated in the complexity of the transformations in the Turkish political sphere. 'Modernisation' and 'progression' are the elements that constructed Kemalism's discursive unity. These elements were already in the discursive field, but become reformulated by Kemalism on the basis of nationalism in a completely novel way.

2. Kemalism did not emerge *ex nihilo*. It emerged at a particular moment in history as a produce of the rearticulation process. Its contingency and the instability of its frontiers render Kemalism both the subject and object of dislocations and rearticulations. In short, Kemalism stands at the intersection of diverse hegemonic practices.

3. Kemalism is hegemonic insofar as it succeeded in articulating/rearticulating the diverse discursive formations in itself, and insofar as the alternative discourses constituted their discursive unity with reference to Kemalist objectives and ideals. These counter-hegemonic discourses constitute themselves through a chain of opposed signifiers: the traditional versus the modern, the religious versus the secular, and the dark versus the enlightened. The extent of the antagonistic confrontations falls within the limits of the Kemalist definition of political practice. The tension between antagonistic social identities is dissolved in favour of the modern, the secular, and the enlightened. At this point the mediation of the hegemonic logic manifests itself in full sense transforming Kemalism to a surface of inscription.

4. Finally, there is the paradox of Kemalist hegemony. Kemalist hegemony ironically comprises the conditions of its own dissolution. Its story reminds us of the story of a ruler who tries to inscribe all the rules of the game in such detail that no interpretations can arise, but eventually finds her/himself in the midst of numerous deviations. It is precisely when the ruler becomes confident about the legitimacy of his/her power, identities once excluded and repressed keep coming back

to the site of the game, indicating the existence of ‘an impossible kernel’ which threatens the ground of legitimacy, and shows how fragile power in fact is. It is the ruler’s failure in constituting a fully transparent social space, and in drawing clear-cut lines between political and social spaces that becomes the condition of possibility of these outlets articulating themselves as alternatives in the game of hegemony (Celik, 1996: 299). It is the expression of constitutive impossibility of society through the production of empty signifiers that explains the instability of hegemony (Laclau, 1995: 44). The success of the hegemonic practice causes that hegemonic project to lose its connection with its original promoter. Its victory renders its limits visible.

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NOTES

- 1 'Elements' and 'moments' are constitutive and constituted parts of discursive articulation. Laclau and Mouffe's definition of these concepts is as follows: "*The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call moments. By contrast, we will call element any difference that is not discursively articulated*" (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105).
- 2 An empty signifier is a signifier without a signified. In that sense, it points to an absence, i.e., an unfulfilled reality (Laclau, 1995: 36-46).

SECTION FOUR: MEDIA AND ETHICS



Abstract writing workshop

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Journalism ethics in the age of para-journalism¹

François Heinderyckx

1. INTRODUCTION

News media are in turmoil. Declining audiences, media concentration, spectacularisation, deteriorating job security for journalists and increasing pressure from sponsors and advertisers combine to force news media to adapt for fear of going out of business. On top of these structural drivers for change, the media are caught in the tumult of the emerging and self-proclaimed 'Information Society' with its chaotic trail of new uses and practices by consumers and practitioners driven and tossed about by technological innovation. The entire configuration of news gathering, processing, dissemination and perception is shifting towards a new pattern, the shape of which cannot yet be apprehended.

Let us consider, as an example of such shift, the crucial issue of information validation. Until recently, for journalists and scrupulous researchers of all types, validation of a fact, an interpretation or a principle was left to those with the recognised capacity and legitimacy to do so, be they academic experts, public authority or direct witnesses. In many cases, it was also recommended to confirm one particular validation by matching it with a second source independent from the first. This traditional approach does not preclude errors or even manipulations occurring. Yet, by relying on clearly identified resources, by inferring institutional and often individual responsibility and accountability in endorsing or confirming information, and often by demanding justification, evidence and argumentation, the classic scheme of validation offers certain guarantees and induces a certain inertia which, in itself, provides some protection.

All this is now changing dramatically. In the age of instant circulation of information, of interactive media and even self-media and in the name of freedom of expression, democracy and the struggle against infor-

mation monopolies, validation is increasingly in the hands of the masses, of the users. The opinion or interpretation of the many is admitted and recognised, sometimes explicitly as better, most likely, accurate and therefore to be held as 'true'. This is, in a way, a bit like renouncing some of the core assets of the Age of Enlightenment.

2. TRUTH BY ASSUMED MAJORITY

Something can now be held to be true simply because it fits nicely in the climate of opinion, because an apparent majority, which might very well be only a vocal minority, seems to find it likely or believable. The ground is ideal for a number of groups or individuals whose ideas, they feel (often quite rightly), are ignored or censored by the establishment of powers and institutions that can, at last, be bypassed with the help of ICTs. Among them, unfortunately, conspiracy theorists, revisionists, religious extremists, smear campaigners and other would-be manipulators or sincere naives are only beginning to understand how this new pattern of the circulation and validation of ideas and 'truths' offers them a golden opportunity to facilitate undisturbed and unchallenged dissemination of their messages. Let there be no misunderstanding: I am, like many, ecstatically enthusiastic about the fantastic potential that ICTs bear in promoting, enhancing and consolidating freedom of expression, public debate and circulation of ideas. I am not advocating the need to regulate, control or filter the ever thicker flows of messages in circulation in the developing information society (or whatever it will be called). What does concern me greatly is the insidious, covert but powerful shift in the resources made available to the people to contextualise, situate, understand, question and validate the information and the messages they encounter.

Under the disguise of a grass-roots, popular, democratic processes of collective discussion, of massive peer review, we are increasingly seeing as unquestionable truths whatever is seen as true or even only likely by a perceived majority. Following a sort of 'cyber-snowball effect', an idea, a judgment, an evaluation that seems shared by some, becomes adopted by others (be it by conformism or mimetism), thus making it ever more present, offering the aspect of consensus.

To make things worse, the cyberspace is crammed full with mechanical redundancy. An enormous mass of content is simply replicated over and over again in various forms, cross reference, appropriation or quote. This is best shown when using anti-plagiarism software.

Whenever the system signals a suspicious segment, it shows an impressively long list of URLs all matching the segment exactly. This absurd level of redundancy provides a false impression of confirmation by different sources while one is, in fact, faced only with sheer replication of the same content!

These are clearly adverse conditions for news accuracy, particularly if one considers the aggravating factor of the race for instantaneous reporting among media which have all opted, whatever their history, for the inescapable 'real-time-continuous-update' model, preferably before the competition, if only on their web site.

3. BLOGS CHALLENGING ETHICS

Another example of emerging practice that stirs some questions is the very fashionable 'blog'. Firstly, a number of journalists maintain a personal blog. Some say it helps them differentiate between the neutral reporting on the job and the expression of their personal opinions on the blog. So why is that potentially problematic? Because it is still unclear whether the audience can make the difference between the two types of narratives. If you value a journalist or a columnist, you are likely to perceive his or her blog entries, journalistic reporting and Op-Eds as forming one system of representations and meaning, one set of tools to understand and assess a particular event or situation.

Secondly, there is a rising number of bloggers who gain influence and fame on the web to the point where they gradually become full-fledged actors of the news media scene, if not, for some, a news source among all other news sources. Thirdly, cheaper and ever more user-friendly technologies drive the rise of the self-media or pseudo-media which are propagating a model of what I would call 'para-journalism' because it shares a number of formal features with journalism and can be seen as just a different form of journalism by the audience. All of the above should lead journalists and news media editors and publishers to some serious soul searching. Good practices are to be adapted, choices are to be made, traps are to be avoided, standards reinvented. In particular, the profession should address the ethical implications of these changes. We should first consider the question of adequacy and relevancy of the current ethical norms (codes, charters, etc.) in the face of these new developments. A systematic examination of the new issues and of the current norms is badly needed. Looking at some of the founding texts of journalism ethics (e.g. the 'Declaration of Rights and Obligations of

Journalists', better known as the Munich Charter), it appears that most if not all of the principles listed in these pre-internet, pre-ICTs era not only hold their full relevance, but they do in fact frame remarkably well the emerging fancy-technology-rich practices.

This does not mean that codes of journalism ethics should not be adapted. But if we consider that the current codes of ethics are reasonably adequate, the focus of attention should shift towards the application and the enforcement of these norms. This does not insinuate that there's nothing new. The novelty lies in a rather complex and delicate set of issues which can be summarised in a set of simple questions.

First question: Are these makers of 'para-journalism' bound by journalism ethics norms? Ethical norms are safeguards designed to guide professional journalists in their duties of information gathering, story writing and dissemination. They are supposed to keep journalism practices within boundaries preventing misbehaviours that are socially unacceptable. Strictly speaking, journalism ethics, at least in its widely accepted, culture-independent, quasi-universal terms, is applicable to any journalist. This leads quite naturally to a second question.

To what extent should these new content producers be considered as journalists? In most countries, journalists form some sort of corporation. Professional journalists belong to bodies with specific admission criteria that constitute de facto an institutional definition of what is a proper journalist. The decisive criteria tend to be related to journalism being one's main activity, providing the main income, and within the editorial project of a recognised news media. The new breed of para-journalists undeniably fails some or all of these criteria. However, a number of them do offer some level of functional resemblance with journalists. They are mediators of information that they select, process, narrate and disseminate. If they are functional journalists and that they are not recognised by the profession, the next question lies in their self-perception.

Do para-journalists see themselves as journalists? Answering this question would require an extensive survey. We can only speculate at this point. On the one hand, they are likely to pride themselves at being different, not one of 'them', not part of the establishment, not from the universe of what they see as paleo-journalism, bound in a suffocating system of constraints and pressure. They are new players of a new game. But that should not be interpreted as their not seeing themselves as journalists. Some see their production as a necessary complement or even a worthy substitute to traditional news media; they might see themselves as the forerunners of the modern journalism.

Provided that ethical norms are developed to maintain standards and to protect individuals and society against malpractices, the last question is to explore the perception by the people exposed to these new forms of content. Does the audience see these para-journalists as journalists and the content they offer as news media content? The current variations of para-journalism available online are likely to be identified by their audiences as distinct from the traditional media. But so are the online transpositions of these traditional media and the halo of sophistication that surrounds them.

In other words, the forms and features characteristic of para-journalism are not radically different from that of established news media. More importantly, I would argue that the content provided by para-journalism and traditional journalism serves a similar purpose for the audience, that of awareness of current events, their context and their meaning. The alleged preference for consensual approaches to news coverage among traditional media in an attempt to preserve or expand their market share and the resulting decline in committed journalism, do give para-journalists a competitive edge, encouraging them to be sharply opinionated in their reporting.

4. WHAT TO DO?

These observations lead me to recommend watchful vigilance. The concerns about possible drift or abuse induced by the new configuration should encourage a larger effort to revive interest and attention for ethical considerations in journalism and in media in general. Most importantly, the revival of ethical concerns should be undertaken, as much as possible, in a positive way. Avoiding excessive corporatism or reactionary defiance towards the 'new' practices, the return of the ethical journalism should be promoted as a driver for quality, worth and attractiveness; it should be seen as the pathway to attract audience and generate value; it must be established not as a burden or a necessary drudgery, but as a structuring force and source of pride and, incidentally, profit.

Finally, I would argue that the hyper-competitive market forces that characterise the media and news market of today can only be effectively influenced by demand. It is therefore of decisive importance to enable the audience in making informed choices, in discarding the unacceptable and in demanding sufficient ethical standards. This demand-driven improvement of journalism practices will require groundbreaking

enhancement of media and information education at all levels. Only media literacy will boost the audience's level of expectation which, as a result, will encourage implementation of strict ethical norms seen as guidelines for quality and success rather than incantatory and obsolete moral constraints of another age. Easier said than done, but better said than suppressed.

NOTES

- 1 This chapter was first published in *Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication Ethics*, 2006, 3(2-3): 12-14. Reprinted with permission from the editors of the journal. Copyright Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication Ethics. Subtitles added to the present reprint.

The strange case of Silvio Berlusconi and the role of lying in political discourse

Fausto Colombo

1. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this essay is an Italian political issue which has nonetheless made its way into the international media, and which represents a perfect, if dramatic exemplification of the complex relationships between the media, power and political discourse.

We will call the matter in question the 'Berlusconi Case'. As most will know, Silvio Berlusconi began as a successful real estate speculator and later became a proper tycoon, with vast holdings in the fields of television, print media, publishing and advertising. The conglomerate he founded, whose highest positions are occupied by relatives and longtime friends, constitutes a major commercial empire that is not limited to Italy (e.g. La Cinco Channel in Spain). In 1994, following the violent political upheaval that caused the citizenry's faith in the traditional political parties to collapse, Berlusconi founded a new political entity called Forza Italia, which, by using political marketing in a new way and building unprecedented alliances with parties previously at the margins of government (the Lega Nord¹ and the Alleanza Nazionale²), succeeded in winning the national elections and governing for a brief period. Defeated in 1996 by his nemesis Romano Prodi (who defeated him again in 2006) Berlusconi led the opposition to victory twice, in 2001 and 2008, such that presently he is once again Prime Minister and leader of a new, broader alliance called the Partito della Libertà.

The parliamentary majority enjoyed by Berlusconi's coalition is overwhelming, to the extent that the opposition has virtually no room to maneuver. However, recent events of a purely personal nature have begun to tarnish the glow of his public approval, until now very strong, and above all to negatively impact both his own image and, more generally, that of Italy abroad. In truth, Berlusconi's image had already

been compromised by a number of public gaffes committed at diplomatic events, but his good personal relationships with key world leaders (notably George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin) had always deflected criticisms of his uncouth behavior.

Here we are in the present: April 28, 2009, the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*³ exposes Silvio Berlusconi's participation two days prior at the 18th birthday party of an unknown girl by the name of Noemi Letizia, to whom the Premier had given a necklace valued at 6,000 euros. In later interviews, the girl would admit to calling Silvio Berlusconi by the affectionate nickname, 'Papi' (or 'Daddy'). That same evening, First Lady Veronica Lario sends a press release to ANSA wherein she describes the television starlets who had been recently nominated by her husband to the European Parliament as 'shameless tramps'. She also takes the opportunity to criticize the Premier in his role as a father. On May 3, Ms. Lario announces that she has filed for divorce. Berlusconi immediately appears on the television talk show *Porta a Porta*⁴ to defend himself, maintaining that he is an exemplary husband and father.

In the days that follow, *La Repubblica* investigates the relationship between Berlusconi and Noemi Letizia. The responses received from the Premier and his entourage are partial and/or contradictory. On June 5 the Spanish newspaper *El Pais* publishes photographs of a party organized by Berlusconi at his Sardinian villa, where a number of unclothed women mixing with public figures appear. The Premier files suit against both the Spanish paper and *La Repubblica*. On June 17, a woman from Bari named Patrizia D'Addario declares that she received a promise of economic compensation for attending a party at Palazzo Grazioli, Berlusconi's Roman residence, and for spending the night with the Prime Minister. The news is reported with a variety of emphases and positions by the print media and the Sky networks, but is more or less ignored by the state-owned networks and Berlusconi's Mediaset empire, even after the publication on the website of *L'Espresso*⁵ magazine of recordings relative to the Premier's encounters with D'Addario. The international press begins to increase its coverage of the scandal around the time of the G8 summit in L'Aquila, which the local press must instead paint as a great success. So, that is a summary of the basic facts. We will now briefly analyze the elements of greatest theoretical interest for our purposes here.

2. THE IMAGE OF POWER IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: STEREOTYPES AND COUNTER-STEREOTYPES

The first point concerns the relationship between local and international information, and in this regard there is no doubt that the 'Berlusconi Case' is exemplary. Indeed, it confirms the risks of a lack of true journalistic competition and autonomy, along with the paradoxes that this lack can entail. In the case at hand, we see an open battle between one publishing group (Gruppo Espresso La Repubblica, culturally close to the current political opposition) and a bloc of political and mediatic power that deploy two concomitant strategies: censorship (with the resulting irony that some newscasts end up denying stories that have not even been reported), and the counterposition of opposing elements. Among this type of argument, the most often used are the *ad personam* attack (e.g. the newspaper *Libero*, aligned with the Premier, rushed to publish photos of the young Ms. Lario, then an actress, appearing nude in a theatrical production, insinuating her proximity to the starlets she had called 'shameless tramps') and outright dismissal (i.e. whatever is asserted has no journalistic or political merit). However, *La Repubblica* replies by using the foreign press, which is beginning to pay more attention to the case, as a backup. The paper's website repubblica.it contains links to foreign news sources, and one could even say that the revelations of *La Repubblica* have ended up separating ever more clearly the image of Italy abroad and the image Italy has of itself. Sadly enough, in Italy a significant portion of the population gets its news predominantly from television and is thus not very aware of how we are seen by the rest of the world. On the other hand, there is no doubt that Berlusconi's sexual scandal as reported in the foreign media risks confirming certain stereotypes about our country and about Italians in general.

It must be said that Berlusconi, since his arrival in politics and above all through his role as Prime Minister, has often helped to accentuate the dichotomy between the internal and external images of our country.

In an article that appeared well before the 'Noemi scandal', Alexander Stille (2009) perfectly captured the perplexity aroused by some of Berlusconi's 'performances' at official diplomatic events. Stille provides a list of just a few of them: the cuckold's horns held up behind the head of the Spanish Foreign Minister during a group photo; the offer to a German member of the European Parliament that he be recommended to play the role of a concentration camp kapo (immortalized in Nanni Moretti's film *Il caimano* of 2006⁶, as well as in the documentary *Citizen*

*Berlusconi*⁷, which is only now being distributed in Italy, several years after its release); the claim to have made use of his skills as a playboy to obtain concessions from the President of Finland (a woman) during negotiations on agricultural policy; the proposal to talk about ‘football and women’ to alleviate the tension of a meeting while Italy held the rotating presidency of the European Union. And then a barrage of more recent episodes (at the time of Stille’s article): describing US President-elect, Barack Obama, as ‘young, handsome and well tanned’; hollering Obama’s name across a room during a meeting of the G20 in order to get a photo taken with him; making German Chancellor Angela Merkel wait for him on the red carpet so he could finish a cell phone call. Stille wonders where such a series of gaffes could come from, and concludes that there is a method behind the (apparent) madness: according to the American journalist, the gaffes that Berlusconi continually makes abroad are the necessary corollary of that admixture of the public and private dimensions that determine Berlusconi’s success at home. Stille writes,

That Italy not only accepts but also approves of Berlusconi is a symptom of a country in profound crisis, with a stagnant economy, a political class its people loathe, and a weak opposition (...). His off-color remarks are seen by some of his supporters as a form of authenticity, the opposite of the careful statements of typical politicians, and therefore reinforce Berlusconi’s image as an anti-politician. (Stille, 2009)

We should also note, in the case we are dealing with here, that the reasons behind these two images of Italy derive in part from a typical conflict of discourse, and in this battle, *La Repubblica* finds itself somewhat besieged:

- besieged by others in the print media, first of all. These publications either support Berlusconi or, while providing information relative to the exposé of *La Repubblica*, certainly don’t want to give their competitor too much credit;
- besieged by television, where Berlusconi’s notorious conflict of interest rears its ugly head through the partisanship of the Mediaset networks and the condescendence of two of the three public networks, directed and controlled by journalists and executives sympathetic to the current government, in keeping with a tradition of ‘spoils’ exploited by every winning coalition in the history of Italian politics;
- besieged by public opinion, which continues to confirm its approval of Berlusconi (although the polls are starting to reveal

some cracks in the system) and which tends to express itself in online newspaper forums with defenses of the Premier that have the tone of football slogans and stadium cheers, leaving us faced with a citizenry that – by a wide majority – appears to be uninterested in facts or reality, to the point of denying them or judging them irrelevant;

- besieged, finally, by Silvio Berlusconi himself, who has wielded his enormous influence to publically urge advertisers to cut their investments in Gruppo Espresso, which he casts as being guilty of defeatism and of sullyng Italy's good name.

In response to this situation, *La Repubblica* systematically seeks and finds support in the foreign media, but most importantly it finds a daily opportunity to relaunch its own campaign, which would otherwise have to rely solely on the publication of the occasional new fact, whereas every story in the foreign media becomes fresh news in Italy. It is no coincidence that *La Repubblica* has built its campaign on a number of public questions to which Berlusconi is being asked to respond, which he has not yet done. This way of posing the question obviously tends to put one's opponent against the ropes: either he doesn't respond, thereby fueling suspicion of his guilt, or he does respond, perhaps by evading the points of suspicion, implicitly proving his questioner right.

What remains to be clarified is why Berlusconi has chosen instead a third way, and that is to respond by lying. He has in fact lied openly (or at least provided evasive or contradictory answers in broadcasts and interviews selected and controlled by him, and therefore without any real threat of being challenged) about his relationship with Noemi Letizia's family as well as with several other young women, including escorts, whom he has entertained in his multiple residences.

To unravel this question, we need to look at things from another viewpoint, one that looks more closely at the current state of political discourse.

3. PUBLIC LYING AND THE NEW POLITICAL DISCOURSE

First of all, it is important to remember that lying is part of political discourse. We need not go back to Machiavelli, or to the *disinformacja* of the Soviet era, or even the deliberate dissimulation in relations between states that takes place every day to understand how closely lying is connected to political strategy (not to mention diplomatic and military

strategy). But here we are dealing with lies that are integrated, so to speak, into the rhetoric of 'war conducted by other means', where the end ('the good of the country') justifies, presumably, those means.

It is another discourse entirely when power lies to the people. Here the lie is customarily condemned as an indicator of the end of democracy. One need only think of the role of that systematic lying plays in fantapolitical literature, from Orwell's *1984* to Moore and Lloyd's comic book series *V for Vendetta*, published between 1982 and 1985 and later adapted as a film: totalitarian power is based on lies, because if the truth were exposed, the populace would understand the deception and rebel. In America's democracy, the cases of Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton are exemplary: the first was impeached, and the second barely escaped impeachment. Indeed, the Clinton-Lewinsky affair is often compared to the Berlusconi case, for we find the same basic elements in both: the sexual nature of the transgression, and the public lie that followed it.

For every theoretician of the public sphere, the condemnation of lying parts from the premise that democratic politics are founded on the quality of argumentation. This premise is at the core in Jürgen Habermas' influential theory of the public sphere which has had a major impact on the recent lively discussion on deliberative democracy (see Habermas, 1975; 1989; 1996; 2006; Bohman, 1996). The choice of the majority is rooted not just in raw numbers (that which Borges calls 'the curious abuse of statistics'), but far deeper, in the capacity of the electorate and its representatives to correctly use the instrument of argumentation, such that the best opinion is naturally the winning one. As such, lying jams the mechanism of argumentation-based selection; it stacks the deck and derails the entire process of political choice.

There has been much criticism of the ingenuousness of believers in the public sphere and their forebears like Hanna Arendt (1958; 1977), and yet it remains difficult to accept, as post-modernists (Villa, 1992) do, that the question of truth shouldn't belong somehow to political discourse, and that the 'strongest argument', as championed by the Sophists and condemned by Plato, is the only way to organizing consensus. (For an interesting overview of the debate, see Alejandro, 1992; Calhoun, 1992; Crossley and Roberts, 2004.)

In any case, returning to the issue we began with, Berlusconi's strategy of lying situates itself in a place that is a bit different from the public sphere. Or rather, it belongs to a transformation of the public sphere wherein the purity of argumentation is already fundamentally contaminated by other discourses, ones not founded on truth but on

what we might call the narration of sentiments, which finds its most perfect expression in the form of gossip.

When we talk about gossip, we refer to two different phenomena, though they are in part quite closely connected. The first is a certain type of social discourse that develops within networks of friends and acquaintances, in groups that are more or less defined. Some feminist scholars have compared it to a classic conversation among women. In the 1980s and 1990s, Deborah Jones defined it as *"a way of talking between women, intimate in style, personal and domestic in scope and setting, a female cultural event which springs from and perpetuates the restrictions of the female role, but also gives the comfort of validation."* (Jones, 1990: 243)

Oftentimes this definition of gossip is confused with backbiting, or speaking ill of someone behind his/her back, a practice condemned by many cultures and explicitly considered a sin in a number of religious traditions, including Christianity. This aspect is not, however, indispensable. Gossip usually refers to people in one's own sphere of relations, and has the aim of gradually delimiting the boundaries of one's own world and sense of belonging. It is from this type of 'horizontal' discourse that many of the banal convictions that orient us in our daily lives arise, regardless of whether they are true or not. Like all horizontal discourses, gossip can exit from its original sphere of provenance and begin to circulate in broader forms. This is the case of the so-called urban legends, which often become common 'knowledge' on a global scale (e.g. the alligator in the sewer, deadly spiders hiding in harmless houseplants, giant rats raised as pets, etc.).

Naturally, the diffusion of the quintessential horizontal medium - the internet - has encouraged the circulation of gossip, both in its typical context of a restricted community and in more widespread forms. There is hardly an online community where one will fail to find - among the many levels of serious or facetious discourse - a significant amount of gossip. In fact, it is interesting that there seems to be a progressive expansion of this type of discourse into the adult male sphere and into youth culture of both genders.

This leads us to the second definition of the term, which is linked more specifically to the media. Gossip is a traditional genre, born in the print media and gradually adapted to instantaneous media such as television. Its distinguishing features can be summarized as information regarding the private lives of public personalities which is often supplemented with images. These stories, masquerading as scoops, are usually of uncertain reliability. The subjects of this genre have always been more or less dignified royals of more or less relevant dynasties,

stars of sport and cinema, and so on. Morin described the logic of 'diva-ism' several decades ago (Morin, 1957). Today, we see that the phenomenon, founded on the exaltation of the public personality around which imaginary narratives are built, has been saturated by a new micro-notoriety introduced by television which finds in its most sensational affirmation in the characters that populate reality shows. Normal people, without any particular qualifications and often utterly devoid of any charisma, are projected onto the little screen and thus enter a circuit that allows them to exist for as long as they manage to appear, in any capacity and at any cost, on other shows, or in entertainment venues, or – naturally – in the periodicals that specialize in gossip. As Andy Warhol prophesized, it really does seem as though a brief period of fame is within virtually anyone's grasp, such that anyone (within certain limits) can potentially become a personality in the great industrial gossip machine.

The internet has played a role here as well, if only by increasing the sheer number of sources available to interested readers. One need only google the word 'gossip' to realize the astonishing quantity of sites and portals devoted to it.

This explosion might lead one to think that the public is crying out for more gossip, and that the increase in supply is a natural consequence of an increased demand. This is not necessarily the case. First of all, the media is not always able to intuit the needs of its audiences. It sometimes happens instead that they become paradoxically imprisoned by the labyrinths of their own making, believing in the shadows that they themselves project on the wall of public visibility. Secondly, it would be an error in my view to identify the core of the issue in its purely quantitative aspect. What should strike us instead is a phenomenon that is certainly correlated, but far more profound and invasive, and that is the progressive overflowing of the gossip genre from its habitual container into more traditional ones that have until now been impermeable, to a genre traditionally regarded as frivolous.

This phenomenon assumes diverse forms, and has been extensively studied over the past ten years or so by many scholars, mostly American, as a global trend in political and editorial journalism. The increasing interest in private lives and the falling off of coverage of serious news is often described as tabloidization (Dahlgren and Sparks, 1992; Sparks and Tulloch, 2000). The fact that we now see so many serious print and online news sources hosting columns and features explicitly based on gossip is indicative of that trend.

Even more disturbing is the invasion of inherently serious fields by the journalistic modalities typical of gossip – minimal information verification, driven by scandal while pretending to regulate public morality, and so on. Nowadays, even politicians are hounded by paparazzi, their privacy placed on display for public consumption, requiring them to always be on stage with the contrived flair of the diva, cancelling the specificity of their actual profession.

Last but not least, the language of political journalism is changing, adopting certain features typical of gossip: the breathless pace, the behind-the-scenes anecdote, the exposure of the protagonists' human weakness. In this sense, political information and commentary are often tainted by gossip, leading to a steady reduction of political journalism to descriptions of the minutiae of the day-to-day, of personal conflicts and idiosyncrasies.

4. GOSSIP AND POLITICS

The process described above has unfolded alongside the so-called personalization of politics. The opinion shared by many observers is that, with the growth of the role of television and the concurrent rise of what has come to be defined as 'audience democracy' (Manin, 1997), the new proximity of politicians to the television audience has forged a new pact with the citizenry. In this sense, the participation of individual representatives of political parties or the government in TV programs otherwise intended as pure entertainment, allowing incursions into their personal tastes and private habits, would allegedly constitute an adaptation to both the new mediatic language and to the institutional crisis that has culminated in the demise of the great traditional parties of the masses and (in Italy, anyway) of the system proportional representation.

I have a different view, and our earlier discussion of gossip helps me to explain it. Political journalism's inexorable adoption of the tone and focus typical of gossip, where the private sphere of the political figure explains his choices more clearly and completely than his ideological convictions do, has progressively eroded the public's trust in politics, colluding to make people view it as a sort of 'glass bead game'. Not, mind you, a more intimate view of the workings of an activity crucial to the common good, but rather a view wherein the specificity of politics can no longer be grasped, because it reveals the basic commonality between politicians (above all in their defects and in the struggles of

private life) and ordinary people. As such, the politician becomes a person just like anyone else, the difference being that he claims the right to plan our collective future and to reap rewards from it.

There is abundant evidence of this low-brow conception of politics recounted by way of gossip, where the distance between public and private life is erased. As we have seen, the media's interest in the private lives of political leaders continues to grow. While this tendency is well established in the United States, it has been taking hold in Europe for some time now, particularly in Italy (Mazzoleni and Sfardini, 2009). Political figures have joined show biz celebrities to become the prey of paparazzi, intent on exposing their personal secrets, dramatically invading their privacy. Their love lives, their marital woes, their real and presumed liaisons are investigated and exposed in the name of public interest. As a result, the subject's attitude changes in relation to this progressive invasion.

There are those who, like French President Sarkozy, abandon an interview on political issues as soon as any mention is made of his divorce – that is, of his private life, which in his view should remain separate from his public role. But there are also those who, like Silvio Berlusconi, deliberately introduce private matters into public contexts where the topic at hand is politics, commenting ironically on the latest gossip about him. Needless to say, these two reactions are both legitimate in terms of individual choice. However, in terms of the essential distinction between a public role and a private context, which helps assign to politics its highest task, the results are opposite, insofar as the first reaction defends the dignity of politics while the second negates it, legitimizing gossip by accepting its challenge.

However – and here we return to the main point of this discussion – gossip is not the locus of political argumentation, for in the realm of gossip truth and lies do not occupy the same slots that they occupy in the public sphere, but belong rather to a game of shadows wherein all that counts is the emotional aspect of both subject and spectator. And this emotionality, of course, does not exist in its pure state but is instead translated into discourse by way of certain social stereotypes. The principal one in the Berlusconi case is the discursive entity that we might define as Italian provincialism: a devastating mix of machismo, admiration of economic success and cynical distrust of acquired power.

All these stereotypes remained neutralized for a long time by the seriousness of public political discourse. This is no longer the case today. It is interesting to observe – as did the acute Italian commentator, Barbara Spinelli (2009) – how Silvio Berlusconi's parabola of power rests

upon a mixture of private and public that is typical of gossip, with a continual display of his familiar normality/exceptionality. He boasts about his devotion to his (second) wife and children (from both marriages) while at the same time incessantly flaunting his skills as a Casanova. He hosts foreign heads of state in his private residences, which he also uses for national political-institutional meetings. And more generally, Berlusconi displays his body and his health like a fetish, declaring to have defeated a serious illness and to have the physique of a much younger man, always taking meticulous care of his image (makeup, hair transplants, platform shoes, etc.). All of this is intended as a guarantee of his reliability and his energy, and it is precisely this energy that social psychologists have identified as the salient feature of his leadership. So, in the end, the private world that he deliberately feeds to an information stream contaminated by gossip is in fact an instrument of power. For this reason, *La Repubblica's* attack on his private sphere threatens to undermine the foundation of his authority, placing in discussion certain cornerstones of his image (i.e. his frequentation of other women compromises his image as a family man, while the fact that these women are paid diminishes his skills as a ladies' man, and so on).

Seen in this way, we discover the key to Berlusconi's lying: it is not intended as political deception, but rather as simple gossip, where the boundary between truth and lie is by its very nature ineffable, just like the emotions that surround and define it. Indeed, the continuous supply of new gossip overrides its eventual incoherence. What is expected is the manifestation of ever changing emotion and sentiment. The moralism of public discourse hides an absolute tolerance of gossip and a concomitant suspension of all judgment. Thus, the hope of Berlusconi and his entourage is that the lie - which is public, yes, but told within the confines of gossip - exempts him from political responsibility. The facts are neither admitted nor denied, but are instead dissembled or deflected. The improprieties of which the Italian Prime Minister is accused, which seem like something from a 1970s porn film, will perhaps never become serious. Indeed, exposing the frivolous behavior of a public figure like Berlusconi makes him more, rather than less tolerable. In politics, the only true enemy of gossip is seriousness.

Many years ago, Guy Debord (1988 [1968]) addressed the issue of the 'society of the spectacle', asserting that only viable form of political struggle is the Situationist *détournement* - that is, the will to organize public interventions that upset the appearance of order and the complacency of entertainment. Today, with the triumph of gossip, the sides have been reversed: faced with a political request from a respected

newspaper that deploys an argument traditionally reserved for gossip in order to pose serious questions, Berlusconi juggles with truth and lies like a Dadaist wizard, abolishing the distinction between the two types of discourse with a wave of his wand. One cannot but notice the irony that the Situationist strategy, originally conceived as a tool to fight entrenched power, is now in power.

And yet politics is not only a type of discourse, for it acts on the world, changing it. Therefore, the paradox of the attempt to abolish the lie by rendering it innocuous, by confining it to a place where it is no longer condemnable, has its costs for democracy. Silvio Berlusconi is inverting the strategy used by Benito Mussolini at the dawn of Fascism. Il Duce publically assumed responsibility for Fascist violence. A truth-telling operation that obliterated democracy because it admitted democratically unacceptable behavior into the discourse. Today, the leader of the Partito della Libertà openly denies the facts (infinitely less grave, of course, than the ones Mussolini admitted to) in the face of an abundance of journalistic proof. A lie-spinning operation that likewise threatens to obliterate democracy, because it negates the condition of possibility: the weighing of correct opinions⁸.

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NOTES

- 1 Lega (Lega Nord per l'indipendenza della Padania - North League for the Independence of Padania) is a political party founded in 1991 whose program advocates the transformation of Italy into a federal State, fiscal federalism and greater regional autonomy, especially for the Northern regions, which they call Padania. Especially at the beginning but even during all the nineties, the party announced that its aim was the secession of Northern Italy under the name Padania and it organized a referendum on independence as well as elections for a "Padanian Parliament" (with no international recognition). Then, after having consolidated the coalition with Forza Italia and the government participation, Lega Nord de-emphasised demands for independence and focused rather on devolution and fiscal federalism.
- 2 Alleanza Nazionale was a conservative right-wing party, founded in 1995 by Gianfranco Fini from the Italian Social Movement (MSI), the ex-neo-fascist party. After the landslide victory of PDL (Popolo della Libertà) in 2008 political election, Alleanza Nazionale was dissolved and merged into PDL, headed by Silvio Berlusconi.

- 3 *La Repubblica* is the second most spread Italian newspaper after *Corriere della Sera*. It belongs to the editorial group Gruppo editoriale L'Espresso and since its foundation it keeps a center-left stance.
- 4 *Porta a Porta* is a very popular talk show hosted by the journalist Bruno Vespa and aired by Rai Uno, the primary television station of Rai, the Italian public service broadcaster.
- 5 *L'Espresso* is a left-wing magazine, belonging to the same editorial group of *la Repubblica*.
- 6 The film *Il Caimano*, directed by Nanni Moretti and released in 2006, focuses on the political and business biography of Silvio Berlusconi.
- 7 *Citizen Berlusconi* is a documentary released in 2003. It is a journalistic inquiry focusing on Berlusconi's vicissitudes from his entrepreneurial successes to political deeds. The documentary was aired for the first time in 2003 by American PBS and arrived in Italy only in June 2009, broadcast by the satellite station *Current TV*.
- 8 I would thank for their kind contributions Claudia Giocondo, who helped to reconstruct the time-line of the case, and Maria Francesca Murru, who discussed with me the content, and helped to edit the final version of the essay.

Two sides of the same coin: Religious overtones of factual discourse and the ethics of photojournalism

Ilija Tomanić Trivundža

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the omnipresence of press photographs in our daily life, defining photojournalism can prove an elusive task. Photojournalism is a practice that oscillates between various sets of normative ideals, technologies and media which are promoted by a variety of social institutions (such as professional associations, educational institutions and training programmes, media houses, galleries and museums etc.) and their products and outputs such as photography awards, codes of professional ethics, 'how to do photojournalism' textbooks, 'best practice' anthologies or histories of the genre, professional journals, on-line publications and the like that often make divergent, or even conflicting normative demands on practitioners. As a consequence, one fruitful way of coming to terms with defining photojournalism (and any other genre of photography for that matter) is to treat it as what Foucault (1972) would describe as a *discursive formation*, an organised totality of dispersed statements on the medium which delimit the possibilities of our understanding of the subject that results from the ongoing struggle for (re)definition and (re)interpretation of a fairly stable set of concepts and elements. Within theoretical and practical discussions on photography, the aforementioned set of ideas and concepts can be broken down into six categories of *privileged discursive elements*: (1) the indexicality and iconicity of the photographic image, (2) the temporal and spatial dislocation of what is depicted in an image, (3) the medium-specific means of expression, (4) the relation between image and text in terms of meaning and meaning-making, (5) the relation between image and the context in which the image is viewed or displayed, and (6) the magical,

even supernatural power of the photographic image. Any genre of photography relies for its conceptualisation on a specific interpretation and on the often contradictory combination of these discursive elements¹. Due to limitations of space, it would be impossible to give an exhaustive account of the way the six privileged discursive elements are played out within various accounts of photojournalism. What will be presented instead is the contradictory interplay between the dominant and most neglected privileged discursive element within the most normative of the articulating discourses of photojournalism – that of photojournalistic ethics, thus exposing the extent to which the discourse that tries to accord rational, factual status to the photographic representations of news is in fact deeply indebted to irrational, supernatural and quasi-religious metaphors and conceptualisations.

2. INDEXICAL REALISM OF EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

Photojournalism is essentially a form of journalistic practice, a practice whose mission is to deliver realistic, eyewitness accounts of people and events to a mass media audience. As such, photojournalism's mission is connected to one of the central normative presuppositions and pre-conditions of liberal democracy – that of supplying factual information to citizens, to enable them to form (and express) informed opinions, to make conscious political choices and to feel that they are meaningfully involved in what Dewey has described as the “*consequences of social transactions*” (1998 [1927]: 292). This conceptualisation of photojournalism as a mere reflection of word-based journalism implies that it shares its practices, methods and ideals, or what some critics refer to as the professional norms or ideologies of objective reporting. Moreover, photojournalism's claim to be a form of factual reporting is grounded in the concept of photography's indexical nature which reduces the image-making apparatus to a more or less passive recording device, able to produce transparent images of reality. Normative discourses of journalistic practice such as codes of ethics or editorial guidelines generally stipulate the objectivity norm without allowing for the possibility of a distinctive word-based, as opposed to image-based reporting (either implicitly through lack of specific stipulations related to photojournalists or explicitly² equating the work of word-based and image-based journalism). The notion of the photographic image as an index or trace of the real imprinted on the light sensitive surface of film or image sensor is the central organising element of the discourse of photojournalism and

photojournalistic ethics. It makes the claim that an objective recording of reality is possible and that this is guaranteed by the very nature of the medium as such, while simultaneously denying news making to be a subjective, cultural practice shaped by a series of naturalized conventions that need to be actively maintained.

The introduction of digital image making and altering technology in the early 1980s gave rise to debates about the end of photography as indexical evidence. The 1980s were pronounced to be probably "*the last decade when pictures could be considered evidence of anything*" (Lasica, 1989: 23). What was heralded was the beginning of a "*post-photographic era*", allegedly characterised by the triumphant return of photography's iconicity (Mitchell, 1992). The introduction of digital technology brought about the discourse of what Batchen (1999) has termed a *technological crisis*, where digital(ised) photography, particularly its manipulating tendency, was viewed as the ultimate threat to the credibility of journalism (Lester, 1991). If photographs can no longer be trusted as quotations from appearances, observed Ritchin, we will consequently lose a "*major player in a delineation of the real [...] a useful if highly imperfect societal arbiter of occurrences*" (2008: 31). Moreover, what is seen to be endangered is our "*primary way of knowing – gathering information with our eyes*" (Newton, 2001: 12). Simultaneously, mainstream media have been confronted by what might be termed an *epistemological crisis* – the growing mistrust of increasingly media savvy audiences with mainstream media and with their newsgathering routines. This epistemological crisis grew out of audiences' increased awareness of media's subservience to market imperatives and the manipulation by political elites, as well as out of their dissatisfaction with institutionalised political processes and the possibility of any meaningful and informed political participation. While the introduction of digital technology and the controversies following its initial adoption by the media industries "*set the stage for self-scrutiny, reassessment and potential innovation in the conception and practice of photojournalism*" (Schwartz, 1999: 175), contemporary debates on photographic ethics reveal that press photography as a whole and news photography in particular failed or better, declined to engage with the fundamental questions of the profession (e.g. representation vs. presentation) and to 'seize the moment of change' as an opportunity for innovation and for redefining professional routines (cf. Ritchin, 2008).

Instead, the profession's response to the challenges posed by the technological and epistemological crisis was to reduce fundamental questions concerning the credibility of news reporting to a more limited

enquiry involving issues of technology, or more accurately, to ones of technique. Photojournalism's core response to challenges of digitalisation has been the radicalisation of ethical demands in terms of non-manipulation of image content during the post-production phase. A widely held consensus emerged that in order to preserve the credibility of images (and of the profession), photographers needed to limit themselves in the use of new technology offered by computer workstation lightrooms to the effects that could be achieved in the darkrooms of pre-digitalised photography. The dominant move within news-oriented photojournalism over the past two decades has been the attempt to improve and enhance ethical standards for image use and (non)manipulation, based on a conception of photojournalistic realism that if not already outdated, has become increasingly hard to maintain. "*The positions taken by rank and file represent a retreat to a moral high ground from which to fend off assaults on credibility*" (Schwartz, 1999: 181), invokes a purism that few photojournalists have ever been able to uphold and exposes the burgeoning rifts between proclaimed ethical standards, routine practices and the public perception of the medium involved. By the early 1990s, digital manipulation became photojournalism's largest taboo and questions concerning the veracity of images overshadowed the other two important aspects relating to the veracity of photojournalistic reports – the veracity of the event itself, and the veracity of the image-text relationship of a given news item.

Let me briefly elaborate on this point. Questions concerning *veracity of event*, such as staging, can be sub-divided into two categories: ones where manipulation of or changes to an event were created by the photographer and those where photographers are merely recording manipulations generated by non-journalists. In the case of the former, manipulation or change range from less problematic practices such as posing to more extreme interventions such as the explicit directing of subjects, the provoking of reactions by providing/controlling stimulus, the re-arranging scenes, the re-enacting of scenes and events using either original subjects or models, and the outright staging of events. In the case of latter, photographers might encounter pre-arranged 'artificial' scenes and photo opportunities, particularly common in the case of pseudo-events (such as press conferences), tempered 'real' scenes (artefacts introduced into real-life scenes by partisan political groups), behaviour especially contrived for the purpose of press coverage that changes to a different mode when journalists and their cameras leave (e.g. exaggerated mourning), behaviour acted out exclusively for purpose of being recorded by photographers (e.g. the burning of flags at

demonstrations), actors paid to perform scripted actions (e.g. the kissing of US 'liberators' in Iraq) or whole events being deliberately staged for the press (e.g. the toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue in Firdos Square). Issues concerning the *veracity of an image* can likewise be divided into two subgroups, those that occur during production and those that are the outcome of the postproduction process. The first category includes decisions made by the photographer concerning how to record an image, especially with regard to the choice of point of view, to vertical and horizontal angling and to framing, depth of field, exposure, timing etc. Issues relating to the post-production process, concerning cropping, burning, dodging, adjusting colour modes, colour saturation, tonal values, sharpness, or contrast, perspective correction etc., as well as adding elements to, or deleting them from the image, merging two or more images or creating a non-existent image. Issues concerning *image-text relationship* are first and foremost those that relate to the inaccurate, misleading or non-existent captioning of photographs. Secondly, text used accompany the article can generate different interpretations to those evoked by the photographs (or captions) themselves, or vice versa. A photograph can be used to prove something in the text to which it does not relate. Thirdly, the use of interpretative photographs which are not marked or classified as such can be considered to be a breach of journalistic ethics and the use of symbolic, nonrelated photographs to draw attention to articles also leads to questions being raised. The final aspect has to do with the overall layout of the pages on which the images appear and is related to the positioning of photographs within the body of text, to the juxtaposition of two or more photographs on the same or on adjoining pages, or to the juxtaposition of photograph(s) with textual and graphic items not related to news such as advertisements that can elicit a different set of meanings.

Present day discussions on the ethics of photojournalism, however, focus on only a few of these multilayered issues. Codes of ethics and editorial guidelines make only passing reference to more epistemological questions, such as the veracity of events or the use of non-misleading caption and focus on manipulations committed *by* photographers. Similarly, questions concerning the veracity of image for the most part ignore the active role of photographer in creating an image. News organisations often provide long and explicit lists of 'do's' and 'don'ts' of computer-based manipulation that stand in sharp contrast to the generalised normative statements concerning more fundamental questions of news reporting. Consider the following passages from instructions to Reuters' contributors:

Reuters photographers, staff and freelance, must not stage or re-enact news events. They may not direct the subjects of their images or add, remove or move objects on a news assignment. Our news photography must depict reality.

Cloning, Healing or Brush Tools are not to be used. The single exception to this rule is sensor dust removal. The cloning tool will only be used below the 100 pixels radius setting. [...] Highlights and Shadows can be toned by using the selective highlights tool, a feather of 25–30 and then adjusted in curves. [...] Sharpening should be set at zero (0) in the camera. Pictures may then be sharpened by 300% at a radius of 0.3, threshold 0, in Photoshop. No selective area sharpening should be done. (Schlesinger, 2007)

Even those codes of ethics that otherwise do not explicitly address issues concerning photojournalism, frequently regulate the use of symbolic photographs, photo manipulations and illustrations. Books, textbooks, industry publications or websites on the ethics of photojournalism normally provide a long (and overlapping) list of examples of prominent cases of ethics mismanagement that likewise mostly focus on violations of the integrity of images through addition, deletion or changing of a part of their content. Additionally, these examples often do not come from genre of news photography but from editorial portraiture and magazine cover page illustrations³. Similarly, much publicised cases where ‘deviant practitioners’ are reprimanded almost exclusively concern the post-production manipulation of image content⁴. In the past decade, the most publicised cases of breaches of photojournalistic ethics have been related to image veracity and range from changing the background colour of a sky, or ‘enhancing’ parts of the image by adding additional elements from the picture, to making a single composite photograph by combining parts of the two consecutively taken images.

3. THE MAGICAL EFFICACY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

What these various discourses on photojournalistic ethics attempt to secure is the undisputable status of photographs as visual factual evidence, provided that correct operational procedures are followed, such as not intervening before, during or after the image has been created. However this heightened investment in the factual nature of visual journalism (e.g. the punishment for any breach of ethics by image journalists is more severe than for word journalists and the ethical stipulations are stricter and more restrictive. This is grounded in the assumption that images have a strong influence on an audience’s

perception of reported events and issues. This underlying rationale is grounded in the privileged discursive element of image efficacy, and of the magical, supernatural power of photographs. As such, it bears strong irrational and non-factual overtones. Photographs have repeatedly been reported to have moved, outraged, scarred, or mobilised individuals, groups, and even nations. This belief in the extraordinary power of photography to influence individuals and collectives is shared by practitioners, members of discourse elites and the general public alike. The envisaged impacts of images are immediate, strong and universal. The effects are almost magical (similar to the hypodermic needle model of media effects). They are based not so much on the aforementioned claims of photography's (indexical) 'truth' or 'proof value', but on the particular capacity ascribed to images, that of being able to persuade by means mobilising emotional, non-rational responses, and of thus bypassing or clouding reason. What is striking here is not simply the unanimous belief in the (strong) efficacy of news images but - as noted by Perlmutter (1998), Domke et al. (2002), Zelizer (2005), and Andén-Papadopoulos (2008) - the almost complete lack of empirical evidence to sustain it. While discourse elites are fond of proclaiming the power of newspaper photography, "*systematic investigations of the actual influence of visual news images are rare*" (Domke et al., 2002: 132). They rest mainly on anecdotal or incidental evidence such as the declining public support for military engagement after the publication of certain (sets of) photographs, and on what Perlmutter (1998: xiv) has called the first person effect, the projecting of effects on oneself onto society as a whole.

There is an argument that photographs are a powerful means of communication since they appeal to emotions and thus hinder or overshadow our capacity to rationally process information. This is an extension of the ancient belief in (and fear of) the magical efficacy of images and is very clearly explicated in Western philosophy by Plato. Many practising journalists and photojournalists believe that images are "*mainlined directly into democracy's emotional bloodstream without mediation of conscious thought.*" (Lance Morrow in Perlmutter, 1998: 4) Likewise, politicians have claimed that images can evoke an emotional response (sympathy, outrage etc.) and can thus "*lay the groundwork for policy by setting up public expectations*" which are often characterised as unrealistic, unstrategic and short-sighted (Lance Morrow in Perlmutter, 1998: 4).

For more than two and half millennia the Western suspicion of images has been organised around two recurring leitmotifs, two interconnected strands of evaluating the power of images: *iconoclasm* and *aniconism*. Aniconism equates the higher thought and development of

individuals and society with abstaining from using images and devaluing the role of the senses in favour of the intellect. (Freedberg, 1989, 61) One of the outcomes of Western aniconism has been the (de)evaluation of images as feminine. Image spectatorship has thus been constructed around the opposition between men and women in which women are the objects of the male look/gaze. (Berger, 1972; Mulvey, 1975; cf. Williamson, 1978 or Goffmann, 1976) This however is only one part of the aniconistic attitude towards images. As Mitchell (2005: 35) points out, it is not only that the production of imagery is focused on “*images of women*” but that “*images are women*”, and as such are ascribed with characteristics of irrationality naïveté, delusion, immorality, mysteriousness, danger etc. Such accounts of the status and power of images result from the interlinked attitudes of fear and contempt:

The contempt springs from the assurance that images are powerless, mute, inferior kinds of signs; the fear stems from the recognition that these signs, and the ‘others’ who believe in them, may be in the process of taking power, appropriating a voice. (Mitchell, 1987: 151, original emphasis)

In Western thought, visual representations have long been conceptualised as to some extent magical. Moreover, photography has, since its inception, been permeated by ideas of spirituality, mystique and supernatural. Mitchell (2005: 128) notes that “*far from being defanged in the modern era, images are one of the last bastions of magical thinking*”. Mitchell is not implying that people universally treat images as supernatural phenomena but that in Western culture, people generally maintain a “*double consciousness*” when it comes to visual representations, “*vacillating between magical beliefs and sceptical doubts, mystical and critical attitudes*” (Mitchell, 2005: 7).

Mitchell identifies three types of attitude with respect to the over- or under-estimation of the power of images: *idolatry*, *fetishism*, and *totemism*. As far as assessing the power of the image is concerned, *idolatry* has the greatest potential for overestimation as the representation is taken to be the very object it represents and is related to practices of worship, to the iconic properties of signs in Piercean terminology as well as belonging to the Lacanian register of imaginary. Within photography, *idolatry* finds its clearest expression in portraiture, in the idea that photographic image can capture something of the essence of a person, his/her soul. It often transforms the possession of a photograph into a surrogate possession of a person (e.g. Bryson et al., 1994; Freedberg, 1989). *Fetishism* “*comes in a close second to idolatry as an image of surplus, associated with greed, acquisitiveness, perverse desire, materialism, and magical attitude toward*

object" (Mitchell, 2005: 97–8). The power of fetish derives from it being a part of the object (often a body part) and as such, it is consigned to realm of materiality and private 'consumption'. The fetish is related to the indexical properties of signs and to the Lacanian register of the real. Within photography, fetishism appears first of all in the conception that a photograph is a window on the world and that it offers unmediated access to knowing the world. This attitude permeates a series of institutional uses of photography, primarily those that rely on the notion that images provide proof or evidence, as with the police and the judicial system, but also in science, journalism and with various forms of advertising and promotion). Fetishism is linked to the notion of truth: photographers often proceed from the supposition that (true) reality is somehow hidden and that it is their role to reveal it by capturing the isolated, partial fragments of space and time. By contrast, *totem* is characterised by the regulation of collective behaviour and is hence connected to the practices of communal festivals or sacrifices. It is also linked to Piercian symbols and to Lacanian symbolic. (Mitchell, 2005: 195) Totemistic uses of photography can be found both in institutionalised public forms where certain photographs or practices serve as articulation points for formation of collective memory and identification (e.g. canonised photographs of nation's history or canonised 'great works' in books on the history of photography) and in the more private sphere of family (Bourdieu, 1990).

4. RELIGIOUS OVERTONES OF (DISCOURSE ON) PHOTOGRAPHIC OBJECTIVITY

As I have demonstrated above, in the age when seeing is no longer believing, photojournalistic ethics still clings tightly to the ideology of factuality and objectivity. However in the attempt to make the case for photojournalism's contribution to the rational perception of "*ourselves and our relationship to our fellow citizens, our communities, our world*" (Wheeler, 2002: 49), photojournalistic ethics utilises a discourse that contains markedly irrational traits since it bears such strong religious overtones. Admittedly, every discourse on ethics is a highly normative one but as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have argued, the metaphors employed in describing and making sense of our world are not without significance. Since the introduction of digital technology, practitioners and theoreticians continuously talk about *death* of photography/photojournalism, often with strong millennialistic overtones⁵. The

discourse on death is complemented by a more optimistic rendering that implies *resurrection* of a new, liberated photography (e.g. Robins, 1991, Ritchin, 2008). Both of these inspire speculations on the medium's *afterlife*.⁶ Codes of photojournalistic ethics and editorial policies frequently provide lists of *commandments* that stipulate what is morally appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Writing on the uncertainties surrounding contemporary image production, Baradell and Stack note in the introduction of their discussion on ethics that "*would be a great time to have a Bible*" (2008: 1). These commandments (consider Reuter's precise outline of 'do's' and 'don'ts' of digital manipulation quoted above) are handed down to protect the Real and the Truth. These entities are seen as absolute and not socially constructed, whilst the discourse of photojournalism ethics tends to imply a clear, absolute separation of right from wrong: "*You never change reality [...] It's totally black and white*" (Elbert in Johnston, 2003). Similarly, Brian Walski, a photographer fired for image manipulation has commented: "*There are no gray areas here. The line is very clear here and I crossed it*" (Brian Walski in Johnston, 2003). Or Van Ripers verdict: "*Walski deliberately combined two of his good legitimate photographs to make one superb illegitimate one. [...] Remember: news photographs are the equivalent of direct quotations and therefore are sacrosanct*" (2003, my emphasis). Violations of these commandments are treated as *sinning*: "*His was the most grievous of journalistic sins: He intentionally misrepresented reality to the paper's readers*" (Wycliff in Carlson, 2009: 130 my emphasis); "*I doubt that any media outlet is without sin.*" (Martinez in Carlson, 2009: 129, my emphasis). Sinners are punished (e.g. suspension for a certain number of days with no pay) and their sins are publically exposed. For graver crimes, offenders are excluded from the community, never to return. This puts one in mind of sanctions imposed for the violation of religious *taboos*, of *sacrificial practices and ceremonial offerings*. The firing of 'bad' photojournalists can be seen as a sacrificial offering to pacify the agitated deity of audience/public (cf. Ehrlich, 1996; Berkowitz, 2000). The obscurity of the public and the unwillingness of the profession to produce an empirically-based study of the public's attitudes to visual reporting is also reminiscent of certain religious practices where the sacred must remain obscured or veiled and where the religious message can only be mediated or transmitted by the chosen few who profess themselves to be as guardians of Truth. Furthermore, sin is connected to *temptation* in the form of digital imaging technology. "*Technology is here and so is the temptation*" (Cartwright, 2007: 340). Or, as Wheele (2001: 40) has asserted: "*[Since] computer manipulations have entered the editorial mainstream [...], adherence to photojournalistic norms have*

given way to the temptation". In terms of ethics violations such as image manipulation, it is digital technology itself and not the photographer that is regarded as the real source of evil. The photographer is only someone who has succumbed to temptation. As Walski has observed: "*It just got out of hand*" (in Irby, 2003). There are many more such comparisons. A number of practitioners are imbued with almost supernatural characteristics (Chapnick, 1994) and selected photographers are canonised. Their work thus becomes sanctified and is transformed into an object of fascination and ritual worship (such services are performed by histories, educational curricula, documentaries etc.). As a result, "*you've got young photographers who think [veteran photographers] walk on water.*" (Schmidt in Johnston, 2003). Even some tools of the photographic trade bear religiously inspired names ("*people were taken out of the pictures by using the digital equivalent of 'hand of God' burns*" (Liddy in Meyer, 2003), and images are attributed the power to "*burn themselves into people's souls*" (Bryant in Newton, 2001: 41).

To sum up, while photojournalistic ethics proclaims photojournalism to be the guardian of the rational and the real, it is in fact a practice founded on a *belief* in the magical capabilities of apparatus, aided by continuous resistance to Weberian disenchantment concerning the routines and practices of image making and news reporting. In trying to restore the inherent trust in the visual reporting of news, contemporary photojournalistic ethics is not promoting a sort of negotiated realism but is rather making the impossible case for image transparency. As a consequence, it is, ironically, giving rise to more questions than the *belief* in photojournalism seeks to resolve.

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NOTES

- 1 Depending on the investments of particular competing social groups, individuals and institutions, these privileged discursive elements can become nodal points in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) understanding of the term as crystallisers of meaning, defining the hierarchy of elements within the discourse. However I see the value of privileged discursive elements precisely because they need not become nodal points but offer the possibility for the investigation of photography at the level of what Laclau and Mouffe would call elements, polysemic 'signs' whose meanings have not yet been fixed. In conceptualisations of photography, privileged discursive elements (e.g. notion of indexicality) frequently float signifiers not only between various competing discourses but often within a given (sub)discourse itself.
- 2 For example *Code of Ethics of Slovene Journalists* declares in its preamble that its norms apply without exception to all domains of journalistic profession, be they "text, photography, video and audio."
- 3 In one of the most popular photojournalism textbooks, Kobre (2004) for example discusses 20 cases of image manipulations in a chapter dedicated to ethics, 16 of which are violations of image veracity. Of these, 14 fall into categories of illustration, portraiture and other non-news genres. Similarly, Wheeler's (2002) list deals predominantly with examples of photographs used as (magazine front page) illustrations. Out of 21 listed cases, only 5 could be classified under the category of news or photojournalism.
- 4 By contrast, the self-appointed watchdogs of media reporting, such as interest groups, civil society organisations and in particular web-based communities of political activists who scrutinise news reporting of specific events or political news and party coverage tend to focus primarily on contesting veracity of events and less on the digital manipulation of images (the latter are considered to be a proof of the former).
- 5 Examples range from Mitchell often quoted claim that "from the moment of its sesquicentennial, photography was dead" (1992: 20) to Mirzoeff's categorical reassertion of the medium's death seven years later (1999, 65). Death is prominently featured in the titles of publications and articles, such as *From Today Photography is Dead* (Robins, 1991), *The end of photography as we have known it* (Ritchin, 1991), *Phantasm - Digital-Imaging and the Death of Photography* (Batchen, 1994) and the list could go on.
- 6 Consider the following book and article titles: *Photography After Photography* (Iglhaut et al., 1997), *Post-Photography: Digital imaging and the death of photography* (Batchen, 1994), *After Photography* (Ritchin, 2008) or *Digitisation and the living death of photography* (Willis, 1990).

The human rights influence on communication sciences: An overview

Manuel Parés I Maicas

1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In our present society one of the key problems and issues is the effective accomplishment of the Human Rights Declaration of the United Nations, enacted on December 10, 1948¹. This complex issue needs an interdisciplinary approach. Frequently the realisation of the Human Rights Declaration can be seen as a mythical question. Therefore, I will deal with it from an ethical philosophical position where the accomplishment of it is not questioned.

In my opinion, if we want to study this subject from a communication and mass media perspective, it is essential to approach all the content of the Declaration, because many issues are interrelated.

It is also interesting to note that there also exists the European Convention of Human Rights, approved on November 4, 1950. I shall not analyse this important text, but I want to underline that it protects principally: a) Right to the life; b) Right to personal freedom and security; c) Right to equitable judicial guarantees; d) Right to the intimacy of private and family life, to the inviolability of the domicile and to the correspondence; e) Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; f) Right to freedom of expression and opinion; g) Right to the liberty of meeting and association, which encompass the right to create and belong to a trade union; h) Right to marry and to found a family. This list also indicates that there is a relationship with a number of human rights mentioned in the Declaration.

Thus, I have elaborated this text on the basis of my own vision of this complex array of issues. I propose my own analysis and its development. Wherever appropriate, I link the different topics that I treat along the exposition with the articles of the Declaration, which refer directly to them.

I would like to insist that this is a very difficult and complex issue, which is often conceived as universal. Actually, it is easy to understand that in practice these rights are diversely conceived for different reasons: variety of cultures and values, ideological insights, religious influence and notions of political and economic power. On the whole, the prevalent conceptions of human rights are essentially Western, for instance when dealing with human dignity and solidarity. This consideration does not preclude, of course, its aim to become universal. But in any case, human rights are fundamentally the permanent search for the peace.

We have to take into consideration that the human right concepts prevailing in 1948 are not the same that those of today, because the changes in many aspects have been very big and deep. The theorists of social change are quite right, in claiming that change has the key role in the process of development of any society.

2. THE STATE AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS

Even if human rights refer to the inalienable rights of the citizens, as it set up in the article 6, *"Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law"*, it is precisely in the State structure where the exercise and enjoyment of them takes place. It is a question that is very much connected with the conflict of ideologies and interests of the corresponding political system, and its democratic or authoritarian background and behaviour. We must take into consideration whether its structure is federal or unitarian, while not neglecting the role of the nations without states. In my opinion, in principle, a left-wing or social democratic ideology will take care more of respecting the human rights of the citizens than a conservative one, as it has unfortunately been demonstrated in many cases.

Let me start with article 29:

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

In another words, these articles indicate the dialectical relationship between the human rights and the rights and competencies of the State according to its own Constitution and its legal system. But, unfortunately, the reality is that even if we refer to them very often, their real application is far less evident. It exists as an extensive and frequent hypocritical discourse on the accomplishment of the human rights. In the European Community, the transnational and national institutions claim the need to apply these rights, but in practice their action is very limited. The same can be said about the policy in this area developed by a number of European member states. It is very disappointing for many historical, ideological and cultural reasons, but the majority of the states have little respect for the spirit of the human rights.

In the case of the USA, the last presidencies of Bush were disastrous. For instance with the Patriot Act and with the application of the torture to prisoners presumed to be connected with the September 11 events. Guantánamo is, sadly, the example of how little respect there is for human rights. I strongly wish and expect that president Obama will adopt a quite different attitude and that the United States will again be acting decisively in favour of human rights. But also in the rest of the world, analyses indicate that the application of these rights is very problematic indeed.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE WELFARE STATE

My perception is that the legislators of the Declaration were strongly inspired by the idea of attaining a model of the welfare state where the fundamental ethical values of general recognition should be applied. This is a wonderful dream!

Consequently, I wish to emphasize the relevance of article 28, as a general principle of application everywhere: *“Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized”* Unfortunately, another dream...

So, if the article 3, underlines that *“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person”*, it is logical, of course, that article 25.1 asserts that:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age and other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond control.

This is an extremely important provision, basic for the welfare state, in its role of public service, as it is indicated in article 21.2. Unfortunately, this provision sometimes enters into crisis.

A particular emphasis should be paid for the paramount role of education in the development of any society. We can distinguish between public and private education, but, in any case, we must consider the former as one of the basis of the public service conception. In relation to this concept article 21.2 expresses that *"Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country"*.

An important issue is the place occupied by the teaching on the human rights in the academic curriculum and in the different epochs of the educational process. My feeling is that it is necessary to teach human rights in the primary, secondary and higher education period, in each case adapted to the particular level. I wish to stress that at the same time, it is important to teach the democratic values with an objective to attain the democratization of the political system and its corresponding civil society. If we neglect it, we risk suffering serious consequences and damages for the regular development of the social and political system.

4. POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Article 21.1 deals with the political participation: *"Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives"*. In relation to elections, article 21.3 establishes:

The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodical and genuine elections which shall be universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Let me underscore that the elections are actually the formal mirror of a democratic system, but they do not always, unfortunately, imply the existence of democratic practice. Sometimes it is the opposite.

I believe that it is necessary to take into account the way the governments, the parliaments and the judiciary should focus on the accomplishment of the spirit of the human rights that should be always present in their actions. They should always operate while understanding pluralism and equality. Without such requirement we shall always be questioning the legitimacy in ethical terms of their behaviour. I can say it in a different way: Without the human rights as a moral principle for action, it is difficult to conceive a democratic system.

Unfortunately, in practice, these ideas are very often unknown or violated. This is one of the explanations of the present grave crisis of the democratic system. The legitimacy of the citizenship requires a special protection.

I wish to express my personal concern of the worrying de-politization of many citizens. Regrettably, the personal interests of the citizens or their attraction for leisure activities often prevail. In the Declaration there is no reference to these points, neither to the functioning of the political parties. Again, there is no mention of social movements, in spite of the fact that they nowadays play an important role in the social and political development of any society.

5. SOCIOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

I wish to assert the fundamental principle that any society is a class society. This fact raises many problems for the real application of the human rights protection. In this area, the Declaration does not offer a coherent array of criteria: Article 16, devoted to family, states that:

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

I believe that point 2 is not shared in large areas of the world, principally governed by religious influence. The paramount importance of religion is here an essential issue. Moreover, the respective role of men and women raises many criticisms.

Article 26, which is devoted to education, asserts that “*parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children*”. Personally I agree, provided that the attitude of the parents reflects the spirit of the Declaration, which is not always the case, because of religious or ideological positions support neglecting the elementary ethical requirements.

For ethical reasons issues like homosexuality, protection of the elderly, abortion, illnesses and euthanasia should also be considered. They have become crucial questions that often are not approached in the due way.

6. DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURALITY

In the Declaration there are several articles devoted to these social phenomena that exist everywhere in different degrees. So, it is necessary to mention the following articles: Article 1 affirms that *“all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in spirit of brotherhood”*. This is a fundamental provision, unfortunately sometimes ignored or despised. Even if we link it with article 2, which is also essential: *“Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”*. In my opinion, a reference to education or health, among other elements, is missing here.

Article 7, in connection with discrimination, declares: *“All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any excitement to such discrimination”*. Other relevant provisions to be mentioned are in article 9 *“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”*. In relation to torture, article 5 says: *“no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”*. And finally article 4: *“No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms”*.

As it may be easily understood, these articles should be openly interpreted in the areas of death penalty, repressions of all kinds, social segregations and violations, violence against large numbers of different forms of expression, injustices of all kinds, the problems of prisons and prisoner treatment (for instance, Guantànamo) and poverty. Moreover, we have to mention the dictatorships, wars, the terrorism, and its variety of forms and manifestations and its disturbing generalization for many different causes. I believe that terrorism is actually perceived as an effective albeit often illegal form of communication to obtain definite results. Everything listed above is a way of domination and a way of expressing power in arbitrarily different forms. It is very disturbing that there are so many examples, of diverse reasons, causes and types.

Another chapter is about the use of violent devices by the armies or police, either in democratic or in authoritarian regimes. From a democratic point of view, it is especially grave when these violations are committed by those who are supposed to serve the interests of the citizens, as civil servants.

On account of the increasing and extensive phenomena of migration, the quotes above raise urgent and serious questions on the effective adoption of an intercultural policy. Our societies see a very extensive and forced flow of immigrations and emigrations between developed and underdeveloped countries, often with the unavoidable consequence of growing racism and xenophobia. This fact gives way to different forms of exiles, refugees, apartheid and the urgent need of minority protection.

However, I regret that the only article dealing directly with these questions is article 14, dedicated to the issue of asylum:

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Although the Human Rights Declaration has been in existence for a long time, and its principles have been enforced for quite some time, we cannot ignore the fact that historical changes have influenced its enforcement. The process of globalization needs a special reference here, keeping in mind that globalization has to be interpreted broadly, not only from its economic viewpoint, as usually happens, but also as a phenomenon that is cultural, ideological, religious, political, technological, and so on.

7. ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The Declaration devotes only two articles to this fundamental element: Article 17 *"Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property"*. The text is very clear and I should like to call it 'beautiful' in the moral sense, but I am asking myself how often and under which different circumstances, it becomes clearly violated? I must confess that I am very pessimistic.

Article 23 is very important, but once again, often ignored and/or violated. It affirms that *"(1) everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and protection against unemployment"*. Speaking ironically, I ask myself up to which extent this article is respected by the firms and the associations representing the economic power, especially in the present critical economic and social

situation. This question is even more pertinent nowadays when we look at the reality where the employees are paying for the consequences of the unlawful practices and bad management of their employers, to put it mildly.

The second section of the same article 23 states: *“Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work”*. When this provision was written, this was untrue, and it still is. From an honest approach this text should disappear for it expresses what can at best be called ‘wishful thinking’.

“Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection,” as article 23.3 puts it, raises a question as to who interprets that a remuneration is just, and how to decide which economic conditions are necessary for human dignity?

Section 23.4 states: *“Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests”*. The role of trade unions is fundamental. But I am afraid that for many different reasons, they very often lack the means and the capacity to properly defend the rights and the interests of their members.

On the whole, article 23 is highly controversial and deserves a thorough analysis. But in order to be brief about it, I would like to point out the following aspects:

- a) There are many questions here which are linked to the development of capitalism as an ideology and a practice;
- b) There are great divides in the field of economic development between countries, regions and citizens;
- c) The excessive and disturbing weight of the multinational companies on the global economy;
- d) The worrying influence of economic lobbying of different kinds;
- e) The immoral attempts of firms and businesses to charge the personnel for the consequences of economic crises, such as the present one for example;
- f) The lack of social justice in relation to the fiscal systems, which is a cause of many discriminations;
- g) Needless to say, the relations between workers and their employers are increasingly conflictive and unequal;
- h) The expectations and hopes for the equalizing effects of new technologies have to certain extent failed.

Just to mention one example: Illegal drug trafficking shows how intersections of capitalist market economies, political powers, developments of democracies and other forces can have a grave influence on the implementations of Human Rights Declaration.

8. ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The need to respect human rights has become one of the most salient objectives of civil society, through the activities of associations and organizations whose main aim is to protect human rights in all aspects of social life. Although there are several generalist organisations, more often they specialize in the defence of specific rights, for practical reasons. Many of these organisations are Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), which can receive private or governmental support.

It is relevant to note that article 20 establishes: "*(1) everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; (2) no one may be compelled to belonging to an association*". This is coherent with what I express in this section.

The task of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Oxfam International (among many others) deserves our best support to the task that they are accomplishing. All those organizations, with their diversity of aims, but whose objective is primarily the protection and defence of human rights, exercise a fundamental role in the normal development of a society. I would like to stress that they are essential for our democratic systems. Very often, unfortunately, their real role is the counterpart of the actions - or the lack of it - of governments, that do not act according to the principles of the Declaration. From a political science perspective, it could be said that these associations or organizations may act as pressure groups in favour of human rights. I agree with this position, on the condition that they are not defending an ideology which does not entirely respect the spirit of the Human Rights Declaration.

9. COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND THE RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I hereby use the term of communication sciences, because in practice there is a large variety of forms of communication. Not only can we look at the news, information distribution, public relations, advertising, political communication and scientific communication as a way of

education and support for human rights, but we also need to look at their negative aspects.

I believe that from the cultural perspective, the term communication takes into account the relationship between culture and communication. Thus we need to interpret the second part of the article 22 openly: *“Everyone, as member of the society /.../ is entitled to the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality”*. Consequently, article 27 says:

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

In addition to those two articles, it is also essential to look at article 18:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

This provision links the freedom of thought, with the freedom of conscience, and the freedom of religion. This can have an array of interpretations. In my opinion it deals with three different kinds of freedoms, each one with their own perspective. However, the article emphasizes the role of religion, what can be interpreted as a way of thought and conscience, but it does not strike me as very clear and uniformly understandable, nor should this prioritising religion be admissible.

Article 19:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and of expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

This is a very basic statement, but we cannot forget that it was enacted in 1948. Since then, the key role of communication in its different approaches – its practice, the development and research of its concept, the development of the mass media and the new communication

technologies – has been so impressive, that we can think that the Declaration is outdated in these areas. In a certain sense, it was important that the UNESCO promoted the MacBride Report², a very necessary and open-minded text, but we should not forget its consequences on the free flow of information. The ideological conflict between the right and the left that rose as the consequence of this report is regrettable.

I think that in the area of communication, the Declaration should be considered a reference to be taken into account, but, indeed, it does not respond to the development of the communication sciences, the media and their research. Our attitude should be that the right to communicate, formulated by Jean D'Arcy has always been based on the spirit of the Declaration, together with the role of ethics and deontology. So, if we consider that any communication message also incorporates an intention to persuade (at least to a certain degree) – which is unavoidable if we think also of the article 19 – then we must openly resist the practices of disinformation, lying and, indeed, propaganda.

Communication sciences belong to the social sciences area, and in this aspect they are connected in their interdisciplinary nature. They are also connected to the evolution of the social sciences and to the impact on them in the different aspects of social change. In any case, if we are dealing with the respect and protection of human rights, the ethical approach, together with its deontological application, should be always essential, in spite of the fact that in the practice, it is often ignored or neglected. I wish to emphasize that I have just tried to approach this complex issue with an open-minded spirit, and with the willingness that communication scholars devote attention to it, because of the fundamental relevance of human rights to our field.

10. CONCLUSION

It is difficult to summarize the many aspects that I have considered, and to avoid repetition. I have approached this subject with the sense of its relevance and need, and with the awareness that human rights are exposed to different dangers. As a person who is very much concerned by everybody's ethical behaviour, beginning with myself, I sustain that it is always indispensable to link ethics and human rights. Thus, let me finish affirming that an example to take into consideration is the life of Nelson Mandela.

NOTES

- 1 Full text of the Human Rights Declaration is available at:
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.
- 2 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0004/000400/040066eb.pdf>.

SECTION FIVE: THE POLITICS OF ACADEMIA



François Heinderyckx

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Diversity and convergence in communication science: The idea of 'National Schools' in the European area

Denis McQuail

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to explore the idea that distinctive approaches to the study of communication can be found in different countries and regions. Certainly, this seems a valid idea from a historical perspective, since there are a big variations in the timing and extent of the development of the field of communication across Europe. At this point in time, the history is short enough to be able to look back within living memory at the most active stages of development of what is a very recent branch of scientific enquiry. It does look as if the countries and national academic institutions of Europe have responded in different ways to the demand for the new field of study and have drawn on different intellectual resources as well as investing in varying degrees and for varying reasons. Although the active period is very recent and the whole development confined to the second half of the twentieth century, some of the intellectual roots and influential ideas can be traced much further back into the early modern period.

There are a number of reasons for expecting a national culture to have shaped and marked an activity that is everywhere a cultural practice, but there are also some problems with the notion, insofar as we identify the field as having a scientific status. In that respect, we expect all branches of inquiry have something of a universal character, drawing on the same universe of theories and methods to deal with problems that are experienced in much the same way, irrespective of national boundaries. This assumption is reinforced where there is a further assumption that in the larger geographical space at issue there is a shared history of events, ideas and culture, as well as similar levels of economic development.

In the case of the communication field, there is a further unifying factor in that the impetus to development has mainly come from the application of a set of communication technologies (the mass media) to much the same range of public and private purposes, in much the same way, irrespective of national differences. The main institutions of European societies that depend on public communication, especially those concerned with politics and economics operate in much the same way as each other and are in various ways inter-connected. Even when Europe was divided into East and West, parallel sets of media and civil institutions could be found, even if with differences of purpose and forms of control. Summing up, it can be supposed that differences between countries, and thus the basis for separate 'national schools' are likely to have been most marked at the earliest stage of development of the field (say, around mid 20th century), then gradually disappearing with further growth and intercommunication. Meanwhile the object of study - public communication - was becoming more similar everywhere, as well as becoming a more central institution. In the final stage envisaged in such a progression there is little scope for the survival of national schools, except as a fringe matter, or a matter of style, or as a reflection of continuing cultural differences that follow the lines of older nation states and linguistic/cultural spheres of influence.

This rest of this paper is essentially an evaluation of this supposition or proposition. The main purpose is to remind present-day students that the ideas underlying their work have an intellectual history and social context. An appreciation of such factors is helpful in understanding the ideas and also an aid in choosing for our own purposes, perhaps by looking beyond what is immediately on offer. The focus here is on the diversity of the field of study of media and communication in Europe, although this means ignoring the elephant in the living room, in this case the United States, since the field was most fully developed at an early date in the US and its history in Europe can also be seen as a matter of adoption in varying degrees of the dominant American paradigm in the years after World War II. In a seminal work, entitled *The Media are American*, Jeremy Tunstall (1977) declared that communication science was predominantly American for the same reasons as were the media. From this point of view, the variation in ways of studying media to be observed in Europe can be understood primarily as variations in willingness or capacity to share the dominant US perspective and methods. Openness to American influence has been, however, a matter of political as well as of cultural and economic factors and such an

approach would provide a very inadequate picture of actual diversity and the reasons behind it.

Some preliminary clarification is needed. Firstly, the assumption here is that the 'field' of 'media and communication' (to use one common name), or of 'communication science' (to use another) consists of the integration of theory, research and teaching in institutionalised form within the larger national institution of education and science. In most European countries, this occurred somewhere between 1975 and 1990, although there was a good deal of media and communication research at least from mid-century onward. Secondly, the term 'school' is used in three senses, but primarily as a reference to the set of practices in the field that have some profile or dominant tendency of definition, problem formulation and method of approach that can be discerned at the national level. Any such classification is bound to be subjective, partial, provisional and decidedly 'fuzzy', since national schools as defined are not institutionally recognised. The other two meanings of 'school' are more objective and therefore more open to observation: firstly, in the sense of a theoretical approach or agenda of problems knowingly adopted by a set of different scholars. Usually such schools accept a common identity and name, sometimes the name of a theorist who provided the founding ideas; secondly, in the literal sense of a school or institute that has a dominant preference for a certain approach to the study of communication. We can thus identify a national school with reference to the activities of the participants in the fields, by way of chosen orientations and the schools to which they belong. Put like this, it seems quite likely that in a given country there will be some observable dominant tendencies in the practice of the field.

2. REFLECTIONS ON ONE CASE: THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION IN FRANCE

The remarks that followed are based on information and ideas presented in a related chapter in this book contributed by Bertrand Cabedoche. It is not intended or necessary here to summarize or analyse the information provided and it is recognised that this material is also a subjective interpretation by an informed observer, making no claim to be a complete or impartial account. The main purpose of the exercise, however, is to distil from this one case an impression of the range of factors that might have contributed to some distinctive features of a 'French School of Communication Science', as we provisionally name it. The

choice of France as a case for special attention is not random, aside from the fact that it is particularly rich and interesting example, with deep roots and a *prima facie* claim to the title of being a 'national school'. Another reason for special attention is that France has probably shown the strongest tendency to resist the American hegemony of media and associated study, for cultural reasons in part, and partly because of circumstances of linguistic isolation from the Anglo-Saxon literature that diffused the 'American model'. Under 'cultural reasons' can be accounted traditions of philosophy and social thought as well as institutional features of journalism and audiovisual media practice. French exceptionalism has also been in evidence during the most relevant period of scientific development in a political resistance to extension of American power. These remarks are, of course, the subjective views of the present author.

It is relevant to the purpose to briefly highlight a few of the points made by Bertrand Cabedoche that seem especially enlightening about the singularity of the French case. These include the fact that France has since its Revolution placed great emphasis on the values and forms of civil society in a unified state. Its history has been politically and socially turbulent, giving rise to scientific interest in collective behaviour and thought. France was the main birthplace of sociology, marked initially by a strong tendency towards positivism. In the twentieth century, French social philosophy had been more characterised by leftist and subversive ideas. In sociology and the humanities there has been a founding concern with structural linguistics and semiology. At the same time, however, the French state and society has long shown strong technocratic elements, a concern with new inventions, a belief in systematic arrangements and comprehensive centralised planning. Of particular interest is the long term belief in the importance of communication, both as physical transportation and in the informational sense. The 'information society' idea found its first European expression in French ideas and implementation.

3. MAIN DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCE

These reflections lead to the conclusion that communication science in France has deep roots in ideas and experience and has emerged in a bifurcated form, on the one hand notably practical, technocratic and system-oriented, on the other existential and metaphysical, as well as

dissident. The body of material presented about France, also helps to elucidate the main dimensions of variation of the field of communication science in general. A number of attempts to do this have been made in the past and there are several versions of the 'map' of the field in circulation that can be drawn on, although there is no space here to explain more (but see, for instance, Rosengren, 1983, 1989; Meyrowitz, 2008). There are many possible sources of difference (political, methodological, cultural, etc.) but the most economical set of dimensions seems to consist of three main polarities, which are themselves of course interconnected, giving rise to numerous sub-categories. Three dominant principles of division can be expressed as follows:

1. Objective/material versus Subjective/Cultural.

This divide applies primarily to the underlying priorities and problem-identification and also to philosophical underpinnings. For instance, the Objective pole would identify materialist theory (such as classic Marxism) and also political economy and other forms of economic theory. It also relates to systems of governance and the organization of media systems. It applies also to the forms of evidence that are sought in testing theory, thus economic and technical data, and data about media markets and industry. Towards the subjective pole of attention, we find the main problems identified as of a social, psychological and cultural character, with corresponding attention to evidence about forms of content, text, discourses as well as the cultural context of media choices and reception plus, of course, attention to the motivations for communication.

2. A critical versus functionalist, neutral or positivist dimension.

Critical approaches all problematize media and communication, but vary a good deal in the fundamentality and basis of criticism (e.g. a Marxist versus a moralistic critique). The alternative is to see media and communication as meeting essential needs of society, with scientific priorities directed at reliable and complete descriptions and explanations of how systems work, for their better or more efficient operation.

3. A choice between primary focus on media or on society.

A primary focus on media may involve adopting of some form of medium theory (as with the Toronto school of McLuhan), or a more technological determinist approach. Giving priority to society means highlighting social and cultural context and consequence and usually

a conviction that uses and effects of media are not caused by a particular technology but by the operation of more fundamental social forces.

Although this is very crude instrumentation, it does at least illustrate the possibility of distinguishing between the way a field tends to be practised in a particular country or within a certain cultural/linguistic space. We should not expect to find absolute differences, but variations of emphasis and different patterns in different countries. For instance, a review of French communication science could certainly produce evidence of some activity at all six 'poles' of differentiation, but the distribution would be uneven. The main question being addressed here is how we account for the pattern of unevenness that emerges and also for differences that we hypothesise would be apparent if we made comparisons with other cases of 'national school'. An attempt at an answer follows.

4. FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR DIFFERENCES WITHIN AND BETWEEN NATIONAL SCHOOLS

This account also draws primarily on the evidence presented about France, but informed by other observations. The factors operate at a variety of levels and on a variety of time scales. For obvious reasons, the longer the history and more complex the case, the harder it is to establish any particular cause and effect relation, but this is not necessary. The aim is only exploratory. The main factors can be described briefly as follows:

- Intellectual roots and origins, not only in 'communication science', but often also in philosophy, political and social theory, literature, etc. Not unimportant can be the existence or not of a school of media or communication history (e.g. of the national press).
- Certain underlying social and cultural features, especially perhaps religion and ethnic diversity. In addition, the historical experience of the nation state in the geo-political and economic sphere can shape the perception and prioritization of communication issues. Relevant here are imperial connections, war and conflict, foreign control, internal dissent, revolution and other deep experiences.
- National policy imperatives in a variety of fields of application: cultural/linguistic, economic development, administrative, technological, etc. Significant examples for the communication field in

the period in question include: the protection and promotion of the national media system and its productive capacity; the protection of the national language and culture; the rapid exploitation of new technologies (especially ICT); market growth in the information and media sphere.

- Development and structure of academic/scientific institutions. In this connection we can say that particular schools develop a policy and profile for different reasons that contribute to the larger pattern of the overall field. If there are only one or two large schools at work, they may well compete with each other by different profiling and also influence the external image of a national school.
- The diffusion of influence across borders, either as an exporter which leads to wider influence and thus reinforcement at home or as importer (of ideas, methods, priorities) which tends to lessen the national particularity, although it may be a source of strength selectively. Whether or not influence flows in either direction depends on several other factors, including especially the critical mass or size of a field and also linguistic, cultural and scientific connections internationally. Some nations are more open, others more closed. Some countries regard themselves as largely self-sufficient in scholarship, or seem to operate as such. The most important single way in which this factor operates in the case of communication science may be the extent of borrowing or insulation the leading nation in the field of communication science – the USA.
- The particular national media system. Although media technologies are sooner or later the same everywhere, they are often organized differently and have a different kind of relationship to other institutions, including those of politics, government and the economy. The national media can directly influence research, theory and education in various possible roles – e.g. as source of problems for investigation, sponsor, destination for employment, occupational or general culture of the organization.
- Less easy to specify are a range of potential cultural influences of a random kind that may have more to do with, taste and even fashion. Communication science grew in most countries rather quickly and in an unplanned manner, opening up possibilities for chance effects from travel, publication, translation, etc.

This catalogue of potential influences exposes the virtual impossibility of systematic investigation, especially since the potential effects are matters of judgement and perception rather than measurement or definite observation. Nevertheless, they are of some use in attempting the interpretative task as outlined. The listing of factors of such broad significance also indicates that the relevant cases where it makes much sense to discern a distinct national school are relatively few in number. They are limited to countries (or possibly zones of national influence) that are characterised by having a fairly early and well developed set of institutions and activities in the communication field, with something distinctive about their history, culture and media systems. There are not many candidates in Europe that meet such criteria (see McQuail, 2008). At the end of the twentieth century, when the field was more or less widely established, the only candidates might have been:

- France and the francophone area (as outlined);
- The United Kingdom;
- Germany, that institutionalised the study of the press and publicity before any other country;
- The Scandinavian (Nordic) region that was very prominent in the field of communication research by the 1970s and has always been very productive.
- The Mediterranean region, with Italy leading and Spain following, for historical reasons, but with what looks from the outside like some shared features of problematization, style, media systems, etc.

5. EXTENDING THE SCOPE OF COMPARISON: A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CASE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

The UK has occupied a fairly prominent position in the overall space of media/communication studies in Europe during the last thirty years or so, measured at least by the number of programmes offered, the numbers of overseas students attracted, the volume of publications of books and journals and other visible indicators. In terms of general features it is similar a nation to France - a former imperial power, member of the EU, an intertwined history, and so on. There is no doubt that a certain part of the international status of the UK in the field is attributable to its sharing a language with the more powerful and successful USA and acting as a staging post for the transmission of influence from there to Europe, with the English language also becoming

increasingly a lingua franca. However this does not invalidate a comparison and the UK does have some distinctive features as a 'school' that strike the present author, at least, when prompted by the account of the French case and reminded by the outline of influential factors given in the preceding section.

A series of somewhat disconnected points follows, identifying key features of difference and distinctiveness.

Intellectual roots and origins.

The roots of communication science in the UK are quite shallow, despite the significance of early UK political thinkers and social philosophy in western thought. Their influence fed into the study of politics and history but did not much inform research into the press and new mass media, with one or two exceptions. Communication research began after WWII prompted mainly by practical concerns about social and political effects, especially after the arrival of television. The strongest intellectual influence stemmed from the humanities and early cultural theory dealing with literature and popular taste (or lack of it). After WWII, this blossomed into a distinctive and leading school of study of popular culture, helped on by the very pragmatic theorising of Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams. This distinctive British approach became more radicalised and took a more distinctly Marxist and linguistic turn, under French theoretical influence, when Stuart Hall took over the direction of Hoggart's 'Birmingham School'. Sociology became also influential but a variety largely imported from the USA, also with radical components, focussing often on the ideological construction of news. A third strand was that of 'political economy' directed primarily at uncovering capitalist influence on and via the media system.

Some underlying social and cultural features could include: a British pre-occupation with social class (not unknown in France), although without much evidence of sharp class conflict; a pragmatism and resistance to theorising (theory is something foreign that has to be imported, translated and handled with care); using a world language, but still rather insular and with traces of post-imperial self-satisfaction and historic ethno-centrism; rather limited exposure to the shocks of history compared to the Continent of Europe.

National policy imperatives have little constancy. Little in the way of cultural policy as such, but there is a continuing attention to the

governance of the media system, especially broadcasting, but from time to time also the press. Later phase of national policy turned toward initially unsuccessful stimulation of new media communication technology, with more success later when coupled with opening up of new markets by way of privatization. Otherwise continued concerns with social control and order.

The institutional framework for the field of communication was for long left largely to chance, with little direct public funding and with a low status in the larger world of education and science. At a late stage of expansion of higher education (from the 1970s onwards) encouragement was given to the educational programmes in communication that turned out to be a success in terms of quantity. The educational institution was very slow to introduce any form of higher journalism (or other media occupation) training. Typically in the UK, academic institutions and those of industry keep apart.

Diffusion of influence has been mentioned. The key points about the UK seem to be that, as with France, it mistakenly regards itself as largely self-sufficient in ideas and scientific output, with only limited efforts to borrow from elsewhere (like methods from the US and complex literary-cultural theory mainly from France, or via France), and with almost no translation from other languages, unless by way of the USA.

The media system has indirectly been very significant in shaping the growth and pattern of the field, despite the lack of input from communication science into the media and the relative lack of support from the media for media research and training. The influence is mainly accounted for by the fact that actual developments in media are closely tracked by media students and critics. It is relevant to note that the British media are, or think of themselves as, largely self-sufficient as national producers. However, both broadcasting (especially the BBC) and also the concentrated national press have for long been powerful and very influential cultural institutions that have overshadowed the work of media researchers and theorists, the latter having relatively low status in public debates on important issues involving the media. There are and never have been any academic celebrities in this area, only outsiders, occasionally granted some attention. Despite the imbalanced relationship, the British media are

generally regarded with respect or affection by their students and critics.

These comments do not amount to a coherent account of a national school, but they support the view that there is something distinctive about the practice of the field in the UK, that this distinctiveness could, with more care and time, be elucidated and assessed, at least sufficiently to make an interesting comparison with France. And if this can be done with the UK, so should it also be possible with other potential schools. The exercise does also confirm that there are some systematic influences stemming from the particular history, culture and social composition of a country, as set out above. While it makes little sense to go further in detail, the general relevance of the dimensions of variation set out above seems to be confirmed.

6. CONCLUSION

The growth of the field of media and communication internationally (across Europe and globally) has made the question of existence and nature of national schools of much less significance than was once the case. There is an increasing convergence and sharing of ideas and methods, promoted by general forces of global diffusion of information, but also by the convergence of media technologies, forms and experiences that present us with common problems and issues. There are still some dominant producing countries and institutional schools, some more innovative and successful than others, and the composition of influence patterns is always changing. The specific contribution of national history and culture from new sources is itself often a source of innovation and creativity. But there are still some sources of bias and constriction arising from too close confinement to the 'national school'. Knowledge and awareness in such matters can still be of value.

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Communication and media studies: The French tradition(s). Keys concepts and key schools

Bertrand Cabedoche

1. INTRODUCTION

Mapping communication and media studies history supposes either courage or recklessness, at least if you consider the difficulty in distinguishing both the cognitive institutionalization and the social institutionalization of the discipline. The process becomes even more intimidating as someone may criticise the initiative for being ethnocentric, as I am focusing on its history in my own country. Still, the chapter aims only to give a minimum foundation to open up debates about communication sciences and media studies in Europe. In order to introduce what could be seen as French traditions within the field, I have divided this chapter into three parts: 1) the pioneers; 2) the French critical tradition; 3) the reactions to the 'return' of the individual as an actor.

2. THE PIONEERS

We must first consider one element as an important factor of understanding, before making any comparison: the national-specific context.

2.1. The specific national context

Historically, it is necessary to go back to the French Revolution in 1789. Since this period, France has usually been defined as the model of a *civic nation*, whereas Germany could be the model of an *ethnic nation* and United States of America the model of a *multicultural nation* (Smith, 1994). This means that 'collective identity', 'ethnic identities', and 'religious

identities' are phrases reserved only for the private sphere. The principle is clearly assumed: For philosophers of the '*siècle des Lumières*' (The Era of The Enlightenment¹, the 18th century), the individual is the absolute referent above or before communities.

This constitutional background explains two characteristics common to both the revolutionary and the post-revolutionary periods. On the one hand, at a political level, collective organizations were considered to be dangerous for citizens' free will: The first French constitution and Le Chapelier law in June 1791 forbade any workers' gathering and corporate organizations. On the other hand, at a theoretical level, speaking about citizens is considered to work against '*le sens de l'histoire*' (the understanding of history), according to the linear conception of historic evolution, as the struggle for equality supposes a fight against any type of differences (cultural, ethnic, religious, social, ...). From the revolutionary period to the 1970s, the Republican Public School tried to erase the psychological, cultural and social adherences, according to the French Literature Nobel Prize winner, Anatole France (1844-1924) and the French statesman Émile Combe (1835-1921).

During this period, French politicians used to refer to *Civilization* as a useful concept because of its three dimensions: conqueror (*Civilization* means *Progress*); embodied (*Occident* infers *Civilization*); proselyte (the duty of *Civilization* imposed upon Civilised people, cultures and nations for the benefit of non-civilized populations) (Bénéton, 1975: 36-37). These three dimensions did not only legitimate external colonization, but also internal. So, during the period when France was an imperial nation, at the beginning of the 20th century, people could read articles in newspapers, which referred to regional populations as '*les peuples noirs*', which was the era's insulting term, referring to the lowest category of humanity: lazy, dirty, stupid, alcoholic, cowardly and worse, religious and therefore superstitious!

Le Peuple noir

*Il n'est pas de meilleurs chrétiens que cette crapule de Bretagne; il n'en est pas de plus réfractaire à la civilisation. Idolâtre, fesse-mathieu, lâche, sournois, alcoolique et patriote, le cabot armoricain ne mange pas, il se repaît ; il ne boit pas, il se saoule ; ne se lave pas, il se frotte de graisse ; ne raisonne pas, il prie, et, porté par la prière, tombe au dernier degré de l'abjection. C'est le nègre de la France, cher aux noirs ensoutanés qui dépouillent à son bénéfice les véritables miséreux (Laurent Tailhade, in *L'assiette au Beurre*, p. 131, 3 October 1903).*

There is no better Christian than this bloody Brittany; there is no other more refractory to the civilization. The Armorican dog is a worshipper, loan-shark, coward, sly, alcoholic and a patriot who does not eat but revels, does not drink but gets drunk, does not wash but rubs himself with grease, does not think but prays and, carried away by prayer falls into deepest abjection. He is the negro of France, dear to the black friars who rob the very poor for their own sakes (Laurent Tailhade, in L'assiette au Beurre, p. 131, 3 October 1903, transl. Marcus Denton).

This did not mean that the Human Being always was considered to be an isolated monad. In Belgium, François Quesnay, 1694–1774, and the French Physiocratic School were the first authors to believe in the *invisible hand* of the market, actually even before the liberalists. They were also the first authors to think about communication as a factor of progress and a consequence of Human Reason and Creativity. So, the enlightened despot must create a flow of merchandises and workers, and must support a policy of building (and maintenance) of transport and communication networks. As a point of reference, Quesnay was a man of medicine, who used the analogy of the blood flow of the human body for the productivity of the social body. So, France's post-revolutionary period facilitated numerous policies, such as the metric system, to accelerate the unification of the national territory. Arguably, it is from this priority of unifying the French territory that French authors became – probably – the first to testify to a technological determinism.

2.2. Technological determinism developed many years before it came (back) from the United States

Like in most of the European countries in the 20th century, French researchers were accustomed to refer to American, and more widely Anglo-Saxon authors, to find theories which could help to maintain the “*eternal promise of the paradises of the communication technologies*” (Mattelart, 1995). There are numerous examples: Towards the end of the 19th century, the American author Jack London positioned cinema against poverty and war, and the Scottish sociologist, Patrick Gueddes thought of electricity as a step towards the ‘neotechnic age’. In the first half of the 20th century, the American historian Lewis Mumford and the Canadian researcher Marshall McLuhan both believed in a ‘new agora’ through radio networks and TV networks respectively (Carey, 1981). During World War II, the research of Norbert Wiener, the American mathematician, formulated cybernetics and the term ‘information society’. He pointed to the potential for information networks to avoid barbarianism.

The American politician Albert Arnold Gore Jr coined the term 'information superhighways' in 1992, and now Manuel Castells speaks about a 'new age of information' in order to emphasise information and communication technologies as major factors in social change.

But to be honest, we must recognize that technology determinism took off at the end of the 18th century in France. First, the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau thought that the 'Athenian democratic model' was no longer possible, because of the size of the population and the size of the national territory. And the invention of the optical telegraph by the Chappe brothers, in 1791, could be considered as the first technological entity opening up a 'new utopia'. Information technologies were solutions leading to a 'new democratic age'. French Revolution authors immediately understood the opportunity, believing that it finally would be possible to reproduce the Athenian Agora model by providing the codes of the optical language to the citizens. In fact, usage was immediately monopolised by the Army. But throughout the 19th century, French authors were, however, convinced that technological progress in the field of communication was the key to the building of the 'new city' and the 'new world'. For example, Charles Fourier (1772–1837) spoke in terms of '*transmission miragique*'² (the illusion of transmission), as the basis of universal unity, just before the development of the electric telegraph. In this respect, the most famous French author was undoubtedly Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825); still a reference today for French socialists because he fought against the universal-economic republic of Adam Smith. Saint-Simon argued that the economist vision of the world leads to an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. To correct inequalities and to enable progress, Saint-Simon thought in terms of a 'new christianism'. The argument was that the development of communication networks, administrated all over the world by a universal association that operates from an industrial point of view, was more efficient than a tutelary power state. After Saint-Simon's death, one of his disciples, Michel Chevalier, spoke in 1832 in terms of circulating civilization, beginning in the Mediterranean area. To develop communication was to work for democracy and equality.

2.3. The absolute necessity of an engagement from politicians to avoid the dissolution of the Human being into passions

In this context, the key author is Auguste Comte, a disciple of Saint-Simon, and the father of *positivism*. Comte's *positivism* can be considered as a systematisation of rationalism from a linear three-steps conception

of history. The first step is a theological step. The condition of being human is a fiction: One tries to explain the world by either giving attention to objects (fetishism), or through communicating with supposed supernatural creatures (polytheism) or by God (monotheism). This is the condition of children, children-people, children-cultures and children-nations. The second step is a metaphysical step. The condition of being human is based on the effort of trying to explain the world using general principles; for example, nature for Spinoza; geometry for Descartes; materiality for Diderot; rationality for the '*philosophes des Lumières*' (philosophies of The Enlightenment). This corresponds to the condition of adolescence, adolescent-people, adolescent-cultures and adolescent-nations. The third step is a positivist step. Positivism explains the world by looking for facts. The reality experiment leaves speculative discourses. Knowledge comes from the observation of reality via scientific methodologies. This is the condition of adults, adult-people, adult-cultures and adult-nations. Positivism understands that it is the duty of adult-nations to develop its rationality all over the world; positivism forbids politicians to use arguments that do not have a scientific basis and to fight cultural dimensions, which refers back to the first step. The influence of positivism can explain the impact of the American theorists of diffusion in the middle of the 20th century. Before then, French authors used to speak in a social Darwinist and deterministic way. Scientific progress comes to the periphery from the outward radiation of cultural values from the centre. Half a century later, American authors still spoke in a similar way. The main actors within this notion of modernization were the Western world's mass media in their promotion of democratic values and liberalism (Lerner, 1958; Rogers, [1962] 2003; de Sola Pool, 1963).

The French tradition understands the impact of cybernetic and empirical-functional ideas as pioneering within media studies. During the beginning of the 20th century, French authors were first to work on the fear of the crowd. In Belgium, Adolphe Quételet conceptualized the mass as a danger and founded the science of social measurement, in 1835, from one social indicator: '*l'homme moyen*' (the common man). Seventy years later, this science was developed by Bertillon into anthropometry, by Galton into biometry and Lambroso into criminal anthropometry. The main focus was the psychology of crowds.

Gustave Le Bon (1895) used the psychology of crowds to write about the psychology of populations. The racial factor determined and defined the hierarchy of civilizations and cultures. Progressively, Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904) spoke about the *Era of Publics*. For Tarde, the issue was not to

argue against any potential apocalypse caused by the plebs (common people), regarded as a key factor of social contamination, but to think of the *Era of Publics* as progress (sociability), resulting from the development of communicative measures (transportation and diffusion). Arguably, we could say that Tarde prepared contemporary French think tanks to read Harold Lasswell's papers on *mass communication research*. Mass media must be analysed as useful and powerful for the governmental management of opinions. After World War II, French statesmen were more open to this idea than French sociological and psychological theories, as these ideas had been turned into instruments by Nazi power and Vichy collaboration. So, in the immediate context of World War II, French references were mainly American in the field of communication and media studies. On the one hand, some were attracted by the building of theories, in a similar way to mathematics and biology. *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* of Claude Elwood Shannon (1948) influenced French researchers such as Abraham Moles (1920–1990) and his project of ecology of communication (Moles, 1986). Journalists provided members of dominant journalist syndicates courses in journalism and political discourses about journalism. This training tried to have a scientific appearance using for instance Lasswell's 5 W theory, or Norbert Wiener's cybernetic theories.

On the other hand, the French tradition was completely mobilised by debates about propaganda and was extremely motivated to distinguish social sciences and humanities from mathematical, physical and biological sciences. With American authors such as Birdwhistell, Watslawick and Edward T. Hall, France learnt not to adopt linear models and paid attention to the Palo Alto school. Serge Tchakhotine's *Le viol des foules* (*The rape of crowds*) convinced about the efficiency of *propaganda* by the media for the benefit of the totalitarian strengths (Tchakhotine, 1939). At the same time, Jacques Ellul was aware of the increasing risk of propagandas (in plural) whether the political system was Soviet or western (Ellul, 1963).

3. THE FRENCH CRITICAL TRADITION

The arguments against functionalism mainly came from four places: the influence of the Frankfurt School; the mainly French contribution to structuralism; the relatively poor French contributions to debates on the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) and from Cultural Studies as a specific school. These four traditions have that in

common that they distance themselves from empirical functionalism arguing that the media must be analysed not only as factors of regulation, but also as factors of domination.

3.1. *The natural meeting between a French critical tradition and the Frankfurt School's critics*

Among those who are usually classified as functionalist authors, a French critical tradition immediately appears interested in dissident voices working within functionalist frameworks. Indicated as one of the inspirers of American cultural studies, C. Wright Mills was open to the contribution of Marxist critics. His research works connected two issues: culture to power and social stakes from social structures. Free time must not be disconnected from work time. So, he questioned society: how to organize genuine leisure activities, without being a 'joyful robot'? This kind of question is close to Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) who questioned the kind of men and women our societies create. Alongside Mills, Lefebvre was one of authors who denounced the alienation, which dominated the model of societies promoted by both USA and USSR. France was, together with Italy, a place where the impacts of neo-Marxist theories were important, it listened to the Frankfurt School and authors such as Adorno, Horkeimer, Marcuse and Habermas (Tar, 1977).

An unresolved issue concerned the cultural industry concept and whether we are facing a phenomenon of standardization of products or a phenomenon of societal dissolution. In retrospect, a lot of students who were involved in the May '68 movement relate that their involvement was mainly due to the 'hegemonic' reading of Marcuse book *L'homme unidimensionnel* (*The One-Dimensional Man*); indeed the depth of Marcuse's influence before May 68 was widely viewed to be "a myth" (Duvignaud, 1979; Dreyfus-Armand et al., 2000: 85). For his part, Abraham Moles preferred to speak as Alvin Toffler did, focusing on how western societies are building a '*culture mosaïque*' (mosaic culture) in that anybody gets any kind of message, anywhere, in any conditions. This is not a real option for encountering knowledge but only an illusion of knowledge.

Alongside the alienation concept, are we facing a Marxist concept or a break? Guy Debord was a situationist author, preparing the way for an understanding of the topic of alienation through media, using theories particularly developed by Herbert Marcuse. Debord argued that the spectacle was the ultimate stage of capitalism. It is an economic ideology,

because society is legitimating a standard vision of life, an alienation that allows the reproduction of power (Debord, 1967).

In the context of structuralism, the individual is no longer an actor in history. Structuralism is primarily a linguistic theory. From language as a social institution, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) had a dream of a science that studied signs of social life (de Saussure, 2006). Roland Barthes (1915–1980) was the academician who tried to realize that dream. From the distinction between denotation and connotation, language appears as a social organization of signs, which works in media, building myths, in order to make naturalize the values of the *'petite bourgeoisie'* (Barthes, 1997). This is why we must say: *"Language is fascist"*. Algirdas-Julien Greimas (1917–1992), from Lithuania and quickly integrated as a French author, laid the foundations for the Paris School of Semiotics through his work on structural semiotics: when analysing a media article, the first level of meaning must reveal the article's ideology (Greimas, 1966; Broden, 1998).

The research teams at the renowned *Centre d'étude des communications de masse* (CECMAS) developed the Centre's theories of mass communication. Established in 1960, the Centre has comprised widely acknowledged authors; e.g. Georges Friedman, Edgar Morin, Julia Kristeva, Christian Metz, Violette Morin, Eliseo Veron and Jules Gritti. In 1921, Edgar Morin brought the cultural industry concept to France, speaking of the narcotic function of media. Using the psychoanalytic mechanism of projection, Morin explains how society is actually creating stars in cinema, TV, politics and sports. Journalists become the new Olympians (Morin, 1962). Beyond the work of the Center, a radical re-reading of Marxism is proposed by the writing of Althusser (and Balibar). We must contest alienation as the wrong pre-Marxist humanist concept. The correct analysis is that the *'appareils idéologiques d'état'* (ideological state apparatus), such as school, church, family and media, exert symbolic violence, allowing the domination of one class and the determination of human beings (Althusser, [1965]1997).

Claude Lévy-Strauss and Roman Jakobson, who both spent most of World War II in New York City teaching at the *École Libre des Hautes études*, the university-in-exile for French academics³, are considered central figures for structuralism. The *Elementary Structures of Kinship* was rapidly regarded as one the most important anthropological works on kinship, in which Lévi-Strauss explains that we must apply structuralist analysis to anthropology and focus on the relationships between individuals inside families instead of focusing on the individuals (Lévy-Strauss, 1958; 1973). Lévi-Strauss considered culture as a system of

'symbolic communication', to be investigated with methods that others have used more narrowly in the discussion of novels, political speeches, sports, and films. His work engaged French authors to question the nature of human freedom, opening a heated debate with Jean-Paul Sartre. On one hand, as a left wing author, Sartre believed that individuals are constrained by ideologies imposed on them by the powerful. But on the other hand, as an existentialist philosopher, he said that human being is free to act (Sartre, 1964), a position Levy-Strauss considered false. Echoes of this debate between structuralism and existentialism inspired young French authors. In the structuralist sphere of influence, Bourdieu, like Foucault, spread French influence beyond the national borders.

Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) worked on symbolic violence. He analysed mechanisms of social reproduction focusing on cultural and symbolic factors rather than economic ones, as Marxists do. He thought that social actors develop strategies from dispositions (cultural capital) they have learnt through socialization (habitus), inside spheres of competition he calls fields. He aimed to build a synthesis between structuralism and constructivism (Bourdieu, 1984). Michel Foucault (1926–1984) worked on '*social control*'. He analysed the integration of power by the individual. He distinguishes two kinds of power. On one hand, the '*discipline blocus*'⁴ is based on exclusions, hierarchies, subdivisions, and breaks of communication. On the other hand, the '*discipline mechanism*' is formed from numerous techniques of surveillance and crossed with flexible processes of control, devices which exercise surveillance through the internalization by the individual from its constant exposure in the eye of control (Foucault, 1977).

3.2. *A relatively poor contribution to debates about NWICO and Cultural Studies*

We can summarise the way French writers invested in debates at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s about the relationship between North and South, and particularly issues about information in a world dimension in this area, as paradoxical.

On one hand, various factors should have prepared a significant intellectual contribution from France. First, the NWICO debate was launched by Jean Maheu, the French president of UNESCO. Secondly, French left wing intellectuals maintained either close relationships with their African colleagues, who (radically) demanded for a NWICO to be established, or read the works of Latin-American authors like Antonio Pasquali, Luis Ramiro Beltrán, Fernando Reyes Matta, and Marius

Kaplun. Thirdly, both structuralism – with its methodological panoply of techniques was particularly relevant to analyse media discourses in a critical way – and Sartre’s reading of *existentialism* were able to consider the phenomenon of international domination by Western media through its own definition of cultural neo-colonialism. So, French authors should have been open to works of Kaarle Nordenstreng, Tapio Varis and Jean-Paul Sartre. Nordenstreng and Varis co-authored the warning to UNESCO to pay more attention to the one-way-directional-flow-of-information in the world (Nordenstreng, 1986). Sartre prepared the warning’s analyses; he had seen his popularity growing, in particular when he declined the Nobel Prize for Literature in protest against bourgeois society.

Some French authors were now working to reveal the ethnocentrism of First World newspapers and the configuration of the dominant global press agencies, particularly when these authors maintained a close and personal relationship to Anglo-Saxon media, literature and authors like Palmer and Boyd-Barrett. Of course, other authors also denounced media imperialism, as a process that positioned France towards Africa (for example, Mignot-Lefebvre, 1996)

[W]hereby the ownership, structure, distribution or content of the media in any country are singly or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries, without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected (Boyd-Barrett, 1977: 117).

But, despite the distribution of the media imperialism concept all around the world, we must say that the French production has not been particularly noticeable on this issue, except for some poor quality books (Bourges, 1976), or Armand Mattelart’s original (in the French context) contribution (Mattelart, 1995). This relative lack of French cultural influence could be contrasted to the progressively growing influence of UK-based Cultural Studies. Cultural studies are focusing on the place of culture over social and economic determinism, and the ability or willingness to play an active role in an encoding/decoding process, revealing a hegemonic reading, but also negotiated and counter-hegemonic readings too.

Debates initiated by Cultural Studies were not really known in France, as they still had to be mobilised. For this to happen, we had to wait for the mediation of French anthropologists, such as Marc Augé, and for discussions on the effects of transnational media on the 3rd world

(Mattelart, 2002). When Cultural Studies finally became more familiar to French readers, the debate had already undergone the destiny of any scientific revolution (Kuhn, 1962). Neveu and Mattelart (2003: 63–68) explain that having gradually delivered all it can deliver, a scientific revolution finally loses its ability to be creative, as well as its significance as a theoretical identity.

In France, Schiller (1976) was however already criticised from other theoretical paradigms; French researchers quickly developed a critical distance with regards to NWICO and Herbert Schiller's concept of cultural imperialism. In fact, under political pressure the debates about NWICO quickly became unfashionable. The USA wanted to impose a free flow of communication; the USSR developed an instrumental strategy of non-aligned countries; the USA, UK and New Zealand decided to leave UNESCO, which provoked a lethal crisis for the international institution. Moreover, the non-aligned countries were not unanimous in defining NWICO. Subsequently, more and more French authors started to argue that the dominant nations still tried to use their exaggerated power to guarantee their reproduction.

During this time, intellectuals in France were willing to develop new paradigms. The debate on the return of the individual as an actor, and activities concerning intersubjectivity, were progressively transforming the intellectual landscape. All this stemmed from a major critique against structuralism.

4. THE DEBATED ISSUE ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL AS AN ACTOR

At the end of the 1970s, after the failure of structuralism, at least in its more radical version, France opened up to other schools of philosophy.

4.1. *The relative decline of structuralism and the assertion of a post-modern age*

Henri Lefèbvre (1901–1991) was the earliest critic of *structuralism* in claiming that mediated information is not a monolithic system. He argued for the need to come back to experimentation, instead of fixing the structure outside time and space, as Althusser did (Lefebvre, 1981). In this context, a space was opened up for other challenging paradigms (Lyotard, 1985). The French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard (1924–1998) argued that the present time was (1979) the post-modern age. According to Lyotard the conventional focus on nation-state, political parties, professions, institutions and historic traditions was now less

efficient for analysis. He instead argued for the need to create a distance from '*les modèles de profondeur*' (the profound models) of ideology *versus* false consciousness; cultural authenticity *versus* alienation and signifier *versus* signified. Luc Ferry (a future Minister of Education in Raffarin's government 2002–2005) and Alain Renaut criticised the determinist thesis. Authors from Nietzsche and Heidegger to Marx and Freud were the inspirations of the determinist theory, which intellectuals like Foucault, Derrida, Bourdieu and Lacan supported. The determinist theory emphasized both the submission of the individual to the social and cultural structures they live in, to their conditions as members of a social class, and to their unconscious (Ferry and Renaut, 1985). This revolution opened up France's intellectual debates for a lot of schools, for example ethnomethodology.

But some French researchers, such as Gérard Althabe (1932–2004) felt suspicious about the "*disappearance of the critical distance*" (Althabe, 1988). In fact, a lot of French authors were more interested in analysing usages. The rise of theories of the uses of communicating machines comes from the famous reversed question: 'what do people do with media?' This has been important in France. Pioneers such as Jacques Perriault (1985), and collaborations with American researchers (Dayan and Katz, 1992) opened up the French intellectual landscape to for instance Giddens' stacking of practices and structure; Austin's communicational linguistic; Bakhtin's ideology of life; Jauss' co-creation of authors and readers (which was a topic developed by Jean-Paul Sartre); Katz' negotiated uses and Michèle Mattelart's gender inspired studies (Mattelart, 2003).

4.2. *The impossible 'consensus'*

From the end of the 20th century to the first years of the 21st century, there were increasing calls, particularly from the USA, for convergences, in terms of both theory and methodology. The American Everett Rogers' return is significant in this context. He had recently suggested that his previous diffusionist position was too linear; now, the heavy devices of centralised and persuasive media were no longer efficient. The situation now made it necessary to understand convergence between individuals, thanks to 'light information techniques', and to hope for mutual understanding. Epistemologically, like Elihu Katz, Rogers believed that links would begin to form between critical research and empirical research. Significant, too, are the terminological changes taking place during this time period: Globalization invites some to think of the management of the world; logics of re-territorialisation urge us to

consider cultural meetings in terms of hybridization and to speak of glocalization.

This message should have been widely heard in France. After all, at the end of 1960s, Jean d'Arcy (administrative director of the states broadcasting channel O.R.T.F. and founder of the *Eurovision Network* in 1954), had already used the same terms. D'Arcy, as a visionary, was dreaming of a new kind of relationships between people brought about from the potential of new and light techniques of broadcasting (Pierre, 2003).

French research integrated these dimensions but also repositioned them in a critical way. Researchers have translated and adopted the teachings of Jesus Martin-Barbero, Nestor Garcia Canclini and Arjun Appadurai whose ideas have helped to better understand the fine articulations between local and global. That it is not to say that – as a social sciences and humanities discipline – the consistency of French information and communication science (*SIC* in French) is not evolving. But unlike physical sciences for example, which are working to produce theorems, the knowledge of *SIC* constitutes a non-cumulative science, within which a theoretical statement is not that easily erased from its context and continues its own trajectory, testifying to a historic longevity. So, we must understand that convergences cannot be absolute in France.

5. To conclude: GRESEC, as a characteristic research team beyond the French landscape

Within this context of multiple perspectives, and competing schools of thought, GRESEC in Grenoble has now developed a good position in *SIC*, avoiding a general theory and without producing pure speculative discourses. However, GRESEC does consider that the work of researchers should formulate concepts and models and – hence – move beyond the totally descriptive level. Content and discourse analysis can be useful, but only when they are systematically connected to other methodologies, to reveal games and variable strategies from social actors (including journalists) and understand the risks and mechanisms.

Under the leadership of Bernard Miège GRESEC has become a powerful force in critiques of the 'information age'. The GRESEC team (Miège, 2007; Pailliar, 1995; Bouquillion, 2008; Cabedoche, 2009; Mattelart, 2002) argues that Information and Communication Technologies accompany rather than determine social change, i.e. they are never the sole cause of fragmentation of the public sphere. GRESEC discusses the penetration of the public sphere into the private sphere and the

criticism of the culture industries, considering the segmentation of sectors, all with their own laws of profitability: books, music; broadcasting mass media and the print media.

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NOTES

- 1 All French into (English) translations are the responsibility of Marcus Denton, the language editor of this chapter.
- 2 *Miragique* – the adjective of "mirage", an optical illusion.
- 3 *École Libre des Hautes Études* after the war became a leading Paris based research institution, the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*.
- 4 See Beaulieu and Gabbard (2006: 76) for an explanation of '*discipline blocus*'.

Oscillations between coherence and fragmentation, and between globalisation, glocalisation and translocalisation: The Europeanisation of the Communication and Media Studies discipline

Nico Carpentier¹

1. INTRODUCTION

In this article I want to have a look at the Europeanisation process of the Communication and Media Studies discipline. What I want to explicitly avoid is the unconditional acceptance of the sometimes celebratory narrations of the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area. My interest lies in the analysis of the Europeanisation of the Communication and Media Studies discipline, and of its conditions of possibility. In order to theorise this evaluation, I will make use of the concept of globalisation (and its counterparts, glocalisation and translocalisation), based on the (theoretical) similarities between globalisation and Europeanisation. At the same time, I will only focus on the European component of the Communication and Media Studies discipline, in the full realisation that other continents have equally valuable academic practices and traditions. My starting point will be a reflection on the nature of the discipline, and the way it has been organised in the diversity of European countries. Only afterwards, I will move to the discussion on the Europeanisation of the discipline.

2. COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES AS A DISCIPLINE

Communication and Media Studies has for some time now been established as a discipline in most European countries. Although the

European – dare I say global – history of Communication and Media Studies still has to be written, the fragmented genealogies that are already available support the conclusion that with the growing attention for communication since the end of the WWII, with the construction of independent university departments from the 1960s onwards, with the institutionalisation of communication study programmes in the 1970s and early 1980s, and with the emancipation from the US and Soviet research traditions (although obviously in different ways), European Communication and Media Studies have become a full-fledged and thriving discipline. It shows that Berelson's harsh critique – published in 1959 – proclaiming the near death of the discipline because of the lack of new ideas, was wrong.

However, Communication and Media Studies remains a young discipline, although Atwood and de Beer (2001) have pointed us to the existence of Tobias Peucer's doctoral dissertation, *De relationibus novellis* ("On news reporting"), which was written in Germany in 1690. Moreover, the discipline of Communication and Media Studies has many ancestors, like Albert Schäffle, Karl Bücher, Max Weber, Karl Jaeger, Gabriel Tarde, Alexis de Tocqueville and many more (listed by Simonson and Peters (2008), see also Jirák and Köpplová (2008); Robinson (1996)); but we are still part of a young discipline.

Despite (or maybe because of) its relative novelty, the discipline remains characterised by its diversity. In his overview of schools in his contribution to the *International Encyclopaedia of Communication* (see also his chapter in this volume), McQuail (2008) points to the existence of different schools in Western Europe, such as the Francophone school, the Scandinavian school, the British school, the 'German-centred' school and the 'Mediterranean' school. He quickly adds that "*Smaller countries were not necessarily backward in developing the field of communication and some, such as Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and Finland, took leading positions.*" In addition, he also makes the solid argument that research (and education) is context-dependant, and that the diversity of European media systems, media cultures and media uses, combined with a more general diversity at the level of the political, the social, the historical, the economical, the legal and the cultural, also generates a diversity of European academic research traditions. Obviously, the cold war divide is one of the key events that have impacted on the European Communication and Media Studies discipline, keeping the schools and traditions in the East and the West of Europe from communicating with each other. These different historical trajectories have only strengthened the diversity of the discipline, and (however regrettable the East-West divide was) have

added to the richness that characterises the European Communication and Media Studies discipline, rendering it a house with many rooms.

But let me take one step back, and look at the dynamics between coherence and fragmentation, between diversity and unity, between fluidity and sedimentation, that characterise a discipline, a concept that Moran (2002: 2) defines as “*a particular branch of learning or body of knowledge*”, immediately adding the second meaning of discipline to his definition, referring to “*the maintenance of order and control amongst subordinated groups ...*” Disciplines play a key role in the organisation of knowledge, but also in organising (and sometimes disciplining) its practitioners. Nelson and Parameshwar (1996: 3) explain this disciplining component: “*disciplines police their boundaries, by training their members to internalize them, neutralize them, and then fancy themselves free as birds.*”

Obviously, the order that is provided by a discipline cannot be considered pre-given. As Gaddis (1976: 20) wrote in his novel *JR* on knowledge:

Knowledge has to be organized so it can be taught, and it has to be reduced to information so it can be organized. ... this leads you to assume that organisation is an inherent property of the knowledge itself, and that disorder and chaos are simply irrelevant forces that threaten it from outside. In fact, it's exactly the opposite.

Not unlike Claude Lefort's (1988) reflection on the empty place of power in contemporary democracies, we can say that the heart of a discipline is empty, but at the same time filled by a continuous stream of practices at the level of research, pedagogy, representation and (public) intervention. Different paradigms, pedagogical ideologies, individuals and organisations struggle for control of the empty heart of the discipline, in order to position themselves on the discipline's throne of knowledge, only to be dethroned soon after or to have the phantasm disrupted by the presence of other academic discourses or institutions with similar claims. In this sense, the notion of coherence and harmony is a phantasm, never to be realised. But on the other hand, we cannot imply (again using Lefort's metaphor) that there is no heart of the discipline. We simply cannot ignore the establishment of academic hegemonies that generate a combination of stability and exclusion. Less dramatically, and reverting to the Foucauldian notion of the necessary productivity of power, we cannot not ignore the importance of academic nodal points that structure and stabilise the entire field, and that ensure its continued existence. From this sense, the belief in the fragmentation of the field is equally

phantasmagorical, and is built on a naïve understanding of the structure-agency dialectics. An illustration of the presence of both phantasms in this debate can be found in Craig's (2008) summary of the two successive special issues of the *Journal of Communication* on *The future of the field: Between fragmentation and cohesion* (1993). There Craig writes:

Some saw the continuing fragmentation of the field as a problem; others celebrated fragmentation as an invaluable source of adaptive strength. Some called urgently for efforts to define the intellectual focus of the discipline; others just as urgently insisted that any such effort to define a theoretical core would be not only useless but counter-productive.

More fruitful to approach the workings of a discipline is the notion of oscillation, which describes the permanent movement between a discipline and a field, and allows combining the disciplining effects of the discipline and the nomadic opportunities of the field, without ignoring the structuring capacities of the discipline and the vagabond uncertainties of the field. At the same time we should avoid celebrating the phantasms of coherence and of fragmentation. The phantasm of coherence results in a situation where movement is made impossible by the disciplining effects of the discipline, while the phantasm of fragmentation results in the disintegration of the discipline. In short, the discipline moves, whether we like it or not. It is also only through this oscillatory process that we can generate enough openness to enter into multi-, cross-, inter-, and transdisciplinary dialogues, and enough closedness to avoid being incorporated by other disciplines.

3. COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES AS A EUROPEAN DISCIPLINE

But where is the discipline moving to? One dimension where changes (or oscillations) are taking place is at the European level. The process of Europeanisation takes place at the organisational level, at the level of research and at the level of education and exchange. At the organisational level things have rapidly changed. In the (late) 1990s attempts to organise the field had led to the establishment of the European Consortium for Communication Research (ECCR) and the European Communication Association (ECA). The breakthrough came in 2005, at the *First European Communication Conference*. This conference took place from 24 until 26 November 2005 in Amsterdam and already had 550

participants from more than 30 countries. Here, these two organisations merged, to become the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), an organisation that saw its membership in the years after the conference spectacularly increase, reaching the 1600 members mark in February 2009.

After the merger in November 2005, ECREA continued the tradition of the European Communication Conferences, and organised the *Second European Communication Conference* (the ECC08) in Barcelona (25–28 November 2008), in close collaboration with the Communication Sciences Faculty at the UAB and the Communication Institute (InCom-UAB). Here, about 1000 participants of 40 countries attended the conference with its 2 keynote panels, 4 semi-plenary panels and 119 parallel panels (including the poster panels). ECREA's 15 sections and 2 networks played a crucial role in organising the parallel panels of the ECC08. Obviously, the section and network activities were not limited to the ECC08. Together they organised 10 workshops in 2007, with the Brussels symposium *Equal opportunities and communication rights: Representation, participation, and the European democratic deficit* (11–12 October 2007) as one of the most prominent examples². The sections and networks are now in the process of organising a similar number of workshops (for 2009) and they will again play a key role in the *Third European Communication Conference* (ECC10) which will be held in Hamburg (Germany) on 12–15 October 2010, hosted by the Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research. Finally, ECREA has continued the ECCR book series, and opened it up to the ECREA membership through a yearly call. The *Reclaiming the Media* (2007), *Finding the Right Place on the Map* (2008) and *Press Freedom and Pluralism in Europe* (2009) books, in 2010 to be followed by *Gendered Transformations. Theory and Practices on Gender and Media* (2010) exemplify the success of this book series.

This now concludes the promotional component of my chapter.

We do find a similar process of Europeanisation at the level of research. In its attempts to superimpose the European level (and identity), the EU has also impacted on the European academic research landscape. The Framework Programmes and the driving concept of the European Research Area (ERA) has strengthened existing transnational collaborations, and generated new ones. To again use McQuail's (2008) words:

...the impulses stemming from the European Union, with its educational, cultural, and technological policies ... There have been numerous teaching and research programs promoted and financed by bodies such as the EU, the

Council of Europe, and the European Science Foundation. The result has been extensive cooperation, networking, and sharing of paradigms and ideas.

The ERA concept was endorsed at the Lisbon European Council in 2000, and (according to the European Commission's 2007 Green Paper) consisted of the following key aspects: "a European 'internal market' for research, where researchers technology and knowledge freely circulate; effective European-level coordination of national and regional research activities, programmes and policies; and initiatives implemented and funded at European level." (CEC, 2007: 2). The 2007 Green Paper adds that "there is still much further to go to build ERA, particularly to overcome the fragmentation of research activities, programmes and policies across Europe." (CEC, 2007: 2) The main instruments for realising the ERA were the Framework Programmes, (amongst other outcomes) resulting in the creation of Networks of Excellence (NoEs) and Integrated Projects (IP's), the development of e-Infrastructures like GÉANT, EGEE and DEISA, the launch of the Gender Action Plan, the Regions of Knowledge initiative, the ERA-NET (European Research Area Network³), EURAXESS (European Services Network⁴), the EUREC (European Network of Research Ethics Committees⁵) and the ERC (European Research Council⁶). A number of key documents like *The European Charter for Researchers* and *The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* (EC, 2005) supported the process of the Europeanisation of research.

This also impacted on the Communication and Media Studies discipline. A number of large-scale Framework Programmes were funded, like the FP5 *The transformation of political communication and mobilisation in European public spheres*⁷ (EUROPUB.COM - 1 million euro), the FP6 Networks of Excellence *The future of identity in the information society*⁸ (FIDIS - 6.1 million euro) and *The democracy network*⁹ (DEMO_NET - 6 million euro), the FP6 Integrated Project *Diversity and the European public sphere: Towards a citizens' Europe*¹⁰ (EUROSPHERE - 4.1 million euro), and the FP7 Network of Excellence *Integrating research in interactive storytelling* (IRIS - 2.42 million euro). Apart from these large projects, there were also a number of smaller projects funded like the FP6 Coordination Action *International radio research network*¹¹ (IREN - 350.000 euro), and the FP6 STREPs *Adequate information management in Europe*¹² (AIM - 0.8 million euro) and *Media and ethics of a European public sphere*¹³ (EMEDIATE - 0.8 million euro).

A search in the Cordis FP7 database¹⁴ resulted in 42 (sometimes vaguely) related research projects financed by the recent Framework Programmes. Although many of these projects are to a very high degree

focussed on communication technologies, at least a number of these projects include scholars that operate within the discipline of Communication and Media Studies. Without wanting to claim that there have been no transnational collaborations before the European Framework Programmes, these projects (and their specific nature) are indications of the Europeanisation of research. Also in the COST Actions we can find traces of European (or at least transnational) collaborations. For instance in the Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health (ISCH) domain of the COST Actions, we can find 5 Actions with links to Communication and Media Studies discipline. Moreover, 49 Cost Actions are mentioned in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) domain, including these 2 Actions: 269 *User Aspects of ICTs* (end date: April 2004) and 298 *Participation in the Broadband Society* (end date: January 2010). The European Science Foundation (ESF), which manages the COST (still financed through the Framework Programme), also funds research (directly or indirectly) through other channels, such as the Exploratory Workshops and the Eurocores projects. Moreover, the ESF is also the driving force behind the European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH) project, which has been indexing European academic journals (and has not been very kind to our discipline).

Also at the third level, education and exchange, we can also see the process of Europeanisation at work. In a rather triumphant press release entitled *Where would European higher education be without the Erasmus programme?* (European Commission, 2009), Ján Figel, the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, is quoted saying: *"The Erasmus programme has been the grandfather of some of the biggest reform initiatives in higher education in Europe today."* The press release points to a 2008 study that evaluated the Erasmus programme since its inception in 1987 (European Commission, 2008), claiming that the Erasmus programme has played *"a leading role in the internationalisation of national, European and international higher education"* and that it *"has also triggered the modernisation and internationalisation of university curricula as well as the transparency and transferability of qualifications."* (European Commission, 2009) There are arguments that support the triumphant tone of these statements. In the 2008 study itself, the achievements of the Erasmus programme are inventoried:

Since its start the programme has enabled over 1.9 million students and 140,000 members of university staff to be mobile within Europe. At present the ERASMUS programme enables around 200,000 students annually to study and work abroad. In addition, it supports close co-operation between

higher education institutions across Europe. Around 90% of European higher education institutions (more than 3,100) take part in ERASMUS covering 31 European countries. (European Commission, 2008: 18)

The Erasmus programme can be seen as an important part of the Bologna process and the construction of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The 1999 Bologna Declaration (European Council, 1999) builds on the 1998 Sorbonne Declaration by four ministers (of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom), who called for the harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system. Both documents refer to the need for an “*Europe of Knowledge*”, which should be supported by “*an open European area for higher learning*” (Allegre et al., 1998: 1), where “*national identities and common interests can interact and strengthen each other for the benefit of Europe, of its students, and more generally of its citizens.*” (Allegre et al., 1998: 3) Through this harmonisation, at the level of quality assurance, the two-level degree structure, the promotion of mobility, the establishment of a credits system, and the recognition of degrees, the Europeanisation of all disciplines, including the Communication and Media Studies discipline, is again increased. Especially the Erasmus system, which allows for the exchange of students and staff, has to be seen as a key component of this process of Europeanisation.

4. PROBLEMS WITH THE EUROPEANISATION OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES

One can wonder whether the above triumphant narration of increased and intensified Europeanisation should be uncritically accepted. Arguably, we can use a globalisation perspective to theoretically ground the critiques that need to be launched against this celebrative approach. In (the critical approaches towards) this Europeanisation *cum* globalisation perspective we can find a strong concern that we find ourselves situated in a “*context where the dominant discourse proclaims that there is no alternative to the current neo-liberal form of globalization*” (Mouffe, 2005: 70). In these critical approaches, there is a concern that this will result in the homogenisation and unification of social and cultural processes, combined with the worry that globalisation will facilitate the circulation of neo-liberal ideologies and eventually will contribute to the establishment (or continuation) of their hegemony.

In the case of Europeanisation, we can see a number of similarities that legitimise the parallelism between globalisation and Europeanisation. We can see a number of homogenising processes, for instance in the ideoscape/ideascape and the etnoscape (Appadurai, 1990), where the EU harmonisation policies are built on the strong ideological – dare I say neo-liberal – premises. Although the EU discourses do emphasise the importance of diversity (remember the EU's motto 'unity in diversity'), they simultaneously contain homogenising forces that claim to bring modernisation and prosperity. If we look at discourse analyses of the European identity project, we can see that there is still a strong claim of Europeaness. To quote Ifversen (2007: 182): *"Although this soul [of Europe] is ambiguous because it also contains a reference to 'diversity', it still singles out a particularly European essence."* This claim of common European values is then in turn used to legitimise specific policy objectives that are grounded in specific ideologies.

And this detour brings us back to our discipline. Articulating the Communication and Media Studies discipline as an oscillating field also implies that it can become an object of struggle, impacted upon by forces strange to it. As mentioned before, we should avoid celebrating the phantasms of coherence and of fragmentation, but we should also be wary of forces that aim to implement their coherence to our discipline, forces that aim reduces our fragmentation by cutting off a series of options, and forces that aim to discipline our discipline.

We should not remain blind for the colonising forces that lie hidden within the Europeanisation/globalisation discourses, and that call for responsibilisation, rationalisation, and modernisation, as if we are not responsible, not rational and not modern. We should not remain blind for a number of problems that are part of the package deal of the Europeanisation/globalisation that is now being offered to us.

5. EUROPEANISATION, GLOCALISATION AND TRANSLOCALISATION

As mentioned before, the Europeanisation of academia can be approached from a globalisation perspective (without wanting to push the argument too far and ignore all differences). The advantage of using this globalisation perspective is that we can take on board some of the traditional critiques on globalisation, but also that we can use some of the aligned concepts that have been developed along the road, namely the glocal (Robertson, 1995) and the translocal (Appadurai, 1995). The

glocal is a well-known concept that aims to theorise the ever-local adaptations and contextualisations of the global. The translocal is less well-known concept that implies an inverse approach, allowing taking the local as the point of departure, and adding the global as a second component. In this way, translocalisation acts as glocalisation's mirror image. It allows us to retain the focus on the dynamics of the local and the global, but uses the local as a starting point, rendering it more active.

Without discrediting the advantages of the globalisation of the Communication and Media Studies discipline (or in this case, its Europeanisation), we should not remain blind for the problems that the economies of scale (sometimes to be taken literally) bring about. The glocalisation and translocalisation approaches allow us to introduce a different perspective which (in addition to the globalisation approach) might be more respectful for the oscillatory nature of the Communication and Media Studies discipline, and for the academic struggles that lie at the heart of the discipline, with its many paradigms, pedagogical ideologies, individuals and organisations.

At the level of academic practices and institutions, the translocalisation of the discipline refers to the ways that always-specific, contextualised and situated knowledge and practices can transcend local boundaries and enter into intellectual interactions without losing their contextual affinities and situatedness. The same argument can be applied to our objects of study, the social-communicative processes, the structures, the organisations, the people, ... that are context-specific as well, and that cannot always be studied through an Europeanised perspective. I do think that special care should be taken not to forget the ultra-local, the hidden, the belly, the downtrodden, the stigmatised, the forgotten, and the microscopic. These are places where processes of social change and of social stability can be observed in their earliest manifestations, and their analysis remains of crucial importance to our discipline. Although I do not want to exclude the possibility of analysing the hyper-contextualised on an Europeanised level, I think we have to be pleased if we can even bring the hyper-contextualised on a translocal level. But this is still no excuse to ignore it.

In contrast, the glocalisation of the discipline refers to the translations of more globalised (or Europeanised) academic practices into other research contexts. Again, as our discipline is based on oscillations, one crucial flow of knowledge is based on the translation and incorporation of global academic practices at the more local levels, making this knowledge again more specific and modifying them on the basis of local contexts. We should not allow the Europeanised components of our

discipline to spin off into thin air, never ever to be brought back into the discipline at the more localised levels.

6. A SHORT CONCLUSION

The process of Europeanisation is a crucial challenge for the Communication and Media Studies discipline. It would bear witness of a severe case of myopia if I would ignore the intellectual and academic possibilities that this process is generating. But at the same time, there are many reasons for being only hesitantly optimistic. Academic disciplines hide complex power struggles and oscillations between coherence and fragmentation. Disruptions of this oscillatory process, where specific components like instrumental research and managerial cultures become over-privileged and hegemonic, which can seriously disrupt the balance of our un-balance.

We very much need to protect the multi-level nature of the Communication and Media Studies discipline, where the local, the national, the European and the global all become and remain relevant categories. At the same time we should maximise the intersections and interactions between these different levels. That is where the combination of the translocalised, the globalised/Europeanised and the glocalised come into play. This first of all implies that we need to be conscious about where the process of Europeanisation is taking us, what options becomes excluded, and how we can avoid these exclusions that disrupt the oscillatory nature of the discipline. Then, and only then, we can become truly European academics.

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NOTES

- 1 A longer version of this text was presented as a keynote at the fifth SOPCOM Conference at Lusofona University, Lisbon, Portugal (April 14-17 2009), and will also appear in the conference proceedings. My special thanks to Claudia Alvares for stimulating me to write this text. I also want to thank Kaarle Nordenstreng for his appreciated comments on an earlier version of this text. Of course, the author still assumes the full responsibility for the article.
- 2 A number of presentations of this seminar are to be published in Garcia-Blanco et al. (2009).
- 3 http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/index_en.cfm?p=9_eranet.
- 4 http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index_en.cfm.
- 5 <http://www.eurecnet.org/index.html>.
- 6 <http://erc.europa.eu/>.
- 7 <http://europub.wzb.eu/>.
- 8 <http://www.fidis.net/>.
- 9 <http://www.demonet.org/>.
- 10 <http://www.eurosphere.uib.no/>.
- 11 <http://www.iren-info.org/>.
- 12 <http://www.aim-project.net/>.
- 13 <http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/activities/289/>.
- 14 The search was performed on 20 February 2009; the used keywords were media, public, audience, journalism and film. Smaller grants like Marie Curie grants were not included. The amount mentioned is the project funding.

ELDERLY WOMEN IN THE DIGITAL ERA; BARCELONA CITY

Erika Alvarez

Contact: eriaran@yahoo.com

Within 'western' society, Information Communication Technologies (ICT) have become an intrinsic part of ordinary life: in domains such as the home, work place and schools, there is an increasing dependency on digital information technology.

These technologies are used by both the young and the middle aged, all of whom are developing new skills to use on multiple platforms both in and outside the home. However it is often the young who have more quickly and easily developed interactive abilities, in part because a lot of platforms have been designed for youth entertainment e.g. Social Networking Sites. The elderly as a social group have not been developing comparable ICT skills. The generational divide has also become a digital one.

The objective of my research is to examine the ICT engagement of specific groups of elderly women in Barcelona City taking into account their usage, habits and abilities. Women of this generation often have had no contact with ICT's and exert resistance and rejection when they have the opportunity to participate in technologically related activities. I will analyze their approaches to ICT's (Internet, PC, television and mobile phone) to try and understand the implications of them engaging with ICTs and the attitudes facing them.

My research question is: How elderly women are facing the technological shift and how do they handle the 'digital divide'?

This study focuses on elderly women in Barcelona because:

- More than 50% of the female population are 65 to 85 years old (Data from the National Institute of Statistics INE, 2008).
- The phenomenon of an 'Aging Society' in European countries is increasing. The number of elderly people in Europe in 1960 will have doubled by 2020 (EU, Information Society Commission, 2007)
- Society discriminates against elderly women on the basis of gender, age and poverty

The research will be case-study based using both qualitative and quantitative methods including an ethnographic approach with semi-structured interviews to incorporate aspects such as: family, work, activities, use of the Internet, terrestrial digital television (TDT) and

mobile phones. The two theoretical approaches I will draw upon are: the 'Uses and Gratifications' theory (Katz, Blumer and Gurevitch, 1974) and cultural studies (Curran, Morley and Walkerdine, 1996). 'Uses and Gratifications' theory considers users as active individuals. In this context, ICTs and media selection can be seen to either satisfy a necessity, to strengthen social links, for information or for entertainment purposes. This is also one of the most important concerns when considering that this collective group of individuals has deeply rooted problems such as social isolation, loneliness and social marginalization.

Applying an ethnographic approach in relation to cultural studies, certain aspects related to the object of study need to be involved. This research will, consequently, use evidence gathered by observing specific cases, giving details and collecting narratives in order to learn the previous and current lifestyle of the studied group of people, taking into account the habits of their everyday lives.

In alignment with general societal trends in Spain, La Caixa Foundation is promoting an active role for elderly people. Since 1997, la Obra Social 'la Caixa' (La Caixa's Social Programme), in agreement with government agencies, has opened centres throughout Catalunya.

Currently there are also 407 ciberaulas (clubs offering training in ICTs) with more than 200,000 members (membership fees are 8 Euros per year) having received ICTs training.

Poble Nou's Ciberaula in Barcelona has two rooms, in each area is a Ciberaula employee, a 'monitor' who helps the elderly with any problems using the computers. I propose to work with two groups, comparing their ICT skills: Group 1 consisting of elderly women who have not taken any of the 'ciberaula' ICT training courses and Group 2 consisting of those who have taken them.

I will answer my research questions by studying the processes, motivations, resistances and contexts in which the elderly female participants attempt to join the 'Information Society'.

VIDEO ACTIVISM 2.0 – DISSEMINATING IMAGES OF CONTENTION AND COMMUNITY

Tina Askanius

Contact: tina.askanius@mkj.lu.se

A great deal has been voiced on the subject of popular political resistance towards global capitalism and neo-liberal globalisation, often under the umbrella terms of alter-globalisation or the global justice movement. Critiques have on several occasions pronounced the global justice movement as 'dead in the water', while others have proclaimed the movement capable of ending the spread global capitalism and neoliberal governance. The latter suggest that new media technology enables the renewal of political engagement within the context of global civil society, which is often argued as the only means capable of solving the crisis into which democracy and left wing thinking and practice has plunged.

My contribution to this academic debate is an audiovisual slant on this subject. I focus on the concept of online video activism, moving images and audiovisual imagery in the realm of web-based political activism against neo-liberal globalization. The study uses qualitative discourse analysis of a number of selected videos and their orbits of circulation to examine the nature and affordances of moving image used as a political tool to make a social critique. Discourse analysis also raises issues of how the normative exigency and demand for action in this critique is constructed in the process of mediation. This allows me to identify and discuss new sites of tension and transition shaping the networked media environment surrounding contemporary forms of activism as well as exploring the dialectical relationship between capitalism and social critique in the 21st century.

The media texts are viewed as the footprints of a larger social movement offering an alternative discourse in public debate. They challenge the power structures within visual media by questioning who decides what images and truths of the world are publicly presented. Activist videos, increasingly circulated in popular and commercialised spaces of social communities, are not among the channels that media scholars have traditionally characterized as social movement media. Activist videos are labelled as radical, alternative, counter-hegemonic or counter cultural. In the context of increasingly corporate-led and mainstream online cultures, the issues of how the communicative spaces

of political activism are changing the dynamics of political practice need to be questioned. Society should also be made aware of the potential pitfalls the development of 'activist videos' may pose to the 'free' spaces of radical voices in civil society.

RADICAL AND COMMUNITY PRINTSHOPS LONDON 1974–2000

Jess Baines

Contact: j.baines@lse.ac.uk

During the 1970s and early 1980s numerous radical and community printshops emerged across Britain and by 1982 there were about 30 in London alone. Almost all the printshops were registered as worker co-operatives, which were collectively run but later became places of paid employment. The founding objective of the printshop movement was to produce, provide or facilitate cheap and safe printing of 'radical' materials. Initially most were informed by the DIY (do-it-yourself) ethos. Some presses emerged due to 'countercultural' concerns about libel and obscenity laws (Dickinson: 1997: 33) others out of an older tradition of anarchist presses, others by politically-motivated art school graduates (or drop outs). They were economically dependant on either the state (via the local authority) or 'the market'. State funded projects tended to be defined as 'community' printshops; market dependant ones as 'radical' or 'alternative'. By the mid 1990s however most of them had either closed, been incorporated into other organisations or acquired conventional (hierarchical) management structures.

At the time of writing only two collectives survive (Calvert's & Aldgate Press), both London-based offset-litho printing businesses. Speculative explanations for this situation point towards a series of interrelated factors.

- Print is no longer the essential media form for radical communications
- Increased self-sufficiency of potential clients via new technologies
- A lack of necessary 'business' acumen
- A decreasing pool of individuals that considered radical printing a desirable vocation
- An actual decrease in numbers of typical client groupings

- Cuts in local government funding and for London organisations the closure of the GLC
- Interpersonal and political conflicts within individual presses
- Shifting priorities within radical politics in Britain between the early 1970s and mid 1990s.

Little has been written about these organisations, yet they printed, facilitated and often designed the majority of radical media in Britain for approximately a 20 year period. They also represented, via their own constitutions and practices, significant developments, debates and formations within British radical politics and social movements. My basic questions so far are:

What were the politico-cultural sensibilities and conditions that produced the proliferation of radical printshops in 1970s London?

In what ways were the relationships to work, skill, professionalism and careers, machinery and technology within the printshops ideological and conflictual?

How were the relationships to state and market and civil society negotiated?

How did the constitutions of the printshops change in relationship to the shifting radical formations, allegiances, agendas of the 1980s and 1990s?

How can an analytical, historically grounded study of the printshops be useful to contemporary participatory projects?

STUDYING MEDIA DISCOURSE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Inesa Birbilaite

Contact: i.birbilaite@pmdf.vdu.lt

Climate change problems, in recent years, have emerged as one of the fundamental issues affecting personal habits and lifestyles of citizens as well as public policy agenda setting processes in many countries around the world. Increasing media coverage on climate change also demonstrates the significance of this issue. As a result, in the field of scientific research, climate change phenomenon is being discussed from different perspectives including the communicative.

The field of communication studies emphasizes the importance of communication on climate change and usually discusses the subject in the broader framework of risk communication. The contemporary approach to risk communication on climate change goes beyond alerting or reassuring the public about potential environmental hazards (Gurabardhi, Gutteling and Kuttschreuter, 2004). Scientists emphasize that the involvement of social actors in the discourse helps to stimulate interest in environmental issues and increasing public knowledge, as well as involving them in 'problem solving' and policy making processes. *"Effective risk communication obtains information from the public and acknowledges and respects the beliefs and opinions of the people for whom it is targeted"* (Trettin and Musham, 2000).

The purpose of this study is to look at how climate change problems are communicated in Lithuania. The research addresses the issue of climate change in the context of risk communication and analyses the climate change discourse in Lithuanian media.

First the research will assess through content analysis how climate change issues are covered in media. An understanding of the issues, problems and solutions related to climate change, as well as input from actors (institutions and people) involved in the discourse will help to evaluate empirical data and to better understand the Lithuanian media's climate change discourse.

Secondly relationships between experts and journalists will be analysed to evaluate the influence of a range of actors (scientific experts and institutions, politicians and political institutions, NGOs and citizen action groups) on media content on climate change. The information, interpretations, demands, suggestions, criticism, metaphors and slogans of different social actors will be recognized, which will help to understand how media agenda is affected by politics, scientists and others (Bakir, 2006). Selected groups of main actors and journalists will be interviewed.

"Journalistic coverage with actors or sources cited contributes to creating and changing individual understanding on climate change" (Heinrichs and Peters, 2006) so it is important to evaluate how individual understanding is being shaped by media. Thirdly, the issue of how consumers are responding to the media content will be examined. Interviewing randomly chosen media consumers will enable an exploration of the cognitive process of media consumers. Respondents will be asked to comment on articles, in order to record the cognitive reactions which the media content evoke.

COMPARING ELECTORAL MANIFESTOS WITH MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FRENCH-SPEAKING TV IN BELGIUM DURING THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE 2007 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Anouk Bouckaert

Contact: abouckae@ulb.ac.be

Television broadcasting plays a crucial role in the transmission of political information to citizens. In accordance with their respective resources, interests and constraints, several actors (e.g. journalists, citizens and political actors) construct political information, more or less accurately reflecting political reality. Moreover, as television constitutes an essential access point for citizens to political beliefs and policies, the medium is often argued as having a significant influence on the formation of voters' opinions.

Moreover, according to the theories of media representation and of social construction of reality, media do not transmit what is going on in social reality: they impose their construction of the public sphere. The information essentially uses language that is not transparent to the surrounding world. A particular world view is constructed through the opacity of language.

The study is thus based on the assumption that the creative rules for television content (process of selection and production) influence political content, which raises the following question: how are political beliefs and policies mediated, by both television and political manifestos, during electoral campaigns?

This study aims to identify formal characteristics and key themes of political discourses mediatisation on television. The study seeks to highlight the dichotomy between journalistically mediated and candidate-controlled communications. The general election of June 2007 in Belgium has been chosen as a case study. This election campaign will be examined, as it constitutes a crucial moment to discuss major political issues and to clarify political parties' positions and proposals.

My research focuses on detailed content and discourse analysis of media coverage on party campaigning combined with a content analysis of electoral programmes. By considering these two sides of the political information landscape this comparative analysis offers a privileged

access to main issues of the parties' political agenda. This analysis will be completed by a frame analysis of some relevant topics.

This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In doing so, the study intends to understand how political beliefs and policies are mediated both through television and by political manifestos during electoral campaigns.

An expectation is that this research will be able to highlight the impact of media framing on the content and form of political discourses and the process by which political discourses become media discourses.

DIASPORIC WEBSITES AND THEIR APPROPRIATION IN GERMANY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE MOROCCAN, RUSSIAN AND TURKISH DIASPORA

Çiğdem Bozdag

Contact: cbozdag@uni-bremen.de

Diasporic websites symbolize the transnational character of diasporic cultures. They are also social sites, through which these cultures are contested and (re-)produced. In the national media of the countries of migration and origin, diaspora groups are mostly underrepresented or represented by others, who speak in their names. Moreover, topics that relate to specific diaspora communities are in many cases excluded from the agendas of the national media. In general, diasporic media provide diasporas with their own information networks and a common discursive framework, which connects them to each other. However, there are limitations to the production and distribution of diasporic mass media in terms of material resources. In this sense, the Internet provides an alternative for diasporic media production with lower costs. Furthermore, they allow communication among the dispersed members of diasporas independent of spatial boundaries. The boom in the number of diasporic websites like Vaybee!, Maroczone or Germany.ru in Germany in the last 10 years can be seen as an outcome of these and other factors.

On the one hand, diasporic websites have the potential to empower diasporas by enabling self-representation, own communication and information networks and by giving them a sense of belonging. But, on the other hand, they could also lead to new forms of exclusion and

isolation. This research project aims to understand the role of diasporic websites for the members of diasporas in the contexts of their use in everyday life, identity and community formation and their political implications. The project will, therefore, conduct an analysis of their appropriation and representation patterns within the Moroccan, Russian and Turkish Diaspora in Germany.

The appropriation of diasporic websites will be examined on the basis of the qualitative interviews of the DFG research project 'Communicative Connectivity of Ethnic Minorities' (Prof. Dr. Andreas Hepp, IMKI, University of Bremen, Germany). Furthermore, the diasporic websites that are used by the interviewees will be analyzed in regard to their communication structure, the discourses and information that they provide. By looking at the diasporic websites and their appropriation, the project aims to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between online communication and the contemporary forms of complex transnational cultures.

THE COMMUNICATION OF PATIENTS ASSOCIATIONS

Mary Charoud

Contact: mary.charoud@u-grenoble3.fr

Health issues today involve various actors (politicians, scientists, experts, patients and families, etc.). Patients Associations are not 'new' actors that have emerged from nowhere, even though the onset of AIDS was instrumental in bringing them to public awareness. The aim of this research is to gain an understanding of what Patients Associations represent in our society, in the health sector and for the patients.

A broad spectrum of actors belongs to these Associations: patients and their families, scientists, volunteer workers, etc; any of whom can have links with politicians and media actors. A comprehensive understanding the driving forces of the Associations, the sharing of power among their actors and their influence on the health sector is necessary.

Do Patients Associations imply changes in the health sector and for the patients? Important aspects are the roles, implications and motivations of patients and activists. We will also analyse the communication strategies of Patients Associations and their relations with the actors in

the media. Moreover what conditions of communication do they participate in creating? How do patients use this information and what is at stake?

The theory of the public sphere from Habermas (1962) and the works on this theory and its criticisms are important for this reflexion, even though this research is not based on either this theory or its critiques.

This research favours interdisciplinarity and adopts an approach incorporating not only the information and communication science, but also an historical approach and a sociological and political science approach.

Our first hypothesis is that changes are occurring in the relationships of patients with Patients Associations and consequently with the health sector (commitment, individualization, consumerism, experience, etc.).

Secondly we hypothesize that an evolution of the 'publicisation' of the patients' associations and of health issues in our society is taking place.

Thirdly, we hypothesize that Patients Associations and their activities enable to emphasize the difficulties and limitations of health institutions (place and roles in the scientific sphere, missions of scientific information and communication of the Patients Associations).

Does a 'health oriented public sphere' exist? We will focus on the factors which participate in this process: the driving forces, the construction of public problems, the multiplicity of actors, the methods of 'publicisation', the limitations and difficulties.

The methodology will be qualitative (open interviews). We have noticed there are many Patients Associations, which are responsible for different pathologies. Patients and actors (e.g. people in charge of the Associations, volunteer workers, etc.) of these organizations will be interviewed. We will also analyse the Associations' publications and their visibility in the media and will therefore also interview the actors in charge of the communication strategies of the Associations.

MEDIA SYSTEMS AND QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN ITALY, GERMANY AND GREAT BRITAIN: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Antonio Ciaglia

Contact: antonio.ciaglia@sumitalia.it

My research project will look for an answer to the fundamental question: which of the main media systems makes the best contribution to the quality of democracy?

I aim to specify and describe the links between media systems and democratic systems in a comparative perspective. This will enable an understanding of whether and how the structure of media systems, the level of professionalization of media operators and the journalistic routines in the selected countries impact on the dimensions of the quality of democracy.

I will control three kinds of hypotheses in my research:

- 1/ A media system, which is characterized by a high degree of professionalization, will promote 'watchdog' journalism, founded both on the consideration of the objective newsmaking criteria and neutral reporting of events, and oriented toward a pragmatic attitude. By contrast, a media system with low-professionalization will allow an attitude of collusion – more amenable to the needs of the political arena than newsmaking criteria – and a paradigm of journalism founded on political support.
- 2/ A high level frequency of direct intervention in a media system by the state lowers the possibility the system will be characterized by a high degree of external pluralism, real market competitiveness and a high degree of autonomy of its practitioners.
- 3/ The lower the degree of political partisanship within a media system, the more likely a really autonomous journalism exists and the greater will be citizens' trust in media and the quality of the information they provide.

My dependent variable coincides with two of the dimensions of the quality of democracy described in political science literature, in particular by Diamond and Morlino (2005): electoral accountability and responsiveness. The purpose of this project is to clarify the impact of political communication on these dimensions.

Thus, my explanatory variables are: the level of professionalization of media system operators in Italy, Germany and Great Britain, the level of commercialization of the respective media markets, the kind of link between the political class and the media system (collusion and parallelism versus autonomy and conflict), the relevance of the role of the state as far as the structures and logics within the media systems are concerned.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF GENETIC RESEARCH: THE PRODUCT OF THE INTERACTIONS OF VARIOUS ACTORS

Vinciane Colson

Contact: vcolson@ulb.ac.be

Genomics research and gene therapy are among the most controversial areas of science and close to the top of the political agenda worldwide, as shown by the significant number of articles about genetics, genomics or genetically modified organisms (GMOs) published almost every day. Media are a key site for the production and dissemination of cultural images of emerging biogenetic technologies; therefore understanding media representations of this area of science and of the derived technologies is important.

Using the actor-network theory as a framework, my PhD research analyses the media coverage of genetics and the coverage's construction. Articles on genetics in the newspapers are considered to be the effect of heterogeneous networks, a kind of 'black box' in which several actors (journalists, scientists, pharmaceutical groups, lobbyists, etc.) interact and leave traces. My study focuses on two of these actors whose environment has evolved dramatically in the last fifteen years: science journalists and academic researchers. For my research, I use both qualitative and quantitative methods.

First, to open the 'black box', I undertook a content analysis of genetic stories in the general-interest press. I used multiple angles of analysis to provide a targeted set of descriptors allowing a thorough understanding of the corpus.

Secondly, I interviewed science journalists. Newspapers rarely hire staff science reporters and nowadays, they even tend to dismiss them. The way science journalists work is worthy of attention: how is their

work affected by the specific competition of researchers' blogs, the increased difficulty to separate relevant and non-relevant scientific information and the difficult economic context of the press?

Thirdly, I am engaged in interviewing scientific researchers who have specialized in genetics. Academic research, especially in genetics, has evolved considerably since the 1980s. Because research in this area is increasingly financed by the private sector (the industry in particular), scientists have to justify their work, provide progress reports and prepare the society for the applications that might follow. So they have to communicate via the media. But how do they really comprehend this communication and the media coverage of their field?

This three-step approach will lead to a better understanding of the way genetics is covered by the media and above all, in which way the coverage is a network effect and the product of the interaction of various actors.

DIGITAL INEQUALITY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN SWEDEN? SOCIAL CLASS, MASCULINITY AND THE EVERYDAY EMBEDDEDNESS OF THE INTERNET

Martin Danielsson

Contact: martin.danielsson@hh.se

The Internet is often ascribed with and celebrated for the various democratizing effects it has on society. Likewise, young people are often thought of as being at the forefront of these changes. Popular rhetoric implies that the 'digital generation' exclusively makes use of the new technology in the most active, creative and – above all – participatory ways. In the light of these discourses, which reproduce not only simplistic ideas about the relation between technology and society, but also generalizing, essentializing and exoticizing notions of young people, there is clearly a need for critical inquiries, looking at how the internet is appropriated within different socio-cultural contexts, characterized by certain power relations.

My PhD project is inspired partly by the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu (including concepts such as 'habitus', 'field', 'symbolic capital', 'symbolic violence', etc.) and partly by the social shaping of technology school of thought. The project aims to explore the ways in

which Swedish boys of 16–18 years, from working class and middle class homes located in contrasting socio-cultural contexts, perceive, relate to and make use of the internet as a potentially capital-enhancing and differentiating technology.

Consequently, the project primarily seeks to explore social class as a factor shaping the ways in which young boys think about and relate to the Internet, which might be understood in terms of social reproduction and social change. However, social class cannot be understood without reference to other factors, for example gender and geographical location. Hence, in order to gain a better understanding of young people's relationship with the Internet, the ways in which class-related practices interact with gender processes as well as with place-related experiences need to be examined. In other words, the project starts from an intersectional understanding of social power.

Methodological inspiration comes mainly from ethnography, which in this case means that qualitative methods such as individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews will be combined with focus group interviews for collecting the empirical material. Thus, my project builds upon the idea that in order to understand the meaning of the Internet for young boys, one has to take their (socially structured) everyday lives as a point of departure. Growing up in working class homes and middle class homes in contrasting socio-cultural contexts may produce diverse readings of the technology and various ways of thinking and acting in relation to the Internet.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL CONTROL. THE CASE OF MESSAGES INTENDED FOR HOMOSEXUALS IN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S AIDS CAMPAIGN

Jean-Philippe De Oliveira

Contact: jean-philippe.de-oliveira@u-grenoble3.fr

In France, 'public communication' is described as an action aiming to change behaviours, officially recognized as of benefit to the country. My PhD project aims to analyze 'public communication' as a type of discourse making visible political mobilization with regard to social issues. In this research, I consider 'public communication' as a way of

using political power for the purposes of social control, as Foucault defined it. This work focuses specifically on the case of messages intended for homosexuals in the French Government's AIDS campaign. The project aims to map the evolution of the spread of social discourses about homosexuality in the public sphere according three periods: 1/ before the AIDS epidemic began, 2/ during the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, and 3/ after 1995 when the French government started to gain legitimacy about AIDS prevention. Thus, the project needs to gather a corpus of the dominant social actors and media discourses more particularly from 2000 till 2008. By emphasising the evolution of the discourses about homosexuality, the project intends to show that the institutionalization of messages for homosexuals in the French Government's AIDS campaigns occurred alongside a less familiar discourses on homosexuality of other social actors (associations and personal stories). This project will determine how 'public communication' can represent a tool of social control, in order to serve Foucault's concept of 'biopower' management, which states have adopted since the 19th century.

JOURNALISTS AND POLITICIANS IN INTERACTION. A STUDY OF THE INTERACTIONAL POWER DYNAMICS IN POLITICAL INTERVIEWS AND TELEVISION DEBATES

Eva De Smedt

Contact: Eva.De.Smedt@vub.ac.be

This study explores the complex interactional dynamics and power relationships manifest in interactions between journalists and politicians in political interviews and television debates. Particular attention is given to the interactional strategies and techniques both actors develop and employ in order to maintain a positive image in front of the audience.

In political television interactions, journalists and politicians are confronted with a double tension. On the one hand, journalists take a sceptical stance towards the policies, utterances and actions of politicians in a manner that meets their legitimated role of 'watchdog'. At the same time they are restricted in challenging politicians, since they are legally obliged to stay neutral and objective at all times. Politicians, on the other

hand, need to obtain or maintain a favourable image by refuting the journalist's critical comments and at the same time communicating their own messages and policies to appeal to the electorate.

This PhD research maps this tension by focussing on local micro-interactions between journalists and politicians and the ways power relationships are being continuously negotiated and resisted in a dynamic and often collaborative way. Therefore, the methodological framework of conversation analysis (CA) is appealing. The basic idea of CA is that social interactions are organized in an orderly way and that this 'natural' organization can be discovered by the close analysis of the rules and structures that produce that orderliness (e.g. Psathas, 1995). Traditionally, proponents of CA have always been rather reticent regarding the explicit use of the term 'power' in institutional talk. However, more recently there have been some pleas to bring considerations of power into the framework of CA (see for instance Hutchby, Silverman and Thornborrow). In line with this trend, I argue for the study of 'power-in-interaction', thereby emphasizing the local and dialogical nature of the ways in which power can be "*brought into being*" (Heritage, 1984: 290). Power can be maintained and resisted within the local orientations of journalists and politicians in the interactional context of political interviews and television debates.

TRANSCULTURAL MEDIA REPERTOIRES AND COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS IN EUROPE

Hanna Domeyer

Contact: h.domeyer@hans-bredow-institut.de

The project focuses on the question of how media use and community perceptions are interrelated in changing cultural and media environments. Current developments in two fields of communication research shall be addressed and connected.

First, is the field of transnational and transcultural communication. Globalisation, Europeanisation, migration trends, mobility and communicative connectivity lead to the increasing transnational and transcultural character of media production, content and use. Traditional concepts of national media audiences and imagined communities have to give way to more complex approaches that enclose phenomena such

as de-territorialisation. Questions of identity and belonging become more important to an increasing number of people, especially when using the media.

Secondly, current developments in the field of audience and reception studies also lead to a reconsideration of traditional constructions of media audiences. On the one hand interpersonal and network media link communities by a 'real', or at least closer, connectivity. These concepts step alongside the imagined communities and dispersed audiences created by mass media. On the other hand new forms of media blur the boundaries between producers and audiences. Both developments defer to the often neglected reciprocity of media use and the formation and articulation of identity and belonging.

My core questions are: What role does belonging play in the process of media choice, and vice versa? What effect does media use have on the perception of audiences or communities? Applying the concept of media repertoires (stable transmedial patterns of media use) I ask how mass, network, and interpersonal media, forms of consumption and 'produsage', feelings of belonging to imagined audiences and mediated networks, references to place and space are combined by media users. Hence, the approach starts on the micro level of the individual media user and from there searches for linkages to the macro level.

An empirical study shall compare different groups of media users varying in age, the existence of a migration background and their country of residence (Germany and the UK). Regarding the already conducted research in the above mentioned fields these characteristics seem to be crucial for questions of identity and belonging as well as the assembly of an individual media repertoire. The latter shall be surveyed by a combination of media diaries and media biographical interviews including visual methods.

This work aims to reduce the deficit in systematic empirical research on the interrelation of cross-border and cross-culture media use and community perceptions.

THE CELEBRIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Olivier Driessens

Contact: Olivier.Driessens@UGent.be

The democratization and diversification of celebrity together with the penetration of entertainment celebrities into non-entertainment social fields has turned celebrity into a defining characteristic of our modern media-saturated societies. The first aim of this article based PhD-project is to gain a better theoretical understanding of this celebrification process through analyzing its relationship with mediatisation and commodification on the one hand and through integrating celebrity into Bourdieu's field theory on the other hand.

A central starting point of this research is that celebrities are never ideologically neutral and should be conceived of as sites of social and political struggle. Both implicitly (as embodiments) and explicitly (through endorsements) celebrities play a role in the public sphere. The second aim therefore is to study the role and importance of celebrities in the public sphere. This is done by concentrating on the agents, the context and the content.

First, in studying the 'agents', we focus on celebrities' socio-political activist practices and their potential of functioning as role models. Both studies are informed by practice theory (a.o. Schatzki, Reckwitz, Couldry) and are based on in-depth interviews with Flemish celebrities.

Next, we try to explain how celebrities have acquired a place in the public sphere by tracking the most fundamental changes that have led to celebrity politics (in its large sense) in Belgium. Additionally, a quantitative content analysis of four Flemish newspapers (1998-2007) enables us to critically evaluate the relative importance of celebrities in the public sphere and also gives us the possibility to test our conception of celebrification with empirical data.

Third, this project focuses on a Belgian celebrity-supported national campaign on the duology and argues that this can be understood as a neoliberal philanthropic project because of its redefinition of good citizenship and of relations between civil society and the state. This analysis is based on promotional material and news articles on the campaign and aims to improve our understanding of possible unintended consequences of celebrities' activism and roles in the public sphere.

Overall, this PhD-projects intends to contribute to celebrity studies by exposing possible dynamics and characteristics of a (g)local celebrity culture (i.e. Flanders/Belgium) which is different from the dominant Anglo-American celebrity culture.

CHANGING MEDIA CHANGING FEMINISMS: CONTEMPORARY QUEER AND FEMINIST ACTIVISM IN BRITAIN (AND BEYOND)

Aristea Fotopoulou

Contact: a.fotopoulou@sussex.ac.uk

The project examines the use of new technologies for the production and circulation of activist media by contemporary queer/feminist activists in Britain. The focus is on new networking conditions created by new media and their incorporation by queer/feminist activists. I am interested in how the experience of producing ephemeral media with new technologies is different from earlier forms, for example zines, and how the capability of digital archiving and sharing shapes production attitudes, form and content. Moreover, I aim to understand how activists interact with commercial media strategies like advertising. What kind of cultural capital and media literacy is needed by activists and to what cultural/political collective memories do they speak? My corpus is the work of groups and individuals, their attitudes and practices.

The centrality of digital technologies in everyday life reconfigures gendered identities and sexualities. The meaning of activism and social change, gender equality and feminism are shifting and it is this dynamic inter-relation that the project examines. It investigates what digital networking means for queer/feminist activists by arguing that, it is not just the everyday integration of media technologies, but the changing perceptions around technology, gender and social change that needs to be studied. The point is not to investigate queer/feminist activists as users of digital media, but to understand how their interaction with technologies (visual, audio, print, narration, dialogic, virtual, artistic) shapes the materiality of these mediation technologies. I therefore aim to make sense of emerging practices within new media landscapes and to imagine future directions.

The framing questions are initially interested in definitions, continuities and dynamics of digital media practice and feminisms.

How do we define activist media and what are the limits of communication practices for individuals and groups? How can digital media production be placed in the context of existing queer and feminist cultures? How can we understand the interest in new technologies and motivation to use them in activist practice? How can we understand resistance to them? Do 'new' media signify 'new' feminisms? In particular, how do they re-position questions of gender, sexuality and technology?

THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIM CHARACTERS IN THE TELEVISION SERIES 24. ETHNIC NORWEGIANS AND NORWEGIAN MUSLIMS SPEAK OUT

Rolf Erik Sundsbak Halse

Contact: Rolf.Halse@infomedia.uib.no

Television series can play an important role in the way they represent different groups and categories of people, when considering the position of ethnic groups within contemporary multicultural societies. Television series participate in forming an arena, in which representations, social relationships, identities and borders between ingroup members and outgroup members are negotiated and constructed. According to social constructivism, the discourses in a television series will not merely be a reflection of reality, but also elaborate on the construction of reality.

This PhD project will apply the methods and theories from two interpretative traditions in television studies, in an examination of the American action series '24': a combination of textual analysis and audience reception analysis. The first part of the study includes textual analysis of selected episodes from '24', drawing especially on theories of character representation. The focus will be on '24''s depictions of the Muslim characters which constitute the enemy, and the main question will be if they are represented in a stereotyped manner. The second part of the study examines how a variety of interpretive communities of young adults in Norway read, comprehend and interpret the representations of Muslim characters in the texts. The reception analysis will be carried out in the form of focus group interviews. The advantage of applying this method is that statements and utterances in groups may shed light on reception in the context of interpretive communities with

different backgrounds. The study will include twelve focus group interviews, and each focus group will consist of five to eight participants. The participants will be high school students in Norway who are either ethnic Norwegians or second generation immigrants with Muslim backgrounds. Participants will be asked about related themes and concepts which are central to this study, e.g. depictions of Muslim characters are depicted in '24' and whether or not stereotype representations: exist, contain a kernel of truth and are offensive.

Combining textual analysis and reception analysis is a common approach in reception studies of television series. However, the importance is often placed on mapping the meaning that is attached to the meeting between textual content and the audience rather than on a comparison of the parts (Waldahl, 1999). This project will focus on a comparison of the analyses, allowing the analysis done by a television studies researcher to be complemented by and compared to the readings and understandings of the two interpretive communities. The textual analysis aims to uncover how stereotypes can work in a television series text, while the reception analysis seeks to shed light on the interpretive communities' stereotyping of the same text. An important issue is whether, and to which extent, opportunities for plural interpretations of the text exists, creating an 'open' text. By contrast if similar or identical interpretations of a text are portrayed, the text is considered 'closed'. This study will investigate issues of interpretation, comprehension and stereotyping of television texts.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND ITS INFLUENCE TOWARDS MEDIA

Ondřej Holomek

Contact: ondra.holomek@centrum.cz

The Ministry of Information, founded in 1945, was an extraordinary state institution and original centre of power in Czechoslovak and Czech history. The Communists post-World War II proposals for the government programme outlined deep and far-reaching changes in political power and socio-economic areas, which amounted to a blueprint for building a new order. A component part of this structural change was the inception of a new ministry - the Ministry of Information - an ideological institution responsible for ideological education, enlighten-

ment and promotion of government programme. The Communists delegated Václav Kopecký, a convinced Stalinist and ideologist educated in Moscow, to lead the institution.

The initial period after World War II and the first post-war government election in Czechoslovakia, in 1946, is connected with the implementation of the Kosice Government Programme. The Ministry of Information organized many appeals and charitable collections via radio broadcasts and newspapers. In the meantime, the Ministry also systematically tightened control over the media.

The results of the elections in 1946 corresponded to the expectation of the Communists, who won more than 40 percent of the vote, making them most powerful party in Parliament by a large margin. Based on the results of the May elections, the new government led by the Communist Klement Gottwald pronounced a new two-year programme, which was fully the intention of the Communist party.

The second period, between May 1946 and Communist Coup in February 1948, was an era of accelerated changes, major legislative modifications, personal purges and the dissolution of potential alternative sources of power. Kopecký's institution had a significant part in this process. The Ministry of Information made an exalted effort to restrict the whole media system in Czechoslovakia. Film making was nationalized in 1945, newspapers were placed under the Ministry's control due to deliberately exaggerated paper crisis and radio broadcasting was controlled by Ministry of Information 'plants' who were titled to interfere in the broadcasting. The Ministry also issued media licences. Alternative opinions were disapproved of, as evil with a distorting influence and against the official governmental (communist) programme.

In February 1948, parliamentary democracy in Czechoslovakia was overthrown by Communist system of one party rule. After the coup, there were two different sources of power established in Czechoslovakia. State institutions (the Prime Minister, government and particular institutions) were duplicated by party institutions (the General Secretary, the Central Committee, and the Party Secretariat). Both branches had leading ambitions and antagonistic relationships between the leading individuals. The Ministry of Information remained a part of the government structure, but its competency decreased. The Communists accomplished legislative changes affecting every part of a person's life, including the media sector. Radio, newspapers, film and music production were nationalized and fully controlled by government and the Communist party.

A STUDY OF THE VISIBILITY OF FINNISH MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN THE FINNISH MEDIA

Annamari Huovinen

Contact: annamari.huovinen@ultramarino.fi

The concept of identity has recently become an important theme in social sciences. My aim is to apply this concept to political journalism by studying how the media represent the identity of the Finnish Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The theoretical framework of my research is based on identity theories by Stuart Hall, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and I apply also Erving Goffman's framing theory to explain how the media represents politicians.

In media texts discourses can be distinguished that offer politicians different subject positions. Through these subject positions the media construct politicians' identities by directing them to a range of locations and giving them antagonistic placements regarding other possible positions. Critical discourse analysis, by Norman Fairclough, offers the methodological framework to my study. I analyse my data with linguistic tools with aim determining the spectrum of identities the Finnish media give to the Finnish MEPs.

The primary data of my study is a collection of news articles from two sources: Helsingin Sanomat, the daily paper with the largest circulation in Finland, and Internet news by YLE, Finland's public broadcast company. I have chosen two six month periods of time to examine. Both periods take place during the term of the European Parliament, avoiding election campaigns, to focus the study on the general publicity of the MEPs. As secondary data, the research is supplemented by interviews of Finnish MEPs with the aim of hearing their views of how the media represent them.

The analysis is implemented at three levels: 1/ a quantitative analysis of all the news articles that concern the Finnish MEPs in the chosen time periods, 2/ an overall analysis of different discourses and subject positions in the data, and 3/ a more detailed linguistic analysis of texts chosen from the data.

The research process is iterative and as in discourse analytic studies, my study does not include specific hypotheses, despite this the study will find the spectrum of MEP's professional identities. The final goal of the research is to develop a Finnish MEP's identity profile, which gathers different subject positions and discourses used in the media.

BRITISH MILITARY MEDIA STRATEGIES: AFGHANISTAN

Rikke Bjerg Jensen

Contact: r.jensen@my.westminster.ac.uk

This project examines, through analysis of the broader military media strategies affect British soldiers on the battleground, the issue of how these strategies shape soldiers narratives? In 2007, Tony Hall published a report which concluded that 'the MOD cannot control the media: what it must do is to control its own narrative.' As a result, the British military has recognised that it cannot manage the news media by focusing on restricting access and information during conflicts. Instead the military seems to be concentrating on minimising its own narrative(s) in an attempt to handle media output.

This study examines issues like these from the military viewpoint, unlike the majority of military-media relationships, which are told from the media's viewpoint. The primary objective of this project is thus, to shift the perspective from journalists to soldiers, from the media to the military. This shift of perspective will contribute to the understanding of the changing nature of the interrelations between the two professions. The aim is to approach the topic with an understanding of competing ideals between media accessibility and defence operational security. Moreover, the aim of this study is to deviate from the much discussed idea of embedded journalism and the supposed loss of objectivity, coming mainly from journalists themselves and from media institutions. New perspectives need to be explored and tested.

The MOD has taken into use new measures, assuring that military personnel understand how to relate to and communicate with the news media, as several recently published internal notices and guidelines indicate. Moreover, military academies have developed media and communication courses to educate officers and soldiers in the function of the media. As a result of lessons from recent operations, the Defence Media Operations Centre was created in April 2005 to provide extensive media training and education within the defence community.

Characteristics of modern warfare and communication technologies mean that the military is competing with mechanisms of war coverage that are continually evolving. The pressure is not only on journalists to communicate the changing nature of contemporary warfare, but is equally as much on the military to manage journalism that works to promote access and information in order to protect security and strategic decisions.

EUROPEAN IDENTITIES IN THE MEDIA – PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS AND THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST, 2009

Nicole Landeck

Contact: landeck@uni-mannheim.de

Despite a general support for EU membership, the majority of Europeans primarily or exclusively feel as national citizens. There is only a minor European identity, which is one of the major shortcomings of EU democracy. Unlike most studies on European identity that focus exclusively on either political identities or the concept of cultural citizenship, this PhD project aims to incorporate both strands of theory. The study asks how media coverage contributes to the formation of various types and qualities of collective European identities. This media contribution will be examined in a systematic comparative analysis of political news coverage on one hand, and the discourse surrounding a popular European media event on the other.

The concept of cultural citizenship claims that mass media, especially television, substantially contribute to collective identity formation by negotiating membership of society and confirming cultural communities (Klaus & Lünenborg, 2004; Gripsrud, 2007). Collective identity formation is built on 'a feeling and expression of belonging to a common culture, way of life, a common symbolic system, and a common cultural heritage' (Mach & Pozarlik, 2008, 2), and is marked by inclusions, exclusions and internal differentiations (Eder, 2007). Moreover, the expression of collective European identifications is one dimension of the Europeanization of mediated public debate (Wessler et al., 2008). Media, culture and identity are also central to Habermas's notion of the public sphere which encompasses a political and a cultural component. In this context, both the European elections and the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) function as 'discursive tool[s] in the definitions of Europeanness' (Bolin, 2006, 191). Hence, both events serve as reference points in the process of European identity formation (Hepp & Krotz, 2008).

The content analyses will comprise German print and TV coverage of both the elections and ESC as well as the follow-up communication of both events to be found in citizens' comments on leading news websites and in ESC web forums and weblogs. The central concept of analysis in this context is identity framing which implies, for example, Europeans'

self-image and external perceptions, delimitations towards the outside and references to common history or symbols like the Euro (e.g. Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2006). Consequent to this analysis and based on the results, a comparison of Eurosceptic and Europhile member states in Western and Eastern Europe would bring deeper insights into the relationship between general attitudes towards the EU and possible media effects on European identity.

THE POPULAR MEDIA AND POPULAR PUBLIC IN CHINA

Hsiao-wen Lee

Contact: h.lee@my.westminster.ac.uk

The focus of this research is whether Habermas' 'bourgeois public sphere', which is characteristic of Western society, can be extended to China. My main contribution is to demonstrate that the concepts of 'sentiment' and 'reason' are central to any discussion of the public sphere in China. This is in sharp contrast to the West where rational discussion and the rule of law are the twin foundations of the classical discourse of the public sphere.

China's society is distinct from Western democracies in at least two fundamental ways. First, the political system remains 'communist' with a single party controlling all of the media. As a result, the degree of freedom of thought and speech is extremely limited, and there is no obvious way in which the mass media can act directly as a forum for free and informed discussion of public policy. Secondly, whereas the rule of law is understood as a central element in Western democratic culture, it has a subordinate place in Chinese culture.

I examine these assumptions through a study of the readership of popular press. I wanted to discover how the popular press engages with the general public, how the general public read and judge media messages, and crucially whether the popular press could employ an indirect approach and work to constitute an 'imaginary' public in China.

I developed four dimensions of research to demonstrate my hypotheses. These were: 1/ the 'sentiment' and 'reason' of the public sphere in the Chinese context; 2/ the press and Chinese popular culture; 3/ the popular press and its alternative aspects; and 4/ the popular press and people's opinion.

This research employs three research methods, institutional analysis of archival materials, text analysis of several newspapers within the Party press and the popular press, and dialogue analysis of eight audience focus groups (consisting of white- and blue collar workers) with sixty participants spread between Beijing and Kunming in 2007.

I conclude that while China's cultural, political and economic system of control is the main factor leading to the restriction and dissent of the general public, a 'reasoning' popular public might, in time, be shaped through their reading of controversies in political and public affairs in the popular press.

PHOTOJOURNALISM AS A CREATOR OF VALUES: OTHERNESS IN NEWS PHOTOS

Heli Lehtelä

Contact: hlehtela@ulapland.fi

The research draws on the insights provided by photojournalism to examine the values and value formation of journalism in relation to power and ethnic minorities. The material to be analyzed consists of news photos shot in 2006, dealing with the Sámi, published in the Arctic press and in particular the newspaper *Lapin Kanssa*.

Photojournalism is a powerful medium, indeed, people outside the Arctic construct their view of the area largely through the news photos as they affect emotions and engender meanings about reality and settings more subtly than texts. Photojournalism makes value judgements on issues, groups and individuals through the size of the photos, settings, poses, the roles depicted and simply by choosing who is photographed.

My particular focus is the news items dealing with the Sámi and how this ethnic minority is depicted in those representations. The methods to be used are content analysis and formal photo analysis. Among the questions I hope to address are: What kind of judgements can be seen in the representations of the Sámi? For example, are the roles depicted comparable to the real roles of the Sámi where occupations are concerned? Who takes on the active roles with power and who the passive ones? I use the concept of otherness for determining journalists' priorities. A simple definition of otherness could be 'being an outsider'.

Is there otherness between norm population and the Sámi or even among the Sámi, for instance, in the relationship between women and men?

ELECTRONIC SPORT AND NEW TYPES OF SOCIAL FORMATIONS

Janina Maric

Contact: janina.maric@uni-erfurt.de

Electronic Sport (e-sport) can be understood as a new form of computer gaming: the institutionalisation of gaming as competitive sports. E-sport relies on structures similar to organised sports such as national teams, clubs, associations, regular broadcasting and media events. Hence, not only the content (the computer games) which unites people within e-sport but also the new form of gaming practiced in an institutionalised, organised and professional way.

The focus on social forms provides an adequate entry point into this recent field of research because e-sport understood as a new form of gaming also raises the questions of what social forms are emerging and how they can be conceptualised. Even though e-sport emerged out of the gaming scenario, processes such as institutionalisation and re-territorialisation encourage social forms which overcome the unstable and fractured sociality of post-traditional social forms such as the gaming scenario. Furthermore, these processes aim at acceptance by and integration into society, whereas a scenario as a social form offers members a refuge which is not dependant on official approval by society.

Media communication is central to e-sport as it is not only used as infrastructure or reduced to the role of broadcaster but also presented as sport. Hence, from a media and communication perspective e-sport constitutes an interesting research field because it points to emerging social forms which are based on, in and around media communication.

The study uses Weber's *vergemeinschaftung* concept as an open framework to analyse the emerging social forms. *Vergemeinschaftung* enables an understanding of social relationships based on affective belonging while taking processuality into account. The research focuses on e-sport events, e-sport clans and e-sport communication. E-sport events are grand finals of national and international competitions which

are held offline but broadcasted online. E-sport clans contract gamers and attract fan support. E-sport communication refers to the online communication which provides information and spectacle as well as discussion and reflection.

The main research question is: what forms of *vergemeinschaftung* do e-sport events, clans and communication provoke?

In order to identify these forms the analysis concentrates on practices, meanings and functions as well as internal and external relationships.

Qualitative empirical research based on the grounded theory, which is suitable for exploring new phenomena answers the research question as it is adequate. The research aims to reflect on and contribute to previous research concerning new social forms and media and to address broader questions of media and socialisation.

HELPING THE MARKETS. THE THEORY OF MARKET FAILURE AS A PARADIGM FOR COMMUNICATION POLICY ANALYSIS

Tatu Matilainen

Contact: tatu.matilainen@gmail.com

Since the 1980s, the increased emphasis on economic and industrial objectives in communication policies has often been seen as a threat to the realization of democratic principles. Some have linked this economic turn to 'neoliberalism', 'marketization', and 'commercialization', while others have simply stated that the concept of a 'free market' has increasingly gained respectability as a policy ideal. The aspect that is missing, however, is an analytical presentation of the key economic theories, ideals and arguments that are used in defining contemporary media and communications policies. So, the aim of this research is to provide insights into these increasingly significant discourses in communication politics.

This research project concentrates on analyzing one particularly influential and illuminating economic paradigm for communication policy analysis, the theory of market failure (TMF). The paper approaches TMF mainly by using the method of conceptual analysis, and focuses on presenting, analyzing, and criticizing some of the key concepts of the theory: 'market', 'government intervention', 'competition', 'efficiency', 'externalities', 'public goods', and 'natural monopoly'.

Particular emphasis is also placed on examining the relations between TMF and certain wider strains of political and economic thinking (for example, the 'liberal' political ontology studied by Tuija Pulkkinen, and the 'individualist' ontology criticized by institutional economist Geoffrey Hodgson).

The following research questions give an idea of the main stages of this research project thus far: 1/ What, according to different authors and sources, are the most important concepts of the TMF, and what definitions have been formulated for these concepts? 2/ What underlying assumptions do these definitions conceal, and should these implicit assumptions be questioned? Finally, 3/ what consequences have the use of TMF had and might have for media and communications policies? Up to this point, the research has mainly focused on the questions about 'hidden assumptions' of concepts, and is consequently largely confined to analytical criticism of the conceptual framework in question. The research has thus far relied on previous literature, policy documents and journalistic articles as principal sources and material, but in the future interviews may also be conducted.

VIRTUAL SPACES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE WEB. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Sara Minucci

Contact: saraminucci@hotmail.com

The aim of my PhD project is to study how political parties belonging to three different European countries use the web to communicate. The objects of my investigation are political communication strategies on the Internet of the two prominent parties in Italy, France and the United Kingdom, according to the results of the last political elections. Therefore, I will concentrate the analysis on the web sites of the following six parties: Forza Italia and Partito Democratico (Italy), Union pour un mouvement populaire and Parti Socialiste (France), the Labour Party and the Conservative Party (UK).

I have chosen to develop a comparative analysis to find possible similarities and differences that characterize their communication strategies.

The overall aim is to study if there are elements (i.e. national political culture, national political socialization, position in the European or in the national Parliament) that could explain differences and similarities among the parties' strategies in their use of the Internet.

The decision to focus my attention on the Internet has been influenced by three main considerations. First, only the Internet gives the possibility to follow the modalities and contents of the communications of these six parties in three countries. Second, the Internet offers both the political party and the electorate the possibility of disseminating information and interacting by means totally different from those traditionally employed. Third, the attention paid to on-line politics has increased significantly and concerns a qualitatively relevant portion of population (and of the electorate) who are interested and even active in the off-line politics that constitute a great resource in political phenomena.

NEW MEDIA – NEW PUBLIC SPHERES? AN ANALYSIS OF ONLINE SHARED SPACES BECOMING PUBLIC AGORAS

Maria Francesca Murru

Contact: maria.murru@unicatt.it

Arguably the Internet offers the ideal communicative configuration for a viable public sphere. At stake there are some of the central features of the Habermas' concept of *Öffentlichkeit* (1962/1990): the commitment to freedom and equality in the communicative interaction; the dialogicity and the mutual expectations of uptake between interlocutors; the ability to address an indefinite audience, thus ruling out any form of social exclusion. All these normative requirements can be fully realized by new media which not only facilitate the proliferation of different and counter-hegemonic voices, but also have the potential for free exchanges of opinions where only the 'best argument' stands out. However, this logic is weakened by countless empirical contradictions demonstrating that there is no intrinsic feature in new media leading automatically to a vibrant public sphere.

The aim of this thesis is to analyze how the interactional and representational dimension (Dahlgren, 1995) of online shared spaces, shape the establishment of a public that reflexively acknowledges itself as 'inclusive in principle' and 'focused on matters of common concern'

(Calhoun, 1992; Dayan, 2005). In order to do this, the classic notion of public deliberation will be reframed through a double conceptual movement inspired by some of the main criticisms elicited by his theory. This double movement implies firstly an attempt to reframe sociologically the myth of ideal speech situation coming from normative accounts of deliberative democratic theory and informing all current technological utopias about new media (Bourdieu, 2000; Crossley, 2004). Second, if it is true that Habermas's public sphere appears to contain a "*basically non-political and static view of the public interest*" (Verstraeten, 1996), the assessment of online public-sphere requires a 'political twist' of the concept. This would cast light upon the evolving dialectic between inclusion and exclusion implied by every normative boundary among public and private spheres. Starting from this theoretical background, an empirical model will be developed and applied to the study of an Italian weblog (www.beppegrillo.it), which is considered to be a public sphericule (Gitlin, 1998) where media processes merge in a fruitful fusion with the emergence of a new political subject. Combining discourse analysis with interviews, the study will look at the weblog with the purpose of highlighting the 'politics of truth' and validity claims established through discourses and grassroots debates. The study will explore at the same time the contingent social imaginary inspiring users' practices and the political identity built on the backdrop of a network of counter-identities and assimilatory affinities.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE GLOBAL IMAGINARY IN THE OBAMA PHENOMENON

Markus Ojala

Contact: markus.ojala@helsinki.fi

In the beginning of April 2009, political leaders gathered in London for the G20 summit, and under intense media attention, produced an agreement on the measures needed to tackle the global economic crisis. For some of the participants and observers, the plan signalled a radical realignment of domestic and international economic policies away from the doctrines of neo-liberalism. For critical commentators, the summit was nothing but a weak attempt to save a crumbling market system

based on the unsustainable logic of growing inequality. However, the interesting aspect about the meeting, and its global media coverage, is the degree to which it manifested a shared understanding, or political imaginary, about the state of the world, the scope of possible policies and the normative grounds for state interventions.

The purpose of my study is to look at the transnational diffusion of political ideas in the Western media. To what extent can we talk about a dominant world culture, understood as a set of political values, principles and world-views that are considered universally valid? The particular aim is to examine the Obama phenomenon on a global scale: did the election of Barack Obama create a new global political imaginary?

The United States presidential election turned out to be one of the most significant media events of 2008 world-wide. Obama grew into a global media phenomenon, and the international election coverage reinforced the idea it was an event affecting all world citizens. Thus Obama became a symbolic expression of globally shared hopes, values and world-views.

The Obama phenomenon also presents an opportunity to promote political goals and ideals. While cultural symbols play a significant role in the (re-)construction of social imaginary, they are also being exploited to legitimize political purposes. In this way, the 'change' symbolized in Obama becomes an object of political struggle of definition. By defining, debating, defending and propagating political norms and values media narratives render meaning to policy proposals, create political pressure and shape the social imaginaries of political agents. What are the main characteristics of the political imaginary constructed in the narratives on Obama's presidency?

The analysis concentrates mainly on magazine articles covering Obama's election campaign and first term as President. The plan is to examine the main political, economic and cultural periodicals published in the United States and internationally between 2004 and 2010.

INNOVATION IN ONLINE NEWS ACCESS AND DISTRIBUTION

Alan Oukarat

Contact: alan.ouakrat@orange-ftgroup.com

Digital intermediaries are new challengers in the news market. These web-only stakeholders in the news business try to integrate the news value chain into the distribution level. They offer solutions based on services and function innovations to personalise, aggregate and modulate access to many news sources. As challengers, digital intermediaries must be innovative in a variety of fields, as they aim to enter into specific markets like news, particularly by building new business models, encouraging the creation of new audience measurement indicators and creating new ways to improve access to information for users.

The dominant theoretical approach of my work is based on economic sociology which observes the market's reconfiguration by these new challengers and their integration into the value chain alongside traditional and web-only news market players.

My thesis relies on three strongly correlated key-ideas.

The first refers to the 'attention economy'. In a world where information is both abundant and easily accessed, and people's time is short, it is up to content producers and web services to attract and retain people's limited attention. Moreover, people are also looking for services that simplify their access to relevant content. They can assess the news' usage values for themselves whereas news producers would have decided this value in the past.

The second idea concerns innovation in audience measurement. Syndication formats like RSS, ATOM and widget, upon which most news aggregation web services rely, are based on dynamic updates on a single page. This property conflicts with traditional web audience measurements which use conventions such as page views or unique visitors. These web services do in fact encourage the creation of new measurement tools. Usual standards are outdated in comparison to this kind of innovation, even if they remain relatively unfamiliar or little-used for the time being.

The third and final idea concerns business models for digital intermediaries. Many web 2.0 services have managed to gather a significant audience. Nevertheless, most of them are still searching for a business model that will allow them to monetize this audience.

Following a study, of the advertising market in France, aimed at understanding the context and constraints that news organisations have to face on the Internet, my goal is to observe the alternative business models that these digital intermediaries try to test. These include, for instance, revenue-sharing with established news organisations in order to distribute their content.

THE DILEMMA AMONG THE NEW MEDIA USERS, DESIGNERS AND PRODUCERS IN TURKEY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Didem Özkul

Contact: ozkul.didem@gmail.com

The study aims to identify the relationships among the new media users, producers and designers in the context of globalization and taking the new media technology implications, especially the Internet, in Turkey as a case study for the research. While examining the producer's and the designer's roles, technological determinism and social construction of technology theories are used to construct a theoretical and critical basis for new media technology and user-media interaction. The producers and the designers are presumed to be situated on the one side, and the users on the other. Instead of only regarding the producers (manufacturers, content or service providers), the designers are also regarded as a part of this interaction process in this study. When one considers design as the visualization of ideas, the designers', the users' and the producers' ideas have to match for a successful interaction and for an easier path of adaptation to new media. The users of these new media technologies considered both as a part of the design-production process and as the 'affected party', are thought to be in the centre of this process and of this interaction. For this reason, user-centred design (UCD) is used as a guide to discover the process of interaction both before and after the exposure to a particular new media technology.

Turkey will be the site of the research. Considering Turkey as a country experiencing the stages of modernization and development, the concept of the digital divide will be discussed in the context of the political-economy of new media. The study will analyse the relationships between Turkish internet sites and their users. The problem of 'experience' in UCD will be applied to new media/ new communication

technologies discipline and will test whether Turkish internet designers, producers and the users use the medium as intended. The success of the interface design is a highly subjective notion and changes from one user to another and being an abstract notion is difficult to measure. This difficulty will be solved by reducing this measurement to concepts such as 'ease of use', 'content' and 'visual attractiveness'.

This study provides answers to the problems of adaptation to new media and extensive usage of new technologies through determining the basic motives in the new media market and any rapid technological developments from the politico-economy perspective. Analyzing the relationships amongst the users, designers and the producers from the economic perspective will help to form a theoretical framework for the study. For the user adaptation element of the research, the study will analyse cultural values and shared beliefs to understand the motives behind the interaction among these actors not only economically but also socially.

WINDS OF CHANGE, BETWEEN THE FILMS AMORES PERROS AND ARRÁNCAME LA VIDA: THE MEXICAN CINEMATOGRAPHIC INDUSTRY 1999-2008

Mariana Pérez-Cabello

Contact: marianaperez@hotmail.com

The main objective of my PhD Project is the study of the Mexican film industry from 1999 to 2008; during this period new legal and structural conditions were generated, which might have determined new production schemes and ways of consumption, in contrast to those that were dominant during the previous three decades.

During the same period, the presence of Mexican films at various festivals around the world has grown in quantity and quality. The number of film festivals has flourished as have the diversity of genres, e.g. documentaries and short films, and national themes represented in films: women, Jewish, Argentinean, indigenous, migration, sexual diversity, AIDS, etc.

This diversity represents a new phenomenon in the Mexican film industry, of a new production model, the continuity of which would rely on proven ability.

Through the research questions the aim is to identify, analyze and explain the diverse factors that have determined the production, distribution, exhibition and consumption of Mexican cinema between 1999 and 2008, within the framework of the cultural industries in Mexico.

**YOUNG CITIZENS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION 2.0:
INSTITUTIONALIZED, CRITICAL OR JUST INDIVIDUALLY
NETWORKED? THE NATURE, MODALITY AND MOTIVATIONS
OF E-POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN A EUROPEAN
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

Monica Poletti

Contact: monica.poletti@gmail.com

My research deals with the political online participation of young people in European countries. The research particularly focuses the attention on youngsters that are not-affiliated and not linked to any conventional (political parties) or non-conventional (social movement organisations) political organization, but that are not either completely passive or uninterested in politics.

The theoretical framework brings together studies of political participation and protest politics, with a specific focus on young people and post-materialism theories, in the context of new media technologies and of democratic contemporary network society. This is a comparative study that takes into account the multidimensionality of online and off-line participation and has an empirical focus. Taking the participant's perspective enables the study to develop a deeper understanding of how changes in online communication encourage individual political participation of young people.

There are three main research questions. First, how and to what extent do information and communication technologies, particularly Web 2.0 tools, and the way active youngsters adopted them, are used as a resource to redefine issues and places of the political as well as the nature of their involvement and commitment in politics? Secondly, what are the motivations that make young individuals participate politically (in different forms), either or both online and offline? Thirdly, to what

extent is online participation a tool for affecting perceptions and practices in offline activism?

The methodology for data collection is a combination of quantitative (surveys) and qualitative data (in-depth interviews) of young online political participants. This combination will give a general picture of country differences and to have a more in-depth understanding of how youngsters perceive their political participation online and offline.

PARTICIPATORY JOURNALISM – A CHANCE FOR GREATER DIVERSITY IN REPORTING?

Annika Sehl

Contact: annika.sehl@udo.edu

While participatory journalism is on the increase in editorial offices, this new and relevant field remains underrepresented in current journalistic research. This PhD project examines the correlation between participatory journalism and diversity in the reporting of German newspapers.

Traditionally, journalism has been associated with the media institutions and based on the work of professional journalists. They have acted as 'gatekeepers', claiming to be the only ones capable of deciding what the public needs to know according to professional routines and conventions (e.g. Shoemaker, 1991). In the past decade, new communication technologies like weblogs have enabled the members of the public to publish content for a potentially global audience (e.g. Gillmor, 2004). Institutional journalism has reacted to this development by integrating the audience into the process of content production (e.g. Domingo et al. 2008).

From the perspective of pluralistic democracy theory, participatory journalism constitutes a new opportunity for greater diversity in reporting. A multiplicity of communicators with different backgrounds could succeed in covering issues neglected by professional journalists and adopting perspectives not yet represented in the public discourse. A positive correlation between participatory journalism and diversity in reporting is often assumed in research literature (e.g. Roessler, 2007), but up until now has not been scientifically proven. This project closes this gap in research.

In particular, the study examines how participatory journalism influences diversity in reporting of German newspapers. The analysis is limited to local reporting on the basis that readers are more engaged in issues that concern their immediate surroundings. Additionally, the study analyzes whether the content, produced by readers, fulfils the journalistic quality criteria of relevance, as readers conceivably will enlarge diversity in reporting, but with issues of less relevance. In this case, participatory journalism does not necessarily contribute considerably to a comprehensive formation of opinion in a democratic society. Finally, this study investigates which criteria play a role in professional journalists' selection of articles or photos of reader reports if, for example, only a few can be published in the newspaper. How do the professional journalists fulfill their role as gatekeepers? This question is important, since the answer influences the degree of diversity that is published in the newspaper and that can be realized by readers.

The empirical study is based largely on content analysis. In order to select a sample, the first step is to investigate the status quo of German newspapers' participatory journalism. Therefore, a quantitative full population survey among editors-in-chief of German newspapers will be conducted. The data of the content analysis is supplemented by qualitative interviews with professional journalists responsible for participatory journalism.

The empirical findings are theoretically embedded in the concept of diversity (e.g. Schatz and Schulz, 1992) as well as the theory of discursive journalism (e.g. Brosda, 2008).

IS LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT DISCOURSE REALLY ABOUT LANGUAGE? THE OVERT AND COVERT MECHANISMS OF LANGUAGE POLICY MAKING. A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT IN ESTONIA, FRANCE AND DENMARK

Maarja Siiner

Contact: maarja@siiner.eu

The ideological roots of control-oriented language policies are in the majority of modern nation states planted deeply in the discourse of language endangerment (Siiner, 2006). But as indicated by recent research into Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Heller et al., 2007; Blommaert, 2005), the language endangerment discourse is not really about endangered languages. Language policy issues are in the deepest sense political issues and are always about more than language (Ricento, 2005). Language specialists appealing for help is not sufficient to activate language endangerment discourse, which is only activated when it fits in the overall political agenda, as the central players on the language policy scene are not language specialists, but politicians. Even in countries where the linguistic situation is close to hegemony, like Denmark, changes in political discourse can start a language ideological debate about the need to draw up a language act (Milani, 2008; Siiner, in press). The problem is that in countries with a substantial and active language policy, like France and Estonia, the topic of language (endangerment) is overwhelmingly present in every-day media, shaping the minds of the general public. As the representation of an issue for a mass audience has implications for the way it is understood (Cameron, 2007), the constant focus on the topic makes people think language really is in trouble. The discourse aligns the audience with the postmodern conceptualisation as reductive mechanisms: by highlighting some aspects of reality, while placing others in the background (Blommaert, 1999). The aim of the present PhD project is to uncover both the overt and covert mechanisms of language policy making in order to understand who benefits by activating the language endangerment discourse and with what aim. The research will be conducted by analysing the language political discourse in media and political texts using CDA. The comparative approach is chosen in order to uncover both the reasons for substantial and superficial language policies and to look at the various stages of language

policy making. Both Estonia and France are known for rather active language regulating activities. France has a long tradition of language management, while Estonia's is short. Denmark on the other hand is known for a *laissez-faire* language policy, which views sanctioning and controlling the use of language as discriminatory. A comparative approach will also enable the research to determine whether there are any common traits in the process in spite of cultural differences.

ISSUES OF IMPARTIALITY AND BALANCE IN NEWS REPORTING ON PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTER AND OTHER TV CHANNELS IN MALTA

Joanna Spiteri

Contact: joannaspi@nextgen.net.mt

This study investigates the role of the Public Service Broadcaster (PSB) in Malta in maintaining political impartiality, balance and objectivity in news programmes and its changing role within the present broadcasting situation. The major players of the Maltese TV broadcasting scenario included in the study are the PSB and two television stations which are owned and wholly funded by the two main political parties. The main objective of this PhD thesis is to investigate mainly the concept of impartiality within the PSB and the two political stations and how broadcasting regulations can affect impartiality, balance and objectivity in news content and current affairs programmes. The main aim of the analysis is to investigate whether impartiality and balance are present in the TV news and current affairs programmes presented by the PSB and the two politically owned stations.

The research analyses the differences in regulating non-public broadcasting stations with regard to impartiality and balance in news programming and thus questions the role of the Malta Broadcasting Authority with regard to the main concepts of impartiality and balance. I will also be studying the measures and policies taken to achieve impartiality and how regulations affect the news content on the PSB and the two 'political' television stations. The main argument of this thesis revolves around the ownership of television stations and the concepts of impartiality, balance and objectivity when these stations produce news programmes. Even the broadcasting regulator, while being perceived to

be independent, has to enforce the laws to safeguard impartiality whilst also being an effective watchdog.

Through the use of four research methods, the study examines the different perspectives which make up the news bulletins and current affairs programmes. Quantitative techniques of content and textual analyses are used to investigate the impartiality in news and current affairs programmes. In order to gain the producers' and regulators' points of view on impartiality, media producers and representatives of the Broadcasting Authority will participate in face-to-face interviews. The audience's perception towards the concepts of impartiality, balance and objectivity in news is also studied through focus groups.

This study, though it focuses on Malta, will refer to the situation in other European countries, particularly the development and the situation of PSB in the UK and the role of the regulator in other European countries other than Malta. Also the research compares the Maltese regulations with EU broadcasting regulations on news programmes. The study attempts to answer whether impartiality is achieved in TV news broadcasting in Malta but will also be fully aware of the pertaining question whether impartiality has been achieved elsewhere.

In summary, the research focuses on:

- The history of TV broadcasting in Malta and the evolving role of the Maltese PSB within the development of broadcasting
- The importance to achieving news impartiality within the PSB for a democratic system, as in the case of Malta
- The measures and regulations which are taken to achieve impartiality in news and current affairs aired on Maltese television

This study attempts to shed light on the role of the PSB with regard to the concept of impartiality in the production of news bulletins and current affairs programmes. The study explores the important role of the PSB in a bi-polarised environment, such as Malta, particularly when reporting news and producing current affairs programmes. The study also investigates the role of the regulator in maintaining impartiality in the news content of the public service broadcaster and the other politically owned TV stations.

THE IMPLICATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES TO PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE IN THAILAND

Suttanipa Srisai

Contact: suttanipa@hotmail.com

Public relations (PR) practice is undergoing a revolution as a result of the emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The emergence of ICTs is changing the way PR practitioners, individuals and institutions communicate which has consequences for PR practice. However, these changes in PR practice vary across countries with culture playing a crucial role. Thai PR is an interesting example to examine. As Thailand has never been colonised in its 800 year history, and being a homogenous society with the majority of Thai ethnics having a strong faith in Buddhism, a common language (Thai) and a regard for the institution of monarchy, Thailand is unique among Southeast Asian countries.

My PhD project attempts to examine the evolution of PR in Thailand. In addition, the study intends to examine the development and implication of ICTs on PR practice in Thailand. Cultural value systems are explained to account for the characteristics and changes of Thai PR practice.

The thesis consists of eight chapters. The first three chapters consist of an introduction, a literature review, and a research methodology. The fourth chapter focuses on the evolution of Thai PR occupations in three sectors: government and state enterprise; private sector; and PR consultancy. This chapter presents the historical background and describes key events, organisations and people, which are then drawn together in a way which offers a convincing explanation for the expansion of the PR occupations in different periods of Thai history before the modern era.

The sixth chapter presents PR practice in Thailand in the modern era. The roles and types of Thai PR activities, as well as modern Thai PR characteristics are discussed. The seventh chapter examines the linkage between Thai PR practice and ICTs. How Thai PR practitioners use ICTs in their work will be discussed. Cultural value systems are described to help explain Thai practitioners' behaviour in both chapters: how and why Thai PR has been practiced in the way it has been.

Two main research methods – documentary sources and in-depth interviews – are employed in the project. Documentary sources are employed to explain the evolution of Thai PR. Thai senior PR managers who have a crucial role in companies' policies and long experience in the PR field are interviewed to examine the practice of PR together with the use of ICTs.

THE IMAGE OF A JOURNALIST IN THE PRESS: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Tatana Svrckova

Contact: tana.svrckova@gmail.com

In my dissertation, I will focus mainly on representing reality and categorization in the press. I would like to analyse stereotyping in the mediation process and stereotypical descriptions of journalists not only from their perspective but also from the public perspective. The purpose of my work is to discover all the possible social roles of journalists within contemporary Czech society. By analysing Czech news magazines, I will indicate methods of bias and stereotypical clichés in the language. The first part of the research will be focused on literature review. The other parts of the study will describe the research results.

The analysis will be focused on the different forms of categorization and on the emotionally loaded vocabulary. I will consider mainly lexemes (expressive ones, euphemisms, augmentatives, metaphors etc.) due to their strong manipulative potential. The analysis will use a variety of methodologies: critical discourse analysis, content analysis, categorical analysis and linguistics. The research will be focused mainly on the categorization and stereotypical implications in editorials, feuilletons and media columns. By deconstructing and analysing editorials and media pages I aim to discover the nature of Czech journalists and the public's perception and opinion about them and, metadiscursively, the editors' perspective.

Part of the research will compare the situation of news magazines in the Czech Republic in the 1990s with contemporary examples. The sample of the magazines will cover a time period from 1990 to 2009. This time period was chosen to illustrate the Czech stereotypes of journalists of this era, the change of argumentation and description of desired (or

missing) skills, abilities, attributes, rights and supposed duties. This register has changed as a result of the cultural, political and economic changes and development of the Czech Republic after the Velvet revolution in 1989.

CULTURAL AND COMMUNICATIVE ROLES OF THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM IN PERMANENT EXHIBITION PRODUCTION

Taavi Tatsi

Contact: ttaaavvii@gmail.com

The PhD project is based on an anthropological interest to investigate the logic of the museum production field and the ways the National Museum's role (both cultural and communicative) is being reinvented, planned and entextualised in Estonia through the ongoing process of producing a new permanent exhibition on Estonian culture.

Museums are increasingly seen as a form of media and a lot of studies focus on researching the ways that museums frame the relationships between artefacts and human beings. The Estonian National Museum (ENM) is currently being reinvented and reframed through constructing a contemporary building, for the first time in a building designed for museum purposes. The process is taking place in a post-transitional society influenced by a number of significant socio-cultural changes. The public has until recently viewed ENM largely as a repository of material peasant culture of the ethnic Estonians from the 19th century. This function has served the state and ethnic Estonian population well in the process of regaining independence and implementing the national agenda.

Now, however, both museology and socio-cultural changes suggest new roles for a national museum, to create content of the contemporary life-environment and build intercultural ties, etc. The new permanent exhibition on Estonian culture, which will be the centrepiece in the new ENM, is the primary tool facilitating these new roles and communicating them to the public. As the production process of the permanent exhibition is under way, there is ample ethnographic research material available to investigate the continuities and changes in several fields of interest:

How is the historic mission of the ENM retained while setting new aims in the agenda? Where are the sources for the new initiatives, and which mechanisms and power will put these into effect? How is Estonian culture represented in the final product? How are producers roles and competences constructed and practiced and which fields of production intersect and influence the process and how? How are audiences articulated and interaction and engagement practices modified or remodelled? How is participatory research influencing the production process (increasing reflexivity) and does it contribute to the theoretical framework of production ethnography?

Methodologically, the approach is best characterised as production ethnography with research questions and underlying theoretical framework being relatively flexible in order to adjust where necessary to the logic of the field and process as they open up during the participatory observation.

QUESTIONING THE CLOSURE OF MEANING: HEGEMONY OF THE NEOLIBERAL DISCOURSE, SLOVENIAN JOURNALISM AND DEMOCRACY

Andreja Trdina

Contact: andreja.trdina@gmail.com

Drawing on the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe, situated within a post-structuralist and post-Marxist framework, this project considers with particular empirical reference to the Slovenian context the relationship between the journalism and the neoliberal social order. The project aims to critically examine the role media play in the processes of reproduction of the neoliberal discourse and construction of the Slovenian neoliberal reality. In particular, the purposes of my research are threefold: 1/ to expose the characteristics and functioning of the neoliberal discourse (through journalistic texts); 2/ to chart real effects the neoliberal discourse has on the structuring of social relations (by offering specific subject positions and creating consensual neoliberal interpretative scheme); and 3/ to consider broad socio-political implications of those effects (in the contexts of the concepts of citizenship and democracy).

Although still work in progress, my findings so far support arguments that the current affairs journalism of Slovenian media construct and reproduce the hegemony of the neoliberal discourse by employing specific discursive strategies of moralization found in the rhetoric, narration and visual iconography of journalistic articles. The neoliberal discourse manages to link together various elements that might be in their particular logics perceived as entirely arbitrary or even contradictory, through hegemonic operation that constitutes a chain of equivalences and fixes neoliberal meanings and identities around specific nodal points. Explicitly, these articles paradoxically articulate and naturalize neoliberal ideas of nation, family, authority and tradition on one hand, as well as egoistic interest, competitive individualism, and the idea of opposing the bureaucratic state on the other. While I keep the analytic distinction between those articulations, in practice they overdetermine each other and simultaneously construct a neoliberal order.

Since neoliberal discourse engages in a hegemonic move that also attempts to absorb and redefine some of the oppositional demands, the project will in addition address the issue of structure versus agency, a concern from what position should we speak in order, if possible at all, to develop a subversive critique, and the question of normative ground from which theory-building, and not merely deconstruction, is promising. Answers suggest shifting to a 'complex of dialectics' between the contingency and necessity.

Finally, I reflect on implications of neoliberalism's inherent authoritarian tendencies that add force to the processes of depoliticisation by way of transforming conceptualisations of democracy and citizenship. On the basis that any critique of society is in journalistic articles aestheticized (commodified), therefore suffocated, Slovenian journalism is more successful in cultivating a neoliberal moral order than in its normative role of moving beyond neoliberal closure of meaning, providing critical analysis, and stimulating public debate. Rethinking the emancipatory potential of journalism is in this respect crucial.

**RESISTANCE, VISIBILITY AND CONTESTATION.
THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE
IDENTITIES IN POPULAR ONLINE SPACES**

Julie Uldam

Contact: ju.ikl@cbs.dk

Studies on social movements and social movement organisations (SMOs) in an online realm tend to centre on their strategic uses, e.g. for mobilisation purposes. Popular online spaces such as social networking and file sharing sites are often considered key spaces for reaching broader publics. This thesis explores popular online spaces both as scenes of politicality and as sites of collective identity formation for two reasons. First, to understand the role of popular online spaces within the broader role of the Internet, in conditioning the opportunities for visibility and political engagement of SMOs connected to the Global Justice Movement. Secondly this thesis probes the interplay between SMOs' strategic endeavours and collective identities, asking whether the communicative practices facilitated by popular online spaces in any way come to reposition collective identities at an organisational level. More specifically, central questions to the study are: what kinds of confrontation occur in the organisations' outbound communication? What kinds of ingroup/outgroup distinctions are promoted? How are these distinctions debated and negotiated among members? To answer these questions, the study draws on the concepts of radical democracy (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Mouffe, 1992) and social movement framing (Snow et.al., 1986; Gamson, 1992) as theoretical and analytical lenses.

In examining the dialectic of strategy and collective identity formation in the context of popular online spaces, the study draws on the cases of the World Development Movement and War on Want and adopts a two-fold approach: 1/ it addresses SMOs' communicative practices towards external actors. Here, agonism entails attempting to destabilise the discursive structure of neoliberal globalisation. And 2/ internally, agonism relates to framing as the process of the formation of collective identities and entails possibilities for intra-organisational contestation. In doing so, the study relies on an understanding of political engagement in new social movements that is conflictual, passionate, sometimes irrational and consisting of manifold, fluid identities (Mouffe, 2005; Fenton, 2009; Cammaerts, 2007). At the same time, the promotion of

coherent frames is important to gain visibility in relation to external actors. We need to appreciate both processes to understand the relationship between strategic communication and the underlying dynamics of intergroup tension (Snow et.al., 1998), the interconnections between strategy and passion, coherence and diversity.

By analysing how SMOs use different online spaces as locations for strategic framing and identity formation, we can begin to study how the Internet may contribute to an agonistic public sphere where also contestatory voices can form and potentially gain legitimacy among and beyond the hardcore activists.

BEYOND PATRONIZING? THE AREA OF TENSION BETWEEN EDUCATIONALIZATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION IN THE LIFE-WORLDS OF CHILDREN

Nele Van den Cruyce

Contact: nvdcruyc@vub.ac.be

During the last century, the concept of childhood changed in the midst of a tension field between pedagogical and commercial sources. With this evolution, the perception of the average healthy child and the notion of what is considered to be a healthy childhood have also altered.

This PhD research will first define the historical alteration in the societal discourse about healthy children and illustrate this shift by means of a visual content analysis. Commercial and governmental advertisements containing information about children or childhood are used as data. This is because the advertisements are marketing what the average healthy child should look like or what is needed for a child to approximate the societal idea about childhood at a particular moment in time. Stereotypically, the topics children and childhood are coloured by a female bias. *Libelle*, as the first women's magazine published in the Flemish part of Belgium, will be used as the main data source. The historical part of this PhD research will help to shed light on the different sources that have been occupied with defining the average healthy child and demonstrate that health is a social construct.

In the second part of this PhD research, the present situation of children and childhood will be examined. Following the paradigm of the sociology of childhood, children are hereby seen as capable actors and

they will be actively involved in this part of the research. The main research goal is to frame children's thinking as part of a larger socio-economic and cultural context. Next to interviewing parents and school-teachers about their views on the average healthy child, children themselves will be questioned about health, a healthy childhood and their main information sources concerning these topics. The children will also be confronted with historical health messages and images. In order to do this adequately, a child appropriate research method will have to be developed and considering the pitfalls of doing research with children, a mixed method approach is recommendable.

STRUCTURE, AGENCY AND IDENTITY IN TAIWANESE GIRLS' SELF-PORTRAITURE ONLINE

Yin-han Wang

Contact: Y.wang26@lse.ac.uk

In this era of the Internet and Web 2.0, an abundant corpus of research on girls' various forms of digital content-creation has been done. Prevalent in this vigorous body of studies is a positive attitude that celebrates the 'discovery' and acknowledgment of girls' role as agents in cultural activities and a potential rejuvenation of feminism, much like the excitement of discovering female pleasure and resistance in reception studies two decades ago. My project looks into Taiwanese girls' online photographic self-portraiture on Taiwan's most popular Social Networking Site (SNS), and asks what role this practice plays in the formation of their identity. I view their media consumption and self-portrait production as embedded in the grain and context of everyday life, shaped and reflecting the identification, negotiation and resistance between individual agency and hetero-normative structural influences (commercial, familial, media and cultural). I acknowledge that girls' agency exists but also bear in mind issues such as commercialization and sexualization. In this sense, I will engage sociological theories of 'individualisation' with feminist critiques of the post-feminist 'empowerment' discourse and ask how we can move beyond the opposition between optimism-agency and pessimism-exploitation. Also, if the feminism perspective is to be brought into the examination of the risk-taking, boundary-exploring behaviours of girls' self-portraiture,

how do we approach this occasionally highly-sexual practice without resorting to moralism and conservatism?

To this end, I have attempted to outline the possible positions in understanding girls and Internet self-portraiture as follows:

- 1/ Active-Hope: Empowerment
- 2/ Passive-Hope: Pleasure
- 3/ Active-Fear: Self-Objectification
- 4/ Passive-Fear: Exploitation/Victimization

My research questions are grouped in three categories:

- 1/ The nature of self-portraiture: What are young people's Internet self-portraits like? Are there discernible patterns emerging from boys and girls self-portraits? What are gender-related characteristics and differences in their self-portraits?
- 2/ Girls and self-portraiture on Social Networking Site: What does self-portraiture mean to girls? Why, how and when do they do it? What kind of activities do they do on their SNS space, with whom do they interact, and how involved are they? What elements from their everyday lives do they incorporate in their self-portraiture? What are the factors that inform their decision of self-portraiture? How might their self-portraiture reflect traces of social-structural influences and also their attempts to express and make sense of girlhood?
- 3/ Media in the self-portraiture: Do girls draw references from media representations (TV, magazine, advertisements, others' self-portraits) into their self-portraits? What elements of the media representations do they import and how do they make use of them?

The project uses a mixed method of quantitative content analysis of 200 self-portraits of 100 girls and 100 boys selected at random, as well as online participant observation and semi-structured IM interviews with 16 girls. Ultimately, this project aims to understand how Taiwanese girls make sense of their lives via self-portraiture on SNS, and to identify the opportunities and risks in their online engagement for the development of (new) media literacy education in Taiwan.

SHARED PICTURE. PRODUCTION OF EDITORIAL PORTRAITS IN A CONSUMER MAGAZINE'S WORK PROCESS

Hanna Weselius

Contact: hanna.weselius@taik.fi

My research focuses on editorial portraiture in the magazine context. As a hypothesis, I divide contemporary journalistic photography into three forms and medium-based categories: traditional documentary photography (mainly in newspapers and photographic art context), editorial format photography (in magazines) and digital multimodal photography (in independent web media or web supplements of traditional printed media). Whereas a documentary photograph intends to be a context-free entity giving a neutral representation of the subject, a magazine picture is a collectively planned product that is valued in terms of fitting into the magazine's visual concept more than its relation to common reality. Digital multimodal photography features distinctive qualities such as multimodality (sound, graphic elements, moving image), interactivity and a fairly unlimited length of narrative. All these overlapping categories, in all media, use portrait photography, the subject being the person portrayed or any social or political issue in a personalised form.

My research questions are: 1/ How and why the pictorial subject of an image (i.e. portrayed person with authentic or staged background) is cropped, framed or elaborated on in magazine production, and 2/ How the reader is constructed and discussed during this process of image making?

I am conducting my ethnographic study in Finnish magazines using semi-structured interviews and newsroom observation. I follow the production process from the initial stage to final outcome, making visualised models of the work flow and interviewing also the persons being portrayed. The units of analysis are 1/ the practitioners' discussions during and around the process and 2/ the photographs, their style and structure, and the constructive implied reader within.

In magazine journalism, the relation to readers has always been explicitly important. Written down in the editorial policy or stylebook, there is often a fictitious person, the model reader, for whom the content is tailored. Readers have also recently been discussed concerning the epistemic and financial crisis of printed newspapers. The argument is that the audience's trust in journalism is based on the default assumption

of accuracy. In the magazine context, I argue that accuracy alone is insufficient to gain the audience's trust, which may form as a result of a mutual understanding – shared between the reader and the magazine – of 1/ certain defined forms of photographic representation and interpretation of reality, and 2/ certain professional photographic quality and distinctive style of the images.

BLOG COMMUNITIES AS AN ELEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN RUSSIA

Dmitry Yagodin

Contact: dmitry.yagodin@uta.fi

Blogs as a personal online easy-to-use publishing tool enable ordinary people to express their opinions, share news, but also openly criticize authorities. This features make blogging a part of any media system. In some societies this alternative channel of information seems to be vital in the face of press freedom restrictions. Blogging and blog communities are claimed to be extremely popular in the Russian language segment of the Internet (colloquially Runet) and are often seen as one of the most vivid spaces of political debate. On the other hand, according to some estimation, the movement has been failing the expectation of mobilizing the relatively weak Russian civil society.

The focus of this research is blogging as an alternative public forum in a specific political environment of modern Russia. In general, I am looking for an answer to a broad question: what does political debate in the blogosphere mean for civic engagement and, as a result, for Russian civil society? As the subject of the research I have chosen the most populated and active blog platform of Runet – the Russian language element of LiveJournal.com, which includes several dozen political communities involving thousands of bloggers.

The research implies an interdisciplinary approach with an emphasis on the concepts of civic engagement, civil society, participatory media and the role of media in different societies. I use the mixed methods paradigm: quantitative analysis of factors that affect bloggers' participatory action and qualitative discourse analysis of attitudes and meanings that political debate in blogs has for Russian civil society. The first part of the research is based on a questionnaire survey among

bloggers of political discussions (June 2009), and the second part will be based on a series of interviews with active bloggers and media experts (2010).

In my view, the current development of the blogosphere, and the Russian language element of LiveJournal in particular, resembles an intellectual discussion club with no serious effect on real life and is obviously harmless for political system. Though, we might expect changes in this respect as a result of the ongoing economic recession and growing social discontent.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT IN INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION

Anna Zoellner

Contact: a.zoellner@leeds.ac.uk

Over the last few decades, European television industries have become increasingly commercialised across all genres with intensified competition and rising economic pressures leading to risk aversion and an orientation on audience ratings among broadcasters. In a broadcaster-publisher system the economic pressures that the networks experience are directly passed onto independent production companies impacting strongly on the production conditions and the nature of the programmes produced.

My research project examines the under-researched independent production sector with a focus on the production of documentary programmes for television. The project analyses the impact the broadcasting system and its power relations and economic imperatives have on the development of original programme ideas. The recent changes in the broadcasting system are not restricted to a single nation state but are the result of global developments in the media industries with consequences for various national television outputs including documentaries. My research looks at the production framework in two national contexts, Great Britain and Germany, uncovering differences but also similarities in national culture, regulation and economy. In line with the tradition of media production studies, the research subject is approached in an ethnographic study applying participant observation and interviews complemented by content analysis of programme proposals. The case

study of this research involves two independent production companies that specialise in documentary production.

The analytical focus centres on three areas: first, organisational issues and practices in the development process; secondly, occupational issues with regard to the labour conditions in independent documentary production; and thirdly, textual issues with regard to the documentary programmes that are being developed. The thesis, with reference to the structure-agency debate, cultural labour in creative industries and documentary theory, will address key aspects of the independent production sector: Power relations and autonomy in the broadcasting commissioning system; the quality of working life; the special appeal of working in television; the potential for innovation; and the content and style conventions of the genre.

About the authors

Agnes Aljas is a researcher of the Estonian National Museum and PhD student of the Institute of Journalism and communication in the University of Tartu. She has an MA from the University of Turku (where she studied ethnology) and a BA in ethnology from the University of Tartu. Her PhD focuses on the changes of the culture concept. She is currently participating as a researcher in following research projects: The Problems of Transformation and Reception of Cultural Heritage in the Digital Age; Developing museum communication in the 21st century information environment and Actual complexity of cultural communication and methodological challenges of cultural research. She has published several articles about the Estonian National Museum.

Contact: agnes.aljas@erm.ee

Jess Baines is a first year part-time PhD candidate at London School of Economics. She is also employed as a lecturer in Cultural and Historical Studies at London College of Communications. From the early 1980s to the mid 1990s she was involved in the radical and community press scene in London.

Contact: j.baines@lse.ac.uk

Petr Bednařík, PhD (1973) is a lecturer and researcher at Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Media Studies and a researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences. He is focused on scientific research in the area of Czech media history in the 20th century and Czechoslovak Jews after the year 1938. He publishes on Czech press and television history.

Contact: bednarikpetr@seznam.cz

Michael Brüggemann is Post-Doctoral Fellow at Jacobs University Bremen, Germany, and coordinates the research project The Transnationalization of Public Spheres: The Case of the EU at the Collaborative Research Center Transformations of the State (University of Bremen and Jacobs University). Before, he has worked as a researcher and lecturer at

the Institute for Communication Research at the University of Munich. His research and teaching focuses on issues of comparative international communication, political PR and journalism. His PhD thesis dealt with the information policy of the European Commission.

Contact: m.brueggemann@jacobs-university.de

Bertrand Cabedoche is Professor of Information and Communication at the University of Grenoble III, UNESCO chair in international communication, and member of the executive board of ECREA. He is also in charge of the international development of GRESEC, a well-known French research team in the field of information and communication. He has worked on the representations of the European Union in the main member states' newspapers, and on media and information issues on North-South relations since the 1970s. He has also been working on the ways society is constructed when it becomes the subject of public (polemic) debates.

Contact: Bertrand.Cabedoche@u-grenoble3.fr

Nico Carpentier is an assistant professor working at the Communication Studies Department of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB - Free University of Brussels). He is co-director of the VUB research centre CEMESO and vice-president of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA). His theoretical focus is on discourse theory, his research interests are situated in the relationship between media, journalism, politics and culture, especially towards social domains as war & conflict, ideology, participation and democracy. Recent publications include: *Participation and media production. Critical reflections on content creation* (ed.)(2008); *Discourse Theory and Cultural Analysis. Media, Arts and Literature* (ed.)(2008); and *Democracy, journalism and technology* (ed.)(2008).

Contact: nico.carpentier@vub.ac.be

Nur Betül Çelik is an associate professor at Ankara University, Faculty of Communication. She completed her PhD under the supervision of Aletta Norval and Ernesto Laclau at the Department of Government, University of Essex, UK in 1996. Her doctoral thesis is titled *Kemalist Hegemony: From its constitution to its dissolution*. Her research interests are social and political theory/philosophy, ideology and discourse theories, democracy theory and Turkish politics. She is the author of several articles and a book chapter on Kemalist hegemony, and a book on

Marx's concept of ideology. She also recently translated Laclau's *On Populist Reason* into Turkish.

Contact: nbetul@yahoo.co.uk

Fausto Colombo is Professor of Media Communications Theories and Media and Politics at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan. He is Director of the Osservatorio sulla Comunicazione, a media and communication research center based at the Università Cattolica of Milan. His scientific activity concerns the sociology of media, with particular attention for media and democracy. His latest publications are: *Digitising TV. Theoretical issues and Comparative Studies across Europe* (with N. Vittadini, 2006); *La Digitalizzazione dei Media* (2007); and *Boom. Storia di quelli che non hanno fatto il '68* (2008).

Contact: fausto.colombo@unicatt.it

Benjamin De Cleen works as a teaching assistant at the Communication Studies Department of the VUB - Free University of Brussels. His research deals with the Flemish extreme right party Vlaams Belang's discourse on culture. Publications include 'Popular music against extreme right populism. The Vlaams Belang and the 0110 concerts in Belgium', to be published in the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, and 'Bringing discourse theory into media studies', *Journal of Language and Politics* (2007, with Nico Carpentier). He is vice-chair of YECREA, the ECREA Young Scholars' Network.

Contact: bdecleen@vub.ac.be

Šimon Dominik, M.A. (1981) is a doctoral student at Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Media Studies, and a MA student of theatre direction at the Academy of Performing Arts, Prague. He focuses on the history of Czech television broadcasting, especially on the production of serials, and contributes to the long-term project Czechoslovak and Czech television serial 1959-2009.

Contact: s.hubert@email.cz

Aristea Fotopoulou is a Doctorate Candidate in Media and Cultural Studies, at the Centre for Material Digital Culture, University of Sussex (2008-2011). Her research interests include media technologies and social change. Her Master's dissertation concerned the practice of blogging for disabled women. Her thesis focuses on contemporary queer/ feminist activism in the UK and digital media practices. She also works as an editor for the *Studies in Social and Political Thought Journal* at the

University of Sussex and as an Associate Tutor at the Film and Media Department.

Contact: a.fotopoulou@sussex.ac.uk

Iñaki Garcia-Blanco is a Research Associate at the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (Cardiff University) and a PhD candidate at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). His research focuses on the relations between the media and the political, understanding the political in its broadest possible sense. He co-edited *Media Agoras: Democracy, Diversity, and Communication* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009) with Bart Cammaerts and Sofie Van Bauwel. He is vice-chair of the Communication and Democracy section of ECREA. Contact: garcia-blancoi@Cardiff.ac.uk

François Heinderyckx is Professor at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and director of the Department of Information and Communication Sciences where he teaches media sociology, political communication and research methods. His research interests include journalism and news media, electoral campaigns, e-government and information and communication technologies. He is correspondent member of the Board of the Institut des Sciences de la Communication du CNRS (ISCC, France) and President of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA).

Contact: fheinder@ulb.ac.be

Andreas Hepp is Professor of Communications at the University of Bremen, Germany, and head of the IMKI (Institute of Media, Communication and Information) as well as head of the research project The Transnationalization of Public Spheres: The Case of the EU at the Collaborative Research Center Transformations of the State (University of Bremen and Jacobs University). His main research and teaching areas include media and communication theory, media sociology, transnational and transcultural communication, cultural studies, media change, comparative media and communication research, media appropriation and discourse analyses.

Contact: andreas.hepp@uni-bremen.de

Rikke Bjerg Jensen began her PhD in October 2008 at the Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI), University of Westminster, London. Her current research explores British military strategies in relation to media operations in the context of the war in Afghanistan.

She is looking specifically at the relationship between the military and the media, the soldier and the journalist, as strict military policies determine and structure the interaction of these two professions. Her research is supported by the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation and by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

Contact: r.jensen@my.westminster.ac.uk

Anastasia Kavada is a Research Fellow at the Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI) of the University of Westminster. Her research interests concern the role of the internet and social technologies in the establishment of international campaigns and political coalitions and in practices of citizenship and democracy. Her research has focused on the Global Justice Movement, exploring the connection between the internet and participatory decision-making, decentralized organizing, and the development of a common identity among movement participants. Anastasia has taught in a variety of courses in media and communication at the University of Westminster, Middlesex University and Kingston University.

Contact: A.Kavada@westminster.ac.uk

Katharina Kleinen-v. Königslöw is Post-Doctoral Fellow at Jacobs University Bremen, Germany, and researcher in the project The Transnationalization of Public Spheres: The Case of the EU at the Collaborative Research Center Transformations of the State (University of Bremen and Jacobs University). The topic of her PhD was the integration of national public spheres as a theoretical concept and as an empirical phenomenon. Her main research areas are comparative media research, statistics and methods of content analysis, which she taught at the Universities of Munich and Bremen. She has also worked as a professional media and market researcher in Munich.

Contact: k.kleinen@jacobs-university.de

Swantje Lingenberg is Post-Doctoral Fellow at Jacobs University Bremen, Germany, and researcher in the project The Transnationalization of Public Spheres: The Case of the EU at the Collaborative Research Center Transformations of the State (University of Bremen and Jacobs University). She studied Media and Communications at the University of Münster and graduated with a PhD at the University of Erfurt, Germany, focusing on the European public sphere in audience perspective. Her

main research areas are transcultural communication and qualitative audience research.

Contact: s.lingenberg@jacobs-university.de

Denis McQuail is emeritus Professor and honorary Fellow of the School of Communication Research, University of Amsterdam where he held the chair of Mass Communication from 1977 until 1997. He is author of the textbook *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory* (fifth edition, 2005). Other recent publications are: *Media Accountability and Freedom of Publication* (OUP, 2003); *Normative Theories of the Media*, with C. Christians, T. L. Glasser, K. Nordenstreng, and R.A. White (UIP, 2009). He is an editor of the *European Journal of Communication*.

Contact: denis290@btinternet.com

Johanna Möller is research associate in the project *The Transnationalization of Public Spheres: The Case of the EU at the Collaborative Research Center Transformations of the State* (University of Bremen and Jacobs University). She studied Political Science at the Free University Berlin, with a special interest in Poland and argumentative patterns in deliberative public discourse. Her PhD project examines transcultural political actors, connecting German, Polish and European public spheres. Contact: j.moeller@jacobs-university.de

Maria Francesca Murru is a PhD candidate at the Department of Media and Communication at the Catholic University of Milan. She graduated in 2006 with a thesis analysing the concept of media literacy through the theoretical perspectives of diffusion of innovations theory and the social shaping of technology approach. She is currently working as a researcher at OssCom, an academic research centre in media and communication based at the same university. Her research interests include public sphere theory, media and democracy, internet and political culture, children and media. Her publications include: Colombo, F., Murru M. F. (2007) 'Weblogs between Counter-information and Power: an Italian Case Study', *Observatorio (OBS*) Journal*, 2 (1): 1-13; Tsatsou, P., Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, P., Murru, M. F. (2009) *Digital Divides*, in S. Livingstone and L. Haddon (Eds.) *Kids Online: Opportunities and risks for children*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Contact: maria.murru@unicatt.it

Hannu Nieminen is professor of media and communication policy and director of the Communication Research Centre CRC at the Department of Communication, University of Helsinki, Finland. He received his PhD in 1996 at the University of Westminster, London. His research interests include media and democracy, theories of public sphere, and communication policy and regulation, on which themes he has published several books and articles. His monographs include *People Stood Apart: the Constitution of the National Public Sphere in Finland 1809–1917* (2006, in Finnish), *Hegemony and the Public Sphere* (2000), and *Democracy and Communication: Habermas, Williams, and the British Case* (1997).
Contact: hannu.nieminen@helsinki.fi

Irena Reifová, Ph.D (1971) is a lecturer and researcher at Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Media Studies. She teaches courses on critical media theories, cultural studies and media audiences. Her major scholarly interests are in television popular culture, where she especially focuses on Czechoslovak and Czech serial television fiction. She is a member of Editorial Board of Czech and Slovak journal *Media Studies*.
Contact: Reifova@seznam.cz

Tobias Olsson is Associate Professor and head of Media and Communication research at Jönköping University, Sweden. During the last decade he has been a part of a number of research projects within the areas of new media and citizenship (funded by for instance the Swedish Knowledge Foundation and the European Union's 6th Framework Programme). He is currently coordinating the research project *Organised Producers of Young Net Cultures*.
Contact: tobias.olsson@hjk.hj.se

Manuel Parés i Maicas is emeritus Professor of the Facultat de Ciències de la Comunicació, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, principally in the field of political communication and ethics of communication. He is one of the founders of the European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School, and was its coordinator for 10 years. Manuel Parés i Maicas is honorary president of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (president 1998–2002), coordinator of the Unesco chair of Communication of the University, member of the Scientific Council of the Maison de Sciences de l'Homme, Paris 13, member of the Consell de la Informació de Catalunya (Catalan Information Council) and of the Federació de Asociaciones de la Prensa de

España (Spanish Federation of Press Associations). He has published a considerable number of books and attended many international conferences.

Contact: Manuel.Pares@uab.cat

Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt is a senior researcher at the University of Tartu Institute of Journalism and Communication. She also works as a part-time researcher in the Estonian National Museum. Her research interests are focused on online spaces as possible venues for participation in political and cultural life. She completed her PhD in 2006 on the topic of information environments as contexts for internet adoption. She is the leader of the following research projects: Developing museum communication in the 21st century information environment and HUB websites for Youth participation. She is also researcher in these projects: EuKidsOnline, The Problems of Transformation and Reception of Cultural Heritage in the Digital Age and Estonia as an Emerging Information and Consumer Society: Social Sustainability and Quality of Life. She has recently published in *Journal of Baltic Studies*, *Journal of computer Mediated Communication* and *Journal of Children and Media*.

Contact: pille.vengerfeldt@ut.ee

Anders Svensson holds a PhD in Journalism and Mass Communication and a Senior Lecturer in Media and Communication Studies at Jönköping University, Sweden. Since March 2009 he is also a researcher within the national research project called Organised Producers of Young Net Cultures (funded by the Swedish Knowledge Foundation). Anders Svensson has published a number of texts in edited books and journals on issues of new media and democracy, online communities and social capital, and the impact of new media on traditional mass media.

Contact: anders.svensson@hjk.hj.se

Ebba Sundin is Assistant Professor in Media and Communication Science and has focused on young people and media use. At present, she is engaged in an international project about university students' internet use. This is a comparative study between four countries: Sweden, France, Mexico and Canada. Recently, she has also been involved in a project about children's newspaper reading in Toronto, Canada. Two other projects are on young readers in the Nordic region and a historical study of children's pages in Swedish newspapers in the 1950s. Ebba Sundin has

been working at the School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University since 1994.

Contact: Ebba.Sundin@hjk.hj.se

Indrek Treufeldt is advisor to the board of the Estonian Public Broadcasting and also a lecturer in TV journalism at Tallinn University. He received his Diploma (M.Sc) in electronics at Tallinn University of Technology in 1993 and an MA in journalism at Tartu University in 1996. He has been working as a broadcast journalist since 1991.

Contact: indrek.treufeldt@err.ee

Ilija Tomanić Trivundža is an assistant at Department of Media and Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. His primary research interest spans across the field of visual communication, particularly photography and film. His published articles focus on visual representations of otherness and collective identifications. He is a co-editor of *Fotografija* magazine.

Contact: ilija.tomanic@fdv.uni-lj.si

Yin-han Wang is a PhD student at the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics. She holds an MS degree in Advertising at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests include consumer culture, identity, gender and the visual, and young people's online culture. Her PhD project explores the role of online self-portraiture in Taiwanese girls' identity work.

Contact: y.wang26@lse.ac.uk

Anna Zoellner is a doctoral student at the Institute of Communications Studies at the University of Leeds, UK. Her research focuses on television production, cultural industries and creative labour. Anna Zoellner has a background as television producer with a specialisation in documentary and international co-production.

Contact: a.zoellner@leeds.ac.uk



*Communicative approaches
to politics and ethics in Europe*

Edited by
Suro Carpenter
Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt
Sandro Alderson
Tobias Olsson
Hannu Nieminen
Ebba Sutidin
Kaarle Nordenström

The European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School is supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme Erasmus Intensive Programme project (EUC number: 69935-IC-1-2007-EE-ERASMUS-EUC-1), the European Communication Research and Education Association (www.ecea.eu), the University of Tartu - the Institute of Journalism and Communication (www.jrnl.ut.ee), the Danish National Research School for Media, Communication and Journalism, the Finnish National Research School and a consortium of 22 universities.