

Foreword

The media and communication research associations of the Nordic countries in cooperation with Nordicom have held conferences every second year since 1973. These Nordic conferences have contributed greatly to the development of media and communication research in the Nordic countries. The 18th conference in the series was held in Helsinki, Finland, 16th-19th August 2007. Host for the conference was the Finnish Association for Mass Communication Research (TOY). About 320 scholars from Denmark (48), Finland (79), Greenland (1), Iceland (4), Norway (79) and Sweden (76) gathered to discuss current research and findings. In addition, some participants came from further afield, from the Baltic States, Austria, France, Germany and Great Britain in Europe, and also from Australia, Canada and the USA.

The conference proceedings included plenary sessions with keynote speakers and thematic seminars in 23 different working groups. In addition participants enjoyed a number of social gatherings and cultural events. The theme of the plenary sessions this year was *Generations, Communication and Media Philosophy*. This special issue of *Nordicom Review* contains all the lectures held in plenary sessions.

As usual, the main business of the conference took place in the working group sessions. About 230 research papers were presented in 23 working groups. A number of the papers presented at the conference have been revised and edited to become articles that were then submitted for review for publication in English. Together, the articles presented in this issue of *Nordicom Review* give the reader some idea of the breadth and depth of Nordic scholarship in the area.

Responsibility for arranging the conferences is divided into two parts. More comprehensive questions, such as the theme, keynote speakers, working groups and fees are the responsibility of a Nordic Planning Committee, whose members are appointed by the national media and communication research associations and Nordicom. Members of the Committee that planned the conference in Helsinki were Gunhild Agger, SMID (Denmark); Henrika Zilliacus-Tikkanen, TOY (Finland); Leif-Ove Larsen, NML (Norway); Monica Löfgren Nilsson, FSMK (Sweden); Epp Lauk, University of Tartu (Estonia); and Ulla Carlsson, Nordicom.

A Local Planning Committee was responsible for the arrangements and details of the conference: Irma Kaarina Halonen (Chair), Åbo University; Anu Kantola, Ullamaija Kivikuru, Hannu Nieminen, Esa Väliaverronen and Henrika Zilliacus-Tikkanen, University of Helsinki; Anneli Lehtisalo and Risto Kunelius, University of Tampere; Raimo Salokangas, University of Jyväskylä.

Jenny Hokka served as coordinator for the conference as a whole.

The next *Nordic Conference on Media and Communication Research* is to be held in Karlstad, Sweden, 13th-15th August 2009.

Göteborg in October 2008

Ulla Carlsson
Editor

Generations, Communication and Media Philosophy

*The 18th Nordic Conference
on Media and Communication Research*

A distinguishing generational experience is a precondition for belonging to a certain generation. The 1960s was a time of great changes in media research as youth culture, rock and film had an impact on the interests of researchers. The Vietnam war in the 1970s speeded up the consideration of media ethics and at least in Finland the turn of the 1980s and 1990s is remembered as the beginning of financial recession. The interaction of technology and culture, mediation and global networks are setting new demands for media ethical and media philosophical considerations in the 21st century. The links between media and power have become more complicated and invisible than before.

The Internet has revolutionized the research of media and created a new generation of researchers whose minds are occupied with media philosophical questions, such as What is media? What is mediation? What is mediated activity? While the marxist philosophy of the 1970s was considering the influences that the society system had on the actions of people, in the 21st century one must cross borders of nations and societal forms and pay attention to functional contexts and networks worldwide. Media research has entered a new phase where influences are adapted from different sources and research is taking place even more on no-mans land, for instance in societies and by using the new web technology. Face-to-face interaction has changed into computer-to-computer communication.

One distinctive feature of the change of generation can also be an important event that shakes a person so profoundly that it can crucially change his/her world of thoughts and values. The media researchers of my own generation are connected, not only by Nordic conferences, but also by societal crisis like the collapse of the socialistic system in Europe, the unification of Europe and the digitalization of media. The reporting of global catastrophes in media can also produce generation based experiences.

The Nordic Conferences on Media and Communication Research have functioned as a meeting point and a crossroad already for quite some generations. The conferences that begun in Voksenåsen, Norway in 1973 have discussed current issues about communication and media research. Although modern communication technology can replace face-to-face meetings, it can't deliver the humane forms of interaction even at its best. The interaction between the different generations of researchers has to be cherished in a concrete place and atmosphere. The younger generation of researchers is still in the need of support and opportunities for meeting other researchers. The conference is a special opportunity to say out ones thoughts aloud and for communication with the researchers of the field, which can result in new ideas and forms of interaction. The conference is *medium par excellence*.

Irma Kaarina Halonen

President (2006-2008)

TOY Finnish Association for Mass Communication Research

Global, Hybrid or Multiple?

Cultural Identities in the Age of Satellite TV and the Internet

JOSEPH D. STRAUBHAAR

Globalization-impacts of Satellite TV and the Internet

There is a strong presumption by many that first satellite TV in the 1990s and now the Internet in the new millennium has begun to strongly globalize people's identities. However, many questions lurk behind this surface of apparent change. What is truly easily available to people, not only in physical access, but also in terms of effective access to understand or enjoy? How many new information and entertainment sources are truly global, versus transnational, national, regional and local? What are people actually choosing to read and watch amongst all these new options?

What structural, economic, cultural and other factors guide people's choices as they choose among all the new possibilities? What is the role of cultural history, language and proximity? What has been shared historically and what is coming to be shared now, in part through the new media themselves? What impacts do global media have compared to national, regional or other media have upon culture? In a larger sense, what impacts do today's global media have on people's identities and how should we understand both those impacts and the identities themselves in this new world? And what impacts to all of these phenomena and have on the structuring of cultural spaces and markets in at local, national, regional and global levels?

The movement from traditional local life to modern interaction with mass media has produced identities that are already multilayered with cultural geographic elements that are local, regional (subnational but larger than the very local), transnational based on cultural-linguistic regions, and national (Anderson, 1983). In this study, we argue that new media users around the world continue to strongly reflect these layers or aspects of identity while many also acquire new layers of identity that are transnational, or global. In this paper, we examine the relationship between processes of hybridization of identity and culture over time and the buildup, maintenance, and even defense of various layers of multilayered identities. These layers of identity are articulated with a variety of media, such as television and the Internet, but not in a simple sense of being primarily influenced by media. Some layers of identity, such as those religious traditionalists hold, may actively resist many of the ideas most television channels and Internet sites and messages carry.

These increasingly multilayered identities are articulated with a variety of changing structures. As we shall see below, social class and geography strongly structures who can access what new channels. Further, the media institutions themselves are becoming

more complexly multilayered, even as they reach further geographically. Models, such as commercial TV networks globalize, but are also localized and regionalized as they engage the specific histories and institutions of a variety of cultures, media traditions and regulatory systems. Because of these kinds of adaptations and localizations, another notable theoretical strand we shall use here is hybridity. In our model, hybridity and multi-layeredness coexist and interact. Layers like the institutions, program genres, and audience identities for public service co-exist with layers for commercial networks, genres and audiences. Both can acquire and maintain substantial solidity, but both are also changing, in part as they interact with and change each other. One case, we will consider below, the global expansion of Discovery and similar networks, takes documentary and other genres from public service television and hybridizes them, or as many would say, waters them down, into a new global commercial form.

Cultural Sedimentation: Layers and Mixtures / Hybrids

In my own work, particularly a number of in-depth interviews within Brazil, and from Austin to the Texas border with Mexico, I find a process of hybridity as well as a process of the formation, maintenance, occasional collapse, and recent proliferation of multiple layers of identity and corresponding layers of media use. I articulate this as a dual process. As an observer in Brazil, for instance, I perceive cultural hybridity taking place in a certain situation. However, I rarely interview people who see themselves as culturally hybrid. On the other hand, I frequently find myself interviewing people who articulate their identity as a series of spaces or layers. In both Brazil and Texas, I find people who articulate very clearly a local sense of self, a regional sense of self, a national sense of self, some interest or knowledge of the global, a social class sense of self, a religious sense of self, an ethnic and/or linguistic sense of self, a professional, and an educational sense of self.

So in my work, I'm moving toward what we might see as a kind of sedimentary model in which layers of meaning, culture, identity, and media use form and persist. New layers form over the top of all others as structural circumstances permit or even dictate. Sometimes when we look at people, for instance, we are likely to see the newest layer as strongest. For many observers when they look at culture these days, they see on top a new layer of what they might call globalization. So seeing this as a new layer, there is a supposition that this is perhaps now the dominant layer, perhaps homogenizing all the others. Or perhaps even the dominant aspect of someone's identity or experience. However, if we were looking at a highway cut or a river canyon someplace, we see the layers from the side. We realize that there are recent layers, which are important, but they've built up over older layers.

One problem with the geological analogy for this is that it seems to imply that the layers persist as separate. But as in geology, the layers often interact. They sometimes break down and form new layers out of the pre-existing ones. Even more in culture, I think we will see that these layers interact with each other so that as one becomes globalized a certain part of one's life, such as one's education or profession, one finds that inevitably in dialogue with one's local interests, musical preferences, or even religious or philosophical interests. One could have a rich metaphor to work with for the ongoing nature of change. Too many systems either overstate change, as in the very strong cultural imperialism hypothesis, or in contrast, understate change, as in some globalization hypotheses in which everything forms separate pockets and simply persists.

I don't think any of those are quite adequate for understanding the complexity of what we see as people do use new forms of media to interact, forming new layers and levels of identity. But they continue also to think in terms of older layers of identity, interest and media use, as well.

Multiple Media Spaces of Production, Flow, Identification

In this paper, I would like to more clearly articulate a map of some of the different forms and layers of interaction that are frequently put together under the idea of globalization. I want to define some of those layers more narrowly and carefully. At the same time, I would like to map out, as a heuristic beginning, the kinds of layers of production, flow and identity that I see emerging. Some of this map comes from examining the production process, some from extensive mapping I have recently done of television flows (Straubhaar 2007), and much comes from interviews with a variety of audience members in Brazil and Texas conducted by me and my students at UT. Following is a map, or typology of layers from the most global down to the local.

- Global infrastructures of technology, finance and media models that structure more specific layers of production, flow and identification below.
- A U.S. "empire" based on Hollywood structural & cultural power, itself becoming a transnational network of co-production (Miller, et al).
- Other global exporters – Latin American producers of telenovelas, Japanese anime, Bollywood, etc.
- Transnational cultural-linguistic producers, markets and audiences – geographically separated former colonies and diasporic migrants, English, French, Portuguese-speaking.
- Geo-cultural regional producers, markets and audiences – geographically linked cultures with common or similar languages, shared histories, and geographic proximity, like the Nordic countries, the Arab World, Greater China, and Latin America.
- Translocal producers, markets and audiences – cross borders into India from Hong Kong, into the USA from Mexico, etc. (Kumar, et al).
- National producers, markets and audiences – of enormous variety, from powerful states like China, which push Rupert Murdoch around, to failed states like Somalia.
- Regional producers, markets and audiences – smaller than states, perhaps lapping across borders, like the cultural region and border zone between Monterrey, Mexico to Austin, Texas.
- Metropolitan producers, markets and audiences – global cities or media capitals (Curtin), which are directly linked to global networks, and produce for themselves, regions, nations or transnational spaces.
- Local producers, markets and audiences – at the level of the smaller city, municipality or even neighborhood.

The Importance of Cultural Geography

If we examine this list of layered producers, markets and audiences more carefully, we can see historical and geographic patterns of development that put global developments into a more nuanced perspective. We are beginning to recognize that markets and services are not simply or clearly defined by technology, or by corporate ambition, but also by culture, uses, and identities and how they layer over time. Many of these culturally defined markets and identity reflect pre-global layers of culture. These include many of the most powerful layers of both media and identity.

The dominant cultural forces for most people seem to have been originally local and regional. People thought of themselves primarily in terms of villages, local dialects, perhaps tribes or clans. It took well into the 1700s for most Frenchmen to speak French in one of the earliest nations to be defined as such (Weber 1976). Now, based on my interviews in Brazil, even the most globe-hopping businessman or academic usually still has a very local identity as well. A neighborhood they live in, other neighborhoods they go to for work or pleasure. They prize local restaurants, music clubs and scenes, nightclubs, museums, bookstores, all the many places that in a very physical and spatial sense tend to give life local context and local pleasure. These are linked to personal networks, but in media terms, also local music scenes, local radio, local newspapers, festivals, and performances.

For many people, there are regional layers of identity and regional layers of media, which are smaller than the nation, but larger than the very local. Many of these regional foci depend on language variation. Very important cultural and linguistic regions from Catalans in Spain to the Kurds to Mayan language speakers in southern Mexico to a variety of regional language groups in India still have strong layers of quite separate identities from the nation states that contain them. They also often have ethnic, cultural, and religious differences with national majority populations. They usually have their own music traditions and scenes (O'Connor 2002), and histories, which are often intense focuses of identification. Sometimes hundreds of millions in very large nations like India speak local or regional languages linked to regional cultures, film industries, broadcasters, etc.

In many ways these regional groups below the nation state are based on cultural linguistic groups that predate the nation state in very real and effective ways. The USA, for instance, is spending tens of billions of dollars time trying to prop up a nation state in Iraq, echoing the British efforts to create such a state earlier in the 20th century. However, the likely fate of Iraq is to disintegrate into the three pieces in which it existed in under the Ottoman Empire (LOC 2007): a Kurdish area, Sunni Arab area based in around the capital city, and a largely Shiite area in the south. So these old ethnic groups, languages, empires, and religions have a great deal to do with major layers of identity that many of us hold very tight and important.

Another strong set of pre-national and pre-global cultural forces are what I call geo-cultural, based on cultural-linguistic groups that precede the European colonization of the late 1400s on. These are based on older ethnic groups, languages, empires, and religions, in places like the Nordic countries, Greater China, Arab World, and South Asia. Some cultural forces and identities that remain very powerful date from before most nation-states, from colonial empires, migrations, languages, religions, and racial mixtures, in Latin America, Franco- and Luso-phone Africa, in the USA, and other Anglophone nations, such as Australia or Canada (Abram 2004). In some ways, many of the cultural roots of Nordicom date from the common, pre-national roots of Nordic

cultures. Scandinavia has a certain geographical coherence and contiguity, as well as shared historical, cultural linguistic, ethnic, dynastic or political, and religious roots, of geo-linguistic (Sinclair 1999) or geo-cultural layers of understanding and identification (Straubhaar 2005).

I have several times attended the meetings of another academic group, based on common language and culture, very different than Nordicom, the Association of Portuguese speaking media researchers (Lusocom), from Portugal, Angola, Mozambique, and Brazil, along with much smaller places like East Timor. There can be meaningful associations widely spread geographically but linked by language, culture and history, colonial experience, and now academic interaction that build common literatures, etc. They are more far-flung geographically far-flung groupings such as the Portuguese speaking world or the English-speaking world. I distinguish them from the geo-cultural by calling them cultural linguistic transnational spaces.

While the roots of these geo-cultural and transitional cultural linguistic layers of culture predated both the nation-state and globalization, they were reinforced by many of the new forces, particularly in technology and economics that we associate with globalization. Just as we see growth in parts of the Hollywood coverage of the world, we see often rapid growth in cultural linguistic and geocultural spaces and markets in television exports (Straubhaar 2007), satellite/cable TV, Internet sites, music and movie downloads.

However, many if not most people who've lived in the last two centuries have interacted with modern national educational systems in which textbooks and teaching norms are discussed and prescribed at a national level. They have also grown up with national media, whether commercial or the kinds of public broadcasting systems common in northern Europe at the national level. They often deal with other nationalizing forces, national churches in some cases, national labor unions, national sport teams, and all the things that in many ways are articulated with a certain sense of nationalism.

National cultural forces (Anderson, 1983) are linked to novels, national newspapers, national radio and television, and in some cases to national film and music. Anderson shows those national cultures and national media are not a given and they are slowly and often carefully constructed over time. Sometimes cultural elements have been deliberately used by governments, or national romantic artists to reinforce national identity, such as the 1800s use of Kalevala runot in Finland, or the 1890s use of Snorri Sturluson's Sagas of the Norse Kings to help create modern Norwegian identity, or the 1930s to present use of music in Brazil to define national identity.

New Global Layers of Cultural Identification

Audiences around the world also acquire new layers of identity or identification corresponding to new global layers of production and flow of media, enabled by new structural forms of political economy, and new forms and models of media. Forming one of the main new global layers, Hollywood dominated the flow of film to most world markets (Miller 2001) and at least initially dominated the flow of television, as well (Nordenstreng and Varis 1974). So by sheer dint of exposure, American culture began to seem as a familiar second culture to many people (Gitlin 2001), particularly in Western Europe and the Anglophone countries where the U.S. presence was often most notable (Straubhaar 2007). It was linked over the years, to film, television exports, satellite/cable TV channels, and music, part of what a recent turn in political economy research calls a

new sort of virtual empire by the USA (Hardt and NEGRI 2001). However, many people around the world were more lightly touched by this U.S. layer than others, depending on location, social class, language, religion, and other aspects of identity that led them to discount the U.S. output and choose to watch other things (Hoskins and Mirus 1988).

There are also renewed and expanded transnational layers, as noted above, at both cultural-linguistic and geocultural levels that utilize many of the same technologies as do U.S. and other global productions and flows. Books have flowed among language and religious groups for millennia. The Bible and Koran helped expand large areas of shared religious identification and at least in the case of the Koran, considerable Arabic language hegemony as well in the Mid-East and North Africa. Mass media like radio, cinema and television helped consolidate and renew language and cultural groupings. Since the mid-1990s, research by Sinclair and others (1996) have highlighted the growing importance of cultural linguistic markets. Research on the role of satellite TV in the Arab World (Kraidy 2002) shows how new refinements in technology can continue to facilitate and reinforce such identities.

At least in television, the U.S. and new transnational flows are heavier, but there are also new layers of other global production and flow or access, such as the worldwide flows of Latin American telenovelas, Japanese anime on film and television, Hong Kong kung fu film and television, and Bollywood films, among others. The scope of these flows, especially compared to Hollywood exports, has been contested (Biltereyst and Meers 2000) but they have grown into visible new options for those who have access to them. We can also see some new global flows of news (with new operations like Al-Jazeera in English), feature films (especially those co-produced with Hollywood), music, and some Internet sites, like YouTube. There are new forms that seemed to be global in ways that we've perhaps not yet thought how to articulate, such as the way young people in many countries now interact in English via technologies like massive multiple online role playing games like World of Warcraft.

Global Stratification of New Media Access and Use

Next, perhaps, to consider is that the world of global media, particularly the new media, is a very stratified place. Many people do not have access to the new tools and channels that carry some of the layers described above. Even though we are speaking today in Scandinavia, where Internet access and multi-channel TV access is as high as anywhere in the world, many places exist, particularly in Africa and South Asia, where access to even simple broadcast TV and radio is still quite limited.

In some ways people in North America and in Scandinavia live in what Mattelart (2002) has described as a global archipelago or a 'techno-apartheid' global economy (p. 607) of those included in the information rich global economy, concentrated in the rich countries of the European Union, North America, Australia/New Zealand, and parts of East Asia, but in which almost 80 percent of the world's population is excluded (Mattelart 2002, p. 608). That global archipelago of high incomes and connectivity tends to have very high Internet, satellite, cable TV, advanced mobile phone, and other new media access and use. This archipelago is, in some ways, a unique place where people find it easier to pursue global topics, whether it is on numerous forms of television, the Internet, audio accessed through the Internet, mobile devices, or other channels. Its infrastructure is now in many ways beginning to converge together on the Internet. Most people in it have both physical access to an Internet connection and the education,

cultural capital and social capital that enables them to use it skillfully for their own interests. Majorities of users in at least the major urban parts of this archipelago have access to broadband Internet.

Broadband penetration is a good indicator of the broad outlines of the archipelago of the highly connected. An International Telecommunication Report gives the broad outlines (ITU 2007, p. 9):

Today, however, broadband penetration is dominated by the wealthy countries. Some 70 per cent, or nearly three-quarters, of broadband subscribers worldwide in 2006, were located in high-income countries which accounted for just 16 per cent of world population. Furthermore, two economies – India and Vietnam – accounted for more than 95 per cent of all broadband subscribers in low-income countries, while a single economy – China – accounted for 94 per cent of broadband subscribers in the lower-middle income group (Figure 1.2). The good news is that a number of developing countries are experiencing broadband growth. In Peru, for example, the number of broadband subscribers has grown by close to 80 per cent annually between 2001 and 2006, from 22'779 in 2001 to 484'899 at the end of 2006. In Europe, over half the Estonian population uses the Internet and the country has the highest penetration of both Internet and broadband in Central and Eastern Europe. But in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), there were merely 46'000 broadband subscribers in the 22 out of 50 LDCs with broadband service in 2006. (ITU, 2007, p. 9)

However, even within nations considered to be part of the global high tech archipelago, people with less education have lower access and less profitable usage of their connectivity (Mattelart, 2002). People who live in rural areas or people who simply do not possess the cultural capital or group habitus, in the terms framed by Pierre Bourdieu (1984), do not necessarily have the interest, wherewithal or ability to follow the same patterns as even their urban or more educated compatriots within the archipelago. The Pew Internet studies in the USA have noted that a number of people do not know enough to use the Internet enjoyably and others perceive it as outside their interests and personal repertoires of entertainment and information.

Outside the global archipelago, there is another new model to the world's connectivity. Many of the larger developing countries, such as Brazil, Russia India and China, and other large-scale developing countries are heavily pursued by many of the ICT equipment and content marketers of the world because they have large numbers of Internet and satellite TV users. But they are internally stratified. For example, while perhaps 5-10% of Brazil uses the Internet avidly with high speed connectivity, another 5-10% struggles to get access in public places or with low bandwidth home connections, and 80% don't use it at all (Spence and Straubhaar, forthcoming). Most use it with only partial understanding of the tools, frequently frustrated by connectivity. So, many developing country elite users come forth and join the global archipelago described earlier but many more in their populations are excluded. Many don't even know they are excluded.

There is yet another world in most of Africa, and much of Asia, the Arab World and Latin America, where almost all people are excluded but there is a very small globalized elite of new media users in certain companies, parts of some urban areas, and a few NGOs and educational institutions. This world excludes 90% or more of all potential users of both the Internet and other new media like satellite TV or cable TV.

There is another pattern that splits Internet use from in satellite and cable TV, especially in some countries like India and much of the Middle East. While the Internet remains restricted, satellite and/or cable TV have become truly mass media in some countries, like India (Sinclair 2005). Structural changes have been made within satellite and cable TV to reduce prices so that cable in a major Indian city may cost under five dollars a month. In most of these situations, however, a parallel structural change has been made to focus on regional, translocal, geocultural or transnational channels that target the population in question with its own culture (Kumar 2006). Major efforts have been made to localize or regionalize satellite and cable TV, challenging another aspect of its assumed globalization.

The Really Existing Uses of Satellite Technology

The existing uses of satellite TV technology are very plural: global, transnational, translocal, and national. There are a number of global channels, as we shall see below, but most of them are adapted, at least minimally, to targeted regions and nations.

There are some truly global satellite and cable TV channels, such as CNN, MTV, HBO, ESPN, Discover, Disney, BBC, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Channel. However, we need to understand exactly how these are structured and exactly how they operate. Some, like HBO, remain highly centralized with regional offices making a selection among American material to figure out what would be most regionally appropriate and would not affect local sensibilities. So that a Singapore office of HBO seems to exercise some degree of choice and moral censorship over what's available on the HBO broadcast into Singapore, Malaysia and its region, but it is still a very globalized channel. On the other hand, some global icons like MTV have gained extensive popularity and commercial success precisely by localizing its genre forms of video clip, VJ, and youth-oriented reality shows into national and regional versions. The tendency seems to be in the latter direction.

Nearly all global channels have done the minimal localization of translation and dubbing. Those that do not so extensively, like CNN, remain locked in small, if elite, parts of the English language archipelago, with very small audiences by TV standards, as Colin Sparks (1998) and others have noted. Some popular specialty channels do a little more than dubbing, such as Discovery and Cartoon Channel. They do local culture based transitions, promotions, and appeals to draw local audiences towards what remains largely globalized programming (Chalaby 2005). These channels are most popular among specific niches, such as educationally aspiring middle classes or children, as we shall see below. Many channels, particularly in music, sports, news, television drama, etc. find they have to localize more in order to compete effectively with more culturally specific transnational and national channels. There is a tendency for such channels to first regionalize and then focus increasingly on national situations that require more specificity in order to achieve a decent audience to become profitable (Curtin, forthcoming).

The example of Murdoch in Asia is interesting. He initially tried to cover all of Asia with five television channels: MTV Asia, a BBC channel, Prime Sports out of Denver, Star Plus entertainment and culture, and a single Mandarin language channel. He rapidly discovered that he had to go to much more national and now has over 50 channels aimed at various specific places, specific culture regions and nations with various specific lineups. He is continuing to subdivide and localize further everyday.

Some of the fiercest competition for Murdoch and other would-be global titans comes from new transnational channels that work within cultural spaces or markets, defined

by language and culture. Many of these are geo-cultural. They work within culture and language defined spaces of contiguous nations that share not only languages but pre-colonial cultural and historical commonalities, in areas such as Greater China or the Arab World, or colonial common languages and histories, such as Latin America. Some are transnational cultural-linguistic spaces, such as the English- or Portuguese- speaking cultural spaces or markets, spread across the globe but unified by colonial languages, shared histories, and often by new post-colonial cultural exporters, like the USA in the Anglophone world, or Brazil in the Lusophone world. Networks targeting these more specific cultural spaces seem have an advantage, which we cover more below, over more global, but also more culturally distant broadcasters. Al-Jazeera beats CNN so completely in the Arab World in part by the cultural specificity or proximity of its news approach, framed within a more specific set of commonly held values and traditions.

Other strong competitors to global corporations are either national or translocal. In India, there are a number of translocal (targeting the local or national from outside it) commercial India-oriented satellite channels that come in from outside India. There are increasing numbers of local and regional channels, based out of the pre-existing local and regional film industries. These show both the existing stocks of films from regional language film industries and also create new television programs in regional Indian languages (Kumar 2006). So while the technology of satellite TV has spread out in the 1990s into a number of places, in many cases it has been used for rather traditional purposes to break open an existing broadcast television monopoly, as in India, Turkey or Iran (Semati 2006) or other places where government control over national television remains quite strong. In these instances, a new phenomenon of trans-local TV is arisen, which permits those who wish to reach those cultures markets and polities to do so via satellite TV from outside (Kumar 2006). On the other hand, satellite TV content is not what one would have anticipated as global from the U.N. debates in the 1960s or 1970s on satellites (Katz 1977). It seems pretty much organized within cultures and languages already known to people. It is frequently marketing goods, ideas, or even religions or political parties that they're already quite familiar. In some ways these are alternative national or regional channels using satellite or cable technology to come in from outside, much more translocal than global.

Many of these same channels also target diasporic populations in a truly global way. Both translocal "national" and regional language channels from India follow migrants to North America, Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere. Some national channels, like Chinese Central TV in English, or transnational versions of geo-cultural channels, like Al-Jazeera in English, now intend to grow from a specific national or regional base to more global roles and to an audience beyond the ones constituted by migrants from their regions.

However, an even earlier and perhaps even more widespread use of satellite TV in many places, starting with India, the Soviet Union and the United States, was simply to use the satellite to bring new channels internally to the entire national polity or market. Most of the people in small town or rural Brazil who watch television do so via a signal carried from a satellite transmitter and rebroadcast in their small town or rural area. These retransmitters may have been put up by a national network, by local advertisers, or most likely, by a mayor who saw bringing national television to town as a strong benefit to his electorate (and a good way to get re-elected). In many ways, satellite dishes coupled with re-transmitters were indeed public works programs in many parts of the world from the 1980s and 1990s into the 2000s (Straubhaar 2007). So much satellite

use harks back conceptually and technologically to an earlier day of communications development programs when satellite TV was widely promoted in many large developing countries or even large industrializing countries like the United States and the Soviet Union as ideal ways to reach the entire populace with a signal (McAnany 1987).

Globalization and Class among Audiences / Users

Another layer to add to the discussion of multi-layered television and new media is to think about its audience, not so much in the linguistic or cultural geographic terms that we've been speaking about above, but to think about global cultural layers or segments in class terms. At one level, we have the super connected elite of the global media archipelago described above. At the other extreme, in rural parts of Africa and South Asia, there are many people who can barely afford radio or are scarcely covered by very many channels in it (Souto 2005). In terms of global elites, the very best educated and connected, the most likely to speak English and have a strong cultural capital knowledge of global politics and events, are probably major consumers of many globalized channels and spaces, both on satellite/cable TV and the Internet.

Probably the smallest and most elite audiences are for the global news channels, CNN, the BBC, and new would-be global news channel from CCTV (China) or Al-Jazeera. CNN and BBC target political and intellectual elites. That they reach very important groups is true, often important elites in terms of their economic and political importance, but not particularly massive audiences. From my own interviewing in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and various social groups and language groups in Texas, I have observed that the cultural capital as well as the English ability required to actually knowledgeably and enjoyably watch BBC or CNN news on satellite TV or cable is considerable, and rare. For example, in Santo Domingo, in 1987, several people initially told me that CNN was one of the reasons they got cable TV, but on closer examination, almost none of them watched it with any regularity. So even though the idea may interest people, very few people actually have the ability to sustain watching them over time.

Certain other channels with global ambitions have also aimed at liberally educated and wealthier audiences within various nations who have the English-language ability (for those channels that do not yet dub their programming) and the cultural capital and knowledge of the look to find their programming interesting. I interviewed an entrepreneur in Brazil in the late 1980s, who intended to start an American talk show channel in Latin America with shows like Oprah or Phil Donahue. I asked her if she thought she had a big enough target audience to actually make money with across Latin America, people who would know enough to be interested in Opera and Phil Donahue? She was sure she had lots of friends across Latin America who spent quite a bit of time in the USA, who knew English very well, traveled to the U.S. several times a year, etc. What she didn't realize was that even for a regional television channel aimed at a market seemingly as broad as Latin America, she was targeting a very narrow, class-defined group of people. There simply probably weren't enough such people to justify such a satellite channel and, in fact, her channel went bankrupt within a couple of years.

Other channels do successfully target global middle and upper middle classes. It seems that HBO and a certain number of other channels reach middle classes and a certain number of cultural elites who are exceptionally interested in American or European film and television. The initial focus for satellite television by Editora Abril in Brazil in the late 1980s was to provide foreign channels in a variety of languages to former

immigrants and their descendents. However, that audience base was very restricted and marginally profitable. So Abril's system was ultimately sold to its competitor, Murdoch. Interviewing people in the management for HBO in Brazil, Singapore and other regions, I find that with their target audience seems to be people who are cinema fans, not necessarily extraordinary movie collectors, but still people who spend a great deal of their time watching movies, who have the cultural capital and interest to watch a great deal of American film. From my own interviews with cable audiences in Brazil, 1989-2006, this group extends much further into the middle class than does CNN's audience, which makes it more viable as a commercial enterprise and also more likely to have considerable cultural reach and impact.

One of the more interesting genres to rise out of international and global satellite television and cable television is that of the broadly educational, but primarily entertaining documentary: Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, National Geographic, etc. From studies that I have seen in Brazil and elsewhere these seem to reach primarily out to middle classes, or those who aspire to be middle class (Straubhaar 2003), who want to watch something entertaining but also something educational. Interviewing some of the regional management of Discovery Channel in Singapore in 2006, asking them about their balance between entertainment and education, they said that they specifically avoid calling their programming educational, not wanting to make it seem forbidding or uninteresting. They particularly push a combination of sort of good for you, sort of educational, but clearly entertaining and interesting material. This seems to be the adaptation of a documentary genre that national public service television networks had originally created, now broken down into an animal documentary genre, a nature documentary genre, a historical documentary genre, etc. All these genres have been around for a great deal of time, but Discovery Channel seems to have taken them to a more globally diverse, somewhat less nationally specific audience by making them broader and more entertaining. Talking to producers and managers of Discovery in Asia and Latin America, I have found that they are actively aware of the need to blend entertainment value and educational value to the audiences. This has resulted in tremendous global success for Discovery Channel and a proliferation of even more specific documentary channels, particularly in countries in Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere, which did not have the kind of national public service channels that had done such programs in Japan, North America, and Europe (Chris 2002). Private broadcasters have even brought these new kinds of global entertainment documentaries into Nordic countries, like Finland, where they offer an entertaining way to compete with the more serious documentaries done by public service broadcasters (Hujanen 2007).

Audience studies seem to reflect the same sense of the global documentary genre. For example, one of the first studies of slum dwelling audiences for cable TV in the Rio de Janeiro slum of Rocinha, found that parents there were particularly interested in programming that would keep their kids entertained and safe off the streets, since in their neighborhood the streets was frequently dangerous, with gun battles between drug dealers and police. So the preferred cable channels and genres in that neighborhood were cartoons and entertaining documentaries from Discovery, Animal Planet, etc., which kept kids happily indoors (Letalien 2002).

In contrast to the very global flow of documentaries, MTV is a global satellite TV brand that seems to have succeeded by localizing extensively. It kept core elements of its formula, a focus on youth with a variety of genres of music videos and other kinds of programming, and VJs (video-jockeys) or announcers who adapt MTV styles to local

aesthetics (Chalaby 2002). In Brazil, in the operation I studied most intensely, the initial MTV target in the late 1980s was middle-class and upper-middle-class youth (Flesch 1990). MTV in Brazil initially imagined an audience that would consume the sorts of things that were shown in the videos from the United States, and would have a very direct particular interest in music videos from United States. The producers and researchers for MTV Brazil I interviewed in 1989 and subsequently were very aware of that this was not the majority of Brazilian youth (MTV 1997). Most Brazilian youth would prefer to have seen a higher proportion of Brazilian music videos and fewer American heavy metal and other 1980s U.S.-style videos. However, they were cautious, initially building on the videos they already had from the USA, not wanting to encourage the cost of having a to record new videos, which weren't yet being produced already in Brazil by the music industry in the same way that they were in the United States. So they started with a more cautious mixture of U.S. and Brazilian music videos and appealed to the youth who liked that mixture, upper-class youth with more previous exposure to U.S. culture. As they began to broaden their ambitions to try to reach a broader range of Brazilian youth, they increased the proportion of Brazilian music videos, locally-based interview segments and lifestyle segments etc.

A Multi-layered Internet

The Internet seems to run an extreme range of cultural geographic and other layers of production and identification from very global to very local, much more than broadcast television, satellite television or film. Many people worldwide do use global sites in English, such as the New York Times, Wikipedia, software sites, and games. User registration for the New York Times shows hundreds of thousands of users outside the USA, for example. UNESCO was concerned enough about the dominance of English (and a few other major languages) on the Internet to address the issue of linguistic diversity on the Internet in their Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Unesco 2005) and in subsequent action programs (c.f. UNESCO Information Society Observatory weekly email bulletins).

However, increasingly, more people seem to use language specific sites and services. For example, the English-language version of Wikipedia is popular, drawing hundreds of thousands of global users. What are accelerating even faster, however, are increasing numbers of language versions of Wikipedia. As of August 2007, there are 174 language versions of Wikipedia that have over 100 articles in each as of 2006. Showing some level of concentration in major world languages, 12 language versions of Wikipedia have over 100 thousand entries each (Wikipedia, 2007). Electronic mail, social networking programs, and other new Web 2.0 (or more intensely participatory and interactive Internet uses) tend to function within language groups, within social classes, within religious or other groups. For example, a recent study in the USA shows that even within the seemingly somewhat homogenized U.S. youth culture of the Internet, Facebook social networking program users tend to be somewhat better educated, whiter, more elite, and more college oriented than MySpace users (Boyd 2007). The latter tended to be more working class, more ethnically diverse.

In many cases, many national media Web sites are far more widely used than global media Web sites. Oh My News from Korea, for instance, is one of the world's most heavily used new sites, even though it functions primarily in the Korean language primarily serving a very large and growing base of Korea news users. Likewise in Latin

America and other parts of Asia or Europe, national media sites tend to be somewhat more widely used for actual news purposes than global media sites, which tend to be more likely used for entertainment or other purposes. In Europe, national public service broadcasters' Web sites are often the most heavily used (Hujanen 2007). In some ways, this reflects the trust created by national "brands" of media, often specifically public media, but often, too, private national newspapers. It also relates to the social, cultural and other capital demands made on a user or reader of news (Bourdieu 1986). For someone to knowledgeably read and use the New York Times website for news articles on a regular basis requires intense cultural capital. More than basic knowledge of English, far more than basic knowledge of U.S. and world events, further into U.S. specialized vocabulary, phrases and usages are required for someone to use a new service like the New York Times more than occasionally. If one is to be a regular intensive user, one needs to have the cultural capital required make that both easy and pleasurable.

In fact among the rapidly growing U.S. online news spaces, the most popular spaces are those of extremely localized news portals and services, according to multiple reports at the Eighth Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism, March 30-31, 2007 at the University of Texas in Austin (<http://journalism.utexas.edu/onlinejournalism/>). New services for and about specific neighborhoods, small cities, parts of larger cities like the San Fernando Valley part of Los Angeles, for example, all seem to draw intense, frequent news usage, perhaps when cumulated, more than do larger more cosmopolitan more global sites like the New York Times or the Los Angeles Times. This reinforces our point about the continuing importance of local identity.

Transnational Complex

We need to look more deeply at some of the driving forces behind the growth of complex transnational layers of production, flow and identification. These include the major regional and global diasporic languages, and cultural linguistic markets, both transnational and geocultural, discussed above. They also include the flow and adaptation of capitalist models, global, transnational or regional, and in one key, related development, the growth of major media capitals (Curtin 2003) or production metropolises, and global cities (Sassen 2004).

In many parts of the world, there is a truly globalized capitalism. We see it both at basic level of basic economic forms on into specific media genre forms. It carries with it important cultural forms such as the form of modern American network style of commercial television, or the form of the commercialized music video, or the form of the Western professionalized news story. There are, however, also many regional, national and even local variations. For example, past a very basic level of capitalism itself, is there a single model for the sort of modern or capitalist modernity that many countries throughout the world now pursue? Or are there Japanese and Chinese models of capitalist media modernity, as suggested by Iwabuchi (2002) or David Harvey (2005), which now serve as models for other places in Asia, Latin America, etc. Those may be models that are more approachable and seemingly more realistic than the American, British or French models.

For an interesting example, of over half a century of life now, we can look at the forms of Latin American commercial television broadcasting and, in particular, the way they have produced their most famous product, the telenovela. There, perhaps earlier than anywhere else in the world, we can see the impact of the forms of U.S. style commercial

network broadcasting which have proven so influential in the 1980s and 1990s in places like Europe. Those forms and models landed with full force much earlier in Latin America, with radio in the 1920s and with television already in the 1950s. So already by the 1930s, we saw modern American corporations used to a certain style of highly networked and highly commercialized broadcasting, which they were accustomed to use for selling their products, beginning to use and adapt the same forms to Latin America.

To take a very specific case, Colgate-Palmolive, the major U.S. multinational soap company, helped develop a specific American form of melodrama that we called soap opera in the United States. They quickly moved it to Cuba, the most developed Latin American market, first in radio in the 1930s and then in television in the 1950s, and it spread quickly throughout Latin America. That seems straightforward as a preview of top down capitalist globalization of media and culture, but we look more closely, we actually see a much more complex process. A combination of genre traditions, television industry structures, television producers, and television audiences produced the Latin American telenovela, as a distinct variation on the rather globally dispersed notion of the melodrama, of which the U.S. soap opera is just one notably successful variation. Producers, first in Cuba, then elsewhere in Latin America drew on European serial novel traditions, American radio and television soaps, Cuban and other early Latin American adaptations of those genres, and emerging local and national cultural traditions that lent themselves to melodrama on television (Lopez 1995; La Pastina, Rego et al. 2003). Audience response ensured that advertisers would supply the economic resources for continued and expanded production of telenovelas in an increasing number of countries. Audience feedback shaped the productions away from elite focused dramas toward a mass culture form that resonated more with a variety of traditions and plot devices and that could involve both men and women, peasants, urban workers, and the middle classes (Martín-Barbero, 1993). This cultural formation spread all over Latin America, with distinct adaptations variations, so that Brazilian telenovelas are quite different from those of Mexico (Hernandez, 2001).

In one of life's little ironies, probably Fidel Castro did not consciously intend to accelerate and consolidate the commercial American network form of television in the rest of Latin America when he pushed so many commercial media professionals out of Cuba in 1959. But that was exactly what happened when many highly trained scriptwriters, directors, network managers, network owners, actors and technicians left Cuba for Venezuela, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Peru. These professionals had their own notions of how to supply the American network model and certain genres like the variety show and telenovela. It was based on the Cuban experience, reflecting the American experience, but quickly developed a number of variations to fit the general Latin American market as well as specific places they worked. They took literally hundreds of thousands of pages of scripts and other concrete formulas that permitted them to move their knowledge with them rather quickly and rather effectively, not unlike the rapid, massive spread of reality shows in the last 10-15 years.

One of my current projects is doing an oral history with Joe Wallach, one of the lead professionals from Time life Inc. who in 1965 went to Brazil to begin a joint venture with Roberto Marinho, the owner of O Globo newspaper and several radio stations, who wished to get into television. I find that he was aware of both the advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses of an American television model as it was taken to Latin America. He realized that certain things about the American model, particularly its financial forms, network simulcasting, and central management would seemingly work

well in Brazil, but he also recognized very quickly by the end of 1965 that some of his U.S. colleagues' ideas about how to program television, principally importing a lot of American programming, would not work. It simply wasn't going to make money. The Time Life TV Globo station was in fourth place out of four in Rio. So he went looking for Brazilian professionals who could bring local programming approaches, which would be more popular with Brazilians. Here is a very early example of how even major pillars of international capitalism recognized the need to localize their strategies and adapt to local forms of capitalist development and of cultural definition of markets. So a key thing that we see in the evolution of current capitalist modernities is the adaptation of these models. This was visible early in Latin America, but also recently in east Asia South Asia, the Arab world and various parts of Europe, to the cultural linguistic and geocultural regions that both local and transnational cultural industries encountered.

We also see the growth of major production centers, media capitals (Curtin 2003) or global production cities. They include Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, and Miami (Sinclair 2003) for Latin America, Hong Kong and Shanghai as major production centers in China, for much of Asia, Beirut and Cairo in the Arab World, etc. These centers have an increasingly global projection, but their real base has been and continues to be transnational geo-cultural and cultural linguistic markets.

Multiple Identifications, Identity and Hybridity

There is an ongoing, complex interaction between forces of economics and technology, as exemplified by many of the satellite television services, broadcast television networks, and Internet companies or institutions discussed above, and long run patterns of culture and language. To some very large degree, people in audiences come to identify with what they are shown. The extraordinary dominance of global film distribution by the USA since the 1920s has resulted in cultural patterns of familiarity, knowledge and liking for American style films that persists in many parts of the world (Miller 2001). That creates a market defined by both political economy and culture that new networks of feature and documentary film, like HBO or Discovery, can exploit, using new technologies of television distribution. Those supply and reinforce the audiences of those who like those genres. So for large numbers of people, a specific identification with Hollywood style film builds up to where there is a layer of culture so familiar to people that Gitlin called this American cultural layer of production, flow and consumption, a familiar second culture for many people in the world (Gitlin 2001).

To take a very different example, the historical primacy of public service broadcasting over time in the Nordic countries and its ongoing creation of genres and forms of content that engage and please its audience has created patterns of goodwill, familiarity, cultural capital or knowledge, and liking that continues to guide audience preferences toward it even when competition is available. From the continued ratings success of such cultural and informational genres in the face of both broadcast and satellite/cable multi-channel TV competition, many Scandinavians seem to have ongoing identification with them that could be seen as fairly stable cultural layers of production, programming and consumption for both informational and cultural forms typically identified with public service broadcasting. To some degree, these forms are identified with national culture and also continue to connect with and reinforce a layer of what might be seen as national identity in a country like Denmark (Søndergaard 2003).

The creation of a certain linguistic or cultural space or market is intertwined with economic and technological forces. In his study of the development of nationalism, Anderson saw print capitalism as work with existing languages or dialects to standardize and spread them, via the printed word of newspapers, novels, etc. to become standardized national languages (Anderson 1983). In his work on modern India, Kumar (2006) shows how Hindi has been both spread and resisted as a national language within India by different institutions of television, at both national and regional levels. By providing ongoing news and culture for people to identify with, a number of these broadcasters, at the level of region or province within India have served to reinforce regional senses of identity, which were already based on earlier forms of language and culture, before television, radio or film.

So the interaction is indeed complex. Audience identification and more aggregated senses of cultural identity change with media forms. Culture is not static. Audience senses of identification can increase as forms of media bring them new and compelling cultural forms to identify with. This is one of the ways that layers of cultural production, flow and identification can increase, reaching the multiple layers presented earlier in this article.

However, ongoing, changing forms of culture (and language) also defines spaces and markets within which use of technologies and orientations of media institutions and businesses is defined. For example, there was a point in the history of television broadcasting in Italy, where somewhat surprisingly large audiences existed for Latin American telenovelas. As channels increased, seeking for new material to program, programmers experimented with the telenovelas and they struck a resonance or identification with parts of the audience to where European scholars began to debate whether counter-flow from the developing to developed nations might be underway (Biltereyst and Meers 2000). However, an underlying preference for locally produced versions of popular television forms could also be seen or anticipated (Straubhaar 1991) and Italian fiction production began to increase, proving profitable, and pushed the telenovelas slowly out of the main parts of the national programming schedule (Buonanno 2004). Still for some parts of the Italian audience, particularly in southern Italy, where many felt more linked with emigration and family ties to countries like Argentina and Brazil, an identification with and liking for such programs continues (Del Negro 2003). These identifications with specific programs again reflect the growth of multiple layers of both identification and identity. These are not essentialized or reified, but must be seen in a steadily changing media and cultural environment where technologies, television institutions, program forms and audience identification and identity evolve together.

This ongoing pattern of change can be seen as both hybridity and the multiplication of layers of production, programming/flow, and identification. The hybridity can be seen in ongoing cultural change through the contact of local, regional, national, transnational and global elements, liked those discussed earlier. Layers of cultural production and identification multiply as technological and economic forces allow. To people I have interviewed in Texas and in Brazil, many of these layers of culture that are made available to them and with which they come to identify, seem very solid, not something they anticipate changing. Latino immigrants to Texas that I have interviewed, as well as Turkish immigrants to western Europe interviewed in research by Ogan (1998), show that many immigrants welcome a certain continuity of culture to be found in television from back home. They cherish that layer of culture and identification, even as they form others in their new environment.

However, these layers of cultural production and flow evolve with technological and economic possibilities. Affordable satellite television channels make it much easier for transnational immigrants to stay more closely involved and identified with their home culture. (Earlier waves of immigrants had fewer media options and were more likely to have to use media in their new hosts countries, if they wanted to use media.) They also evolve with changing, or hybridizing forms of culture, that both reflect and frame the technological and economic possibilities. So as television becomes cheaper, and people also start creating their own cultural forums on websites, we see the growth of Persian language television production in Los Angeles for Iranian immigrants there (Naficy 1993). We see even larger numbers of websites, web radio programs, and even specialized satellite TV channels for South Asian immigrants to the USA or Great Britain, some focused on events back in South Asia, many focused directly on the immigrant experience and news of their own specific community (Mallapragada 2006). These examples show the reciprocity of economic, technology, culture and media channels. People move in large numbers mostly for economic reasons, although political, familial, religious and other reasons factor in as well (Papastergiadis 2000). As they move, they take their culturally formed interests with them. That creates spaces or markets for new layers of media to act in, if economic and technological possibilities allow. All of these ultimately tend to create a new layer of production, experience and reception, that is media, identification and identity specific to the new immigrant community and its culture. That community and culture will represent both a hybridization of home and host cultures, and a new layer of media and culture in itself.

So, to conclude, this article looks at four bodies of issues and theory. First, we see the elaboration and development of new multiple layers of media production, flow, identification and, perhaps, eventually, identity. Second, these form in reciprocal interaction between technological possibilities, political-economic forces such as movement of peoples and expansion of media institutions and companies, and spaces for media created by the cultural identities and interests of concrete groups of people. The net effect of this has been the expansion of layers of production and reception of culture at the global, U.S. export empire, transnational cultural-linguistic, transnational geo-cultural, trans-local, national, regional, global city or media capital, metropolitan and local levels.

Third, instead of the homogenization feared by earlier theorists (Hamelink 1983), we see a less drastic but perhaps equally pervasive hybridization of cultures. Both media institution professionals and audience members I have interviewed tend to articulate what they see as the increase in the number of layers or kinds of culture (often expressed as new markets by the professionals), those layers are also constantly changing as they also interact and hybridize over time. So, fourth, this is also a complex and dynamic system that is constantly evolving or emerging (Straubhaar 2007), as culture, political-economy, and technological possibilities interact and shape each other.

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From International Communication to Global Media Studies. What Next?

First I would like to thank the conference organizers for inviting me here and giving me the opportunity to comment on Professor Straubhaar's presentation. I congratulate Professor Straubhaar on his excellent presentation, which I am sure we all enjoyed. He kindly sent me his new book, *World Television. From Global to Local*, which his presentation is partly based on. I would also warmly recommend everybody to read Professor Straubhaar's interesting and engaging book.

Another person whose work I have been recently thinking about and reread is the late Professor Jan Ekecrantz. His work contributed significantly to the discussion we have today around global media issues. I miss his intellectual and human presence here and will miss him again in many conferences to come. Today I will try to tackle the question Jan asked himself in his recent article: "How is media research conducted in a globalized world?" (Ekecrantz 2007: 169). Thus my commentary does not only have to do with Professor Straubhaar's presentation or book, but more generally with the paradigmatic changes from international communication to global media studies and how they have affected our work. My presentation is based on the assumption that, when we start changing the theory, we need to change the methodology we use and the empirical materials we collect accordingly. These changes will of course then have an effect on our conclusions.

From Globalization to Global Studies

In the last 15 years many exciting things have started taking place in the social sciences and in the humanities that have had consequences on almost every field of study, including the field of media and communications. The word globalization, which is now used critically or uncritically by almost everybody, was hardly used by anybody in the early 1980s.

The first groundbreaking research was mainly done outside media and communications studies, but in fields related to it, such as sociology, geography, anthropology and political science, and was considered a major paradigm change, a change from one way of thinking to another (Rantanen, 2004). Many of the early pioneers have now become household names: Arjun Appadurai, Ulrich Beck, Manuel Castells, Anthony Giddens, Ulf Hannerz, Saskia Sassen and Roland Robertson to mention a few. Each of them has contributed to *global studies* – I use it here as a generic term, even if many of the theorists used different concepts such as network society, transnationalization or cosmopolitanization.

Since the beginning of the debate the concept of globalization has become so contested and overused. As Giddens himself has noted, the concept of globalization is nowadays asked to do too much and has lost part of its explanatory power (Rantanen 2005a: 76). Even if this has happened, we need to ask: how, if at all, did the concept of globalization change our thinking? Where are we now? What are the lessons we have learned so far, especially in relation to media and communications studies? This is the question Professor Straubhaar also asked in his paper: ‘How many new information and entertainment sources are truly global, versus transnational, national, regional and local’?

Let me start with the key concept and theories that have been re-thought since the discussion on global issues started. I will relate them to the issues of media and communications.

Theoretical Issues: Key Concepts and Theories

Nation-State

1. Even if scholars disagree about the degree to which the nation-state has lost its power, we no longer automatically take it as *the* only starting point for our research, as we did in international communication studies. We do not divide the world only on the basis of nation-states. We do not unproblematically compare nation-states to each other. We acknowledge that they are not homogenous entities that can be compared to each other *an sich* or that nationality becomes the most important explanatory factor. We now further acknowledge that nations and states are not necessarily the same thing, and that they were not combined into the currently existing nation-states before the 19th century in Europe. They also have had ever-changing territories and boundaries. We can study nations and states separately. We acknowledge the power of states, but we problematize the connection between nations and states.

Culture, Language and Identities

2. We acknowledge the diversity of people living in nation-states and we understand that there is not only one national culture or identity, but several cultures and identities that are not fixed and change in space and time. Many of them are undermined or oppressed by governments or majority cultures within nation-states or by occupation by other nation-states, near or far.
3. When we acknowledge that nations are ‘imagined’, we stop conceptually uniting one language, one culture, one identity and one territory and recognize the junctures and disjunctures between the four. We no longer talk about one homogenous national identity threatened by homogenous global media. Instead we may be worried by heterogenous or multi-layered as Professor Straubhaar puts it, national identity (identities) being threatened by heterogenous or homogenous global media.

Political and Cultural Citizenship

4. We recognize that citizenship of a particular nation-state is only one of the defining characters of an individual. We have started to understand that an individual’s political citizenship may be very different from his/her cultural citizenship. We acknowledge that individuals and groups have dual citizenships and/or multiple affiliations that cross the boundaries of nation-states.

Global Mediation

5. We recognize that social relationships are increasingly mediated and individuals in different locations within and between nations and states are connected to each other through media and communications. As Roger Silverstone (2006, 5) wrote: 'We have become dependent on the media for the conduct of everyday life. They have become the *sine qua non* of the *quotidian*. But they are also inexplicable and insignificant without the everyday, without in turn their being resources for thought, judgment and action, both personal and political'. Hence, the increasing use of media and communications is one of the most striking features of our age and defines the ways we live. Globally, outside our homes, as Castells puts it, established hierarchical social and political structures have given way to *networks* Castells (1996). These networks (and here is the major intersection with globalization theories) are non-isomorphic with nation states and increasingly enable individuals to communicate across the borders from their homes. In this way, the private and the public are connected not only to each other but created new plural virtual private and public spaces we have never seen before.
6. We understand that connectivity is part of global mediation. Mediation is a concept that can be used as a starting point for any analysis of contemporary societies, in the same way as, for example, society or social interactions are used in political science or sociology. The concept is required in order to acknowledge that the nature of societies and social relationships have fundamentally changed and become increasingly mediated through the use of media and communications. This change has broken traditional boundaries of national societies and given birth to new global connections, again characterized by their mediation. Mediation refers to both the material and the phenomenal nature of media and communication (Hansen, 2006). It brings together the study of innovation, technology, production, content and use.
7. We acknowledge that global mediation is a process in which some have more power than other. Professor Straubhaar asks 'what impacts do global media have compared to national, regional or other media upon culture? In a larger sense, what impacts do today's global media have on people's identities and how should we understand both those impacts and the identities themselves in this new world? And what impacts to all of these phenomena and have on the structuring of cultural spaces and markets in at local, national, regional and global levels?' However, we do not understand media effects any more as only a one-way street or as effects. Instead we could turn the question the other way round by asking what impacts do identities have on global media? This could free us from our media-centric approach and adopt a new approach in which mediation is seen as an active multi-way process (<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/>).

Methodological Issues

Units of Analysis for Comparative Research

8. When we do comparative research across borders, we understand that we do not always need to compare nation-states to each other, but we can compare places, regions, cities and other sites to each other inside and across borders.
9. When we do comparative research we do not see a particular medium as representing a particular nation-state or its culture or identity; we realize that even if particular media and communications are defined by their nationality and thus 'naturalized',

such as with 'US television', ownership, investments, production, technology, content and/or audience are often split across national borders.

10. We need to re-operationalize our research in order to be able to identify what we mean by 'global', 'national', 'regional' and 'local'. When we do comparative research we do not see a particular medium as representing a particular nation-state, especially when it is defined primarily by its size or status, but understand that we need to compare a variety of media across borders, including minority and diasporic media, in order to do justice to their diversity within a particular nation-state and to see their similarities and differences inside and across national borders.

Changing Conclusions

11. Instead of seeing the consequences of global mediation in purely dichotomic terms, as either homogenization or heterogenization, we start seeing both of them on different levels (global, national, regional, urban, local) and the struggles between and inside them. We start forming new concepts such as 'hybridization, not complete resistance, autonomy (Straubhaar 2007)' and new formations, things we cannot yet identify or name.
12. We acknowledge that, in opening up to unforeseen consequences, when we conceptualize these as 'both and' (Beck 2005b: 257) we may risk losing the critical (and political) edge of our research as 'either or' when we can no longer say it is 'just cultural imperialism' or 'just globalization' to name our enemy.
13. As a result, we may be approaching the end of those global media studies, where globalization was used as a starting point, as a key theoretical concept, and a key conclusion.

As I said in the beginning of my presentation, Professor Straubhaar's presentation exemplifies these changes in our research. His research convincingly shows what we gain by using new analytical tools. As always, we also lose something. We may approach the point when need to think what's next: what follows after globalization?

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THOMAS TUFTE

Exploring Cultural Globalisation

New Forms of Experience and Citizen-driven Change Processes

In the following, I present *two perspectives* that each serve as a comment on Joseph Straubhaar's keynote presentation. 'Global, Hybrid or Multiple? Media Flows and Identities in the Age of Satellite TV and the Internet'. In each their way, my comments refer to the analysis of cultural globalisation which lies at the heart of Joseph Straubhaar's presentation.

1. The first perspective is a *developmental and change perspective*. Here, I wish to connect Joseph Straubhaar's mapping and stratification of recent media development trends to a discussion on *the particularities of the globalization process*. I see Joseph Straubhaar's presentation as a very useful point of departure for assessing the social and cultural change processes we are experiencing today. New media and communication technologies are at the heart of these change processes.

However, I also wish to raise questions about the *drivers of change* in our society today. Who are the drivers of change, or agents of change, and who are not? Is it media conglomerates that drive the process? What about ordinary citizens? The question is: *who are the agents of change in our contemporary process of cultural globalization?* This question speaks to issues of *power relations and citizen engagement in development processes*. By highlighting such a developmental and change perspective, I suggest a stronger connection between the issues Joseph Straubhaar deals with and the growing research area of communication for development and social change.

2. The second perspective I will highlight is a *media sociological perspective*. Here, I wish to connect Joseph Straubhaar's presentation to questions about the role of new media in identity formation. This speaks to the relationship between media use and a broad range of contextual factors. My question is: *What role do the new media and communication technologies play in the formation of people's social and cultural identities?* Or, when it comes to impacting on identity formation: What is different about the new media and communication processes compared to older and more well-known media and communication processes?

Joseph Straubhaar's presentation outlines some interesting scenarios, fundamentally arguing that we are experiencing radical changes both in our organization of time, space and social relations and in our articulation and formation of cultural identity. I would argue that these radical changes may be less radical than we interpret them at first glance.

1. The Developmental and Change Perspective: Globalization as a Particular Development Process?

If we take a closer look at my first perspective, the developmental and change perspective, my point today is to suggest an assessment of cultural globalization in which issues of *power relations and citizenship* are emphasized. Cultural globalization is, as many scholars have argued, obviously integrally associated with political and economical globalization.

Such an assessment also requires a closer examination of who the drivers of today's change processes are.

Joseph Straubhaar's presentation provides a *very useful mapping of key developmental trends*. He provides an interesting stratification of markets, insights into geo-cultural and cultural-linguistic markets and also outlines core tendencies in the reconfigurations of markets and communities. Furthermore, socio-cultural characteristics of interconnectivity, transnationalism and cultural hybridity are outlined as emerging as part of the socio-cultural changes seen in our society today.

Based on the media development trends Joseph Straubhaar outlines, my Swedish colleague, Oscar Hemer and myself have previously argued for the need to reassess current change processes from what Dutch sociologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse calls a '*critical globalist*' perspective (Hemer and Tufte 2005, Pieterse, 2001). While there currently is a strong on-going debate about social change processes within development studies, it also fits well into today's media and communication discussion. Development is no longer a process reserved for 'developing countries'. All societies are developing as part of a global process, making the dichotomy of 'first' and 'third' worlds obsolete – at least in a geo-political sense. The entire world is 'in transition', and development must therefore be rethought as a regional, transnational, global project (Pieterse 2001: 45). In this context, and following the fundamental post-colonial deconstruction of development, we can now witness a gradual reconstruction of this debate with Pieterse's referral to '*world development*' as a 'new' grand concept.

Among the main potential new agents of social change in the context of world development are the transnational advocacy networks, or TANs, as they are called. They form an increasingly important part of the NGO world and are part of what Arjun Appadurai calls 'grassroots globalization' or 'globalization from below' (Appadurai 1996 and 2001).

What the developmental and change perspective I here have outlined can help us understand is that these *processes are not neutral processes*, which simply happen as media and communication technology is innovated and applied by creative industries. Instead, by deconstructing the whole power geometry of this world developmental process, and of the cultural globalization processes in particular, issues of citizenship, cultural citizenship, citizen media and participatory governance can be understood. This can open conceptual pathways to building a developmental and change perspective on to Straubhaar's analysis, and into communication and media studies. This is what is known today as the research field of *communication for development and social change*. (Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte; 2006)

2. A Media Sociological Perspective: The Relationship between Media Use and Identity Formation

Let me now turn to my second perspective, which is the media sociological perspective on how media use relates to identity formation. This has long been a continuous debate in media and communication research. The question is: *What characterizes the relationship between the arrival of new media and communication technologies and people's patterns of identification?* Do people's cultural orientations, their senses of belongings – their patterns of identification at large – change when new media become part of their everyday lives?

If analysed in a short-term perspective today, it would certainly seem so. The popularity of satellite TV and not least the Internet seems to suggest this. And Joseph Straubhaar's presentation appears to confirm it as well. However, I believe we need to dig deeper into the analysis and explore *what dimensions of the new media may articulate new layers of identity, or new patterns of identification*, which I would prefer to call them. Is it the technological innovation in itself, the interconnectedness per se, the interactivity possible on the Internet, or is it the access to more or better information and entertainment that articulates changes?

In addition to digging into the details of everyday media use and its relationships to questions of subjectivity, production of meaning and personal experience, I would furthermore suggest the incorporation *a life history approach* into such studies. By introducing a life history approach, richer data can be obtained on diachronic cultural processes compared to the data that have commonly been offered by reception studies and media ethnographies. A good example is Terhi Rantanen's work from 2005 (Rantanen 2005).

While reception studies and media ethnographies traditionally have offered fine analysis of *the synchronic dimension of media use* and identity formation, the fact of complementing this with a life history approach adds a historical perspective on cultural change processes. Finally, connecting the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of media use with an analysis of *large-scale institutional transformations and market developments* can provide a deeper understanding of processes of cultural change, identity formation, and their relation to overall developmental processes in society.

I did such an analysis with a team of Brazilian colleagues in a previous research project in which four families in Porto Alegre in Southern Brazil were studied in the context of urban and media development, collecting data spanning a period of more than a century. We conducted interviews with as well as ethnographic observation of the latest 3-4 generations of family members. The families were furthermore of different ethnic and class backgrounds. The study was conducted in the late 1990s, when satellite and cable TV were being introduced on a large scale in Brazil (Tufte 1998 & 2001, Jacks et al. 2006).

In many ways our findings on the large-scale media institutional developments and urban developments connect well with those outlined by Joseph Straubhaar today. However, they also put the introduction of new media, satellite TV and the Internet, into *the historical context of introducing new technologies*, including the introduction of electricity, cars, the radio, the cinema, the TV, the video and the mobile phone.

In a number of ways, our findings confirmed but also nuanced *the process of mobile privatization* that Raymond Williams spoke of already in the 1970s (Williams 1975). This was a concept he used to characterize the cultural process within modern, urban, industrial living whereby two apparently paradoxical tendencies merged: mobility, on the one hand, and the increasingly self-sufficient family home, on the other. Increased

mobility came from the new ways of moving physically – cars, planes, etc – as well as from immaterial mobility, that is, access to new symbolic worlds via the media.

While, according to Williams, suburban homes throughout the 20th century became the concrete embodiments of the modern utopia, *the question today is how and whether the new media may be changing the sociological characteristics of media use, and the patterns of identification, in the 21st century.*

To conclude this media sociological perspective, I would like to add one last comment. One significant issue, which doesn't come through in Joseph Straubhaar's work, but which was very clear in our Brazilian study, is *the generational perspective* on media use. There are fundamental differences in how the media are used and what role they play in peoples lives, depending on age and generation. Considering the thematic focus on generations at this conference, this point could deserve further attention.

Conclusion

Globalization, as Tomlinson argued more than a decade ago, and as Giddens suggested even earlier, leads to *new forms of experience* in everyday life. In today's presentation, Joseph Straubhaar has provided us with an interesting mapping of contemporary media development trends. He has outlined the structural conditions in which people's new forms of experience – of identity formation, of socially relating, of engaging in society – occur. Furthermore, through his cultural sedimentation concept, he has offered a model of analysis of people's identity formation processes.

However, what I have suggested here today is a more articulate focus on power-geometries in current developmental processes. Furthermore, *a more articulate perspective on agency and change could deepen our understanding* of the socially and culturally inclusive and exclusive dynamics of this developmental process. Zygmunt Baumann gave this some attention in his book on globalization from 2000, and Straubhaar today rightly emphasizes the issues of difference in access to the new media.

However, a reinforced developmental and change perspective on the topic of media flows and identities in the age of satellite TV and the Internet also speaks to *a stronger connection between globalization and development*. Moreover, it speaks to an emphasis on issues of citizenship and bottom-up perspectives on globalization (Pieterse 2001). This is where the research field of communication for development and social change becomes relevant.

Second, emerging from my media sociological reflections today comes a reinforced call for *research dealing with the changing media experiences of everyday life*. The focus on the contemporary, apparently very large impact of satellite TV and the Internet on many people's lives is *a synchronic analysis* of media use. I have here suggested a deepening of this sort of analysis with a focus on *the diachronic cultural process of media development and media use*. I have mentioned the life history approach as well as a historization of large-scale relevant institutional transformations, like urban development and media development.

Finally, considering the theme of this conference, I have suggested a stronger generational focus on media use.

Joseph Straubhaar's presentation sets the scene and provides a very insightful analysis of the stratification and reconfiguration of media flows and markets in times of satellite TV and Internet. He furthermore, although less elaborately, points out ways to conduct studies on how global media, and other media, impact upon culture and identities.

I would add to this that there is a general need for *a renewed focus on audience studies or user studies* within media and communication research, a focus that also incorporates some of the issues I have touched upon in this commentary.

Thank you.

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Introduction

ANU KANTOLA

The Nordmedia 2007 panel titled *Media, Economy and Democracy* discussed and compared the changing societal and political role of the media in contemporary Nordic societies.

Media systems have characteristically been an elementary part of national democracies and national power systems. In this regard, the Nordic countries form an exemplary case, as their political and media systems have been characterized by a strong Westphalian nation state, which rests on an ethos of national democracy and the national public sphere. Since the 1980s, forces of economic globalization and market-driven reforms have challenged national democracies as well as media institutions and practices in the Nordic countries. The panellists were invited to reflect on the media's role in Nordic societies in light of these changes. How has the media's role changed in the Nordic societies with regard to democracy, the political system and political power? Has there been a change from a national democracy and public sphere towards market-driven institutions and media practices, or do the national institutions and practices still have power? How has the media's role changed due to, for example, economic or cultural globalization, Europeanization, commercialization or the mediatization of politics? Have the media evolved to become an isolated centre or various dispersed centres of power or are they still linked with the national democratic structures and institutions? Can one talk about powerful media, and if so in what sense? What are the most interesting challenges and changes likely to take place in the future regarding the relations between the media, the economy and democracy?

Research on Media and Democracy

Reflections on Changes and Challenges

MATS EKSTRÖM

I have been asked to give some reflections on media power and democracy from a Swedish perspective, concerning large, broad and complicated questions such as: How has the media's role changed with regard to democracy and the political system during the past decades? What are the most interesting challenges likely to take place in the future? I will do this in 15 minutes.

Figuring out what is new and not new when it comes to the roles of the media in democracy is not easy. Reading the literature, however, it seems to be easy to exaggerate transformations and revolutionary changes in contemporary society. I thought it was a good idea to go back and start from the outcome of two large-scale national investigations of power and democracy initiated by the Swedish government during recent decades.

Today, it is approximately twenty years since the Swedish investigation of power ("Maktutredningen"), and ten years since the investigation of democracy ("Demokratiutredningen") were started. In both cases, a large group of researchers from different disciplines were involved, and a great deal of emphasis was put on media analysis. Let me start by summarizing some main arguments and conclusions from these investigations. I believe these investigations articulated some perspectives on the media, power and democracy that were predominant and typical during the final decades of the 20th century. After looking at the investigations, I will then ask the question: What has happen since then, and what are the most significant challenges for future research? Of course it is only possible to focus on some aspects of this very broad area of research.

Three main conclusions from "Maktutredningen" can be summarized as follows (my interpretation):

1. The (mass) media have an enormous influence on people's thoughts and understanding of the world, on opinions and on definitions of the political (and what constitutes a political problem).
2. The media are both powerful actors in their own right and constitute an arena used by other power groups in society to control the distribution of information. The activities and methods used to manipulate opinions are developed and intensified and are increasingly important in business and politics.
3. The media are characterized by increasing commercialization and concentration of power, dominated by a highly professionalized, powerful and autonomous journalism, and what is called media logic.

These conclusions are closely related to an understanding of the media, a kind of implicit presupposition in a great deal of research, characterized by the following:

1. The notion of media is equal to mass media, and in fact about 90 percent equal to news journalism in the press, radio and TV.
2. Media is understood as a coherent and central power institution in society. Media is conceptualized as “The media”.
3. Media power is understood in relation to a broadcast model in which power is mainly localized to media production.

The conclusions from “Demokratiutredningen” were very much the same. It was emphasized that the power struggle in society is largely a struggle for media attention. Related to this is the intensification of lobbying activities. The spectacularization of politics was described as an important consequence of media logic. And what is perhaps the most significant difference compared to “Maktutredningen”, the Internet and new communication technologies were described as unexploited potentials for the development of democracy, mainly in terms of citizen participation and power.

So what has happened in the period following these investigations? And what perspectives and conclusion do we have to reconsider? Here are some reflections.

The End of the Media?

According to Paddy Scannell (in his highly recommended new book *Media and Communication*, published this year), the concept of “The Media” was established in the 1960s, and Marshall McLuhan’s work was of course groundbreaking. In this context, Scannell also quotes Hans Fredrik Dahl who writes, and I quote:

The aggregation of disparate media of communication into a synthetic whole – ‘the media’ is a very recent phenomenon, perhaps coinciding with the rise of television in early 1960s as the dominant information and entertainment medium.

In my opinion, the concept of “the media” is best understood and used as closely connected to a particular historical period in the trajectory of media analysis – from the 1960s to the end of the 20th century. The concept of “the media” is quite often used in the debate and literature on media and power, for example when discussing whether the media are a weak or a strong force in politics, whether the power of the media is increasing or decreasing, whether political institutions or the media are most powerful, and whether the media have primarily positive or negative effects on democracy. This conceptualization of the media was frequently used in Swedish investigations of power and was part of the main conclusions.

I think the concept of “the media” is confusing and misleading for several reasons: It is not clear whether the media relates to technologies, modalities, language or social institutions. Quite often it seems to mean journalistic practices. The concept tends to blur a number of different technologies and practices with totally different implications for power relations in society. The media today do not at all constitute a coherent technology or institution. Talking about power as localized to “the media”, and not to specific groups, actors or social relations, also tends to mystify what is going on. Sometimes it seems to imply that we could have politics or everyday life with or without “the media”.

In a recently published article (in *European Journal of Political Research*), for example, Kenneth Newton draws the following conclusion concerning media and power:

In spite of all that has been written about media malaise, however, both theory and evidence suggest that the media are a comparatively weak force whose effects can be deflected, diluted and diffused by stronger forces.

The media as a concept (in this kind of argumentation) seems to imply that the distinction between mediated and non-mediated practices is an important one in the analysis of power and democracy. I do not agree.

In Swedish research on the media, power and democracy, the conceptualization of “the media” has been closely related to an understanding of a few mass media institutions as quite homogenous centres of the media landscape. The flow of news in society is supposed to be controlled by these institutions, and it is the agenda set by them that the power struggle and the intensification of news marketing and lobbying activities are about. But just as, for example, Bolin, Feilitzen and Åker argue in their introduction to *Media Sweden 2007 Statistics and Analysis* (published by Nordicom), there are reasons to question this idea as a point of departure in an analysis of media and power. Media output and consumption are becoming more and more fragmented. For instance, the tendency is to move away from dominating TV channels with a large and loyal audience that is broad in scope. The audiences of not only Swedish public service television, but also TV 4 are declining. In the new media landscape, including online communication, the distribution of news and information is not controlled by traditional mass media institutions to the extent that it has been. The traditional concept of news distribution and the power of gate-keeping journalists are partly challenged.

The understanding of power as localized to a few central media institutions is also closely linked to the production-consumption separation in the traditional broadcast model. In the media-related parts of the Swedish investigation of power (“Maktutredningen”), citizens were mainly understood as recipients of mass media products. As a dominant media model, this model seems to be increasingly obsolete. People are also active agents, who use media for different purposes and make choices in a media landscape offering different opportunities.

Of course, questioning “the media” concept is not the same as saying that news distribution is totally decentralized or that there are no powerful media institutions. But instead of taking the media centre as a self-evident point of departure, it seems to be more relevant to focus on tendencies towards centralization and decentralization, homogenization and fragmentation of news distribution on national and transnational levels.

Journalism under Pressure?

Both “Maktutredningen” and “Demokratiutredningen” placed journalism (and what is also conceptualized as a journalistic ideology) at the centre of media studies. It was relevant to do so. Just as, for example, Hallin and Mancini argue in the book *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*, Sweden and the other Nordic countries are the most clear-cut examples of what they call the “Democratic Corporatist Model”. This model is partly characterized by a strong, highly autonomous and professionalized journalism (built on common standards and self-regulation). To a large extent, the analysis of media and democracy has taken this position of journalism for granted. But professionalized journalism seems to be under pressure. At least partly as

a consequence of intensified commercialization and a changing news market, the common standards of journalism and the principals of self-regulation are being challenged. The distinction between journalism and non-journalism seems to be more problematic in the new media landscape. This does not call into question the fact that professional journalism still plays a central democratic role by, for example, making corruption and non-transparent decision-making more difficult and risky.

The Internet as a Contested Terrain: From Democratic Potentiality to Actuality

In the Swedish “Demokratiutredningen”, the Internet was described as something that could be promising for the development of democracy and citizen participation, and something that could be an important part of politics. In a recently published article, Douglas Kellner (2007) instead describes the Internet as a “normalized aspect of politics, just as the broadcast media were some decades ago”. What was described 10 or 20 years ago as new media, including a number of potentialities, is today an ordinary and diversified communicative infrastructure with significant democratic implications. The young students that we now meet at the universities are the first generation to have grown up from the very beginning in a media landscape in which computer-based communication technologies are the most natural and most evident infrastructure and modality for a number of different activities in everyday life. This is also an infrastructure for various forms of public communication, which forces us to rethink the conditions and practices of democracy.

A large number of Internet-based activities are of course mainly part of a consumer culture, thus they are more about private consumption, play, entertainment and lifestyle, than about politics and the common good. But new communication technologies have also opened up new forms of public orientation, an explosion of public talk, a rich and intensified public debate in the form of blogging, cultural jamming, campaigning, cyberprotesting and file sharing that are of political significance (Dahlgren and Olsson 2006, Kahn and Kellner 2007, Loader 2007).

Online activities are perhaps part of a more fragmented and individualized public sphere compared to the model of the public sphere implied in the Swedish investigations of power and democracy. But online activities using different web facilities are also part of organized activities, social movements and campaigns, not least in relation to global political questions. Like everyday life in general, online is a contested terrain. Internet use can be part of both public withdrawal and public connectedness. Internet as a contested terrain is perhaps most obviously demonstrated in activities (and the debates following) involving blocking and controlling websites that challenge the centralized forms of information distribution in non-democratic political systems.

During recent years, for instance, we have witnessed an enormous expansion of blogging. What was a peculiar phenomenon just a few years ago is now a natural and widely accepted part of the everyday life of public discourse. Certainly, it is both possible and appropriate to interpret the blogging taking place in different genres and settings as an expression of a narcissistic culture of self-occupied people, sexual self-promotions, or an extreme version of what David Riesman, in the *Lonely Crowd* (published in 1950), described as the “other directed individual”. Most blogs are private diaries made public, but of interest to only very limited audiences. Nonetheless, blogging is also a manifestation of people’s enthusiasm for articulating opinions in public, if there are relevant and

engaging conditions available. All bloggings are not political bloggings, and we still do not know a great deal about the political effects of blogging, but as Kahn and Kellner emphasize (in the article “New media and Internet activism”) “the success of blogging should not be judged solely on whether it generates obvious political effects.” Part of the success of blogging is that it is a form for publication that is cheap and easy to create and continue, without requiring any great technical competence. Today, blogging is an important infrastructure for people’s involvement in the public, for ongoing debates partly on questions of the common good, for the spread of information alternatives to the news agenda in the dominant mass media. One thing is clear, online is a public space that is much more attractive, open, vital and easy to access and act in than is the public space of the journalist controlled and commercialized mass media.

In my opinion, the preconditions and practices of different online activities are so important to investigate from a democratic perspective because the practices of citizenship, of doing democracy, are largely a question of acting by speaking in public, of formation of the public will, and of political judgment in (direct or indirect) dialogues. The modes and preconditions of political judgment in public talk are part of the core of democracy. This also means that we take an agency perspective on media, citizenship and democracy instead of the ‘elite media – passive citizenship’ perspective that dominated the media-related part of the Swedish investigation of power mentioned above.

Even if the Swedish investigation of power included a study of ordinary people’s participation in political activities and use of the press in making one’s voice heard, the dominant perspective concerned the media’s power over people’s thoughts. It was (like a lot of research in the area) characterized by a kind of anxiety about media manipulation of people’s attitudes and choices. The mechanisms of power and the question of ‘personal influence’ were not investigated empirically (or discussed theoretically) in “Maktutredningen” or “Demokratiutredningen”. The manipulated mass audience was implied in an analysis of media and power with a strong cognitive bias. I think it is clear that the affordances of contemporary communication technologies have opened up new possibilities and forms of public engagement, which have to be understood and evaluated not only or primarily from a cognitive perspective, but also from an agency perspective. In blogs, chat, news groups, debates and Net activism of different kinds, citizens are primarily not spoken of or spoken for, but speak themselves in public.

Media Use and the Development of Democratic Citizenship

I think few people will protest if I argue that the media constitute powerful socialization arenas for young people in contemporary society. The fact that media are embedded in most parts of young people’s everyday life seems to mean that it is, as Livingstone and Hargrave (2006) write, “implausible to suggest that they have no influence, whether positive or negative”. Some researchers argue that media activities are essential in the horizontal networks that play an increasingly significant role, compared to the vertical relations in family and school, with regard to socialization and cultural transmission (Pasquier 2002).

A reasonable hypothesis is that media-related activities also play an important role in political socialization or more precisely in the development of civic identities, political orientations, values, skills and patterns of political participation in the period from adolescence to young adulthood (cf. Dahlgren 2007, Dahlgren and Olsson 2007, McLeod 2000). Studying media-related mechanisms and processes in the development

of civic identities would seem to be a very important part of the research on media and democracy. However, media activities should not be studied in isolation. As Livingstone (2002) argues, the media are so important in young people's everyday life because they are an integral part of relations and communication in the family, in school and among peers. In a new research programme recently developed at Örebro University, in collaboration with a number of international scholars, it is our ambition to set up a large-scale longitudinal study on processes of political socialization in the interrelations between different contexts of everyday life.

In media studies, the literature on young people and their relations to politics has largely been influenced by an optimistic as opposed to a pessimistic point of view (Buckingham 2000, Livingstone 2002, Loader 2007). From the pessimistic point of view, it has been argued that the preconditions for political citizenship (active participation and power) have partly disappeared and it has been replaced by a consumer society, a self-centred individualistic culture based on privatised lifestyles, and a political system that effectively excludes not only young people, but most of the people. Political ignorance, cynicism, distrust in politicians and political institutions, political apathy, decrease in voting and membership in political parties, are just rational responses to real powerlessness. Media consumption is referred to as a driving force causing significant changes in youth culture and political culture. Young people do not participate enough in political institutions, they do not learn about politics from the news, they are fed up with politics, however they do spend considerable time on media entertainment and consumption.

The optimists, on the other hand, stress the opportunities for new forms of democratic involvement and public debates. They see the decrease in voting and membership in political parties and traditional organizations not necessarily as signs of political ignorance or apathy, but as signs of a more pluralistic political culture, including new forms of political participation, engagement and protests, and a more diversified public sphere, growing partly out of new communication technologies. Media entertainment has not necessarily diverted people's interest away from politics, but the forms of political engagement have changed. Coleman (2007) argues that "it is not young people who have disengaged from politics ... but contemporary political culture that has become disconnected from the language, values and aspirations of young people". Those adhering to this perspective argue that there is a growing gap between the culture, practices and institutions of traditional politics, on the one hand, and the contemporary media and lifestyle-oriented youth culture, on the other. This perspective focuses on informal relations, interaction outside traditional political institutions, and on the varieties of possible public engagement available online.

In this area of research on media and the development of civic orientations, which I believe is very important, we can see a recent trend moving from mainly theoretical and partly speculative debates and diagnoses of what is good and bad, towards more empirical research on the media and civic orientation (see, e.g., Dahlgren and Olsson 2007, Couldry, Livingstone and Markham 2007).

Previously research on media and political socialization has been highly focused on the importance of news consumption. The low level and decline in news consumption among youth is well documented (Buckingham 2000, *MedieSverige* 2007), and it is commonly assumed that this can explain the low levels of political knowledge and the decrease in voting (Buckingham 2000). However, in a situation in which the Internet has radically changed the patterns of media use among young people, it is perhaps not so relevant to study the effects of a decrease in traditional forms of news consumption.

A more interesting question is what the new forms of online-based activities really mean in terms of political socialization and civic orientations.

Buckingham (2000 p 217) draws the following conclusions: “While they (young people) may be alienated from political parties, from voting and from other conventional forms of political activity, young people are nevertheless seen to be developing a broader, and no less valid, form of politics, that reflects changing social and historical circumstances. This is certainly an important response, although the evidence would suggest that young people’s active involvement in these ‘new’ forms of politics is still confined to a small minority.”

While some researchers have stressed the social withdrawal effect of media use, others have presented empirical support for the idea that media consumption has created new forms for public connectedness and extended the group of people informed about politics. Regarding the role of the Internet in political socialization, there is an important debate going on between the normalization thesis and the expanding thesis. Empirical studies have shown that online activities tend to normalize the off-line gap and inequality in political engagement. Those already interested use the Internet to reinforce their levels of engagement, and the less engaged use the Internet in a way that makes them even more disengaged and politically inactive. But there is also a growing number of studies questioning the normalization thesis by showing that it is partly different groups of young people who are engaged in online politics and traditional forms of politics, and that the Internet in fact has a strong potential to expand the group of politically active individuals (Couldry et al. 2006, Krueger 2002, Norris 2001, Gibson et al. 2005). This is just one of a number of important empirical questions concerning the media and the development of democratic citizenship that I feel we have to pay attention to.

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Images, Identity and Security

*Bringing Together International Politics and Media Research**

LENE HANSEN

Let me take this opportunity also to thank the organizing committee for inviting me. It has been a great pleasure to be able to participate in this conference, not least in that it has given me the opportunity to sit in on the sessions of the working group on Visual Culture which I have enjoyed tremendously.

This conference is also a strong indication of the width and depth of media research. As a political scientist working primarily in the field of International Relations and Security Studies, it is obvious to me that Security Studies needs the expertise of media researchers to tackle two of the most important questions on the global political agenda, namely the use of visual representations by political actors seeking to mobilize their constituencies and the significance of different forms of media for the instantaneous circulation of images. The Muhammad Cartoon Crisis that arose in Denmark in 2005-2006 is a case in point as the publication of 12 cartoons in the Danish daily *Jyllands-posten* escalated into the burning of embassies and violent demonstrations during which somewhere between 50 and 100 people were killed. This unfolding of events came as a great chock to Danish editors, politicians and the public who could not fathom the massive “securitization” – in Danish Security scholar Ole Wæver’s terminology – of something as “innocent” as editorial cartoons. A series of other recent cases, including the US’s army’s ban on photos of caskets shipped out of Iraq, the snapshots from Abu Ghraib, and the video postings on YouTube by Western troops in Iraq, also indicate the security significance of visual representation.

Thus far the field of International Relations has however been rather slow in taking the importance of visuals on board. The most well-known body of work is probably on the so-called CNN-effect that is the ability of media coverage, particularly if including striking images of suffering, violence or humiliation, to influence foreign policy decision-making. Yet, while pointing to a crucial set of questions, this work is also marred by its reliance upon a causal epistemology that tries to identify a cause-effect relationship between images and policy. This requires that images (and the manner in which they are selected) can be separated from foreign policies – that policies are dependent, and visuals independent variables. In political reality, this is however a problematic assumption. Politicians may be directly involved in controlling which visuals can be shown – as in the various visuals bans imposed by the US in Iraq – and the media may be prone to cover events and locals that are on the political agenda already, thus creating a complex set of inter-linkages between images and policy rather than a simple causal relationship. At a

deeper theoretical level the problem of the causal research design is its presupposition that a specific policy demand arises from a particular visual representation. This however is rarely the case. The case of the photos of emaciated prisoners from the camps uncovered in Northern Bosnia in the summer of 1992 illustrates this well. To some observers these photos articulated a clear link to the images of Holocaust victims and genocide and thus a demand for Western intervention. Yet, to others they were an indication of the savagery of the Balkans, or so-called ancient hatred, a representation that warned against rather than called for military intervention. The image is in short constituted through – but not determined by – the larger political context in which it is situated.

Turning from the question of the visual and security politics to the broader questions of identity and the media that were raised in the opening plenary session of this conference, I wish to stress that the non-causal relationship between visual and policy is indicative of a more general co-constitutive, non-causal relationship between identities and policy. Foreign policies always need to situate themselves inside a narrative or a discourse that constitutes Us and Them, places and people that are intervened into, threatened, threatening, cherished or feared. Discourses may come in many media forms, through text, photo, speech or video, and they assign different normative status and qualities to “their” subjects. Some categories, like “terrorists” or “evil” block any inclusion or transformation, while others articulate the possibility for similarity and assistance. The study of the politics of identity thus becomes crucial: policies reply upon representations of identity to legitimize themselves, but is also through policy discourses that identities are produced and reproduced.

It is significant furthermore that we study not only the constructed identities of Self and Other, but also the way in which media and genres establish epistemic and political authority. There are numerous ways in which those speaking foreign policy may constitute themselves as “knowledgeable”, including subjective, experiential and emotive forms of speaking and knowing.

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This was an attempt to give you a few basic principles for how we may understand the politics of identity. Let me use the rest of my time here by making 4 more specific points that also speak to the plenary session and its discussion on identity, particularly national identity while linking to the example of Denmark.

First, we need to understand national identity as always in need of reproduction, as never simply “there”, and thus potentially open to crisis and contestation. Analytically, identity debates may take place along both domestic and international axes – although the two may also become blurred. In Denmark, the two crucial identity debates of the past 15 years have been the one on the EU (external) and immigration (internal). In Denmark the concept of nation is a cultural, ethnic, genealogical one, and the tight fit between nation and state since 1920 has produced a virtual overlap between state and nation. This has made it difficult to think political community in terms other than states and it has at times made European integration appear as a threat – “how would the nation survive, if the state is going to Brussels”?

The debate on European integration and the debate on immigration have until recently run largely on separate tracks, politically as well as academically. But since both refer to concepts of national identity and to state identity (what makes up political community), they are in fact linked at the deeper conceptual level. The reason why the two debates

are not more explicitly connected may be that there is indeed an unstable political and empirical relationship between the two. The Danish government seeks, as does the parliament with the exception of the right and the left wing, to increase support for the EU amongst the large group of Danish EU skeptics, but the government also relies on the Danish Peoples' Party who has a strong anti-immigration agenda. It is caught therefore between opening up the Danish understanding of state-nation (required to solve the opposition to the EU) on the one hand and of preventing its reorganization (due to pressure from the Danish Peoples' Party on immigration) on the other. Put differently, it is quite likely that it would be easier to solve "the EU problem" if the immigration question, or what constitutes "Danishness" was opened up to critical scrutiny and expanded beyond its cultural, genealogical conceptualization.

Second, it is important that we focus not only on the question of national identity, but also on the relationship between state and nation(s). As brought up in the discussion at the plenary panel on Thursday, the question whether states are appropriate normative and political frameworks or whether alternative forms of governance should be sought is a difficult one. Here it is pertinent that our analysis separates between state and government, concepts which are often conflated or presumed identical, perhaps especially in the Nordic context where the alignment of nation and state and the 20th century history of a strong welfare state have contributed to seeing the two as one. Analytically, there is however a distinction between the two, and we should thus be careful to identify the concept of the state which governs political debates in a given setting, and to analyze the extent to which a particular government is constituted as a legitimate embodiment of this conceptualization. Moreover, when debating the normative status of the state, it is crucial that we ask not only whether the state is loosing its sovereignty (territorially as well as a privileged identity) vis à vis other entities and communities, but which inclusions and exclusions a particular community imply.

Third, discussions of patterns of inclusion and exclusion are often linked to the argument that identities should be theorized as overlapping, multiple, or layered. This is an important argument insofar as it stresses the contingency of all identities, including the national one, and that exclusive constellations of identity are not the only available options. It is significant, however, to stress that "multiple" identities are not simply there but depend upon political discourses that reproduce their existence. From this follows furthermore that the crucial question, particular from the perspective of a political analysis, is how "multiple identities" are prioritized and aligned and linked in situations of crisis and contestation. Such prioritization takes place in all political discourses at all times, but particularly so in cases that involves security politics, that is when somebody or something is constituted as a threat. Here we often find that the classical categories through which collective identities are constituted – nation, race, ethnicity, religion and gender – return in ways where some are privileged over others, where some are marginalized or perhaps even excluded. Analysis should, as a consequence, pay particular attention to the processes through which the openness of layered identities are in fact arrested and used to legitimize particular policies.

Fourth, when studying the way in which identity is constituted in discourse it is important that we look at the intricate ways in which subjects are formed. Political discourse often does not operate in a way where "the threatening Other" is explicitly constituted as such. Rather such processes of Othering take place through more complex articulations of boundaries, distinctions and agency. Discourse analysis operates methodologically at the level of text, speech, and visual and thus with "textual evidence",

but it is still a qualitative and interpretative methodology built on an understanding of language, not as transparent, but as flexible and as potentially strategically used by political actors. Two examples from the Danish Muhammad Cartoon crisis illustrate this point. Throughout the Crisis, the Danish government and Danish newspapers were careful to stress that they were not in opposition to “Danish Muslims”, that there was no animosity towards Muslims or immigrants in Denmark, that “Muslims” were not, in short, Othered, but that there was a problem with the (small) group of fundamentalist, anti-Danish Muslims who had initiated and perpetuated the Crisis. As a consequence of this discursive construction, “Danish Muslims” were called upon to show their democratic inclination, to separate themselves from the “fundamentalist Muslims”. This construction of the “good Muslims” invoked however a “Muslim” subject who was not automatically “democratic”, and thus by association fully “Danish”. “Danes” – or Jutlanders or Bornholmers – would not, put counterfactually be asked to prove their democratic nature, as this is taken for granted. The second example of how boundaries are more subtly, but very effectively, constituted, was the construction of the group of Danish Muslims clerics who went on a tour of the Middle East as “traitors”. Many newspapers were keen to point out that considering how “Denmark” had given these people asylum or humanitarian right of residency, one should have expected gratitude rather than treason. Yet, the articulation of a subject as standing in a relationship of gratitude to the Danish state/nation is in fact itself to exclude it from the proper “Danish”. The Danish construction of the welfare state citizen is through a discourse of rights and solidarity where “gratitude” is nowhere to be expected. More generally, we should note that universalistic discourse is always spoken from a particular place, making specific demands on what constitutes the universal good and right.

* This talk draws loosely on Lene Hansen’s *European Integration and National Identity: The challenge of the Nordic states* (co-edited with Ole Wæver, Routledge, 2002), and *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (Routledge, 2006), as well as her new project on visual security and the Muhammad Cartoon Crisis.

Backstage Report: Research Strategies and Field Observations

An Extended Reflection on the Media Research in the Norwegian Power and Democracy Programs

TORE SLAATTA

This essay offers a reflection on some of the strategic considerations on media power research that were developed in connection with the recent Norwegian Power and Democracy Program. A central background for the reflection is the way Nordic power and democracy programs generally can be said to have influenced the fields of Nordic media research. Large scale, nationally coordinated research programs on the status of democracy and the distribution of power have almost become a speciality within the Nordic social science research community. And in due order the Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, and now also the Finnish governments have funded and organised such programs since the late 1970s. The recent initiative in Finland to launch a power research program in 2007 creates an excellent opportunity for reflection on the outcomes of previous research efforts, and on how the development and structures of our field of media research has been influenced by them. Thus, I do not want to comment on “outcomes” in usual, scientific or economic utility terms, and I do not mainly think of “outcomes” as research results or findings. Rather I want to reflect upon “field outcomes” or “field effects”, understood as the effects that these nationally coordinated, interdisciplinary, social scientific research programs might have had – and might have in the future – on the field of Nordic media research. Along the way, I want to touch upon some central questions, for instance:

1. Is it possible to locate and describe some specific or general field effects of the various Nordic media power research projects on the fields of media research? Is it for instance possible to locate specific forms of knowledge, theoretical orientations and research strategies that has emerged from these specific interdisciplinary research efforts? Can we trace a historical line of media power research, or are the effects more diverse and connected to individual careers, rather than collective and general?
2. What kind of external, structures structure the media researchers that chose to work within these national, interdisciplinary, large scale programs and what characterize the space of opportunities? Is it for instance possible for media researchers to develop original research strategies and designs for research on media power that at the same time become epistemologically challenging, ambitious and autonomous? In other words, is it possible for the field of media research to strengthen its position vs other fields within human and social sciences?

3. Are there any experiences and strategic lessons to be learned from the earlier interdisciplinary research and collaborative work within the power research programs that should be passed on to new, future generation of researchers conducting "Nordic media power studies" or pursuing similar research objectives on a European or international level?

Partly as an answer to the questions above, and partly as an opening up for a reflection on my own experiences in these matters, I want to present the major concerns and research strategies developed in the media research within the Norwegian Power and Democracy Program (1998-2003). I am perhaps not the right person to really say what came out of this work, and it is too early to do a proper investigation in terms of historical trajectory in the Nordic fields. But I can say something about how our research was intended, how we made our strategic choices, and how we tried to contribute to the overall production of knowledge within the national program. More generally I can say something about research organisations and my experience as responsible coordinator and media researcher within the program.

The Early Nordic Power Research Programs: Effects on the Emerging Fields

My general argument on field effects will be that the early media power research projects in Nordic social science in the 80s and 90s provided our field with important impetus through innovative theoretical developments and ambitious research designs. They should be seen as defining moments in our field's history, as particular important moments when large scale research on media power brought several researchers together in collaborative work, when original methodological weapons was tried out, and when theoretical concepts and arguments was developed to make an impact both inside and outside our own field. A sound hypothesis is, that during the 1980s and 1990s, the small scale of our media research enterprise meant that more or less, what ever the actual outcome of the research, the field in general would be strengthened by such external relations and research cooperation. However, there are many signs that the early programs also opened up for conflicts and rivalry towards outside disciplines. In trying to balance between internal and external benefits, media researchers risk being squeezed from two sides: From their own field, where there might be contesting interests in the theoretical understanding of how media power should be analysed, and from outside fields, notably political science and sociology, who more easily signals a strong interest in and ownership to the officially stated goals of the overall research program.

Now, as more autonomy, size and numbers has been reached, the situation has changed. The media field has become stronger and more independent, but at the same time more spread out and diversified. Since the structures of interdisciplinary are now already found within the media research field itself, the invitation to participate in external, interdisciplinary research is not as tempting as it used to be. The dominance of political science in the research organisations usually also confirm that the media field is not expected to play a strong role in the definition of research objectives and methodologies. Hence, it is more uncertain if the field at all will be benefiting from cooperation and strong external relations to national power research programs. On the other hand, not to participate is to miss an opportunity for the field to engage in self reflection and external competition: the expansion and diversification of the media research field has

made it large and influential in society, but to some degree at the cost of lower scientific depth and loss of academic virtues. A general low degree of internal contestation and challenging debate across subfields and specialities tend to confirm and reproduce a weak, rather than a strong position of media research within the overarching field of human and social sciences.

The history of Nordic power research began in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The first was the Norwegian power study program which came to an end in 1982. Svennik Høyer, Helge Østbye, Anita Werner and their colleagues in Oslo and Bergen were drawing their conclusions on media power in a separate white paper. They produced a coherent report, but it was published too late and outside the publication series of the program and did not really contribute to the general findings of the whole program. Instead, it became the canonic text for the early years of Norwegian media studies. The field was in an entrepreneurial and embryonic stage and they were inventing Norwegian media research as they did it.

Their work and their writings bear evidence of ambivalence towards mother disciplines. On the one hand, the young discipline needed to draw the lines of their field against the dominant disciplines of Norwegian political science and sociology. On the other hand, its ability to deliver theoretically coherent, empirical research to the programs research objectives had to be proved. The white paper report that the assigned group of media researchers published in 1982 was an impressive collection of quantitative and qualitative data on media history, media use, political communication and news journalism, and also included a chapter on new media technologies. It became a central read for all media students, and secured a theoretical and empirical platform for the new discipline. But although written in the early 80s, the new winds already blowing within media and cultural studies, particularly in Europe and in British academia, were not felt. Neither an interpretative, ethnographic or a linguistic or semiotic turn could be traced in the report. Instead, the report inscribed Norwegian media research within the two competing schools of Norwegian social sciences at the time: the new rational choice theories and institutional theory. However, by not taking side and choosing between them, their balancing act stirred more controversy than expected. The two leading directors of the program, Gudmund Hernes and Johan P. Olsen both contributed with independent books and articles on media power, journalism and political communication which to some degree bypassed the media researchers in the final reporting of the program. Thus the effect of the report was to confirm Norwegian media research as a weak speciality within the social sciences with particular bonds to political science and sociology.

From the mid 1980s and onwards, a new generation of media researchers came to the fore, researchers that had spent formative years within departments of media sociology and journalism and who had a wider reading in the emerging cultural studies field in Britain and the U.S. Slowly, a new consensus in the field proliferated, emphasizing the cultural and constructionist understandings of culture and media power. Qualitative content analysis and frame analysis was increasingly acknowledged as important, methodological tools. The seminal work by Martin Eide and Gudmund Hernes (1987) on social journalism in *Død og pine* (Eide and Hernes 1987, see also Eide and Rasmussen 1986) was recognized among the new generation as being a successful attempt of bringing old and new perspectives together in the media research field.

Thus, a generational effect in the field emerged outside the official power research in Norway, advocating a more culturalist perspective on media and power. In Sweden, the same cultural turn was more integrated from the beginning when the political scientist

Olof Peterson, with the help of Johan P. Olsen, one of the pioneers of the Norwegian power study, started the Swedish power research program in the late 1980s. In developing their theoretical model for the research on the journalist profession, they combined the two main concepts from Eide and Hernes (Actor and Arena) within an institutional framework, emphasizing the power of the journalistic ideology (*journalism*) in maintaining a defining role on political discourse in society (Peterson 1989, Peterson and Carlberg 1990). Thus in Sweden, the political science-driven research on power probably put a more radical challenge to Swedish media researchers at the time. But, perhaps since Olof Peterson insisted on doing much of the media research himself and invited a journalist rather than a media researcher to write the final report, the effect on the field was quite similar to the Norwegian. To some extent the Swedish media researchers were bypassed by the director of the program, and in turn, the effect of the program on the media field in general became low. My impression is that a strong quantitative, social science tradition remained dominant in Sweden even after 1994, and remain stronger than in the other Nordic research communities throughout even today. But the Swedish research in fact had an effect on Norwegian media research: by referring to the twin concepts of “actor and arena” both in their theoretical and empirical writings, the early work by Martin Eide (and Gudmund Hernes) was confirmed as the major theoretical achievement following in the wake of the Norwegian power research.

Beyond doubt, the power research programs had important and mostly beneficial effect on the social sciences on a whole in Sweden and Norway. But they particularly served to confirm political science in a privileged position in the hierarchy of disciplines. When the media and communication fields in the two countries were strengthened and consolidated in the academic institutions during the 1990s, it was of other reasons, and instead of becoming a core and long term research tradition within the field, research on power, journalism and political communication was challenged and attacked. The political scientists and sociologists working in the media field slowly lost their unique, dominant position within the emerging, more composite and interdisciplinary media research field.

In Denmark, both the media research field and the media power research was differently organized. Compared with Sweden, Finland and Norway, the media field in Denmark was marked by an earlier awareness towards post-structuralism, semiotics and British cultural studies. Audience research, film studies and semiotic analysis were more acknowledged within the field, and journalism and political communication studies were still mostly a vocation for political scientists. First with a series of commissioned governmental reports on media power from 1995 and onwards, media power research emerged within the media research field itself, without the presence and dominance of political scientists. A new generation of media scholars thus emerged within the media research field itself with up to date research on these themes which perhaps could challenge the dominance of political science more effectively.

From Consensus to Diversity in the Nordic Media Research Fields

It is my impression that a new consensus emerged during the 1990s regarding research priorities, theories and worldviews within the Nordic media field, particularly in the subfields of political communication and journalism. Disregarding many inescapable differences, the consensus based itself on theoretical insights from post-structural literature and a culturalist, non-essentialistic understandings of culture. This blended in with

a new approval of qualitative methods, ethnographies and the importance of semiotic perspectives, where texts and social contexts were studied together, and where audiences were treated as being active in the construction of meanings. This new consensus had a social foundation in the new generations of young researchers entering the field from 'new' disciplines. Media researchers now not only came from the social sciences, but from the humanities, from literature and linguistics in particular. A look into the formation of new standing working groups in the Nordic media research conferences at the time will confirm this generational change in the field. At the same time, media studies had a significant growth in faculty members, in numbers of students, courses and research projects, and media research became more institutionalised through independent research programs and funding schemes in the national research councils. Thus, although there might be a common understanding of some basic, fundamental concepts and insights concerning culture and the role of media in society, it is diversity rather than unity that has characterized the media research field ever since. The situation was therefore strikingly different at the end of the 90s, when again media researchers in Norway and Denmark were invited to take part in large scale, national research projects on media power.

Being unable to give a full picture, I want to mention three elements that I believe now characterized the field of media research, and that might become important for media researchers who now consider to enter a new large scale, power research program in a Nordic country.

First, compared with the situation of the 1980s it can be argued that social scientific research on power has itself diversified and become a more general and routine exercise in all research fields and subfields. Academic life had disintegrated and specialized in a wide range of subfields and subdisciplines, reflecting an ongoing specialization that totally surpassed earlier periods. The general output and number of articles, books, statistics and white papers that relates to an academic discourse on media power have grown beyond the wildest imagination, and the general knowledge sources on society has become extremely more complex and contested than before. This can be taken towards an argument that the demand for one, final and authoritative statement on power and democracy is institutionally (and epistemologically) problematic. Although the need for clear answers might be high among politicians, it is not equally high in demand among researchers, who more or less have given up on constructing totalizing, grand theories and large scale projects.

Secondly, the new media technology has opened up the field of media research in new ways. Digital media technology changes the media, as we used to know them – as research objects, and this has interesting and important effects on the research field. For instance our ability to define the borders of our field and its relations to other research fields become more complex. As the new technology permeates society in all aspects, many old distinctions become problematic: the distinction between mass media and personal media, between media institutions and business organisations, between state and civic society, etc. The new informational logics in social organisation, as Castells put it, that is, in network society (Castells 1996). Instead of making ourselves visible and understood through a clear understanding of what media *power* is, within a political science framework, the challenge seem now more to be that of finding out what the *media* is. Media power research has to some extent lost its object and we have to rethink what we want to study as "the media" and "media power".

Third, interdisciplinarity has become a characteristic of our field, and a larger scope of theories on media and media power are being kept alive within our field than in other

fields. Particularly I believe this is the case if we compare ourselves with the political science field, which usually have and take the upper hand in steering committees of power research programs. And sometimes, a culturalist perspective can have an impact. Profiled academics from various fields and disciplines within cultural studies and humanities now more often than before manage to oppose the traditional political science domination. They can threaten to undermine unidimensional power research and instead of feeling compelled to contribute to upholding other disciplines worldviews they can successfully argue for the inclusion of a cultural, semiotic or textual orientation in the overall research design.

At the turn of the millennium, these three points – among others – painted a new, complex and dynamic backdrop for strategic reflection on the media research field and its external relations. For us, who were invited as media researchers to participate in the new program, a central question was whether one should be doing something totally new, or rename and circulate what had already been done. It was tempting to try something new and different: new theories and research strategies had been developed that potentially could give the media (understood through concepts as institutions, discourse or technology) a stronger and more central position in the understanding and defining research questions concerning the distribution of power in society. Could we still, as media researchers, at the one and same time, do our own, independently defined research *and* report up to date results to a central, national research program. Alternatively, we could try to connect existing empirical findings and subsume theoretical arguments from different epistemologies and methodologies.

Whatever the outcomes, so to speak, of the earlier power research programs, they had proved to be defining moments of our field, when theories and new methodological designs was tried out and new and original research findings was passed on into public discourse and common knowledge. Now what about the media research I coordinated for the most recent, Norwegian power and democracy program? What did we do, or what did we try to do?

The Media Research within the Norwegian Power and Democracy Program

Let me here present some informational background to the theoretical and methodological choices that were made concerning a) the choice of research object and empirical focus b) the development of theoretical and analytical tools, and c) the methods and research designs that were developed.

In the first proposal I wrote on behalf of my department (Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo) in 1998 to the initial call for ideas from the recently started research group on "Power and democracy in Norway", I suggested three particular important areas of research: 1) financial journalism and the mediation of business, 2) globalisation and the increasing multicultural aspects of Norwegian society and the challenges these developments pose to mass mediated public spheres, and 3) convergence and new digital media as means for new democratic communication and connections between political institutions and civil society.

I still hold these three thematic areas of research as particular interesting ways into the problematic of media power of contemporary society, and I somehow regret that a choice between them was necessary. The final choice was made in favour of developing a research proposal on the rise of financial journalism and the mediation of business in Norway. As it developed, I became more and more pleased with this decision. Why?

A reflection on what had previously been done in our field on this topic was inspiring: There had been no research interest in the rise of business journalism in previous Norwegian media research what so ever: no discussion of the representation of economic power in the media, no research on the mediation of economic information, on conspicuous consumption among the rising capital class in Norway, no interest in the role of the media in the reporting of the booming 90s and the rise of Norway to the top of the UN list over best places to live, nothing on our booming oil-industry and the media (one of my more recent research interests), nothing on the media and the new patterns of social mobility, nor on increasing social and economic cleavages, nothing on the fast spread of economic knowledge, nor the increasing importance of the management of private capital in the declining welfare state, nothing on the increased demand for self-regulation in a economically defined society. Nothing, nothing, nothing. Not one single trace of Bill Clinton's truism "It's the economy, stupid!" So perhaps we must admit we are a bunch of stupid media researchers, too?

In a way, it was an obvious choice: An important focus had to be the rise of professional business journalism since the 1980s and I began thinking about different ways to analyse different roles and powers of business journalism. The research design would have to be built on a theory of symbolic power, exercised through journalistic practice and routines and connected to a specific set of media platforms and publicly mediated discourses. I wanted to theorize connections between journalism as a vocation and journalism as a kind of political and social discourse with legitimating effects. Within this perspective, business journalism would have to be seen as creating symbolic spaces where representation and social construction of meaning take place. Typical power effects would be discursive and social exclusion/inclusion based on tacit and implicit requirements for knowledge, language and codes. In public discourse a process of naturalizing economic realities would take place, but the public exposure of economic, private information would also open the economic field up for public judgement and journalistic powers and norms. I wanted to think through how the connection between media and economy as a cultural and discursive connection could be theorized and empirically studied. Taking the economy and business journalism as research object meant a move to the fast lane of society. We suddenly saw new connections between media studies and elite studies, to the studies on the "new economy" and anthropological studies on business practices, money, finance and capital. An economy is not only a system for exchange and value, it must also be seen as socially embedded, as a form of culture and social knowledge where the mediation of business has a lot to say for the construction of meaning of money, morals, and manners (taken from the title of Michèle Lamont's brilliant work, (Lamont 1992, see also Kjær and Slaatta 2007). Or for construction and mediation of the social meaning of money, to cite another famous academic book title, this time from a publication by Viviana A. Zelizer (1997). This was a place where media scholars usually didn't go, to a place from where we felt we were looking into the bull's eye. Power was everywhere.

The choosing of empirical focus was essential and part of an overall reflection on the field, the trajectory of media power studies and the relationship between project (media) and the overall program (social science). However, the most important element in the media research strategy in my view was the attempt to work from a consistent set of theoretical considerations, concepts and methodologies. This was achieved through the deliberate choice of using Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory. This made the media research project at IMK substantially different, both from earlier projects on media

power and from the more loose, uncommitted theoretical strategy that were chosen for the research program as a whole. In a short-term perspective, this meant that the conceptual framework and methodological particularities in the project were not picked up and mediated in a coherent form in the programs final reporting. However, in my view, the project became methodologically and theoretically more consistent and strong, from an internal point of view. Working our way through the strength and consistency of Bourdieu's theoretical framework and trying to comply to its methodological imperatives, was an inspiring lesson.

In my view, Pierre Bourdieu's theories should be seen as particularly fruitful to research projects that aim at saying something about power relations, and that particularly want to include a social, cultural and symbolic dimension. This should of course also be one of the main interests of media research, and I think Bourdieu's theory is a strong bridge for media researchers who want to connect back to the heartland of the social sciences. Bourdieu's sociology is a relational sociology that automatically challenges any attempt to look exclusively on "the media". Thus, it prevents media researchers from covering over important differences within "the media" itself. Through the use of correspondence analysis we learned and observed that there is a strong consistency between theory and method in Bourdieu's work. A *Norwegian media order* could actually be constructed on the basis of statistical data on media and cultural consumption, despite the common belief that the media nowadays are mostly "more of the same". And, perhaps not surprisingly, the new and modernized "business press" occupied a particularly *privileged position* in this order, one that corresponds to important shifts in symbolic power in the Norwegian society from the political to the economic field (Slaatta 2003).

We developed a traditional tripartite research strategy: the production of business news in various media (interview and observation of the production processes specific to business news production), the contents and particular texts, genres and formats of business news in various media (news sections, notes, comments, specialist magazines, Internet websites, etc), and the reception of economic information and news (in various socially defined groups and in a comparative elite perspective). Looking back, it has been a rewarding professional experience and I can recommend others to do similar choices in their research designs: the economy, symbolic power, the theory of Bourdieu and a focus on the media order. However, I have to admit that one thing remains problematic: With Bourdieu, we probably became too ambitious. With limited funding and limited time at our hands, I know that important parts of the project are still not reported, particularly not to an international audience. The main publication that went into the book series of the program, was mainly a theoretical discussion and a report on our findings from our studies on business news production. An important report was additionally made in the last minute on the reception data from our social groups data (Høijer and Must 2002). However, the comparative elite data has still not been reported, and the ambition to write it "all together" in a single publication is also not fulfilled. Yet. I find some comfort in the fact that it took Bourdieu 15 years to complete *La Difference*, and the famous Decatur study of Merton, Mills, Katz and Lazarsfeldt nearly almost never was completed. So we are still working on it.... But universities are not always the best places to organize and manage research teams. Since the program ended, the research team has been spread with the wind, the brilliant students we managed to recruit have all left the university, and the funds and the time to do the last effort is hard to find.

Experiences and Possible Lessons to be Learned

Media researchers, when invited to participate in large scale, national research programs, are not simply asked to collaborate in a jolly good research project. Some are actually chosen to do a particular job, perhaps because they have come up with a particular interesting and important research proposal or because they seem to fit an overall research strategy of the program. As contracting partners in a defined, but large scale research program involving many partners, they have to sign a contract of delivery of scientific results and textual material as reports, books and chapters. Next, they have to pull through the proposed project or series of projects within a defined period of time and within specific financial limits. This is not so different from other contemporary research projects.

But maybe one of the most interesting thing about nationwide, interdisciplinary research programs like these, is how conflicting interests in defining interdisciplinarity is meant to be overwon. There is a kind of programmatic expectation concerning the end result, which idealize a collaborative platform for research organisation, across different projects and research strategies, across theoretical and methodological differences, across disciplines and fields. For media researchers I believe it always has been clear that the institutional borders that were given to us were temporary and arbitrary, and the possibility for us to evoke an autonomous research tradition and institutional history to our own advantage slim. Still, as representatives of their field, media researchers participating in power studies programs make important experiences concerning how they are collectively confronted and challenged to define their specific field of research. A common feeling among media researchers has often been that one has to teach social scientists a lesson about the media. Political scientists never took it serious, or not seriously enough, and they had a shallow understanding of culture, media and communication. But today, knowledge on media, mediation and symbolic power cannot be ignored, and I believe media researchers today often find themselves to be partners in high demand.

The major lesson learned is that it is extremely important to think through how we frame and focus our research on media power and that we are reflexive about our own positions within the media field, and the position of the media field vs. other fields. We have to reflect upon ourselves as researchers, our interdisciplinarity, our history as a field and its position towards other fields within social sciences and humanities. And since our research is meant to exist within large scale, nationally organized, social scientific research programs, it is equally important to continuously reflect upon what kind of relationship is being developed to the overall research organisation and research agenda. My humble hope is that my reflections can be of some use to directors or coordinators of future media research projects contributing to or working within similar, national, European or international research programs.

One thing I would like to stress, is that research that aims at accurately measuring "media power" is doomed to fail if it involves an attempt to reify and objectify media power as something that can be said to increase or decrease. The category of "the media" has no empirical counterpart and general statements on media power risk ending up as helpless, commonsensical and reductive statements. The success or failure of our research efforts is more a question about being able to ask the right research questions at the right time. It is about the capacity to be able to formulate a research design in a theoretically consistent language that can guide empirical research. But to be able to chose research questions and empirical focus that will matter for society at large, one has

to take into consideration the position of our own research field, its historical trajectory and relations to society, and the particular way in which our research is situated in time and space. A parallel reflection on the changing, external relations between the academic field and society must also be undertaken. Without this exercise, media research easily becomes trapped as in the famous metaphor; looking for the lost wallet in the circle of light from the lamppost.

Our own perception is too often that we are a vanguard, an avant-garde within academia who have to teach others about the right way to understand the media, communication and culture. This point of view often coincide with a defence of the popular against what is seen as elitism and arrogance within other fields. But as Bourdieu has described it, sociology is a weak academic subfield (Bourdieu 2002). And so is the media research field. There is a constant risk that we become too technology-driven in our research agenda, too close to industrial powers, dynamics and externally defined, societal needs: that we become defenders of utopian futures, obsessed with new gadgets and things that are said to change the world, that our research become too dispersed, fragmented and isolated from other disciplines and research traditions in "quasi opposition" to the disciplines that originally gave birth to our field. There is a risk that too little real discussion, academic competition and production of unique knowledge takes place as media departments becomes the paradigm examples of successful university units with a high proportion of external funding, lots of international publications in obscure, Anglo-American journals and high visibility frequency in the national news media.

Although the situation has changed, we are still fighting to make ourselves heard. We are not really active in defining the overarching research agendas of large scale, national research programs and we are still confronted with imported theories, concepts and methodologies. So be it. We should not try to compensate our lack of strength as research field with getting rid of society and over-exaggerating the power of the media through exotic, theoretical means. Instead, we must continue to do empirical investigations of the changing relations between media orders and other fields in society: politics, the field of cultural production, and the economy. I have argued here that Bourdieu's sociology and the theoretical framework and conscious reflection on research design and methodologies that comes with it, is a possible way forward.

Epilogue

While the defining, international moments and canonical writings in our field is usually detected in Chicago, Colombia, Birmingham or Paris, (see for instance Katz, Peters, Liebes and Orlov 2003 and Scannel 2007) the history of media power research can be read as the most important red thread to an understanding of the *Nordic* field of media research. We should perhaps not contribute too eagerly to a mythologization of a Nordic research identity, although participating in Nordic research seminars every second year always reminds me of the possible impact of wonderful, long Nordic summer nights, the special, and the transparent Nordic light and the way these things seem to inspire a particular joy of life (at least at the parties after the conference is over), of everything living and perhaps also a moral sensibility towards the larger community, a peaceful, friendly and empathic solidarity with the world, with humanity, with ourselves. But, let us at least admit that the Nordic research community continues to play an important role in our lives, and that the institutional structures of Nordicom and the bi-annual conferences are productive instruments in maintaining a mutual consciousness of a

potential research community among Nordic media researchers. And now we have the experiences from national research programs on power to share, as well!

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Introduction

SUSANNA PAASONEN

Culture and media technology is perhaps the broadest of titles for a conference panel or a cluster of essays. More specifically, the following texts by Terje Rasmussen and Malin Sveningsson Elm – like the 2007 NordMedia panel titled Culture and Media Technology with Lisbeth Klastrup, Terje Rasmussen and Malin Sveningsson Elm – address the meanings of so-called new media, their cultures of production and usage, in and for media and communication studies. The focus is largely on conceptual, contextual and methodological issues related to the demarcation of and the flux between research topics and traditions.

During the past decade or so, new labels and definitions such as Internet Research, Game Studies, Cyberculture Studies, studies of Digital Culture and New Media have challenged traditional disciplinary and departmental divisions within media and communication studies. These definitions have to do with novel research topics (from gaming to mobile communications or online networking), as well as with the formation of interdisciplinary identifications and networks. More than labels, studies focusing on the social and cultural meanings of new media technologies have posed methodological and conceptual challenges to the ways of understanding media production, distribution and use in cinema, media and communication studies. As familiar models and theories developed in the context of print media and mass communication no longer seem to fully apply, scholars have found themselves stranded between different research traditions and disciplines, looking for new alliances and points of departure while still remaining grounded in their disciplinary histories, methodologies and forms of conceptualization.

Novel interdisciplinary identifications, such as “Internet research” or “Internet studies” bring people together across disciplinary boundaries while, perhaps paradoxically, performing a new kind of boxing in. Understood literally, the term “Internet research” implies media specificity in a situation where the Internet is not so much a specific as a heterogeneous and multimodal medium that both builds on previous forms of communication and gives rise to new ones. In fact, one of the central questions related to “new” or “digital” media concerns media specificity. On the one hand, media culture is increasingly conceptualized as intermedial, multimodal, remediated and converging (cf. Bolter and Grusin 1999; Jenkins 2006; Lehtonen 2001; Herkman 2005). Novel media build on previous and parallel ones while these in return draw on the newer applications: media production, distribution and ownership are networked while aesthetics and texts travel from one platform to another for the purposes of commercial promotion and irreverent appropriation alike. On the other hand, new applications involve specific forms of distribution, participation and experience that transform ways of conceptualizing media production, usage and the role of individual media texts. Technologies create horizons of possibility for that which can be done with a medium: they are both specific and in

constant motion with updating and upgrading, research and development. In this sense, these horizons are in a continuous state of becoming.

All this brings forth obvious dilemmas for media and communication studies – an umbrella term already involving diverse research traditions and disciplinary identifications. Broadly put, the dilemma can be seen as twofold: How to account for the specificity of new technological formations and practices without building them into a fetish in ways that obscure intermedial connections, questions of convergence and historicity? Or, on the other hand, how to make use of research traditions in media and communication studies in ways that do not merely involve projecting methods and theorizations developed in studies of print media, broadcasting or cinema on a range of recent developments? The first position – the fetishization of new media in their novelty – means turning a blind eye towards the historicity of media technologies, a constant “shock of the new” that leads to isolating and, consequently, decontextualizing the media studied. The second position – namely projecting familiar models and structures on new examples – works the other way by turning a blind eye toward that which may no longer remain the same. Here a different kind of decontextualization takes place.

As any media historian is likely to point out, the question is one of both continuity and change. The question is, what this might mean exactly in terms of contemporary media and communication studies: what kind of position do “new media” and their research traditions have in curricula and departmental research profiles and how, if at all, do they influence ways of conceptualizing the objects of study within media and communication studies. Like Malin Sveningsson Elm in her essay, I am not inclined to think that the solution lies in creating specific disciplines, or fractions thereof, for studies of new media. Media-specific definitions divide the field of study into a series of more or less arbitrarily labeled boxes (be these cinema, radio, television, print media, Internet or game studies). While these categorizations enable specificity, they also work to draw artificial boundaries around the object of study. This, again, hinders analysis of contemporary media culture and the constant transformations taking place within it. The task, then, is to critically think through the legacies of research paradigms, to remain sensitive to their specificities and limitations but equally to the possibilities they offer for understanding the cultures of media.

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The Internet and Differentiation in the Political Public Sphere

TERJE RASMUSSEN

Habermas's main question in his keynote address to the media researchers at the ICA conference in Dresden in June 20th 2006 was whether deliberation in the public sphere actually does introduce an epistemic dimension to political decision-making, ie. whether the public sphere can bring new insights and solutions to politics today. As known, Habermas has previously given arguments for the potential of the public sphere, but what about the current condition in western democracies? The volume of political communication in the public sphere has expanded dramatically, but it is at the same time dominated by non-deliberative communication. Habermas argues that there is a lack of an egalitarian face-to-face interaction and reciprocity between speakers and addressees in a shared practice of collective decision-making (Habermas 2006, 414). More importantly, the very dynamics of mass communication, Habermas claims, are driven by the power of the self-regulated system of the mass media to select, and shape (dramatise, simplify, polarise) information. Quite interesting, he presents something of a media-centric argument, suggesting that the increasing influence of radio and TV, fosters increasing ignorance, apathy and low-level trust in politics: 'The data I have mentioned suggest that the very *mode* of mediated communication contributes independently to a diffuse alienation of citizens from politics.' (Habermas 2006, 424) But the strategic use of political power to influence and trigger agendas and issues is according to Habermas also an increasing problem. In other words, in the public sphere of communicative action, strategic action has continued to intervene.

To Habermas, these facts does not refute the validity of the deliberative model of democracy, because the public sphere precisely has the function of 'cleansing' or 'laundering' flows of political communication. From the processing and compartmentalising of the wild and diverse communication (entertainment, shows, news reports, commentaries, etc) in the public sphere, politics struggle to select relevant information (problems, arguments, solutions). As a platform for the pubic sphere, the media sector possesses certain rules, which the players must play according to, in order to be taken seriously and to be efficient. Through deliberation, the pubic sphere is able to raise issues, provide arguments, specify interpretations and propose solutions. In the pubic sphere, demands from social movements and interest groups in the civil society become translated into political issues and arguments and articulate manifest, reflexive public opinions. The model of deliberative communication, Habermas argues, provides a critical standard to which disturbances and constraints in the public sphere can be criticized. For reasons of legitimacy, the political system must keep itself open to the political influence of society. The public sphere thus links to established politics and to the civil society, which must empower people to participate in informed, public discourses.

What then about the Internet. In his talk, Habermas addressed the Internet only in a footnote, pointing out that interaction on the Internet only has democratic significance in so far as it undermines censorship of authoritarian regimes. In democratic countries however, the Internet serves only to fragment focused audiences ‘into a huge number of isolated issue publics’. Habermas claims that: ‘Within established national public spheres, the online debates of web users only promote political communication, when news groups crystallize around the focal points of the quality press, for example national newspapers and political magazines.’ (Habermas 2006, 422)

One interpretation of this is that Habermas is simply not sufficiently knowledgeable about the myriads of discourses on the Internet about delimited issues as well as questions of national concern to transform his model in accordance with the current media situation. One could get the impression that he considers the mediated dimension of the public sphere as mainly composed by the press, increasingly challenged by radio and TV. But this would certainly be to underestimate Habermas as an observer of contemporary changes. Rather, I believe that his passing comments on the Internet derives from his prime interest in the public sphere seen from the point of view of political democracy and less from the point of view of media research. Habermas is simply more interested in political deliberation than in democratic potentials in media change. Also, he is concerned with the deliberative legitimization of politics in differentiated and complex societies, which requires some kind of public focusing and ordering of issues and solutions. In Habermas’ examination, this leads to a focus on the dimensions of the political public sphere that *directly* influence legitimate, political decision-making by providing thematic focus and consolidation.

The notion of the public sphere is the key. Habermas argues that the public sphere can facilitate deliberative legitimization only if a self-regulating media system gains independence from the social environment, and if anonymous audiences grant feed-back between an informed elite and a responsive civil society. Civil society can be understood as the ensemble of self-organised and coordinated activity in organisations, associations, social movements and interest groups where members freely cooperate on equal grounds to publicly pursue aims of common or universal interest. The communicational dimension of the civil society can be viewed as a dimension of the public sphere.

So how can we advance our thinking about the relationship between deliberative democracy and the Internet? If the research problem is not deliberative legitimization of politics *per se*, but rather the significance of Internet communication in the public sphere, we need to a) address local and global public spheres in addition to the national, b) address the literary/cultural public sphere in addition to the political, and c) address the communication that has indirect influence on the political system in addition the communication with direct influence. We should ask what normative energies and burdens the Internet brings to the public sphere. How does it structurally transform the public sphere, not least on a European scale?

My argument here is threefold: *First*, the use of the Internet contributes to the diversity of views and broadening participation, but complicates observation of the political public sphere from the point of view of politics and the state. In this, the Internet seems to reverse the effect of commercial mass media. *Second*, the public sphere should be seen as consisting of two epistemic dimensions or ‘faces’, each oriented towards different solutions and problems. *Third*, an updated understanding of the public sphere would benefit from a network-analytic approach.

Differentiation of Public Communication

The press, cable TV and national broadcasting distribute mass communication from relatively few, centralised senders to a large number of unconnected receivers, who receive the communication in more or less similar ways. The mass media thus functions as centralised filters of public communication. Due to the cost of (mainly advertising-funded) production, content tend to be mainstreamed and directed towards the imagined, implied average receiver/consumer. Content are pre-produced in a limited number of editorial centres and then disseminated widely for mass consumption. The possibilities for feed-back are extremely limited.

These features are often seen as contra-productive and disadvantageous for an active, participatory public sphere. However, they fill a very important function of the public sphere, the function of *focus*, in terms of both content and form. The standardised, narrowed and centralised agenda of the mass media enables the political system to mirror their own deliberation in the public sphere and become visible for the citizens. The problem with the mass mediated platform is not the mass media structure itself, but that this structure have only been complemented by place-bound, face-to-face interaction. I am not here referring to the concentration on the international media market (which constitutes a democratic problem indeed) but the inherent structure of mass media and mass communication. While it inhibits participation and diversity from below, it allows for an organised harmonisation and convergence of meaning as an interface of the public sphere for the society to observe. The amorphous public can thus be identified and referred to, and mobilised as platform for democratic politics. We should however, remember that the vast *numerical* majority of mass media in Europe (newspapers, weeklies, magazines, journals, local radio, and tv stations etc.) have modest circulation and audiences, but which makes them more sensitive to the *diversity* of topics, people and events of interest.

The Internet-based structures of communication, whether we look at e-mail, mailing lists, wikis, blogs, chat groups or network sites like Facebook, clearly represent deviations from the mass media model. In very different ways, they all base their existence on information and communication from their users, including a wide variety of participants, events, views and topics. Not surprisingly, media theory and Internet-research turned rather quickly to Habermas' study of the early European bourgeois public sphere and to theories of deliberation. Theories of deliberation addressed precisely what the Internet seemed to offer: Possibilities for formation of productive enlightening and public opinion on a much broader scale than previously in history. This provided formation of public opinion as a medium between citizen preferences and political institutions. Several studies have demonstrated that digital forums of various sorts have the capacity to create engagement, and critical discussion about important issues of common public interest (Coleman & Götze 2001). Several studies have examined the ability of the Internet to carry public deliberation (for an overview see Dahlberg 2001). The conclusion is that fora on the Internet contribute to the critical public sphere, whether locally, nationally or internationally by reproducing normative conditions for public opinion formation.

However, Habermas is not entirely off the mark in insisting that the Internet play a secondary role vis-à-vis formal politics. In order for a blogger or a group on the Internet to have political impact, their message must in almost all cases be picked up by the mass media. And before we go on to modify the model of the public sphere according to the media development of the last decade or two, we should also keep in mind the naïve

wave of cyber-democratic enthusiasm that tend to confuse political and technological realities (Benkler 2006). What is technologically possible may not be socially favourable. For instance, even if hypertext makes it technically possible to connect issues, publics, arguments, and facts, research shows that this possibility is often not applied in practice. And although it is perfectly possible to engage in civil debates on discussion forums, such forums often report on problems of uncivil communication in various forms. What seemed to worry Habermas is precisely that communication evades responsible editing mechanisms. Substantial parts of Internet interaction seems to amount to hasty, unfocused and inconsistent chat because of the expansion and democratisation of access to un-edited discussion that the Internet offers.

First, what Habermas calls ‘issue publics’ overlap with publics with interest in social and political change, which is pursued through other media. Membership in various publics, either with respect to themes or media (magazine readers, human movements activists, bloggers, tv-viewers, etc.) is not mutually exclusive. Second, the diversity of Internet communication (measured as scope of issues and viewpoints, degrees of civility) is larger than in the mass media, thus representing the worst and the best from the point of view of rational discourse. To control the explosive growth of information on the net, socio-technological tools are developed to search, filter and target information on the net (tags, filters, blog-lists, RSS-feeds, search-engines, meta-sites, tracking systems, etc).

Third, with the Internet, the collective, main-stream nature of the hitherto mass mediated public sphere, become more in tune with individualisation of modern society. With interaction rather than reception, subjective preferences and viewpoints are more easily articulated and linked to others, reproducing webs of intersubjectivity. The autonomy and self-realisation typically associated with the modern individual ‘fits’ better with the public sphere partly reproduced through what I call personal media. Personal media represents the modern individual’s personal tool in that they allow not only for social interaction with friends and relatives, but also for critical judgement vis-à-vis others in weak-tie associations that are linked together with new and old media.

As personal media allow more people to produce texts and take part in communication, the Internet offer new forms of access to public authorities, new channels of coordination and influence for social movements, and a multitude of more or less stable settings for chat and discussions. On all accounts, digital media provide, quite different circumstances for communication than the mass media. The most central ones can be listed as follows:

1. Social Movement activity (web, blogs, email, wikis)
2. Discussion and chats among citizens (blogs, chatrooms, e-maling lists)
3. Citizen access to MPs and public authorities (web, e-mail, blogs)
4. Online ‘participatory’ journalism (web, email, sms, mms, blogs)
5. Connections and weak tie networks (network sites like Facebook, Myspace etc.)
6. User-generated content in broadcasting (tv, radio, web, sms, blogs)

In contrast to the public sphere once entirely dominated by public encounters and the mass media, the Internet and personal media propels a more differentiated public sphere, both in terms of topics, styles, as well as with respect to the number and variety of participants. The current public sphere are more niche-oriented, both because of a more diverse media-scape, and because of a more ethnically and culturally pluralistic

society in general. First, the diversity of *topics* is broader than in the mass media; It has been argued that the nature of topics in the more recent representational dimension of the public sphere are more particular, private and local than the mass media, in spite of the global reach of the net (Becker & Wehner 2001, 74). However, it is also the case that global or international issues are constantly discussed, such as the conflicts in Iraq, if in individual and local ways. Second, the span of *styles* and *genres* (informality, impulsivity, rhetoric styles, politeness, civility etc) far exceeds the mass media. Third, the number and diversity of *voices* is considerable compared to the mass mediated public sphere. (children, youth, people holding extreme viewpoints, etc.). Individuals may change between the roles of general relatively passive citizen and more active and specialised communicator.

The differentiation of topics, styles and participants is truly an astonishing phenomenon, which transforms the public sphere and how we view it in relation to democracy and culture. In all three differentiation trends, the driving force is the personalisation of media on the Internet, enabling the individual to voice opinion directly to public power, to participate in campaigns, and social movements, and to exchange opinions on online forums in her own ways and language, drawing upon personal experiences, knowledge, engagements, values and judgements. Because the threshold for speaking up on the Internet decreases, more people do, and increasing participation lower the threshold even further. And yet because the threshold is still much higher than simply watching the television news, more involvement and interest accompany Internet participation. One tends to appear more as one interested in particular themes and interests, than simply being a citizen among millions (Becker & Wehner 2001, 74). Whereas the mass media produce homogeneity, the multitude of Internet fora seems to produce a heterogeneity that has, I might add, difficulties in controlling itself communicatively.

Consequently, the Internet takes actively part in the current dramatic differentiation of the public sphere, in terms of topics debated, styles applied and persons involved. The diversity of communication on the net, is in part caused by anonymity and quasi-orality (and therefore more extreme viewpoints and considerably uncivil characteristics, unconventional ways of argumentation), diversity of communication forms (from chat forums to blogs and homepages with comment functions), and diversity of inter-textual connections between forums (hyperlinks, RSS feeds, network sites). In its reciprocity, heterogeneity and resistance to censorship it stands in a complementary position to the mass media. Particularly the national and international mass media enable broad attention around some prioritised public topics 'of national interest', and so serves as a resonance for national and international politics. The Internet and personal gatherings underline the individualisation and segmentation of modern societies, in that attention and engagements are spread among a wider range of topics, which make a political focus difficult to trace.

As a modern response to a dynamic democracy, the digital dimension of the public sphere offers less guidance for politics, but more possibilities for expression. Compared to the journalism of mass media, on-line journalism tends to be more compartmentalised and based upon self-selection and personalisation. The criteria of selection are to be composed by the individual. Rather than offering carefully edited information, it offers a differentiated space for interaction and user-composed information, that tend to be rather specialised, and also closer to personal opinion, rumour and not confirmed information. Whereas the mass media works toward conformity and common denominators, the Internet is more oriented towards particular interests. It is located 'between'

the mass media public, and face-to-face interaction, as in public meetings, rallies, etc. (Becker & Wehner 2001, 75).

Studies also show negative side-effects of the new forums: polarisation of debates, isolation of issue-based groups, unequal participation, lack of responsiveness and civility in debates, etc. For these and other reasons, the value of digital forums in a public sphere context is questioned. A main problem addresses their numerous, local, segmented character, which makes it difficult to see how their normative communication may integrate into larger sentiments of public opinion (Kraut et. al 1998). What seems to be missing in many forums on the Internet is a culture for civil, public communication, or simply a public culture. Due to the lack of personal experience in an open space and the absence of editing functions, communication often has a private style, in spite of its open and widely accessible nature. In spite of being public, it draws on genres for private communication. This has two problematic consequences: 1) The discussion has problems with the complexity of the issues discussed, and 2), the discussion has problems reaching a self-referential, self-critical level where the normative aims of the discussion are subject for discussion. In other words, the responsibility that normally embody public communication (publicity), is to a lesser extent taken into consideration in the nature of the interaction.

Still, the vast majority of these forums fulfills some basic requirements of a public sphere: they are (just like the mass media and locale meetings), committed to improve social conditions one way or another, and also to free speech and dialogue. They are also committed to make themselves understood and to understand others in an open space of an assumed indefinite audience, if not for other reason than to make rhetorical shortcuts or reach compromises. Some sort of communicative or cooperative action with embedded validity-claims, may seem to be in action.

At first glance, there are few and weak functional equivalents to editing and regulatory agencies, like editors, journalists and judges (Bohman 2004,143). However, there are in fact plenty of intermediaries on the Internet, as in online journalism and moderators, filters and other software systems, the norms of social movements and organisations, which all serve to normalise communication in one way or another. In spite of its 'anarchic' nature, much of the communication on the net is embedded in larger normative frameworks that tend to discipline interaction. Second and more importantly, we should not assume that the Internet is isolated from the mass media and face-to-face meetings as a platform for a public sphere. The intertextuality of meaning and communication in and out of forums in the public sphere are innumerable. The lack of intermediaries on the Internet is less of a problem than it may seem, precisely because it is so integrated with face-to-face, and mass mediated interaction.

Dimensions of the Public Sphere

In taking the differentiation of the public sphere seriously, I distinguish between two dimensions of the public sphere, related to topics, style and participants, and also with reference to different functional emphasis (Rasmussen 2007). The *representational* dimension refers to the heterogeneity of topics, styles and groups that take part, and which reflects culture and everyday life, only seen before in everyday conversations and more or less peripheral social settings (clubs, parties, unions, therapy groups, etc.) With the expansion of this dimension through digital media, the public sphere is now becoming increasingly differentiated and diversified with regard to people, issues and attitudes.

In a numerical sense it is becoming more democratic and inclusive. This dimension is oriented towards culture, sports, science and everyday life, as well as politics. In the representational dimension, extensive differentiation of themes and styles are not balanced by generalisation.

The *presentational* dimension refers to the deliberation over common issues by central figures acting as voices of the people. It presents a public agenda and an expression of public opinion to politics as a resonance for rational decision-making. Its procedural ideal is rational discourse of argumentation and reasoning. It is primarily oriented towards homogeneity, focus and the political system (but never fully entering it). This dimension is at the centre for Habermas' concern. Historically, the mass media has been a vital cause and effect of this differentiation of communication. In this they represent increasing complexity and contingency. However, equally important is that the mass media generalise communication by allowing variation within certain standards or common denominators that transcends singular contexts. By applying recognisable genres and referring to a limited number of issues, communication and understanding becomes 'less improbable' to use Luhmann's phrase, by stabilising expectations. In this way they reduce contingency, and in relation to political democracy they enable mutual observations between the public sphere and politics. This function of generalisation is predominantly effectuated in the presentational face of the public sphere.

How the Internet is involved with these two dimensions is an empirical question, and empirical research more than indicate that the Internet serves the representational dimension more than the presentational. Increasingly, the political system examines the possibilities of the Internet as a forum for political will formation and deliberation, but such attempts are risky. Due to the proliferation of personal media among individuals, they are used mostly as channels for citizen activity in the civil sphere and everyday life. The heterogeneity of Internet communication stands in a dynamic relationship to the homogeneity of the main stream mass media, through a wide range of mechanisms of selecting, filtering, styling, formalisation, restructuring etc. If such integration occurs, reciprocity emerges between the presentational and representational dimensions. More precisely, in such a dialectic process, the mass media present mainstream issues (and mainstream positions to them) to the broader audience, and to central powers of politics, but also economics, courts, sports, entertainment, social movements, etc. On the other hand, substantial information and communication on the Internet are produced and consumed by culturally, demographically and politically segments of the public.

A dynamic relationship between its presentational and representational faces implies that the public sphere serves its purpose as a political and cultural institution. Both dimensions serves basic functions to a democracy which depends on, and appreciates both efficiency and diversity, both a strong public opinion, which motivate politics on main concerns with the help of journalistic and entertainment techniques, and pluralistic and direct dialog among its citizens. Diversity is increasingly important, not least because the mass media in most countries tend to be subject to concentration in large-scale media cartels. And conversely, a focused and mainstreamed public sphere compensate for the complexity, extremity and intransparency of partial, issue-oriented, public contexts.

It may sound like a contradiction in terms to say that the public sphere both increases and reduces complexity of social interaction, but indeed this is the paradoxical effect of handling differentiation. As topics move interferentially and transcontextually between the presentational and representational dimensions of the public sphere, increasing complexity from new topics, styles and participants are kept under control through its

ability to concentrate the wide audience among some focused themes. And *vice versa*, the focused and generalised agenda of the public sphere, continuously receives fresh meaning from the open-ended, partly non-institutionalised diversity of Internet media and small mass media.

The criteria of quality of such a new public sphere derive, therefore, not simply from the relationship between the mass media and politics (which is a main focus in contemporary political science and media research). Nor is it only a question of (the lack of) diversity in the mass media due to concentration and competition (another heavily researched problem within the area of political economy). Empirical research on the quality of the public sphere needs to take the Internet into account as a *functional complement* to big mass media and face-to-face interactions, and the effects of this. A vibrant and democratic public sphere depends on its internal composition and dynamics, particularly whether the two dimensions are integrated with one another through networks of media, themes, opinions and knowledge crossing in various ways and shapes between its 'compartments' and realms.

In order to understand the interrelationships between the two faces of the public sphere as well as their connection to political democracy, let me briefly recall Habermas' two forms of discourse – the moral and ethical-existential (Habermas 1996). The aim of moral discourse is to find an impartial platform for sorting out collective courses of action on collective matters. The question of moral discourse is what we (in this society) should do. On the other hand, the aim of ethical-existential discourse is not concerned about how we should solve common problems through rational procedures, but rather how the individual should organise her life according to values and norms. The question is: What is the good life for me – who do I (or a cultural/ethnic 'we') want to be. This duality of discourse has been criticised for being too sharp, and for devaluing cultural values involved in moral discourse. In reality, it is argued, my private world of values and norms and the public world of problem-solving are to a large extent intertwined, we always draw on the one world to deal with the other. Furthermore, Habermas is criticized for seeing the ethical discourse as secondary compared to the moral discourse, and therefore tends to reduce the value of feminine, ethnic, and other discourses that go on 'in a different voice', to draw on Carol Gilligan's title (Gilligan 1982). Habermas' impartial discourse, Gilligan argues, is male, not universal.

If perhaps rigid, I think the distinction nevertheless is useful in order to understand the challenges that a modern public sphere is confronted with. The public sphere possesses two faces also in democratic respects, in Habermas' terms a moral and an ethical-existential. The line between the two faces are surely impossible to draw, but should be assumed analytically in order to see functions of the public sphere. We should see the public sphere as a medium between individual voices of a public on the one hand, and the political apparatus on the other. The public sphere transforms and transfers individual opinion into public opinion for the political system to take into account. A *voluntas*, as Habermas once formulated it, becomes transformed into a *ratio*, a consensus about what is practically necessary in the interest of all. To carry out this task, the public sphere must front both the people and politics, by addressing problems and issues as both moral and ethical-existential, and juggling issues between the two. Whereas the moral deliberative discourse are directed to politics and common problems and alternative solutions, the ethical-existential discourse constitute its social and cultural foundation, its reference background and test-bed, its source for ideas and fresh thinking, with fewer conformity and constraints that press for consensus, more controversy, drama, agitation and passion.

The ethical-existential discourse is more characterised by religious and other kinds of values and convictions that rarely becomes modified through discourse.

Conclusion

With the pluralisation and individualisation of society, differentiation became a problem in the public sphere. The active use of personal media is one factor that led to difference and what Pellizoni (2003) calls (with Kuhn) incommensurability. This difference is a major challenge for theories of deliberation. In Rawls and Habermas, rational deliberation must find some common ground, based on moral arguments of justice, leading to consensus or binding compromises. However, a differentiated public debate is not to be avoided, and I have argued that the increasing use of personal, digital media accelerate the differentiation trend. While the Internet is often seen to be an obvious argument in favour of deliberative models of democracy, it also poses some serious challenges, due to increasing fragmentation and complexity. When we examine the basic normative assumptions of the idea of a public sphere, it becomes clear that the Internet and personal media bring about changes in conjunction with other transformations in society, which pose both new problems and solutions to democracy.

While digital media brings increasing participation (and inequalities), fresh viewpoints and new solutions, it is harder to see how they enable consolidation and oversight. I do not argue that personal media are antithetical to the idea of a public sphere, but that they contribute much more to diversity than to convergence. Legitimacy and effectiveness of the public sphere and the democracy as a whole is dependent on not only diversity, but also coherence. How is the modern public sphere able to tackle its own indeterminacy, fragmentation and complexity? In Habermas' model, procedural debates ensure that consensus does not have to rely on common ethical values to be actualised. The model assumes pluralism, not ethical conformity. This, however, requires that the discursive threads in various media and forums actually become connected. This is not necessarily the case with the Internet. Both sociology and media studies have focused on individualisation and the dependence of the individual on expert-systems. The consequences for the public sphere have been underestimated.

The possible solution lies on several levels, inside and outside the media, and in both the personal media and particularly the mass media. The mass media front this process vis-à-vis the national political systems. This will be status for many years to come. The reason for this is not simply technological conservatism, but is related to the structural features of the media as suitable carriers for a public sphere with democratic and political ambitions. The mass media are characterised by a rupture between senders and receivers, with limited possibilities for feed-back. This essential feature allows for public opinion to disseminate and circulate among elites and intellectuals, to be dealt with by languages of expertise, to transform into relatively consensual bodies of ideas, and to be easily scanned by the political system. Voices of opinion have the possibility to observe, to understand and to learn from one another.

Whereas big media like national public service broadcasting and the larger quality news-papers can be regarded as a main arenas for a public sphere, political deliberation is increasingly inter-medial in that discourse circulates through very different kinds of media, from amateur blogs to Financial Times. The question of media's influence on public discourse is therefore a more complex question than in the previous mass mediated (and technically unmediated public sphere. However, whereas the post-modern approach

ignores the legitimacy question entirely, I think it is essential to distinguish between media of diversity and media of focus. Whereas the first group of media enhances pluralism of topics for society, the latter represents what potentially become the agenda for formal politics. Whereas the Internet still tends to belong to the first group, elite quality newspapers and some broadcasting programs tend to represent the latter group. Thus in spite of widespread inter-mediality of the polyphony of public communication, the specifics of various media types tend to coincide with the two dimensions of the political public sphere.

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Understanding and Studying Internet Culture(s)

Hybridity and Interdisciplinarity

MALIN SVENINGSSON ELM

When I was asked to sit on this panel, my first challenge was to decide the subject of my presentation. I tried to get some guidance by looking at the title of the panel: "Culture and Media Technology". Although this title lends itself to several interpretations and understandings, I chose to focus on mediated culture, or more specifically, culture that is mediated through computer technology. Words commonly used for this are, for example, online culture, cyberculture, or, as I would rather put it, Internet culture. I will focus on two aspects here: "Internet culture: what is it and how should we understand it?" and "Studying Internet cultures: researchers and research traditions". The presentation will touch on theoretical issues insofar as I will discuss what concepts we use when we talk about Internet culture and what implicit assumptions about the technology these concepts bring with them. I will also touch on methodological issues, such as questions of reflexivity: Who are we as researchers, and what do our affiliations mean for what we bring to our studies? But above all, the presentation will address issues of what delimitations we make – especially in terms of choice of research subjects – and where we draw boundaries between and within our research traditions.

Internet Culture(s) – What Is It and How Should We Understand It?

What is Internet culture? If we start by looking at the first element that makes up the concept, Internet culture is something found on the Internet. Not so problematic, it may seem, but the fact is that it is not as simple as it sounds.

The Internet – a Hybrid Medium

The Internet, the way it looks today, is extremely multifaceted and diversified, which makes it difficult to define and label. Here we face a choice between different roads – or at least I do – concerning how to describe the parts that together make up the Internet. One approach is to describe the parts as different communication media, and the Internet as something that reflects its overarching structure. For example, the Internet has been called a "super-medium" (Jansson, 2002), a "meta-medium" (Fagerjord, 2007), or a "hybrid-medium" (Sveningsson, Lövheim, & Bergquist, 2003) in descriptions of a large and overarching structure that hosts many different underlying media forms. Others have argued that the whole of the Internet should be seen as one single overarching

medium, and thus understood the different underlying parts that make up the Internet as different communication modes, or genres (Finnemann, 2007).¹ Others still may have chosen not to enter into distinctions concerning whether the Internet should be seen as one or several media, but instead described the parts of the Internet as different places, environments or arenas.

These are but a few of the great number of sometimes partly overlapping labels that have been used to describe the Internet and its variety of constituents, and one could discuss which of them is best able to capture the Internet's essence. In fact this has been done, but in what I find to be quite tedious discussions. My experience, however, is that it is difficult to find a single notion that manages to include everything one might wish to describe within the Internet. If I turn to my own research in the field of Internet studies, for example, I have oscillated between different concepts depending on which aspect of the Internet I am trying to describe. I have used words such as *platform* when looking at the kind of technical solutions that make up a specific type of Internet medium/genre/place. I have often used words such as *places*, *arenas* or *environments*, for specific sites on the Internet, especially when doing ethnographic work on cultures found online. When I use the word *Internet medium*, I am more interested in the form of communication and its conditions, and I am looking at it through the lens of a media researcher.²

Of course all these concepts are overlapping and intertwined in each other. The point here is not to suggest the most appropriate term, as I do not believe there is such a thing. Rather it is to show that the terms we use to describe the Internet may reveal something about our ontological and epistemological baggage: Who we are as researchers (i.e., which discipline or research tradition we come from), how we understand the world (i.e., what perspectives we bring to our studies), and what kind of knowledge we feel is relevant to seek (i.e., what we focus on and how – our research methods). Besides the diversified character of the Internet, perhaps also the variety of research traditions, perspectives and methods of Internet researchers are part of the reason why it is so hard to find one or a few mutual concepts that manage to encompass all aspects of the Internet that Internet researchers may be studying.

Regardless of which terms we choose to classify and label them, the various platforms, media forms or places on the Internet are very different from each other. My impression is also that the Internet landscape has grown increasingly diversified over the years. Until the early 1990s, before the advent of the World Wide Web, the Internet was entirely text based. Differences between Internet media were basically described in terms of whether they were synchronous or asynchronous (i.e., if the communication took place in real time or separated in time), possibly combined with whether the medium was intended for two-part or multiparty conversation (see, for example, Fornäs, Klein, Ladendorf, Sundén, & Sveningsson, 2002; Hård af Segerstad, 2002). Today, the Internet is more complex, and much has changed owing to the technical development that has taken place during the past decade. For example, we have seen the development of multidimensional software that allows for several types of communication (such as MSN and ICQ, allowing both synchronous and asynchronous conversations between two or several individuals, with or without the companion of video images). There has also been a development of Internet sites that host several modes of communication. These platforms are often referred to as portals or communities, and may include, for example, chat programs, guest books, discussion fora, mailing lists, personal profiles or personal web pages. Finally, many sites on the Internet include "bridges" to other communication media, such as Skype, which can be opened from a regular web page by clicking a link,

and then allowing for telephone or video conversation. Especially applications such as Skype make the increased hybridity obvious, as it deals with partly computer-mediated and partly telephone communication. The same holds for online computer games, which can be seen as partly games and partly sites for computer-mediated conversation.

The Internet seems to be increasingly spreading out into and colonizing traditional offline media. On the other hand, the same process is also occurring in the opposite direction, as for example in mobile phones that allow users to access the Internet. This multifaceted character is thrilling, but at the same time challenging, because the increased hybridity and intermediality makes it difficult to draw boundaries between the various Internet media, and also to describe and label them. Thus, if we take a closer look, the “Internet” part of Internet culture may not be so unambiguous after all.

...and What about the ‘Culture’ Part of It?

If we proceed to the second element of the word “Internet culture”, the concept of culture is an admittedly tricky one. When I talk about Internet culture, I understand culture in the sense of “a whole way of life”. This thus concerns culture in the sense of ways of living, ways of thinking, and having something in common – a mutual world of symbols and shared perspectives (cf. Storey, 1993). In my view, Internet culture is then about the shared values and perspectives that are created and maintained in various online settings, perspectives that guide norms and ideals for how to act and interact with other individuals. Consequently, doing research on Internet culture means studying these norms, ideals, values and perspectives – what people do online, what they think about what they do and what underlies their online actions and interactions.

In the same way as the Internet has become more diversified, so have its users. What was once a quite homogenous body of mainly technically oriented users is now a multiverse of an almost infinite number of different, partly overlapping online subcultures. So even if it once may have been possible to talk about one or a few Internet cultures, with a shared linguistic style and similar norms and values, this has become increasingly impossible. There is a multitude of different cultures out there, with the only common denominator being that they happen to be found online.³

So, Internet culture clearly poses some challenges. How are we to study something that is so diverse and multifaceted? The fact that environments and groups of users are so diverse probably means that we must assume different perspectives and use different research methods – and do research differently according to what kinds of material and users we are studying. We may also have to combine several methods in order to study different aspects of specific Internet sites. In other words, we need to be creative and make our own bricolages of methods. Being a hybrid medium, the Internet requires hybrid methods (Sveningsson et al., 2003).

Studying Internet Cultures – The Research and the Researchers

During recent years, Internet research has increasingly been addressed as a research field in its own right. Even if opinions are divided, there have even been attempts to create a separate Internet studies discipline, as has been done with gender studies, or, for that matter, media and communication studies. I will not go deeper into the discussions about this, although there are some obvious problems with organizing such a subject, not least with respect to the difficulties of drawing boundaries for what should be included in

such a subject. For example, should mobile phones be included? Or computer games? As stated earlier, these two examples fall partly inside the umbrella term Internet, and partly outside. Besides, as I will argue later on, I am not sure that the best approach is to form small and independent disciplines separated from each other – I would rather see a more open approach across disciplines and the research being done within them⁴. There are many things that unite Internet researchers, regardless of what disciplines they come from, be it sociology, ethnology, gender studies, computer science or media and communication studies. But instead of detaching ourselves from our mother disciplines and forming a new one, I believe creating and taking part in interdisciplinary networks is a better way to go.

However, even if I do not want Internet studies, or new media studies as it is more often referred to, to become its own discipline, I find myself more often defining myself as an Internet researcher than a media or communication researcher. Doing research in an interdisciplinary field may sometimes mean becoming isolated from other researchers in one's mother discipline. In the international and interdisciplinary field, one has access to other researchers who work with similar materials and research questions, although perhaps from other perspectives. In one's mother discipline, on the other hand, one has access to shared theoretical and methodological traditions, although one's fellow researchers may have less understanding of one's research material and its relevance. During my almost 12 years as an Internet researcher, there have been times when I have felt quite marginalized because of my choice of research subject. When discussions were held within media and communication studies in Sweden in the late 1990s about the core of the subject, in my opinion, there was often quite a narrow frame drawn around what was to be included and studied within the discipline – it was media. But, then again, what is a medium? Surprisingly often, media was defined as the mass media, and communication was consequently seen as what was sent out through the mass media. Now and then, one could also see studies of what was sent in, or occasionally even about the reciprocal exchanges between people who communicated with each other. However, the Internet was largely ruled out from these definitions, like other media forms that found themselves partly within and partly outside what was seen as the core of media and communication studies.

During recent years, the Internet has become increasingly widespread, and the media landscape so hybridized that one can hardly exclude the Internet as a medium, without at the same time also excluding the "good old" media forms. The number of researchers from various disciplines who do Internet research, or who collect their material online, has also increased. Finally, the Internet has gained wider acceptance as a relevant subject to study within media and communication studies. Being an Internet researcher, of course, I see this as a good thing. However, all too often, researchers who are new to the field of Internet studies have little access to and knowledge of the research that has already been done within the field. During the past few years, I have seen several examples of what I would call typical studies of Internet culture, done by researchers from various disciplines, where the researchers seem to be unaware of key references and ground breaking research that has been done in the field during the past 20 years. Isn't this typical? First, Internet researchers are marginalized by being defined out of the core of media studies. And when other media and communication researchers finally begin to see the Internet as a medium, they fail to acknowledge our work. Maybe they simply do not know that there exists a body of research out there – as stated above, one often has little access to networks outside one's mother discipline. More importantly,

some researchers may not see the point in reading and referring to researchers from disciplines and research traditions other than their own. But the fact is that there is an established research field out there, which has existed for quite a while. And in my opinion, it would be a good idea to take a look at existing research, instead of continuing to re-invent the wheel, even if the wheel in question was first invented by someone working in another discipline.

Conclusions

To conclude: I do not believe it is possible to talk about Internet culture in the singular; we must address the different Internet cultures, because the online environments, as well as their users, are so diverse and multifaceted. This diversity and hybridity of Internet arenas requires that we pursue different perspectives and research methods – we must proceed in different ways depending not only on what our research questions are, but also on what kind of material and users we are studying. Finally, studying Internet cultures is an interdisciplinary business, meaning that researchers who do Internet research have to keep open to what is being done and what has already been done within the field, even though the research may have been done by researchers from other disciplines and research traditions. In brief, I argue for a more open approach to research on Internet and Internet cultures, such that we employ a fruitful mixture of diverse methods, theoretical perspectives and, not least, are careful not to draw too narrow boundaries, but are open to research and researchers from disciplines and research traditions other than our own.

Notes

1. In providing us with two different definitions of the word 'medium', Marie-Laure Ryan (2003) gives a useful clue to how we can understand these disagreements in perspective. From the definitions given by the Webster dictionary, she extracts the meanings of a medium: 1) as a channel or system of communication, information or entertainment (which she calls the transmission definition), and on the other hand 2) as a material or technical means of artistic expression (which she calls the semiotic definition). My interpretation is that proponents of the Internet as a medium containing several genres use the term medium in the first sense, while proponents of the Internet as a meta-medium containing several underlying media use the term medium in the second sense.
2. On the other hand, I realize that I rarely, if ever, use words such as *Internet genre*, because I personally find the different parts that make up the Internet to be too different from one another to be described as parts of one and the same medium. This means that I personally side with the view of the Internet as one overarching umbrella, hosting several different communication media within it.
3. See also Livingstone (Livingstone, 2005), according to whom the element 'Internet', too, should be addressed in the plural, because of its diversity.
4. For a similar, although more drastic, perspective, see Nordenstreng (2007), according to whom even the discipline media and communication studies is too small and too fragmented, thus arguing for a return to the roots that make up media and communication studies, for example sociology.

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Media and Knowledge

Some Pragmatist Remarks about Media Philosophy within and beyond the Limits of Epistemology

MIKE SANDBOTHE

The favorite philosopher of one of my favorite philosophers once summarized the meta-philosophical postulate which is the basis for one of his main works by highlighting: "(...) that the distinctive office, problems and subject matter of philosophy grow out of stresses and strains in the community of life in which a given form of philosophy arises, and that, accordingly, its specific problems vary with the changes in human life (...)" (Dewey 256). His controversial follower, Richard Rorty, said the following about Dewey's comments: "the stresses and strains Dewey has in mind are those that arise from attempts to pour bubbly and expansive new liquids into old bottles" (Rorty 5).

Somewhat more concretely formulated, the suggestion, which the two pragmatists present to their colleagues, consists of philosophical thinking not only, and not primarily as a theoretical reflection on the conditions of the possibility of understanding truth, freedom, and beauty. Instead, the authors I have quoted would like to make a contribution to rehabilitate a "practical" form of philosophical work in the Aristotelian sense; a type of goal-oriented activity that might complement the more technical branches of philosophical reflection which have been successfully administered in the professionalized areas of academic teaching and research, such as ethics, aesthetics, logic and theory of science.

For Aristotle, it was already clear that the criteria of a valuable and successful life are not to be theoretically founded in practical philosophy. Instead, by practical philosophers (in the eminent and authentic sense), these criteria have to be taken for granted: not as abstract axioms, but as historically given clusters of habits, values and beliefs. The specific cluster, which Aristotle described with a view of the erudite Athenian as a harmonious interplay of ethical and dianoetic virtues, functions in his practical philosophy not so much as a subject of theoretical knowledge, but primarily as a tool of moral orientation and as a guideline for political action. Here is a quote from the second book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Since, then, the present inquiry does not aim at theoretical knowledge like the others for we are inquiring not in order to know what excellence is, but in order to become good (...)" (Aristotle 1743). And Aristotle adds: "otherwise our inquiry would have been of no use" (Aristotle 1743).

At current, a transition from the typographic and audio-visually shaped industrial community type of the past to the more synesthetically designed multi-media cultures of the future is taking place. This shift not only provokes the theoretical concepts and established paradigms of philosophical thinking, but, at the same time, has metaphilo-

sophical implications. At least that is how the working hypothesis reads which I would like to present here.

My reflections are divided into three parts. In the first part I will first say something about the current conditions of the epistemological debate, which, in contemporary philosophy, is known under the heading "realism versus anti-realism". In the second part I will analyze the different assessments of an epistemologically inspired philosophy of media that are developing at the present. In the third and last part I finally will discuss how the relationship between media and knowledge could look from a metaphilosophical point of view that orients itself not alone to the axioms of a theoretical, but rather beyond that to the goal oriented guidelines of a practical understanding of philosophy (in the old Aristotelian sense).

The Stalemate of Contemporary Theory of Knowledge

The debate about realism vs. anti-realism, as Michael Dummett once called it (Dummett, 1978), finds itself at the centre of contemporary theories of knowledge. This applies not only to the area of analytic philosophy, but also to the intellectual world of continental philosophy. On the one hand, the controversy refers to questions about the ontological status with regard to objects of perception, numbers, values or mental states. On the other hand, it refers to the question about the status of true statements. The epistemological occupation with these kind of questions goes back to Descartes and Kant. Historically it emerged from the endeavors of modern philosophy to guarantee the reality of the real and the truth of our beliefs in a secular manner, i.e. without recourse to divine instances.

Both realist and anti-realist epistemologies try to forge weapons against radical doubt. Radical doubt is a position which is characteristic of the sceptic (Stroud, 1984). The sceptical position indicates that there is possibly much about which we do not know, and that most or even everything of what we know could be completely different than what we actually mean. In order to dispel the doubts of the sceptic, realists and anti-realists respectively come up with different examination procedures that are supposed to help reliably identify and effectively differentiate true, wrong and meaningless beliefs. Therefore, the specificities of the different examination procedures results from the specificities of the different domains, which, by means of these examination procedures are set to each other into relationships.

Realistic examination procedures refer to the relationship which is supposed to exist between an individual belief or a set of beliefs and the range of the so-called *non*-beliefs. The realistic positions differ internally with regards to the question whether and how the world of the so-called *non*-beliefs is to be determined and described in detail. Anti-realistic examination procedures circumvent this problem by not trying to explain the truth of a belief by the reference to something that is supposed to be a *non*-belief, but by the appeal on the conceptual schemes which determine our beliefs as their formal conditions of possibility. The anti-realistic positions differ with regards to the question whether and how categories, schemes, and conceptual rules of generating knowledge differ from simple beliefs and complex belief networks, and, furthermore, with regards to the question whether and how an independent area of epistemological research can be defined.

The interesting specificity of the *current* position of the debate around realism and anti-realism consists of the fact that within philosophy an awareness of the stalemate

which exists between realistic and anti-realistic positions has been increasing. The stalemate itself results from the circumstance that the criteria, to which realistic and anti-realistic examination procedures refer, are equally under-determined. While the realists argue about whether, and how, an external domain outside the world of our beliefs can be proven as neutral criteria for their examination, the anti-realists are trying to solve the recourse problem already described by the late Wittgenstein. This problem consists of the fact that the application of constitutive schemes to single cases of concrete beliefs presupposes high-level schemes that rule the application procedure itself. But for them the same application problem obviously arises again and must be solved by using meta-rules. Thus, the cycle repeats itself *ad infinitum*.

A number of authors have concluded from this deadlock, that they must look at the initial epistemological question again more carefully. As a result, two basic strategies can be distinguished. The first one consists of surrendering to the sceptic and, even more, to actively identify with him. This is exactly what philosophers such as Odo Marquard in Germany and Peter Heintel in Austria have done, albeit with different objectives. The other basic strategy in contrast, is to neither fight nor share the sceptics' doubt, but rather not to take it seriously. Contextualists, interpretationalists, and pragmatists realize this second strategy differently.

In contrast to contextualists such as Michael Williams (Williams, 1996), interpretationalists such as Donald Davidson do not simply put the epistemological topic *ad acta*. Instead Davidson (following Quine) pleads for the development of a naturalist renewal and externalist reformulation of the epistemological discourse (Davidson, 2001, 2005). His central argument, upon which the interpretationalist refutation of the sceptic is based, is that most of our beliefs are true simply because they are what they are: beliefs. According to Davidson this is the case because of the manner in which human beings at very rudimentary levels in a triangulated situation of interpretation learn to have the beliefs that they actually have.

The triangulated language acquisition situation described by Davidson is constituted by a child (1), an adult who is teaching the child (2), and a shared environment (3). The child is conditioned in the process of language acquisition to learn to see and describe that what the adult sees and shows in the way the adult does. In this respect, the child does not learn some abstract language schemes, but instead is introduced by means of causal sanctioning in a number of language-interpreted perception situations (Davidson, 2001).

From an interpretationalist perspective, the network of beliefs we learn to have by means of triangulated language acquisition, is not at all based on an abstract representationalist relationship between language and reality. The very idea of such a relationship opens the door for the sceptic. Instead, according to Davidson, our interactive use of language is based on a socially anchored network of causal connections which exist between the content and the inner-worldly causes of our simple and most rudimentary beliefs.

Inspired by Davidson, but at the same time moving one step further, pragmatists such as Richard Rorty suggest a social-historical reconstruction of the current discourse situation in epistemological affairs (Rorty, 2007). More specifically, Rorty points out that the classical problems of modern theory of knowledge, in the history of secularization, had an important function as a cultural-political tool of democratic emancipation. But in the successfully secularized societies of the 21. century, this function becomes increasingly less important. For this reason Rorty suggested a pragmatist reformulation of Davidson's approach without using the epistemological vocabulary (Rorty, 1998).

Three Types of Epistemologically Oriented Media Philosophy

The new international research field of media philosophy functions as a catalyst within the different sub-disciplines of academic philosophy, as well as with a view of the closely related disciplines of media, communications, and information sciences, which, at the present time are converging. If one can comprehend how the media turn of the epistemological debate in the second half of the 90's developed, the intradisciplinary relevance of a media-philosophical specialized division becomes clear. In this regard, Sybille Krämer and Martin Seel take the position that the epistemological stalemate can be decided in favor of one of the two sides by appealing to a philosophically spelled-out concept of media and/or mediality.

In their introduction to the volume *Schrift, Medien, Kognition*, Sybille Krämer and Peter Koch emphasize that they (with Niklas Luhmann) are convinced that “everything that is known, thought, or said about the world, (...) depends on what can be known, thought and said in media,”¹ (Koch and Krämer 12). From this, they conclude that our belief-constitutive schemes of knowledge are not beliefs in themselves, but rather function as material artefacts that program the human mind, and therefore undermine or even dissolve the recourse problem as described by Wittgenstein (see above). The problem with this pretended (dis-)solution, however, is that we use media in a number of different ways, and that it is not the so-called (and quite abstract) mediality of the media as such, but the real use of concrete media as tools of perception, communication, and transmission which affects our ‘epistemic’ practices (Taylor/Saarinén 1994, Sandbothe 2005).

At about the same time as Krämer/Koch made their point, Martin Seel tried to expand “our use of ‘mediality’ as much as meaningfully possible to show that it is compatible with a moderate, philosophical realism,”² (Seel 249). His strategy consists of “accommodating radical and operative constructionists, deconstructionists, interpretationalists and other emphatic anti-realists (...) as much as possible – in order to then bind them into a realistic rope”³ (Seel 249f, Note 7). Seel’s counter mantra to the quoted Krämer-Slogan, reads as follows: “The thesis is not, that everything that is, is communicated in, by, and through media. Mediated by media is rather everything to which we have a perceiving *relationship* (...),”⁴ (Seel 250).

Like Krämer, Seel also is deeply influenced by Luhmann. According to Luhmann, media are defined as differences which make differences, i.e. Luhmann understands media as loosely related elements, that can become connected to closely coupled forms. Such a form can, for its part, function again as media for the generation of higher-level forms. Likewise, a media, for its part, can be interpreted as the form of an underlying basic media. A popular example is the relationship of sounds, words, sentences and texts. On the one hand, words function as media in which sentences are created as forms, which then, for their part, serve as media for generating text forms. On the other hand, the words themselves can be understood as forms, which are produced in the media of sounds, that for its part, as a form, refers back to still simpler media, such as the media of noises.

The realistic payoff of Seel’s version of Luhmann’s media definition consists of the fact that Seel traces the game of media differences back to the area of our sensual perception media and, at the same time accentuates that all our perception and all our knowledge transcends the involved media from within. With respect to John McDowell, Seel assumes that language (as the very fundamental media of all human knowledge) is so structured, that without it we cannot refer to anything intentionally, but within it, at

the same time, everything to which we refer to is necessarily understood as a language-independent non-belief (McDowell 1994).

Seel's media philosophical achievement exists, on the one hand, in the transmission of these McDowellian thoughts about the intentional structure of language in the area of our media of perception and knowledge. On the other hand it exists in the defense of epistemological realism against the thesis that the digitalization of our media technologies could bring our realistic basic institutions in question. Seel's main defense strategy becomes explicit in the following quotation: "The media revolution does not make an epistemological revolution necessary. On the contrary – we understand it as a media revolution, historically speaking, only if we, in epistemological affairs leave the church in the global village"⁵ (Seel 261).

The philosophical argument that leads Seel to this strategy is based on the idea that the "integrated computer," which Seel calls the Internet and digital media as a whole, "is, in the first place, also a media of images"⁶ (Seel 263). Being media of knowledge, the media of images, according to Seel, are structured similarly to the language media. That means that its inner structure presupposes the reference to a media external reality. In other words, we understand a picture as a picture only if we interpret it as a sign of something that is not a sign itself: a so-called 'non-sign'. In this dialectic argumentation, we can, once again, easily recognize the McDowellian idea. This idea is the basis for Seel's moderate realism which he applies to different levels regarding the discussion of media philosophy. What Seel fails to adequately take into consideration is Brandom's and Davidson's quite convincing criticism of McDowell's position.

Robert Brandom's objection is that the intrinsic language reference to something language-independent is not necessary to be interpreted as a determining characteristic of language itself (Brandom, 1994, 2008). From Brandom's perspective, we should understand the objectivity of the reference much more as an inter-subjective commitment upon which we have implicitly agreed in the context of our concrete language use in historically and culturally determined social practices. From this, the following can be said: if social practices change, our socially organized commitment can also change and be replaced by a different one.

Davidson made a very concrete suggestion for such a change. In his opinion, we should try to safeguard the inter-subjective commitment of our linguistic references in the future neither through referring to an immanent language scheme, nor through referring to a supposedly language-independent content. Furthermore, he argues, that we should separate the latter issue totally from the merely scholastic question whether language itself or specific social practices constituted the very idea of referring to a language-independent content (Davidson, 2001, 2005).

In his book *Medien der Vernunft. Eine Theorie des Geistes und der Rationalität auf Grundlage einer Theorie der Medien*, Matthias Vogel tries systematically to unfurl the media-philosophical consequences which result from Davidson's suggestion. Vogel's ideas move beyond the Luhmann-inspired debate led by Seel and Krämer on media realism versus media constructionism. At the beginning of his book, the author states that the media-form-difference, which both, Seel and Krämer, have adopted (albeit very differently) from Luhmann, is nothing else than another brand of the epistemological dualism of scheme and content.

If one understands the production of meaning according to Davidson as the "internalization of an in the first instance external social process of interpretation,"⁷ (Vogel, „Medien als Voraussetzungen für Gedanken" 118), i.e. as a self-ascription of a process

that follows the model of understanding others, the design of the theoretical starting point changes. This is the case because the functional description of a postulated complex system of loose or coupled sign elements (Luhmann) will then be replaced by empirical research about simple interaction situations that are the main elements of the triangulated process of language acquisition (Davidson).

If one proceeds from Davidson's idea of the triangulated situation of language acquisition which briefly has been outlined in the first point, then according to Vogel, the acquisition of language-based communications practices necessitates the intuitive faculty to make use of non-linguistic communications practices. In order for a child to ascribe to itself the beliefs which the adult articulates regarding the shared environment and therefore to learn to perceive the environment like adults the child must already have the ability to refer to its own reactions and to identify the external cause of the adults' reactions as the very content of its own. According to Vogel this pre-linguistic type of self-reference develops on the basis of "mime, gestures, prosody, onomatopoeia, and other expressive tools"⁸ (Vogel „Medien als Voraussetzungen für Gedanken“ 124). These non-linguistic media are used by the parental attachment figure when interacting with the child. From such interactions, the child can then, in turn, use these media in order to structure its own experiences by triangulating them with the experiences of the adult and the shared environment.

Against the interpretationalist background of such considerations, in the course of his book, Vogel emphasizes the independent relevance of non-linguistic media, such as image, dance and music. So, by example of aesthetic thinking which is enabled by the arts, he shows us that non-linguistic media are, to a certain extent, to be understood in analogy to language-based media as social instruments that serve the "individualization or communication of thoughts,"⁹ (Vogel „Medien als Voraussetzungen für Gedanken" 133). On the one hand Vogel consciously expands the concept of the mind around the dimensions of the non-linguistic and the artistic, but on the other hand he restricts its use to the area of perception and communications media. This exclusion of the technical media of transmission marks a fundamental difference which exists between interpretationalist and pragmatist media philosophers.

From the perspective of media-philosophical pragmatists like myself, our perception and communications media are to be set in relationship to the cultural terms of use which are created by the different media technologies of transmission, processing and storage of data. Time and space, the interplay of our sensory organs, images, language, dance, theatre, and music, as well as writing and numbers are what they are; but they are never independent from the technical media of transmission which delimit the spectrum of their use (Taylor/Saarinen 1994; Sandbothe 2005).

Four Features of Media Philosophical Pragmatism

In the second of his famous Lowell lectures from 1906, William James described the relationship of pragmatism to philosophical theories being in an academic competition with each other, as follows: "Pragmatism unstiffens all our theories, limbers them up and sets each one at work. (...). It has no dogmas, and no doctrines (...) it lies in the midst of our theories, like a corridor in a hotel. (...) all must pass through it if they want a practicable way of getting into and out of their respective rooms," (James 28-29).

Naturally James' corridor metaphor does not rule out that some theorists may prefer to climb out of a window or may simply want to stay in their hotel rooms and have

everything they need to survive brought to them at their desks. It only means, that the easiest path from theoretical to practical philosophy (understood in the Aristotelian sense) goes through the corridor of pragmatism. In this completely liberal and relaxed sense, I would like to finally outline the relationships between epistemology, media theory, and media practice. To this end, I will try to characterize the basic attitude of the media philosophical pragmatist through four main traits.

The first of these traits lies therein, that the media philosophical pragmatist understands herself as an initiator and moderator of the conversation, that the epistemologically oriented media philosophers conduct with each other. The second trait comes in her tendency to make the intra-disciplinary led discourse between media philosophers useful for inter- and cross-disciplinary discussions as well. This aspect of her activity is especially useful in the current situation in which the humanities reorganize themselves by stepwise integrating and partially even focusing on media- and cultural-scientific dimensions of their work.

Furthermore it can be said that we, at present, not only in the media and cultural studies, but also in the social, technical and natural sciences experience an anti-realistic, i.e. constructionist counter-movement to the long-lasting dominance of realism as a leading paradigm. In face of this situation, the task of a pragmatist research ecology inspired by James is to resist, with well-founded alternatives, the newly-announced anti-realistic orientation which reaches from the linguistic or iconic over cultural and performative turns to the so-called “media turn” of our times.

The third trait of the media philosophical pragmatist is expressed by the fact that she takes a balancing and counter-measuring position also regarding the widespread preferencing of specific individual media or media types as superior to other individual media or media types. At the centre of a pragmatist concept of media philosophy is the systematic attempt to analyze and balance the media-ecological interplay between perception media such as space, time, and sensory organs, communications media such as body, image, language, writing, music, dance, and theatre, and (last but not least) technical transmission media such as voice, press, film, television and the internet.

In order to bring the fourth and last trait of the media philosophical pragmatist into perspective, allow me to quote James once more: “The finally victorious way of looking at things will be the most completely *impressive* way to the normal run of minds,” (James 20). If one relates this remark to the current debate, then a practical orientation of media philosophical thinking comes into view that transcends the dimension of inner academic cross-linking, by opening up a pretty long-term space of possible consequences. Media philosophical pragmatists tend to evaluate theories not only and not primarily by considering how they stand the test in the inner theoretical discourse. Instead, media philosophical pragmatists furthermore ask the question, what chance which theory might have to become, in its most popular form, an intuitive element of the common vocabulary with whose help the members of a transforming society (like ours) can describe themselves and communicate with each other in an effective and democratic way (Allen/Groeschner/Sandbothe 2009).

The speed with which our vocabulary has changed with regard to the spread of digital media has increased greatly. The institutionalization of the printing press in the 18th century, and the establishment of the electronic media in the 19th and 20th centuries in this respect, led to an acceleration tendency which in the 21st century has not only become stronger, but also globalized. If one takes the main ideas of Aristotelian ethics seriously, then the genuine task of a practical philosophy of media exists today in the

development of concrete answers to the question, how can we establish new forms of media-based collective intelligence that improve a globalized form of democratic interaction between peoples and nations. This new, trans-national form of collective intelligence will be needed to cope with the global problems of planet earth that we are facing and that will probably not be solvable by focusing on a merely economic understanding of global politics.

Translation: *Kenton E. Barnes*

Notes

1. “alles, was über die Welt gewusst, gedacht, gesagt wird, (...) in Abhängigkeit von Medien wißbar, denkbar, sagbar (wird)“
2. “die Rede von ‘Medialität’ so weit wie irgend sinnvoll möglich auszudehnen, um dann zu zeigen, dass sie mit einem moderaten philosophischen Realismus kompatibel ist (...)“
3. “radikalen und operativen Konstruktivisten, Dekonstruktivisten, Interpretationisten und anderen emphatischen Anti-Realisten (...) so weit wie möglich entgegenzukommen – um ihnen dann einen realistischen Strick zu drehen (...)“
4. “Die These lautet nicht, daß alles, was ist, medial vermittelt ist. Medial vermittelt ist vielmehr alles, wozu wir ein vernehmendes oder vornehmendes *Verhältnis* haben (...)“
5. “Die mediale Revolution macht keine erkenntnistheoretische Revolution nötig. Im Gegenteil: Wir können sie als die mediale Revolution, die sie historisch gesehen ist, nur begreifen, wenn wir in erkenntnistheoretischen Angelegenheiten auch im Global Village die Kirche im Dorf lassen.“
6. (...) the “integrierter Computer,” which Seel calls the Internet and the area of digital media, “wesentlich auch ein Bildmedium ist.“
7. “(...) Internalisierung zunächst externer sozialer Interpretationsprozesse.”
8. “(...) mimischer, gestischer, prosodischer, lautmalischer und anderer expressiver Mittel.”
9. “(...) Individuierung oder Kommunikation von Gedanken.”

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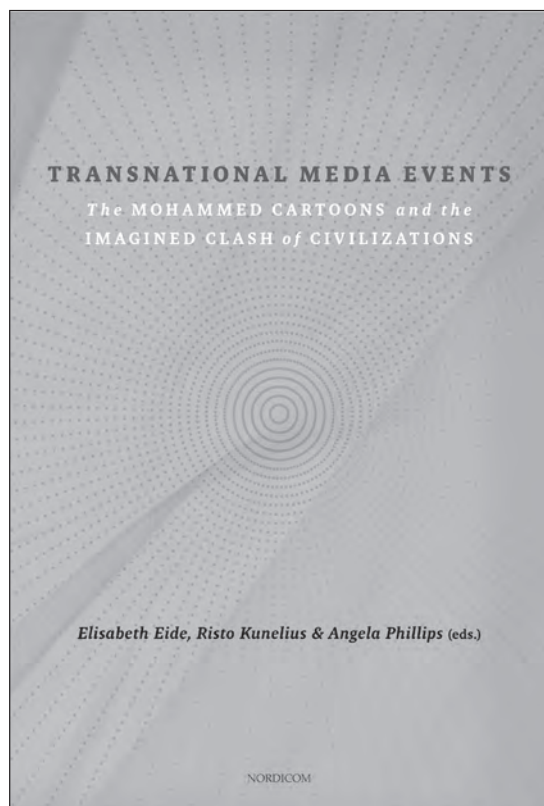
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The Mediatization of Society

A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change

STIG HJARVARD

Abstract

Using mediatization as the key concept, this article presents a theory of the influence media exert on society and culture. After reviewing existing discussions of mediatization by Krotz (2007), Schulz (2004), Thompson (1995), and others, an institutional approach to the mediatization process is suggested. Mediatization is to be considered a double-sided process of high modernity in which the media on the one hand emerge as an independent institution with a logic of its own that other social institutions have to accommodate to. On the other hand, media simultaneously become an integrated part of other institutions like politics, work, family, and religion as more and more of these institutional activities are performed through both interactive and mass media. The logic of the media refers to the institutional and technological *modus operandi* of the media, including the ways in which media distribute material and symbolic resources and make use of formal and informal rules.

Keywords: mediatization, media logic, social interaction, modernity, virtualization

Introduction

This article presents a theory of the influence media exert on society and culture. It attempts to answer the question: What are the consequences of the gradual and increasing adaptation of central societal institutions, and the culture in which we live to the presence of intervening media? Thus, the article takes its point of departure in a classical question in the sociology of the media, namely, how the media affect society and culture. Answers to the question, however, are sought in a new social condition which we will label the mediatization of culture and society. Traditionally, the media have been conceived of as separate from society and culture; consequently, researchers tended to focus on the effect certain mediated messages had on individuals and institutions. For example: front-page headlines during an election campaign might be thought to exert influence on people's voting behavior, advertisements to affect consumers' shopping preferences, and film content to affect the viewer's morals or to distract attention from matters of greater urgency or significance.

Contemporary society is permeated by the media, to an extent that the media may no longer be conceived of as being separate from cultural and other social institutions. Under these circumstances, the task before us is instead to try to gain an understanding

of the ways in which social institutions and cultural processes have changed character, function and structure in response to the omnipresence of media. This altered understanding of media's importance does not mean that traditional questions regarding aspects like the effects of mediated messages on public opinion or the purposes to which people use media, are no longer relevant. But it does mean that an understanding of the importance of media in modern society and culture can no longer rely on models that conceive of media as being separate from society and culture.

Media are not simply technologies that organizations, parties or individuals can choose to use – or not use – as they see fit. A significant share of the influence media exert arises out of the fact that they have become an integral part of other institutions' operations, while they also have achieved a degree of self-determination and authority that forces other institutions, to greater or lesser degrees, to submit to their logic. The media are at once part of the fabric of society and culture and an independent institution that stands between other cultural and social institutions and coordinates their mutual interaction. The duality of this structural relationship sets a number of preconditions for how media messages in given situations are used and perceived by senders and receivers, thereby affecting relations between people. Thus, traditional questions about media use and media effects need to take account of the circumstance that society and culture have become mediatized.

The Concept of Mediatization

The concept most central to an understanding of the importance of media to culture and society is mediatization. The term has been used in numerous contexts to characterize the influence media exert on a variety of phenomena, but rather little work has been done to define or specify the concept itself. Only very recently have media researchers sought to develop the concept toward a more coherent and precise understanding of mediatization as a social and cultural process (Krotz, 2007; Schulz, 2004). Therefore, let us start by examining the various meanings the concept has been given in earlier work.

Mediatization was first applied to media's impact on political communication and other effects on politics. Swedish media researcher Kent Asp was the first to speak of the mediatization of political life, by which he meant a process whereby "a political system to a high degree is influenced by and adjusted to the demands of the mass media in their coverage of politics" (Asp, 1986:359). One form this adaptation takes is when politicians phrase their public statements in terms that personalize and polarize the issues so that the messages will have a better chance of gaining media coverage. Asp sees media's growing independence of political sources as yet another sign of mediatization in that the media thereby gain even more control over media content. Asp acknowledges a debt to the Norwegian sociologist, Gudmund Hernes' expression, 'media-twisted society' (Hernes, 1978), albeit Hernes' perspective was broader. He argued that media had a fundamental impact on all social institutions and their relations with one another. Although Hernes did not actually use the term mediatization, his concept of 'media-twisted society' and the holistic perspective on society he applies is consonant in many respects with the conception of mediatization put forward here. Hernes urges us to

to ask what consequences media have for institutions as well as for individuals: the ways public administration, organizations, parties, schools and business function and how they relate to one another. In what ways do media redistribute power in

society? [...] In short, from an institutional point of view the key question is, how media change both the inner workings of other social entities and their mutual relationships (Hernes, 1978: 181)

Hernes develops this perspective only in a relatively brief analysis of media influence over politics and the education sector, respectively, where he points out that media challenge both the authority and the ability of the schools and political institutions to regulate access to knowledge and to set political agendas. One main point Hernes makes is that the media have transformed society from of a situation of information scarcity to one of information abundance, which has rendered attention a strategic resource, for which anyone with a message must compete.

One finds a contemporary and fairly parallel notion in the work of Altheide and Snow (1979, 1988), who call for an “analysis of social institutions-transformed-through-media” (Altheide & Snow, 1979:7). Whereas traditional sociological approaches to the media try to isolate certain ‘variables’ for media influence, ignoring how media affect the overall premises for cultural life, Altheide and Snow want to show how the logic of the media forms the fund of knowledge that is generated and circulated in society. Although they time and again make reference to ‘media logic’, form and format are their principal concepts drawing on one of the ‘classics’ of sociology, Georg Simmel. Thus they posit the “primacy of form over content” (Altheide & Snow, 1988:206), where media logic for the most part appears to consist of a formatting logic that determines how material is categorized, the choice of mode of presentation, and the selection and portrayal of social experience in the media. In their analyses they mention other aspects of media logic, including technological and organizational aspects more or less incidentally, and because Altheide and Snow (1979, 1984) are working with North American material, the logic at play is essentially a commercial one. Their prime interest with regard to in these ‘other aspects’, is a desire to explore the extent to which and how technology affects communication formats, so that broader institutional change remains little more than an incidental interest. They devote some attention to social institutions like sports and religion, but their prime focus, quantitatively and qualitatively, rests on the format media give political communication.

Like Asp (1986, 1990), Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) apply the concept of mediatization to media’s influence on politics. Considering the cases of Fernando Collor de Mello’s use of television in the Brazilian election campaign of 1989, Silvio Berlusconi’s use of the media on his way to power in Italy, and Tony Blair’s use of ‘spin’ in England, they demonstrate the increasing influence of mass media on the exercise of political power. They characterize mediatization as “the problematic concomitants or consequences of the development of modern mass media”. As to its effects, they comment that “mediatized politics is politics that has lost its autonomy, has become dependent in its central functions on mass media, and is continuously shaped by interactions with mass media” (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999:249f). But they also stress that it is not a question of the media having arrogated political power from the political institutions; political institutions like parliaments, parties, etc., continue in good measure to control politics, but they have become increasingly dependent on the media and have had to adapt to the logic of the media.

In addition to these attempts to specify the meaning of mediatization in the political sphere there are a number of studies where the concept is used as a conceptual framework for the growing influence exerted by the media over political processes.

We have, for example, the work of Jensen and Aalberg (2007), Strömbäck (2007), and Cottle (2006), the latter of whom considers the mediatization of conflicts as the “active *performative* involvement and *constitutive* role” of the media in a variety of political and military conflicts (Cottle, 2006:9, original emphasis). We might also mention the work of a government-funded Swedish study of democratic processes, that published an entire book on the “Mediatization of Politics” (Amnå & Berglez, 1999). Aside from a reference to Asp’s use of the concept in the authors’ introduction, however, the concept is not applied in the individual analyses.

The concept of Mediatization has also been used to cast light on the growing role played by marketing and consumer culture. Jansson (2002) takes his starting point in the general mediatization of contemporary culture, which he describes as “the process through which mediated cultural products have gained importance as cultural referents and hence contribute to the development and maintenance of cultural communities. In other words, the mediatization of culture is the process that reinforces and expands the realm of media culture”. (Jansson, 2002:14f). Whereas culture once was either imbued with the hierarchy of taste that prevailed in cultural institutions or, in the case of trivial culture, was linked to local ways of life, the media today occupy a dominant position as providers of cultural products and beliefs.

In other cases the concept of mediatization has been used to describe media’s influence over research. Välvirronen (2001) does not consider mediatization “a strict analytic concept, but rather an ambiguous term which refers to the increasing cultural and social significance of the mass media and other forms of technically mediated communication” (Välvirronen, 2001:159). Seen in this light, the media play an important role in the production and circulation of knowledge and interpretations of science. Consider, for example, the number of people whose knowledge of various phases in the history of evolution has been formed, not so much in the classroom as by Steven Spielberg’s films on Jurassic Park or the BBC documentary series, *Walking with Dinosaurs*. Moreover, the media also are an arena for public discussion and the legitimation of science. Peter Weingart (1998) sees this as a decisive element in the linkage between media and science:

It is the basis for the thesis of the *medialization* of science: With the growing importance of the media in shaping public opinion, conscience and perception on the one hand and a growing dependence of science on scarce resources and thus on public acceptance on the other, science will become increasingly media-oriented (Weingart, 1998:872, original emphasis).

Beyond using the concept to describe the media’s influence over areas like politics, consumer culture or science, some researchers have also related it to a broader theory of modernity. Sociologist John B. Thompson (1990, 1995) sees the media’s development as an integral part of the development of modern society. Thompson speaks of a “mediatization of modern culture” that is, not least, a consequence of media influence. The invention of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century saw the birth of a technology that made it possible to circulate information in society to an unprecedented extent. This revolutionary technological event institutionalized the mass media (books, newspapers, magazines, etc.) as a significant force in society and enabled communication and interaction over long distances and among larger numbers of people, while it also made it possible as never before to store and accumulate information over time. As a consequence, mass media helped to transform an agrarian and feudal society and to

create modern institutions such as the state, the public sphere and science. The subsequent development of other media, like radio, television and the internet, have further accentuated this modernization process. Communication, once bound to the physical meeting of individuals, face-to-face, has been succeeded by mediated communication, where the relationship between sender and receiver is altered in decisive respects. In the case of mass communication, senders typically retain control over the content of the message, but have very little influence over how the receiver makes use of it; in the case of interactive media, both sender and receiver can influence the content of communication, but still, the situation is not quite like that in physical, face-to-face communication. Thompson (1995) sees a strong connection between mediatization and its cultural consequences and the emergence of very large media organizations on national and global levels. These corporations' production and distribution of symbolic products has changed communication flows in society, both between institutions and between institutions and individuals.

Schulz (2004) and Krotz (2007), too, use the mediatization concept to specify the role of the media in social change in a broader sense. Winfried Schulz (2004) identifies four kinds of processes whereby the media change human communication and interaction. First, they *extend* human communication abilities in both time and space; second, the media *substitute* social activities that previously took place face-to-face. For example, for many, internet banking has replaced the physical meeting between banks and their clients. Third, media instigate an *amalgamation* of activities; face-to-face communication combines with mediated communication, and media infiltrate into everyday life. Finally, actors in many different sectors have to adapt their behavior to *accommodate* the media's valuations, formats and routines. For example, politicians learn to express themselves in 'sound-bites' in inpromptu exchanges with reporters. Krotz (2007) treats mediatization as a *metaprocess* on a par with individualization and globalization, but refrains from offering a more detailed formal definition, for, he writes, "mediatization, by its very definition, is always bound in time and to cultural context" (Krotz, 2007:39). In other words, Krotz conceives of mediatization as an ongoing process whereby the media change human relations and behavior and thus change society and culture. That is, he sees it as an ongoing process that has followed human activity ever since the dawn of literacy.

Both Schulz and Krotz point out some similarities between mediatization theory and so-called medium theory, the well-known proponents of which include Walter Ong (1982), Marshall McLuhan (1964) and Joshua Meyrowitz (1986). The two theories both choose to view the impact of media in an overall perspective and focus on other aspects than media content and media use, which has occupied so much of mass communication research otherwise. Mediatization theory is thus consonant with medium theory with respect to taking note of the different media's particular formatting of communication and the impacts on interpersonal relations it gives rise to. Krotz (2007) also points out a number of shortcomings in medium theory, among them a tendency toward technological determinism. Medium theorists typically focus on some intrinsic logics of individual media's technology, so that either printing technology or television is seen to be the key factor to bring about a new kind of society. The interaction between technology and culture and the circumstance that culture also forms technology are neglected, and the medium is reduced to its technological 'nature'. Krotz warns against decontextualizing the mediatization concept; medium theory is seldom interested in specific historical, cultural or social relations, but is mainly oriented toward changes on the macro level.

By contrast, mediatization theory should be much more committed to empirical analysis, including the study of specific mediatization processes among different groups within the population, Krotz (2007) stresses.

The mediatization concept proposed in this article shares several of Schulz' (2004) and Krotz' (2007) perspectives. Extension, substitution, amalgamation and accommodation are important processes in mediatization; moreover, empirical validation through historical, cultural and sociological analysis is required. But the theory also deviates from these perspectives in two principal respects. First, the present theory applies an *institutional* perspective to the media and their interaction with culture and society. This means that a set of sociological concepts is applied, which makes it possible to specify the elements comprising 'media logic' and to better analyze the interplay between media and other social spheres (institutions). An institutional perspective by no means precludes a consideration of culture, technology or psychology, but provides a framework within which the interplay between these aspects can be studied. Secondly, the mediatization concept is applied exclusively to the *historical* situation in which the media *at once* have attained autonomy as a social institution and are crucially interwoven with the functioning of other institutions. In this perspective, mediatization does not refer to each process by which the media exert influence on society and culture. The invention of the printing press revolutionized individuals' relationship to the written language and had palpable impacts on both religion and knowledge, but it did not imply a mediatization of either religion or knowledge. That is to say, here we use the concept to characterize *a given phase or situation* in the overall development of society and culture in which the logic of the media exerts a particularly predominant influence on other social institutions

Mediatization in Postmodern Theory

Some see mediatization as an expression of the postmodern condition, in which media give rise to a new consciousness and cultural order. In his discussion of tendencies in the postmodern art world Fredric Jameson posits that mediatization creates a system that imposes a hierarchy of artistic media and ascribes new self-reflective properties to them: "[...] the traditional fine arts are *mediatized*: that is, they now come to consciousness of themselves as various media within a mediatic system in which their own internal production also constitutes a symbolic message and the taking of a position on the status of the medium in question" (Jameson, 1991:162, original emphasis). Although Jameson does not develop his concept of 'mediatization' any further, and while he remains skeptical as to whether 'postmodernism' is an adequate description of the changes he notes, his analysis indicates that the expansion of the media system has had some very palpable impacts on artistic institutions' forms of expression and has made self-reflective commentary and positioning vis-à-vis the media a significant element in the arts.

The most radical linkage between mediatization and postmodernism is found in the work of Baudrillard (1994), who perceives the symbols or signs of media culture – images, sound, advertisements, etc. – to form simulacra, semblances of reality that not only seem more real than the physical and social reality, but also replace it. It is like a map of the world that has become so vivid, so detailed and comprehensive that it appears more real than the world it was created to represent. In Baudrillard's own words, the media constitute a 'hyperreality'. The media are guided by a kind of semiotic logic, and their central influence consists in that they subject all communication and every discourse to

one dominant code: "What is mediatized is not what comes off the daily press, out of the tube, or on the radio: it is what is reinterpreted by the sign form, articulated into models, and administered by the 'code'" (Baudrillard, 1994:175f). This simulacrum theory leads Baudrillard to conclude that the symbolic world of media has replaced the 'real' world. He goes so far as to state that the Gulf War of 1990-1991 did not take place, but was rather a figment of media simulacra. In Baudrillard's own words: "It is a masquerade of information: branded faces delivered over to the prostitution of the image, the image of an unintelligible distress. No images of the field of battle, but images of masks, of blind or defeated faces, images of falsification" (Baudrillard, 1995:40). We should not take Baudrillard's statement or his theory at face value, i.e., as a denial that physical and social reality exists outside the media, even though some of his formulations may invite such an interpretation. His point is that media representations of reality have assumed such dominance in our society that both our perceptions and constructions of reality and our behavior take their point of departure in mediated representations and are steered by the media, so that phenomena like war are no longer what they once were. Thus, the media-orchestrated Gulf War was not a war as we once knew war to be because our perception of the war was steered by the images and symbols the media presented to us. Sheila Brown (2003) seconds Baudrillard's postmodernist view of mediatization and its consequences, describing a new social situation in which a number of traditional distinctions have disintegrated: "Above all, mediatization in the contemporary sense refers to a universe in which the meaning of *ontological divisions* is collapsing: divisions between fact and fiction, nature and culture, global and local, science and art, technology and humanity" (Brown, 2003:22, original emphasis).

There is no doubt that mediatization has complicated and blurred the distinctions between reality and media representations of reality, and between fact and fiction, but I find the postmodernist understanding of mediatization at once too simple and too grand. Too simple, because it implies one single transformation, whereby mediated reality supplants experiential reality, and traditional distinctions quite simply dissolve. The concept of mediatization proposed in the present article does not embrace the notion that mediated reality reigns supreme, or the contention that conventional ontological distinctions have 'collapsed'. The prime characteristic of the process of mediatization, as conceived of here, is rather an *expansion* of the opportunities for interaction in virtual spaces and a *differentiation* of what people perceive to be real. By the same token, distinctions like that between global and local become much more differentiated as the media expand our contact with events and phenomena in what were once 'faraway places'.

The postmodern concept is too grand in that it proclaims the disappearance of reality and the disintegration of distinctions, categorizations, that are fundamental in society and social cognition. It is difficult to imagine how social institutions would be able to continue to function were fact and fiction, nature and culture, art and science no longer separate entities. In contrast, we posit that society and culture have not changed in any of these respects as a consequence of media intervention. In science, in the media, in everyday life people still distinguish between fact and fiction, and vital institutions like the family, politics and the nation continue to be focal points in social life, for individuals and for society at large. Furthermore, Baudrillard's reference to an overall and dominant 'code' that 'administers' the circulation of symbols and signs in society, remains unclear. On the whole, his claims regarding media simulacra, hyperreality and the disappearance of reality seem exaggerated; at the least, they lack empirical confirmation. Ironically,

they seem to rest on an antiquated assumption that prior to the postmodern epoch, physical and social reality was a straightforward and concrete entity.

The media's construction of a new reality and its relation to the old non-mediated reality is more complicated and nuanced than Baudrillard and Brown suggest, but that hardly makes it less important to discuss and specify that relationship. One example from the music industry may help. Philip Auslander (1999) traces changes in the relationship between live and mediated musical performance over time. Earlier, mediated versions of music took their starting point in non-mediated performance: radio transmissions of music and recorded music emulated concert performances. Over the years, mediated versions have come into their own, in the sense that film soundtracks, CDs, music videos and so forth have each developed their own forms of expression and assumed positions of their own in the circulation of cultural artifacts. With increasing media influence the relationship between mediated and live music gradually reversed; concert performances have come to emulate mediated ones. Many road-show concerts clearly have the character of (re)presentations of a newly released CD or video, and rock concerts, musicals and sporting events all are orchestrated to fit the formats of broadcast transmission and/or recording media (Auslander 1999; Middleton, 1990). Traditionally, the live performance has been considered more authentic than mediated performance, but as Auslander points out, the increasing interchangeability of the two challenges this perception. The issue of authenticity has hardly been rendered irrelevant, but authenticity has become conditional on an *interaction* between mediated and live performance:

The primary experience of the music is as a recording; the function of the live performance is to authenticate the sound on the recording. In rock culture, live performance is a secondary experience of the music but is nevertheless indispensable, since the primary experience cannot be validated without it (Auslander, 1999:160).

The growing interdependence of mediated and live performance means that one cannot say that the one form is more authentic than the other. In a sociological perspective, mediated forms of interaction are neither more nor less real than non-mediated interaction. From a physical or sensual point of view, there may be differences in the degree of reality of mediated and face-to-face interaction in the sense that studio announcers, etc., are not actually physically present in our home, even though we see and hear them as though they stood before us. Still, from a sociological point of view there is no point in trying to differentiate the reality status of the respective forms of interaction. Non-mediated reality and forms of interaction still exist, but mediatization means that they, too, are affected by the presence of media. For example, personal, face-to-face communication assumes a new cultural value in a mediatized society by virtue of the fact that non-mediated interaction tends to be reserved for certain purposes and is assigned special cultural significance. Also, mediated forms of interaction tend to simulate aspects of face-to-face interaction; thus they represent not only alternatives to face-to-face interaction, but also extensions of the arena in which face-to-face interaction can take place (Hjarvard 2002a).

Definition

The uses of the concept 'mediatization' in the research cited above point to a number of central aspects of the interaction between media and society, which also form a part of

the definition of 'mediatization' proposed here. Previous uses of the concept, however, lack an articulated or even common definition; in addition, there are a number of aspects that have yet to be spelled out. In some cases (e.g., Văliverronen, 2001) 'mediatization' has been used loosely to refer more generally to the successive growth in media's influence in contemporary society; in other cases, the intention has been to develop a proper theory of the ways media relate to politics (e.g., Asp, 1986, 1990). Another fuzzy spot is on what level or to which spheres the concept is applied. Some use 'mediatization' to describe developments in a given sector (politics, science, or consumer culture), whereas others use it as an overarching characteristic of a new situation in society, whether under modernity (Thompson, 1995) or postmodernity (Baudrillard, 1981).

Here, 'mediatization' is used as the central concept in a theory of the both intensified and changing importance of the media in culture and society. Thus, the concept is more than a label for a set of phenomena that bear witness to increased media influence and it should also relate to other, central sociological theories. Mediatization theory not only needs to be well-specified, comprehensive and coherent, but it must also prove its usefulness as an analytical tool and its empirical validity through concrete studies of mediatization in selected areas. Thus, a theory of mediatization has to be able to describe overall developmental trends in society across different contexts and, by means of concrete analysis, demonstrate the impacts of media on various institutions and spheres of human activity. This latter task falls outside the scope of the present article, but for empirical analyses of the mediatization of toys and children's play, language, and religion, see Hjarvard (2004, 2007, 2008).

By the mediatization of society, we understand the process whereby society to an increasing degree is submitted to, or becomes dependent on, the media and their logic. This process is characterized by a duality in that the media have become *integrated* into the operations of other social institutions, while they also have acquired the status of social institutions *in their own right*. As a consequence, social interaction – within the respective institutions, between institutions, and in society at large – take place via the media. The term 'media logic' refers to the institutional and technological modus operandi of the media, including the ways in which media distribute material and symbolic resources and operate with the help of formal and informal rules. The logic of the media influences the form communication takes, such as how politics is described in media texts (Altheide & Snow, 1979); media logic also influences the nature and function of social relations as well as the sender, the content and the receivers of the communication. The extent to which the situation amounts to actual submission or only greater dependence on media will vary between institutions and sectors of society.

Mediatization is no universal process that characterizes all societies. It is primarily a development that has accelerated particularly in the *last years of the twentieth century in modern, highly industrialized, and chiefly western societies*, i.e., Europe, USA, Japan, Australia and so forth. As globalization progresses, more and more regions and cultures will be affected by mediatization, but there may be considerable differences in the influence mediatization exerts. Globalization is related to mediatization in at least two ways: on the one hand, globalization presumes the existence of the technical means to extend communication and interaction over long distances and, on the other hand, it propels the process of mediatization by institutionalizing mediated communication and interaction in many new contexts.

Mediatization, it should be noted, is a *non-normative* concept. As noted earlier, Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) associate mediatization directly with more problematic aspects

of media influence on politics. Indeed, there is a general tendency in both research and public discussion to presume that institutions' dependence on the media is essentially questionable. But to presume a priori that mediatization is negative poses something of a problem. At worst such a normative judgment can lead to a general narrative of decline, in which media influence becomes synonymous with a decline in the political public sphere or the disintegration of civil society. Habermas' (1989) theory of structural change in the public sphere is a paradigmatic example of such a normative approach to media influence, and Habermas has since explained that his earlier views on the subject were too pessimistic (Habermas, 1990). Whether mediatization has positive or negative consequences cannot be determined in general terms; it is a concrete, analytical question that needs to be addressed in terms of specific contexts, where the influence of specific media over certain institutions is gauged. The question also requires an examination of the normative points of departure if we are to be able to speak of positive or negative consequences.

Mediatization is not to be confused with the broader concept of *mediation*. Mediation refers to communication via a medium, the intervention of which can affect both the message and the relationship between sender and receiver. For example, if a politician chooses to use a blog instead of a newspaper to communicate with his constituency, the choice may well influence the form and content of his or her communication, while the communicative relationship between the politicians and the electorate will be altered. However, the use of a medium, whether blog or newspaper, will not necessarily have any notable effect on politics as a social institution. Mediation describes the concrete act of communication by means of a medium in a specific social context. By contrast, mediatization refers to a more long-lasting process, whereby social and cultural institutions and modes of interaction are changed as a consequence of the growth of the media's influence. It should be noted, however, that some scholars – e.g., Altheide and Snow (1988:195) – use the term, 'mediation' in the sense 'mediatization' is used here.

In sociological theory, meanwhile, one finds a more general use of the term, 'medium'. Money can, for example, be described as a medium of exchange. Similarly, in linguistic or psychological contexts speech may be considered a medium of expression. Although useful in their respective contexts, these meanings of the term 'medium' are not relevant here, where the term, 'media' draw upon media and communication studies. As such it is used to designate technologies that allow people to communicate over space and/or time. Furthermore, we use the plural form. Media are not a uniform phenomenon; each medium has its own characteristics, and they vary in both use and content between cultures and societies. The consequences of mediatization, then, depend on both the context and the characteristics of the medium or media in question.

Within the process of mediatization, we may distinguish between a *direct* (strong) and an *indirect* (weak) form of mediatization (Hjarvard, 2004). Direct mediatization refers to situations where formerly non-mediated activity converts to a mediated form, i.e., the activity is performed through interaction with a medium. A simple example of direct mediatization is the successive transformation of chess from physical chessboard to computer game. Formerly dependent on the players' physical presence around a chess board, chess is increasingly played with the help of software on a computer. In many ways, the game remains the same: the rules are the same, the chess board has the same appearance, and so forth. But use of a computer opens up numerous new options: you can play against a computer instead of another person; you can play with distant opponents via internet; you can store and consult earlier matches, etc., and these new options gradually

influence the experience of playing chess as well as the cultural context in which the game is played. A more complicated example of direct mediatization is 'on-line banking' via internet. All kinds of banking tasks and services (payments, loans, trade in currency and stocks, financial analysis) can be undertaken through interaction with a computer linked to internet, and the medium has palpably expanded the options available to both banks and their customers; meanwhile, the behavior of both parties has changed.

Indirect mediatization is when a given activity is increasingly influenced with respect to form, content, or organization by mediagenic symbols or mechanisms. Again, let us consider a simple example: the burgeoning merchandising industry that surrounds hamburger restaurants may be taken as an instance of indirect mediatization. A visit to Burger King or McDonald's is no longer simply an eating experience; it now entails a considerable exposure to films and cartoon animations, and as much as the opportunity to eat a hamburger, a visit to one of these restaurants may – especially for the youngest guests – mean an opportunity to collect dolls representing the characters in the films they see. Of course, you can still have your meal and not expose yourself to the media entertainment offered, but the cultural context surrounding the burger, much of the attraction of visiting the restaurant, and so forth have to do with the presence of media, in both symbolic and economic terms. A more complicated example of indirect mediatization is the development of intertextual discourse between media and other institutions in society. For example, Danes' knowledge of the USA is highly indebted to media narratives (fact and fiction) about the country; as a consequence, Danish political discussions regarding the USA are interwoven with media representations of American culture, mores and history.

Direct and indirect forms of mediatization will often operate in combination, so that it is not always easy to distinguish them. The need to distinguish between the two primarily arises in analytical contexts. Direct mediatization makes visible how a given social activity is substituted, i.e., transformed from a non-mediated activity to a mediated form, and in such cases it is rather easy to establish a 'before' and an 'after' and examine the differences. Where the media thereafter serve as a necessary interface for performance of the social activity, we are dealing with a strong form of mediatization. Indirect mediatization does not necessarily affect the ways in which people perform a given activity. Consequently, indirect mediatization of an activity or sphere will be of a more subtle and general character and relate to the general increase in social institutions' reliance on communication resources. This is not to say that indirect mediatization is any less important or that it, viewed from a societal perspective, has less impact. Indirect mediatization is at least as important as the direct forms.

The Media as an Independent Institution

Mediatization, as defined here, means not only that the media play a role of their own determination, but that they at once have attained the status of independent institution and provide the means by which other social institutions and actors communicate. The media intervene into, and influence the activity of other institutions, such as the family, politics, organized religion, etc., while they also provide a 'commons' for society as a whole, that is, virtual shared fora for communication that other institutions and actors increasingly use as arenas for their interaction. In order to treat these social consequences on a theoretical level, we shall first consider mediatization in relation to sociological concepts regarding institutions and interaction.

Institutions stand for the stable, predictable elements in modern society; they constitute the framework for human communication and action in a given sphere of human life at a given time and place. Institutions provide for the reproduction of society within the sphere in question, giving it a certain degree of autonomy and a distinct identity in relation to other spheres. As an institution the family organizes a number of very central aspects of life, such as love, upbringing, rest/recreation and nutrition. Politics, another institution, creates the framework for collective discussion and decision-making concerning shared resources, norms and activities. The more detailed discussion of institutions that follows takes its point of departure in the sociological structuration theory proposed by Anthony Giddens (1984), which in contrast to macro sociological theory (e.g., Parsons' or Luhmann's system theory) or micro-sociological approaches (e.g., symbolic interactionism) affords the possibility to describe the dynamic interaction between institutions and personal interaction. As noted earlier, mediatization itself is characterized by a duality in that it intervenes in human interaction in many different contexts, while it also institutionalizes the media as an autonomous entity with its own logic. A sociological theory of mediatization must therefore be able to give an account of this duality and to describe the linkages between institution and interaction.

According to Giddens, institutions are characterized by two central features: rules and allocations of resources. Together, rules and resource allocations invest the institution with a certain autonomy in relation to the world around it. Rules may be implicit and practical, i.e., outgrowths of so-called tacit knowledge as to proper behavior in a range of situations within the institution in question. Or, they may be explicit and formal; they may be codified in law or take the form of stated objectives or rules of procedure as, for example, in a school or a firm. Institutions in modern, complex societies distinguish themselves by a high degree of steering by rules, both implicit and explicit. The existence of rules implies, furthermore, that the institutions monitor compliance and can apply sanctions, should the rules be broken. Even the sanctions may be of a more or less explicit or formal character, whereas many rules are internalized by individuals and remain for the most part implicit. The sanctions on violations of rules of the latter kind are generally feelings of embarrassment or guilt or perhaps criticism on the part of colleagues or family members. Informal rules often have the character of norms and are maintained and sanctioned by gossip, ridicule and scolding.

By virtue of formalization itself formal rules generally lead to explicit sanctions that are well-defined and known in advance; in some cases breaking such rules may be prosecuted. Like other institutions, media, too, are steered by rules. They are subject to numerous laws and regulations, some of which apply to other institutions, as well, whereas others are specifically tailored to the activity of the medium in question. Examples of the latter include editorial responsibility, freedom of the press legislation, and rules pertaining to libel. Media have also drafted their own codes of good practice and sanctioning systems such as press councils, readers' ombudsmen, and so forth. Some media companies have publicly declared their guiding principles and the public role they strive to play. Concrete praxis in media production is largely steered by informal rules that are expressed in routines, habits and implicit norms of professionalism. Thus, news journalists obey rules when they select their stories (criteria of newsworthiness), when they interact with news sources, while they incorporate norms like objectivity into their news production as a strategic ritual (Tuchman, 1972).

As for the other prime characteristic of an institution, allocation of resources, Giddens distinguishes two kinds of resources: material resources and authority. Institutions can

administer material resources in the form of, for example, raw materials, buildings and facilities, manpower and knowledge; a delegation of authority also takes place within the institution so that it is clear who within the institution is in charge of the material resources, who may speak on behalf of the institution, who may interact with whom, and so forth. If we consider the family, for example: parents generally control the family's material resources, like the home and the car, and the law gives parents authority over, and liability for, the children (under the legal age of adulthood) in the household, as well. (Parental authority may also be regulated in law; some behavior toward children, such as physical and mental abuse, may be prohibited.) Similarly, media, too, are characterized by allocations of resources; in production the individual media company will allocate engineering resources, personnel, travel, etc., to the various departments, while on the reception side, receivers will acquire the necessary hardware and, perhaps not least, devote their time and attention to the media. As shall be elaborated further in the following, mediatization implies that other institutions to an increasing degree become dependent on resources that the media control, and they will have to submit to some of the rules the media operate by in order to gain access to those resources.

The development of the media into independent institutions should be seen as an instance of the increasing differentiation and division of labor that characterizes many spheres and aspects of modern society. Pre-modern, agrarian society was characterized by a low degree of specialization; most people lived in rural villages and one's family and 'birth' largely determined the course of one's life from the cradle to the grave. As nation states emerged, and with industrialization and urbanization, more and more institutions that accommodated different aspects of life split off from the undifferentiated 'whole': science was divorced from religion, and the labor market developed an ever greater number of specialty occupations and professions. Media played an important role in this early modern era inasmuch as they made it possible to detach an activity from its local context and to create a specialized forum on a national or international level. Books and periodicals helped to lay the foundation for the expansion of science and technology; newspapers helped to create a democratic, political public sphere; and literature and popular magazines contributed to the development of a cultural public sphere.

But, in this phase of social development the media were yet to become independent institutions. Instead, they were chiefly *instruments in the hands of other institutions*. As political parties were formed in the late nineteenth century, they began to publish newspapers which gave rise to the system of the party press that characterized Denmark, where each party had its own paper in all the principal towns. Very few of these papers had a journalistic editorial board that operated independent of the party/owner. On the contrary, there were intimate bonds between parties and papers, indeed, editors were generally members of the party leadership. To consider a Danish example: Viggo Hørup, nineteenth-century Social Liberal politician and founder of the Copenhagen daily, *Politiken*. Hørup's political work and his work as editor of *Politiken* were two faces of the same coin. When he spoke to one or another group one day, the text of the speech was very likely to grace the pages of the paper the following day. Similarly, institutions in the fields of science, the Arts, and jurisprudence all had their own channels of publication, over which they exerted editorial control.

The advent of radio in the 1920s marks the point when media started to address a generalized public, whereupon they gradually assumed the character of *cultural institutions*. By this we mean that media are no longer instruments of any given institution or special interest, but keep an arm's length away from the various social institutions.

As public service broadcasting institutions radio and, later, television were to serve the public interest. They should make the work of other public institutions known to the general public and offer a balanced representation of various interests in the fields of politics, the Arts, science and so forth. That radio broadcasting was organized in the form of a monopoly had to do with the nature of the technology and characteristics of the medium itself, which, in the 1920s, meant that it was physically impossible to create the multiplicity of radio channels that characterized the press, for example. But monopoly was also a choice that was well in keeping with other public and national policies; it was also congenial to requirements that the new medium be charged to educate its listeners. At about the same time, the press underwent a development in a similar direction. In Denmark, a process that would lead to the demise of the party press and the birth of independent journalistic media got under way with the reform of *Politiken* under the new Editor-in-Chief Henrik Cavling in 1905. In the interwar period numerous other newspapers followed *Politiken's* lead, loosening their ties to political parties in favor of a more journalistic platform. News reporting predominated, and papers, now less partisan, addressed the entire spectrum of readers. 'News' was distinguished from 'views': opinion-based genres like editorials and debate pages evolved, while the rest of the paper was imbued with new ideals of unbiased, non-partisan treatment of news material. Newspapers also gradually extended the scope of their coverage to include cultural life, 'the home and family' and hobbies and leisure activities.

The decline and ultimate demise of the party press actually extended over most of the twentieth century, but the point in the present context is that the press, once it adopted the 'omnibus' concept, began its development into a cultural institution. No longer an instrument of other institutions, the press began treating various social institutions (politics, the Arts, family, etc.) and special interests from a more general and common perspective. The underlying dynamic in this evolutionary process differed from that behind the development of broadcast media. Whereas radio and television were established as public institutions and given a 'mission' to educate and enlighten, the establishment of the omnibus press was a step in an essentially commercial development, where advertising revenues were a driving force. Be that as it may, in this concrete historical context the outcome was that newspapers became cultural institutions, appealing to all and offering something for everyone.

Attaining the status of cultural institutions was the first step in the media's further move toward independence from other institutions. It implied a gradual professionalization of media practices, in which the establishment of journalism as a profession in its own right, with professional training and the development of ethical codes gave the profession a degree of autonomy (Kristensen, 2000). A key feature of journalists' self-perception is an adversarial stance vis-à-vis political and commercial interests, which is operationalized in the norm of keeping an arm's length distance from one's news sources.

The 1980s witnessed the start of a series of structural changes in the media sector, in Denmark as in many other parts of Western Europe, which presaged the transition from the status of cultural institution to that of media institution. The end of the monopoly position of public service channels on the air waves, and the expansion of broadcasting services via satellite and cable created a more commercial and competitive climate in radio and television, in which market forces challenged television's identity and importance as a cultural institution. The 1990s saw the deregulation of the telecommunications sector, and the rapid expansion of mobile telephony and the internet suddenly rendered the media system much more complex. Many of the newer media are only

loosely regulated, if at all, as to purpose and content. The press, too, has undergone considerable change in response to the introduction of free sheets distributed at mass transit nodes. In Denmark gratis newspapers attained market leadership in the space of no more than a few years, and they have been very successful in many other countries, as well. Subscribed morning and midday papers have suffered a steady decline in circulation, and on the whole the traditional 'hard copy' press is steered by market logic to a much greater extent today than previously.

Thus, as a consequence of the trends of these past two decades, the media are much less cultural institutions, in the sense of institutions that in the public interest represent other institutions. A stronger market orientation has led media to focus more closely on servicing their own readers and audiences. This has been said to imply a greater measure of *receiver steering* of the media, in the sense that attention to receivers has taken precedence over deference to other social institutions. Newspapers, radio, television and internet still devote space and time to politics, the Arts and cultural life, but to a lesser degree on those institutions' terms or from the perspective of 'public enlightenment'. Other institutions have instead become the raw material for the product the media serve to their readers, viewers and listeners. Where media in early days were sender-steered, e.g., steered by particular interests in the days of the party press or by the terms of public service broadcasting concessions, as media institutions they are in large part steered by the interests of their readers, viewers and listeners, their market demand and purchasing power.

This is not to say that the media have become private enterprises like any manufacturer of, say, furniture or bacon; they continue to perform collective functions in society. The media provide the communicative fora, both private and public, that other institutions depend on for their communication with the public and other institutions, and for their internal communication. The duality of having broken away from other institutions' operations, yet still serve collective communication functions in society give the media central importance to society as a whole. Therefore, the logic that guides the media cannot be reduced to a logic of the market alone. Yes, the media sell products to consumers, but they also service their public, which includes other institutions. Thus, families use the media to orient themselves as to norms for their children's upbringing and practical furnishing of children's rooms, and media are used for family members' communication with one another. Political parties use the media to communicate with other parties and the general public, and to communicate within the party, as well.

To be able to serve these collective functions, the media still emphasize the concern for the public interest that imbued them in their roles as cultural institutions, and which continued to imbue the development of journalism as a partly autonomous profession, where the media could make claims of impartiality, objectivity, and so forth. But, whereas in the era when the media were cultural institutions concern for the public interest grew out of the mission to enlighten, a project that engaged the whole of society, the concern today is primarily internalized as part of the sense of *professionalism* shared by journalists and their colleagues in independent media institutions. In sum, the media interact with all other social institutions, but from a position of greater autonomy than a pure market orientation would dictate.

Table 1 summarizes the institutional transformations of the media. It is a highly simplified account and takes no account the variations that individual media display. In all three periods there have been media that operate under the superintendence of other institutions (e.g., scientific journals), just as, ever since the 1880's, some papers offering light entertainment have been primarily market-oriented.

Table 1. *The Institutional Development of Media*

Dominant period	Institutional character	Dominant logic	Media system	Purposes and objectives
- 1920	Media as instruments of other institutions	Steered by particular interests	Party press, scientific journals, religious and arts publications etc.	Persuasion and agitation on the part of specific interests in the specific institution
1920-1980	Media as a cultural institution	Public steering	Public service radio and television (monopoly), omnibus press	Representation of various institutions in a public arena
1980-	Media as an independent media institution	Media professionalism	Commercial and competitive media, satellite tv, Internet, mobile media	Servicing of audiences, sales to target groups in a differentiated media system

Means of Interaction

So far, we have defined what mediatization is and how it came to be; in the following we shall turn to examine *the ways* in which mediatization affects society. Fundamentally, it is a question of the media intervening into the social interaction between individuals *within* a given institution (e.g., between family members via mobile phones), *between* institutions (e.g., through telecommunications media that allow one to work from home), and *in society at large* (e.g., by publicizing and observing events of importance to the community, be they festive, threatening or tragic). In this section we shall consider interaction on the micro-social level; in the next, we will turn to the macro-social level.

Social interaction consists of *communication* and *action*. The media, of course, are means of communication, i.e., an exchange of meaning between two or more parties. As linguistic pragmatics (Austin, 1962; Searle 1969) has shown, communication may be viewed as a form of action: by communicating, people exchange not only information, but they influence one another and their mutual relationship by, for example, promising, confirming, rejecting, deciding, and so forth. In addition to acts of communication, media also permit forms of social action that once required both parties' physical presence: one can buy or sell, work or play. Media may also interact with other actions outside the media, such as elections or acts of terror.

The ways in which media intervene into social interaction depends on the concrete characteristics of the medium in question, that is, both material and technical features and social and aesthetic qualities. A medium's characteristics and its relation to social interaction may be illuminated in terms of perception psychologist James Gibson's (1979) concept of *affordances*. Gibson himself does not apply the concept to media, but uses it in a general theory of how people and animals perceive and interact with the world around them. The idea is that neither human beings nor animals sense their surroundings passively; instead, they approach the world and the objects in it in an action-oriented and practical mode. Any given physical object, by virtue of its material characteristics (shape, size, consistency, etc.), lends itself to a set of uses. According to Gibson, the

'affordances' of an object are these potential uses. For some animals a tree represents shade; others may feed on its leaves, birds may decide to nest in it. Some objects invite certain uses: a flat stone begs to be 'skipped' across still water; a closed door is to be opened. Some uses are practically prescribed, whereas others are ruled out. In sum: the affordances of any given object make certain actions possible, exclude others and, in sum, structure the interaction between actor and object.

Furthermore, whether or not an object's affordances are made use of depends on characteristics of the human or animal that interacts with the object. With the help of a ladder you can climb up or down, but only if you have use of your limbs. Thus, affordances are also defined by the extent to which the characteristics of object and user 'fit'. In his study of human use of technology and other manufactured objects, Norman (1990) points to a third determining factor, besides the material or objective characteristics of object and user. He introduces the concept of 'perceived affordance' in order to incorporate the relational aspect of affordance, where the crucial factor is the user's psychological evaluation of the object in relation to his/her objectives. Thus, an object's affordances are subject to the user's motives/objectives and, in extension, to the cultural conventions that surround the project, as well. In the light of Gibson's (1979) and Norman's (1990) conceptual work, we recognize media as technologies, each of which has a set of affordances that *facilitate, limit and structure communication and action*. For example: Radio made it possible for listeners to experience musical performances to an extent and with a sound quality that was unprecedented. Before radio, concert music was available almost exclusively to a small, urban elite. But organizational factors in the institution of radio also limited the amount of music and the range of genres that were offered, while program schedules, signal range, and the quality of one's loudspeaker gave structure to the listening experience: when one listened, where and how one sat to listen, and so forth.

Perhaps most of all, the media make it possible for people to interact across distances, that is, without their having to be in the same place at the same time. An examination of the differences between interaction via the media and non-mediated interaction face-to-face reveals the ways in which media alter the interaction. Thompson (1995) distinguishes three types of interaction: face-to-face interaction, mediated quasi-interaction, and mediated interaction. In the case of face-to-face interaction, both verbal and non-verbal expressions are available to all parties present. Mass media, like newspapers, radio and television, provide what Thompson calls mediated quasi-interaction, by which he means that the communication addresses an unknown, unspecified group of people who, what is more, are unable to interact with the sender. By contrast, a telephone conversation is an instance of mediated interaction: the conversation takes place between identified individuals, all of whom can interact on an equal footing. Thus, according to Thompson, mediated quasi-interaction is monologic, whereas mediated interaction is dialogic.

This latter distinction is important, but Thompson's choice of the term, "quasi-" (which the dictionary defines as "resembling; seemingly, but not actually") is a bit unfortunate in that it allows the interpretation that a reading a newspaper article or watching a television program only seems like interaction, whereas talking on the phone or face-to-face is true interaction. From a sociological point of view, neither the interaction between reader and article nor that between viewer and television program is any less true or meaningful than a conversation about the article or program over the breakfast table the next day. The circumstance that mass communication does not allow the receiver to respond immediately to the sender does not mean that no action or communication

on the part of the receiver in relation to an article or program takes place. Exposure to a newspaper or a television channel itself represents an act that has social significance for receiver and sender alike. In the latter case, circulation statistics or ratings, which have tangible commercial value. Furthermore, the reader or viewer may very well store the message they have read or seen and relate it to others.

In more general terms: we should bear in mind that social interaction does not necessarily imply that the opportunities to express oneself or to take action be equally distributed among the parties involved. This applies to non-mediated, direct interaction such as that between speaker and participant in a meeting or between participants in a court proceeding, where the opportunities for expression may be very controlled and, indeed, deliberately unequal. Such inequality does not render either the meeting or the proceeding 'quasi'; it simply reflects the fact that in any social interaction, be it mediated or direct, the parties assume social roles that confer different degrees of latitude with regard to personal expression and influence over the course of the interaction or its outcome. The media do, however, have an impact on the social roles in the interaction in that access to the medium itself and the modes of interaction it makes available to the participants, affect the respective participants' ability to communicate and act. Since media play a greater role in an increasing number of contexts, social roles are also evaluated in terms of the access to media coverage they are able to mobilize.

Finally, we should note that Thompson's differentiation of three forms of interaction was inspired by an earlier, now bygone, media landscape. Traditional mass media like newspapers and radio and television channels have developed, and continue to launch, new means by which receivers can respond to, or even participate in, their communication – e.g., via sms, e-mail or blogs, while new interpersonal media like mobile telephones, sms and e-mail also enable one sender to distribute messages to many receivers in a manner analogous to mass media. Rather than adopting Thompson's terminology, then, it seems more satisfactory generally to distinguish between non-mediated (face-to-face) and mediated communication and then to specify the subcategories in terms of parameters like one-way/two-way, interpersonal/mass, text/audio/visual, and so forth.

Media alter Interaction

Mediated interaction is neither more nor less real than non-mediated interaction, but the circumstance that mediated interaction takes place between individuals who do not share the same physical space changes the relations between the participants. If we start with American sociologist Erwin Goffman's (1959) description of social interaction between people who are in physical proximity to one another, what differs in situations of mediated interaction becomes apparent. Goffman uses the metaphor of the theatre and describes the interaction that takes place on the stage as performance. He distinguishes between what takes place on the stage and what goes on backstage, i.e., action and communication that is not open to the participants. In addition to their verbal and non-verbal (facial expressions, gestures, body language, etc.) communication participants will also use various accessories or 'props' (costumes, cigarettes, tables and chairs) and define territories (physical and symbolic) between them and the other participants as part of the interaction. Typically, participants collaborate in the interaction, trying to reach a common definition of the situation at hand in order to achieve a common goal.

In contrast to face-to-face communication, media can extend interaction in time and space: media allow instant communication with individuals anywhere in the world.

Mediated interaction does not require the parties to be in the same space at the same time. Media also change the ability of individual actors to steer how the social situation is defined, to steer the use of verbal and non-verbal communication and accessories, and to define territorial boundaries in the interaction. This has far-reaching consequences, three of which are of interest here: First, media make it considerably easier for individuals to 'act' on several stages simultaneously; second, participants can more easily optimize the social interaction to their personal advantage; and third, the mutual relations between the participants, including norms of acceptable behavior (deference, tone, etc.) change.

As for the first consequence, media not only enable people to interact over long distances, they also make it possible for an individual to *keep several social interactions going at the same time*: one can talk to others in the family while watching television, give advice to one's children by phone from the office, and so forth. Internet has multiplied the possibilities in this regard; given web access, a person can keep windows open to any number of interactions: work, banking transactions, shopping, communicating online with family and friends, etc. In Goffman's terminology, thanks to media, we can switch between stage and backstage in several, parallel situations. It has never been absolutely impossible to take part in more than one face-to-face interaction at the same time. Bringing children to the office is a well-known phenomenon. But it is extremely taxing to carry on several face-to-face interactions simultaneously, and in most cases to do so would violate the norm of collaboration that generally applies. Via media one can more easily divide one's attention between different social scenes, in part because some media are designed to fade into the background while one's attention is directed elsewhere: mobile phones can be made to vibrate instead of ring, you can check for sms at a glance during a meeting, your radio may be playing in the background while you work, drive your car, and so forth.

Media allow actors to optimize social interaction to their own advantage in two principal ways: they lighten the burden of the actor's social relations, and they permit a greater measure of control over the exchange of information. They lighten the burden by making it possible to establish closer contact with less of a personal investment. The popularity of television as a pastime evenings and weekends has to do with the fact that the medium offers entertainment and vicarious company without requiring much in the way of money, attention or effort to make the situation a success. One might instead invite friends over for the evening, but that would require a lot more effort in the form of preparing food, being sociable, etc., whereas the pay-off in terms of sociability and entertainment is less certain. Meeting face-to-face has its perks, of course, but in most other respects television is a much easier and surer way to be entertained. Similarly, sending e-mail messages to one's colleagues at work is often preferable to looking in on them, even though they may be just a few doors away. An e-mail allows you to steer the interaction more than is possible in a conversation, which often takes longer and demands some degree of courtesy, and there is always the risk that your colleague will want to talk about another matter entirely.

Whereas face-to-face interaction gives everyone involved the opportunity to see and hear everything done and said, media make it possible *to manage information to and from the participants*. For example, the sender can decide when it suits him to respond to others' messages, and he has more control over the image of himself that he projects to others. As Goffman points out, there is an essential imbalance between an individual's ability to manage the impression that he makes on other participants, and the others' ability to examine and evaluate the impression conveyed. Goffman makes a

distinction between the impression we *give* and the impression we *give off*. Typically, we will try to give a favorable impression of ourselves when talking to others. But we also give off a number of other impressions, alongside our intended communication, either subconsciously or because we have failed to control our message well enough. Our speech may give one impression, while our body language conveys another, conflicting one. Goffman comments that we need to be very skilled performing artists to be able to manage all aspects of our self-representation. Most receivers, by contrast, are fully equipped to analyze and evaluate others' behavior, to find faults or inconsistencies. It is in this regard that media can help us manage the impressions we project to the world around us and, generally speaking, the narrower the channel of communication a medium offers, the easier it is to manage the communication. As a consequence, we find the paradoxical circumstance that even though media offer increasingly broad channels of communication (high definition visuals, five-channel stereo, etc.) people often choose to communicate through media that afford only a narrow channel of communication, such as sms, e-mail or web messenger.

As for the third area of impact, viz. changes in the relations and norms that prevail in interaction, we need first to consider the norm regulating mechanisms in face-to-face encounters. Goffman points out that during social interaction, the participants invest considerable effort in deferring to one another. When people meet face-to-face, they negotiate to establish the kind of social situation they are party to, whereby certain social roles and behaviors are considered relevant and acceptable to the situation, and others not. In order to avoid embarrassment (due, for example, to having misapprehended the situation and behaving inappropriately, which gives rise to ridicule and/or scolding) the participants engage in a considerable amount of *facework*, which has the purpose of preserving the participants' dignity in the situation at hand. The purpose of facework is to ensure that others avoid losing face, but also, and not least, it is work individuals undertake to preserve their own dignity, as well. Alternatively phrased, social norms are reproduced in the social situation, by participants' helping one another observe them. In face-to-face interactions, then, many actions and reactions only occur under particular circumstances or are tabu. Thus, in social interaction we try to avoid blatant violations of a norm that might result in a loss of face through *ridicule*, *gossip* or *scolding*. Ridicule is a form of humor that is used to set the bounds of social acceptability and to punish those who transgress those bounds (Billig, 2005), but it cannot be exercised without consequences for the cohesion of the group. To gossip about people when they are present in the room is not acceptable, as to gossip in itself is to challenge the dignity of an individual. It is, however, more acceptable to gossip about people who are not physically present (Bergmann, 1993). Finally, reproof (scolding in its varying degrees) typically represents a threat to the harmony in a group, and for that reason, reprimands, etc., generally take place behind closed doors, unless, of course, the objective is to set an example, to imprint a norm on a larger group.

Mediated interaction extends and complicates the use of territories in the interaction, including the ways in which we define ourselves in relation to the other participants. It also regulates access to information between different territories in the interaction. The medium links different physical localities and social contexts in a single interactive space, but it does not do away with the reality of the separate physical and social contexts. Television, telephones and internet all bridge distances, but the users have hardly left their sofas or desks to enter into the interactive space. Thus, the media both link the participants in the interaction and, at the same time, create a distance between the

virtual 'stage' of the interactive space and the participants' respective place-bound social contexts, of which they remain a part. This phenomenon is particularly apparent in the case of television, where the sender and receiver situation are distinctly separate, but it is also present in interpersonal communication via internet or mobile phones, where lack of access to the fullness of the interpersonal exchange reminds us of the distance between the parties.

The de-linking or distance between place-bound social situations that surround the user and the simultaneous establishment of a mediated situation means that the norm-enforcing mechanisms of ridicule, gossip and scolding can assume new forms. Because participants in a mediated interaction lack full access to the other participants' behavior, the individual's place-bound context may assume the character of 'backstage' in relation to the ongoing mediated interaction. It is not, however, a backstage in Goffman's original sense since it can equally be 'on stage', i.e., the prime focus of the individual's attention, and actually frame how he or she interacts on the virtual media 'stage'. Sms-communication (texting) between a group of teenagers may, for example, be instigated primarily for the entertainment of some of the participants, who, together with friends in their physical social situations, make fun of others' contributions to the 'conversation' behind their backs, without those others knowing that the messages they send are made the butt of derisive comments. Similarly, television viewers can mimic the dialects or make fun of the appearance of people they see on the screen. Internet also lends itself to more insidious forms of ridicule, and even outright mobbing, via websites, sms and telephone cameras.

The distance or de-linking of interaction when it takes place via a medium leads to changes, extension and complications of the relations between the 'stage' and 'backstage' of the interaction and, as a consequence, norm-enforcing mechanisms can develop in ways that would be perceived as illegitimate and, possibly, even gross violations of others' integrity, were they applied in a face-to-face situation. Whereas gossip about a participant in an interaction is not voiced openly in face-to-face encounters, it may be spread behind the person's back 'backstage' (Bergmann, 1993), several media and media genres publish gossip: magazines, reality television and blogs shamelessly spread all kinds of gossip, particularly about celebrities. Moreover, in addition to filling these media's columns and air time, the media's gossip is also a legitimate topic in face-to-face situations, where such subjects normally would not be fitting (Hjarvard, 2002b). Use of norm-enforcing mechanisms in media does not make them any less effective, and in some case they may be even more effective because the media make ridicule, gossip or scolding publicly accessible. But because of the distance or de-linking that characterizes mediated interaction, application of the mechanisms in media seems – from the point of view of the viewer, reader or user, that is – less intrusive and less consequential to the individual than if they had been applied in a face-to-face situation.

The Interfaces between Institutions

Whereas mediatization on the microsocial level is evidenced in its structuring impacts on human interaction, on the macro level we find impacts on how institutions relate to one another due to the intervention of media. In general terms we can distinguish three functions that the media serve in this regard: they constitute *an interface in the relations within and between institutions*; television newscasts bring politics into people's sitting rooms, and advertising is an important platform for private firms' communication with

potential customers. Second, the media constitute a *realm of shared experience*; that is, they offer a continuous presentation and interpretation of ‘the way things are’ and by doing so, contribute to the development of a sense of identity and of community. Finally, media help to create a *political public sphere*, within which institutions can pursue and defend their own interests and establish their legitimacy. Put another way, the three functions of the media on the macrosocial level are to serve as a *nexus* between institutions, as an *interpretive frame* for understanding society, and as an *arena* in which members of a society can discuss and decide matters of common interest. As a consequence of these functions, the *logic* of the media – that is, the institutional, technological and expressive characteristics of media – will increasingly affect society. The extent to which and how media logic affects any given institution, the mutual interaction of institutions, and society as a whole will vary, but, of course, these are questions for empirical investigation.

As interfaces, the media are a resource that institutions make use of in their mutual interaction; in order to tap this resource the institution has to participate to some extent in a media praxis, which is evidenced by an increasing use of journalists, information officers, PR consultants by private companies, political parties, educational institutions, etc. On a theoretical level one may assess the importance of media as a shared resource or interface by viewing the various social institutions, media included, as fields in a Bourdieuan sense (Bourdieu, 1993, 2005), i.e., as social areas characterized by a certain autonomy and internal structure, according to which agents occupy specific positions vis-à-vis one another. For example, art is a field that has a certain autonomy in relation to other institutions and is imbued with its own, internally defined norms and hierarchies. No field, however, is totally autonomous; all are influenced to greater or lesser degrees by other fields. Art, for example, is influenced by the market, also a field, in that professional artists make their living by dealing in works of art, and by the field of politics, inasmuch as cultural policy affects artists’ ability to show their works and is the source of stipends and scholarships. Art is also dependent on the media as a field, since media exposure is the key to publicity and fame, which may be converted into other forms of value on the art market or in culture policy contexts. Bourdieu makes a distinction in this regard between autonomous and heteronomous poles, where the former is the site of the field’s immanent logic, where actors act in accordance with the field’s own values, as when a work of art is judged on the basis of the medium’s or genre’s criteria of quality. The heteronomous pole, on the other hand, is the site of other fields’ influence, e.g., the market’s, politicians’ or the media’s.

If we examine mediatization in the light of Bourdieu’s concepts, we find that the media occupy a prominent place in a growing number of fields’ heteronomous pole, thereby challenging those fields’ autonomous pole. Thus, the degree of mediatization may be measured according to how much the respective field’s autonomous pole has weakened; eventually, some fields will lose their autonomy entirely. Media, too, have autonomous and heteronomous poles, where the autonomous pole is the site of aspects like professionalized journalism and codes of ethics, and the heteronomous pole is the site of, say, the influence exerted by the advertising market. There is a tension between the poles in the media; in news media, for example, journalistic criteria of news value and the ideals of good journalism often compete with the demands of the need to sell copies, the influence exerted by news sources, and so forth (Schultz, 2006). Inasmuch as the media are influenced by other fields or institutions, we cannot always be certain that observed media impacts imply submission to media logic alone. Occasionally, mediatization will

go hand in hand with commercialization or politicization, and whether mediatization is the most dominant force can only be determined by analysis. Any empirical analysis of mediatization should therefore enquire whether, and to what extent, other institutions (conceived of here as fields) stand to win or lose autonomy in relation to other fields.

A Realm of Shared Experience

In a historical perspective, the media's ability to create a common horizon of experience across institutions has mainly acted to dissolve local cultures in favor of shared *national* realms of experience. The British sociologist, Anthony Giddens (1984) describes one aspect of modernity as an ongoing 'disembedding' of societal structures: parochial and traditional cultures are broken up, fall into oblivion, and are transformed through contact with the larger, modern world. Viewed in this light, mediatization has been a social force on a par with urbanization and industrialization. Just as electricity and railroads helped to make people more mobile, the media have contributed to a mental and communicative mobility. Since the mid-1800s newspapers, and later radio and television have helped to undermine local, traditional cultures in favor of a national culture and culture of political unity. Julius Bomholt, the first and very influential Minister of Culture in the Danish welfare state, did not mince his words in describing the modernization 'mission' of the media when he in 1964 summed up the status of Danish broadcast media:

Engrained, parochial cultural habits are, with the help of broadcasting, being sundered. Isolated and backward cultures have been dissolved. A shared cultural background has put the population on speaking terms. When credit is given for having eradicated the benighted peasantry and ignorant proletariat of yesteryear, Danmark's Radio [Danish public service broadcasting] will have a major share of it (Bomholt, 1964).

Viewed in this light, then, the creation of a common experiential frame of reference is not just a matter of adding something new and shared; it is also a matter of eroding and doing away with previous experience and culture. Media's creation of a new, shared national realm of experience may, to use Giddens' terminology, be conceived of as a 're-embedding' of social interaction on a more a general and abstract level than once characterized erstwhile place-bound cultures.

Benedict Anderson (1991) speaks of national communities as an *imagined community* inasmuch as no one, even in the smallest of nations, can have met all its other members. The media are the symbolic mortar that make the individual components seem to be a cohesive social whole. Thus, as Jeffrey Alexander points out, the mass media are the symbolic equivalent of the judicial system, as they serve to produce "the symbolic patterns that create the invisible tissues of society on the cultural level, just as the legal system creates the community on a more concrete and 'real' one" (Alexander, 1981:18).

There is more to it than creating common experiential frames of reference. The media create a context, which enables the individual to observe and experience the whole of society from a new perspective. As Paddy Scannell (1988) characterizes the accomplishment of radio and television, for example: "Broadcasting brought together for a radically new kind of *general* public the elements of a culture-in-common (national and transnational) for all. In doing so, it redeemed, and continues to redeem, the intelligibility of the world and the communicability of experience in the widest social sense" (Scannell, 1988:29, original emphasis). The world presents itself at once as a

generalized whole (such as ‘Denmark’ or ‘Copenhagen’) and as something concrete, tangible and ‘at hand’. With access to internet, it has also become possible for individuals to interact with everyone else. Once an abstraction, community has, thanks to media, become concrete experience.

Whereas Paddy Scannell takes a generally positive view of the media as providers of a common frame of experience, Nick Couldry (2003a) is more critical, not least with regard to this very function. Taking his point of departure in Bourdieu’s field theory, Couldry points out that a theory of the roles of media in society needs to do more than show how the media intervene into and influence various fields, like cultural life and politics; they need to take account of “the impacts that media might have on all fields simultaneously by legitimating certain categories with not just cognitive, but also social significance” (Couldry, 2003a:665). The influence of the media is, in other words, more than the sum of their influence in the respective fields. In line with Bourdieu’s concept of ‘metacapital’, used to describe the ability of a state to project its power across different fields, Couldry suggests that one may also speak of a ‘media’s metacapital’ inasmuch as the media are able universally, across all fields, to form the categories that everyone uses to interpret the world. That is to say, the media have an essentially ideological power to describe society in a way that seems the only ‘natural’ way to comprehend it. Couldry (2003b) expands on and exemplifies this idea through a number of analyses, but now using a modified concept of ritual. Media influence on people’s experience consists not least of the media’s ability to present themselves as the centre of society: they offer an interpretive position that gives the world meaning. Media rituals deliver “formalised actions organised around key media-related categories and boundaries, whose performance frames, and suggests a connection with wider media-related values” (Couldry, 2003b:29). In other words, media not only describe the world, they provide basic categorical frameworks through which we apprehend it.

Couldry makes an important point when he highlights the power inherent in the privilege to define the cognitive, social and lexical categories that organize people’s understanding of the world around them. But, he seems not to have any appreciation of the potentially positive aspects that the construction of an experiential commons might have. Secondly, he seems to have an all too monolithic conception of media power, a power so pervasive that no other institution can challenge the descriptions of reality the media provide. Third, Couldry’s use of ritual as a concept deviates somewhat from standard usage in communication research (Rothenbuhler, 1998). Actually, the principal focus of Couldry’s critique is the ideological impact of the media, albeit he uses this term only sporadically. In this respect his perspective bears a resemblance to that of Olof Petersson’s (1994) notion of “journalism as ideology”. According to Petersson, a political scientist, journalism is more than a particular profession or craft; by virtue of their status as a social class having its own norms, education and position in society, journalists develop a semi-populistic ideology, according to which the most important division in society runs between holders of power and ordinary people. Journalists conceive of themselves as go-betweens who are able to speak for ordinary people. Journalism uses language in ways designed to catch people’s attention, and as other social institutions adopt journalistic functions to help them communicate better with the world around them, they will successively assimilate both the language and ideology of journalism. Regardless of whether one sides more with Scannell’s optimistic interpretation regarding a common world created by media, or Couldry’s and Petersson’s more critical views regarding the ideological consequences of this mediegenic commons, the most

important conclusion for our present purposes is that one of the principal consequences of the mediatization of society is the constitution of a shared experiential world, a world that is regulated by media logic.

Virtualization and a New Social Geography

One general effect of mediatization is a *virtualization* of social institutions. Earlier, the institutions were more bound to specific places: politics took place in the parliament, city hall and meeting halls; education took place in the schools and universities; and art was presented on the stage and in museums and galleries. As a consequence of the intervention of media, individuals can take part in and partake of many different social institutions, irrespective of their physical location. Contact with politics occurs by reading the paper at the breakfast table, listening to one's car radio, or via internet at the office.

Virtualization of social institutions goes hand in hand with a *domestication* of those institutions. Typically, the home and family are increasingly the point around which access to other institutions revolves. Newspapers, radio and television have brought politics and cultural expression into the home; home offices have brought paid employment into family life, and internet has made it possible to interact with entities in both public and private spheres from the comfort of one's home. On the one hand, all this implies an enrichment of home and family as an institution in that other institutions are now accessible. On the other hand, the new accessibility also changes the home and family, as family members may be physically present in the home, yet be mentally attuned to other institutions entirely. The virtualization of institutions implies that the home loses some of its ability to regulate family members' behavior, and it is left to the individual to decide in which institution he or she is taking part, and adjust his/her behavior accordingly. Institutional contexts are no longer defined by their locus, but are a matter of individual choice. Virtualization, however, is seldom total; most institutions still maintain physical-geographical bases as an important framework for social praxis. What is new is that these places and buildings now interplay with virtual places and spaces, and the reality and forms of interaction that take place in the virtual world will also have consequences for social praxis in the physical locality.

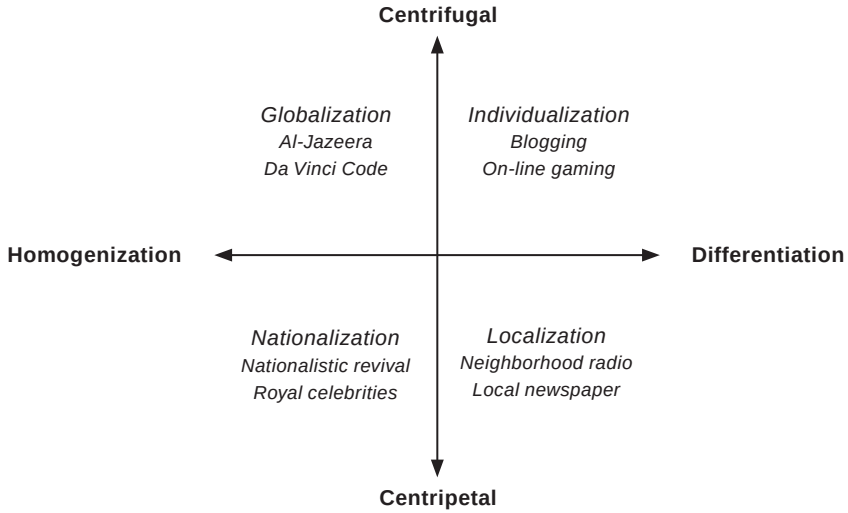
As described earlier, ever since the latter half of the nineteenth century, media have removed social interaction from the local level and embedded it in a national context. In the last decade of the twentieth century it became increasingly possible for media to transcend national frontiers, and media supported the globalization process. Thus, Tomlinson (1999) speaks of the role of media in *de-territorializing* cultural experience and social interaction. With internet, satellite-TV and a growing global market for television series, film, music, advertising, etc., human experience is no longer bound to either the local or national context, but takes place in a globalized context. By the same token, media make it possible to interact with others across political and cultural frontiers. As a consequence of the media's growing complexity and encompassing nature, society takes on a *complex connectivity* (Tomlinson, 1999): In the era of globalization the media not only provide channels of communication between nations and peoples, but also establish networks across all manner of geographical areas and actors. This development leads in turn to a greater *cultural reflexivity*. As influxes of media products and communication cross more and more frontiers, virtually no culture will be able to develop in isolation from others. Greater cultural reflexivity does not mean that influences from abroad ne-

cessarily increase or become in any way indispensable; indeed, foreign media cultures may well be rejected and castigated, as some Muslim and Christian fundamentalists have done so emphatically. But greater cultural reflexivity has the consequence that cultural development no longer takes place in naive isolation from other cultures, but will develop with an awareness that alternative courses are available.

The great difficulty in attempting to chart the social geography of contemporary media trends is that they do not describe a development in any single direction. Instead, the trends seem to tend in many directions at once, which results in a social geography that is far more complex than what we have known to date. But, as we survey the new geography that media support, we can distinguish between two sets of opposites: first, homogenization versus differentiation and, second, centrifugal versus centripetal forces. If, in simplified terms, we might say that the media landscape of the twentieth century has revolved around national public spheres, recent years' developments have remolded the communicative spaces of media. On the one hand, one may speak of a centrifugal force that has broadened national public spheres' contact with the outside world. Transnational media like satellite-distributed television (CNN, Al-Jazeera, Cartoon Network, etc.) and internet have helped to bring about a globalized media environment, in which sound, images and texts flow with ease across national boundaries. With internet foreign newspapers and radio stations are seldom more than a click away, and not least young people can play games and chat with each other around the world. Meanwhile, a centripetal force is also at play: the media environment has more 'introvert' communication spaces in the form of neighborhood radio, local newspapers, community websites, etc.

In some respects these developments have a homogenizing effect; in others, differences are accentuated. The ongoing proliferation of radio and television channels means that there will be ever-fewer programs that we all hear and see 'together'. Access to several different interactive media allows us to create different contexts in which we can communicate; typically, in small groups, in chat rooms, blogs, online games, and so forth. But, despite this segmentation, we occasionally encounter media phenomena that momentarily revive the great collective 'we'. Events in the lives of national 'royals' have, in the case of Great Britain and Denmark, become national media events and broken successive ratings records. Reactions to immigration and globalization in general have also revived a nationalistic culture in many countries, and the media may be more or less explicit part of this process. There are also examples of homogenization on global and regional planes. Al-Jazeera has, for example, created supranational political and cultural *public spheres* in the Arab world (Galal, 2002), and best-selling novels and blockbuster films like *Lord of the Rings* and *The DaVinci Code* are the topic of conversation for millions of people.

Figure 1 represents an attempt to summarize the contradictory processes outlined above. The point of this model is to underline the fact that the media environment is expanding and developing in different directions, so that one cannot say that the media are moving society in any particular direction. Media do, however, play a part in the structuring of communication and action in a growing number of contexts: in some cases it means increasing globalization, often by symbolic products of Anglo-American origin, but it can also bring a greater degree of individualization and segmentation, as in the case of use of interactive media by small groups. Meanwhile, media can also facilitate local interaction or call attention to national phenomena. It should be borne in mind that these contradictory processes often are at play simultaneously. A Turkish satellite-TV channel beamed toward Western Europe may help to preserve emigrants' cultural bonds with their homeland, but the channel is also an ingredient in an overall process of glo-

Figure 1. Media Facilitate and Structure Virtual Spaces for Communication and Action

balization, whereby Turkish identity, language and culture are successively transformed and find themselves in a new transnational context (Robins, 2003).

As indicated in Figure 1, mediatization can facilitate quite different societal tendencies on both micro and macro levels. These include globalization, individualization, nationalization and localization. Which tendency predominates will depend on the specific context, i.e., on the institution or social activity in question. The more precise consequences of media intervention will, however, have to be explored empirically, through examination of the interplay of institutions and media in a historical and cultural context.

The expanding geography that media contribute to does not have the same degree of cohesion as the national media systems of the past. The links between local, national, individual-/group-oriented and the global are far less stable and resemble what in modern governance theory are called *loose couplings*. In late-modern, complex societies decision-making processes are not necessarily steered via linear processes with initial problem definition followed by analysis and policy formulation and then decision. Bureaucratic organizations with well-defined hierarchies and decision processes have been replaced in part by network governance, which is of a more fragmentary nature (Bogason, 2001). In like manner, the different social spaces may be more or less loosely coupled. In national media systems of yesteryear, the links between the media and political and cultural institutions were generally rather strong. Topics mentioned in print and broadcast media often had direct consequences in the political system and in cultural and confessional spheres – and vice versa. In globalized media systems the linking mechanism between media representations and social action is less pronounced. Topics discussed in internet chat rooms or blogs, on transnational satellite-TV channels or on local minority radio stations generally have only marginal influence, if any, on policy-making in national spaces; conversely, national policies and restrictions can be contradicted and rather easily circumvented by means of foreign web sites and radio or television channels. In short, the interplay between mediatization and globalization means a more complex social and cultural geography, in which individual, local, national and global entities can be linked in new ways.

Modernity and Mediatization

Mediatization is an important concept in modern sociology as it relates to the overriding process of modernization of society and culture. The discipline of sociology was founded in conjunction with the study of the breakthrough of modern society. Pioneers in the field like Max Weber, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Georg Simmel were not particularly interested in the role or importance of mass media, but focused instead on phenomena like industrialization, urbanization, secularization and individualization. Nor did later sociologists show very much interest in the media. Only late in his career did Pierre Bourdieu, for example, write about the media, and his critique of television journalism (Bourdieu, 1999) appears rather shallow, compared to his earlier published work. Viewed in a historical perspective, the lack of interest in the media among classical sociologists should perhaps not surprise us. Through the nineteenth century ‘media’ were not visible in their own right; they were specific technologies and separate cultural phenomena – books, newspapers, the telegraph, etc. – each of which were instruments in the hands of other institutions, such as literature, science, politics, commerce, etc.

Only with the expansion of mass media in the twentieth century did the media begin to be perceived as media in their own right, viz., as forms of communication that shared certain constitutive characteristics and were of some consequence. North American sociology emerged in the 1930s, and there the study of mass media – films, radio and newspapers – played a central role for some brief decades. Central figures like Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Robert Merton applied sociological perspectives to the media, but then abandoned media in favor of other objects of study. Instead, in North America and elsewhere specialized disciplines arose – Communication Research and Mass Communication Research or Media Studies – that focused singularly on the media and their role in culture and society. As a consequence of this specialization, the study of media lost contact with broader sociological perspectives. That is part of the reason why medium theory, the theory that most explicitly deals with the roles of media in society, has not been embraced by sociologists, nor have medium theorists shown much interest in using sociological concepts. This should not be taken to imply that media research has been totally isolated from sociology and other core disciplines. On the contrary, media scholars have frequently drawn upon other disciplines in their study of one or another phenomenon. For example, political theory has been used in the study of opinion formation, and anthropological theory has been applied to the study of media use. But when it comes to more fundamental sociological subjects, such as modernization processes, there has been little cross-fertilization.

In recent years, however, we have seen some steps toward rapprochement between the two disciplines. Manuel Castells’ (2001) discussion of internet and the network society is an attempt to integrate a media perspective into sociological theory. Likewise, from the Media Studies point of view, studies of globalization have aroused interest in sociological and cultural analysis (Silverstone, 2006). The theory of mediatization is an attempt to bring this rapprochement a step further. Mediatization is at once a societal process that calls for dialogue between media scholars and sociologists, and a theoretical concept that can only be understood through a combination of Sociology and Media Studies. Mediatization should be viewed as a modernization process on a par with urbanization and individualization, whereby the media, in a similar manner, both contribute to disembedding social relations from existing contexts and re-embedding them in new social contexts. Thus mediatization is a distinct late-modern process that is, to quote John B. Thompson, “partially constitutive of modern societies, and are partially constitutive of what is ‘mod-

ern' about the societies in which we live in today" (Thompson, 1990:15). When classical sociology was in its formative years, media had not become distinct enough from other institutions, nor were they at all as pervasive as they are today. For contemporary sociological inquiry into late-modern society, a theory of the importance of the media for culture and society is no longer an interesting possibility, but an absolute necessity.

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The New Wave of Pragmatism in Communication Studies¹

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Abstract

This article examines two recent discussions of pragmatism in the field of communication and media studies: Chris Russill's reconstruction of a pragmatist tradition based on the theories of William James and John Dewey, and Mike Sandbothe's neopragmatist design for media philosophy. The main contention of the article is that Russill and Sandbothe advocate an unnecessarily narrow conception of pragmatist thought, one that tends to exclude the contribution of Charles S. Peirce, the founder of pragmatism. After the presentation of Russill's and Sandbothe's positions, the article attempts to meet their explicit and implicit criticisms of Peircean pragmatism. More specifically, it is shown that Peirce does not advocate "transcendental universalism". In conclusion, the article argues that his broad conception of experience is preferable to the radical empiricism of James, and that Peircean habit-realism is not only compatible with Dewey's pragmatism, but may in fact provide the most fertile starting-point for pragmatist communication inquiry.

Keywords: pragmatism, communication theory, Peirce, James, Dewey

Introduction

The second coming of pragmatism, a source of inspiration and irritation for philosophers since the 1970s, has at last begun to make serious inroads into communication studies. Of course, pragmatist thought has influenced communication scholars before. However, unless I am mistaken, it is only quite recently that the idea of a distinct, substantial pragmatist *tradition* in communication studies has been explicitly set forth (Russill 2004; 2005b; Craig 2007; see also Simonson 2001). Concurrently, a neopragmatist conception of "media philosophy" has emerged (Sandbothe 2005a; 2005b). Together, these events substantiate the claim of a new wave of pragmatism in media and communication studies.²

In this article, I will mainly consider two fresh attempts to assess pragmatism's role in communication and media studies: Chris Russill's reconstruction of a pragmatist tradition based on the classical theories of James and Dewey,³ and Mike Sandbothe's neopragmatist design for an autonomous discipline of media philosophy. There are similarities between these approaches, but also noteworthy differences, which point to certain tensions in pragmatist thought. However, my principal aim is to argue that both Russill and Sandbothe advocate too narrow conceptions of pragmatism. More specifically, both of these attempts to utilise pragmatist philosophy tend to bypass Charles S. Peirce, the founder of pragmatism, in favour of other figures, such as James and Rorty. This is, I

feel, a rather short-sighted preference – one that might rob the pragmatist movement of some of its conceptual power and critical potential.

In view of the status of Dewey as the seminal pragmatist of the new wave,⁴ it is useful to establish that there is far more compatibility between Peircean and Deweyan pragmatism than is commonly recognised. However, a turn to Peirce would certainly involve more than identifying connections to Dewey. Arguably, Peirce's philosophy is capable of providing a fertile platform for critical studies, in spite of its unfashionable leanings toward system-building and its realistic undertones. In my attempt to meet implicit and explicit criticisms of Peirce, I will also suggest that communication studies would be better served by a suitably adapted Peircean habit-realism than by the Jamesian particularism favoured by many new wave pragmatists.

However, lest I be accused of undue narrowness myself, I wish to make it clear that this article will neither do full justice to Russill's and Sandbothe's projects nor attempt to present a full picture of pragmatist thought.⁵ Moreover, I will not examine the most sustained attempt to utilise Peirce in communication studies to date – Klaus Bruhn Jensen's (1995) social semiotics (see also Bergman 2000; Schrøder 1994a; 1994b). In the present discussion, Peirce's theory of signs is provisionally placed in the background; while no account of Peircean pragmatism is sufficient without a thorough study of its connection to his *semeiotic*, this article is deliberately focused on issues arising from the new wave of pragmatism.⁶

Radical Empiricism

Russill's project might be simply described as an attempt to establish the existence of a communication-theoretical tradition of pragmatism and its contemporary relevance. At first blush, the claim that there is a distinctive pragmatist school feels like hyperbole, if not outright fabrication. While it cannot be denied that pragmatist thought has affected the field in many ways, it would seem to be a case of sundry influences on individual scholars rather than a tradition of thought in the proper sense.

There is, however, a different way to understand the character of the elusive tradition. Russill (2004) argues that pragmatism is capable of meeting the criteria set up in Robert Craig's "constitutive metamodel" of communication theory (Craig 1999; 2001; 2007). Indeed, it seems that it is not the existence of an actual scholarly community that is primarily at stake here, but rather the demarcation of a characteristic theoretical disposition.

Craig (1999) identifies seven traditions of communication theory: critical, cybernetic, phenomenological, rhetorical, semiotic, sociocultural, and sociopsychological. Russill (2004; 2005b) criticises Craig for ignoring an eighth tradition, that of pragmatism. As Craig (2007) includes Russill's conception in his revised metamodel, we may conclude that this endeavour has been at least partly successful; pragmatism is beginning to be accepted as a genuine alternative in communication theory.

However, it is worth taking a critical look at the particular understanding of the tradition that Russill advocates. While Dewey, with some support from George Herbert Mead, is taken to elaborate a uniquely pragmatistic conception of communication, it is James's ground-breaking efforts that allegedly make this possible. Indeed, Russill's reconstructive endeavour seems to be partly motivated by a wish to vindicate James as an unsung pioneer of communication studies; Russill suggests that we ought to return to pragmatism via James's *radical empiricism*.

Russill construes radical empiricism as a world-view conducive to pragmatist communication inquiry (cf. James 1904a). Moreover, he interprets James's theory in a somewhat unorthodox way, placing less emphasis on its peculiar conception of knowledge than on its perspectival upshot. This is understandable, for James's brand of thorough empiricism contains certain incongruous features that may render it less viable as a fountainhead for communication studies.

Put simply, empiricism "lays the explanatory stress upon the part, the element, the individual, and treats the whole as a collection and the universal as an abstraction"; it is the opposite of *rationalism*, which "tends to emphasize universals and to make wholes prior to parts in the order of logic as well as in that of being" (James 1904a, p. 534). In other words, the whole is nothing but a sum of its parts, and universals are reducible to particulars. However, in order to be *radical*, empiricism must admit directly experienced relations into its constructions. That is, not merely particular experiences are taken to be "real", but also any particular relation between experiences that is actually experienced.

Accordingly, James's original presentation of radical empiricism puts the emphasis on a reconception of direct experience; the radical empiricist includes basic relations of continuity and discontinuity as well as things in the domain of acceptable empirical particulars. However, one may note a certain vacillation in James's characterisations of pure experience, the assumed primordial state of being; while he stresses the reality of relations in experience, he also claims that the universe of particulars is a *chaos* – which leaves room for rather giddy conclusions, all the way to full-blown solipsism. Consequently, Russill chooses to emphasise James's occasional acknowledgements of the need for *abstraction* as a means of making sense of a potentially disorganised world; reflection is needed in order to categorise "the original flux of life" (James 1905a, p. 29). In particular, Russill approves of the way James accounts for the need of active grouping and organisation by an agent in "How Two Minds Can Know One Thing".

Experiences come to us on an enormous scale, and if we take them all together, they come in a chaos of incommensurable relations that we can not straighten out. We have to abstract different groups of them, and handle these separately if we are to talk of them at all. But how the experiences *get themselves made*, or *why* their characters and relations are such as appear, we cannot begin to understand. (James 1905b, p. 180)

This statement raises a number of questions. Firstly, it is not clear that the claim is at all compatible with the basic tenets of radical empiricism, as James appears to postulate abstraction as a *necessary* ingredient in a meaningful world. It is at any rate difficult to see how philosophers – and people in general – would be able to produce sensible discourse without appealing to such concepts. Yet, James does not approve of treating these indispensable abstractions and universals as *real* in any substantial sense. Secondly, it seems to introduce a dualistic distinction between knowing subject and known object – the kind of separation James definitely wants to abolish from philosophical parlance. However, given James's particularistic assumptions, the only way to avoid such a dualism seems to be to introduce a rather awkward way of talking about experiences knowing other experiences (see, e.g., James 1904a, p. 539).

Nonetheless, Russill argues that James has identified a key problem of and for communication. When the epistemological question of how two minds can know the same thing is reconstructed on the basis of the problem of incommensurability, the

discrimination between subjects and objects is seen to be an outcome of cognitive activity performed for certain purposes rather than a hard and fast reality waiting to be discovered. Employing Deweyan terminology, Russill claims that such distinctions are made “in the process of coming to know and resolve a problematic situation” (Russill 2005b, p. 290).

Thus, setting out from radical empiricism, the central question of communication can purportedly be articulated in terms of incommensurability. We live in a world of sundry, seemingly incompatible relations, and are faced with the difficult challenge of pragmatically coordinating our activities in an often hostile environment. In Russill’s account, this situation is presented as the basic setting for the construction of a communication theory in the pragmatist mould. Since communication is to take place in a sphere marked by incommensurable relations and abstractions, the emphasis is shifted from subjects striving to know an object to natural beings engaged in social and purposive activity. As Craig (2007) summarises the matter, “the pragmatist tradition conceptualizes communication in response to the problem of incommensurability – that is, the problem of cooperation in a pluralistic social world characterized by the absence of common, absolute standards for resolving differences” (p. 131). We might conclude that James’s radical empiricism provides Russill’s reconstruction of the pragmatist tradition with a worldview and initial ontology; it is a universe of indeterminacy and pluralities, or rather a “pluriverse” (James 1909).

Before we move on, some additional remarks on radical empiricism and Russill’s interpretation of James are in order. It is at least worth noting that radical empiricism is meant to be a philosophical framework that would privilege neither physical nor mental language, but rather allow for plural descriptions of one and the same thing. Consequently, the world might be described in the terms of natural science, of the humanities, or of religion, without one necessarily holding sway over the others. Such a pluralism would not conflict with Russill’s approach, but it appears to place the problem of incommensurability on a different level than in his discussion. But then, it is admittedly rather difficult to grasp what James means by incommensurability. In the passage cited above, pure experience, as such, is marked by incommensurable relations; abstractions and classifications are needed to overcome basic incompatibility and enable intelligent discourse. This, again, indicates that incommensurability is a fact of given experience rather than of descriptive frameworks, and that abstractive activity may be driven by a need to overcome a felt disjunction in the experiential sphere. In fact, Russill suggests that this is the proper upshot of radical empiricism: a conception of a world full of seemingly incommensurable relations, which nonetheless are not beyond debate and inquiry. He contrasts this position to those of two influential intellectuals influenced by pragmatism.

...contra Rorty, there is no absolute or necessary incommensurability implied by James’s position, nor, contra Habermas, can the problem be overcome once and for all. Demonstrating incommensurability is not the theoretical goal or end of James’s position; it is a practical beginning. (Russill 2005b, p. 291)

Indeed, recovering James is only a practical starting point for Russill’s project; his goal is to show that it provides a suitable basis for understanding and developing later pragmatist approaches to communication. Most decisively, Russill (2005b, p. 296) argues that the second-generation pragmatist Dewey accepts James’s radical empiricism, endeavouring to build a philosophy based on the “metaphysics of the incommensurable”.⁷ This is a strong thesis that is difficult to substantiate. Given Dewey’s emphasis on community and his

rather euphoric praise for communication, it seems somewhat questionable to speak of such a metaphysical commitment. However, if Russill means merely to say that Dewey approves of James's struggle against a deterministic world-view, and that such an acceptance of objective indeterminacy facilitates the development of a pragmatist tradition of thinking about communication, then the claim appears more plausible. It seems at least possible to maintain that the communication theories of Dewey and Mead can be viewed as means for making a shared perspective available against the backdrop provided by the problem of incommensurability in experience (Russill 2005b, p. 298). On the other hand, it is not quite clear whether Russill thinks that incommensurability is primarily a feature of pure experience or of abstraction; that is, his account wavers between a metaphysical stance and a more conventional kind of epistemic or social constructionism. In his discussion of Dewey, the emphasis would appear to be placed on the latter.

Russill (2004) argues that communication is fully situated in James's indeterminate world by a triple contingency that is characteristic of Dewey's conception of social action. At the first level, communicative contingency entails that one agent contingently selects a message to influence another. Second-order contingency involves a joint determination of communicative content by two incommensurable perspectives, leading to a relative sameness. Triple contingency is constituted by agents in communication and the context formed by a pluralistic public containing incommensurable interests (Craig 2007, p. 132). Russill connects this to Dewey's theory of inquiry; the aim is to discover or develop a rational course of action that enables agents to overcome obstacles in a democratic and pluralistic setting. Intelligent action, "on the basis of consequences of habitual and prospective actions, creates a standpoint of action that is neither ego's nor alter's but a third perspective" (Russill 2004, p. 105). In other words, the Deweyan point of view prescribes inquiry into the consequences of certain lines of action in view of public interest as the only way to overcome the problematic situations caused by incommensurability.

Here, one may wonder whether radical empiricism, with its strong emphasis on actual experience and lack of attention to the relevance of *potential* experiential consequences, really provides an adequate platform for Deweyan pragmatism; arguably, Dewey's meliorism would be better supported by a position more sensitive to the role of imaginative abstraction in grasping conceivable effects. Yet, Russill presents Dewey's theories of inquiry and community as responses to the problem of communication – that is, incommensurability – as articulated by James.

Russill (2005b, p. 297) also points out some characteristic weaknesses in Dewey's approach, in particular its tendency to generally rate communication and community over difference. Following Peters's (1999) lead, Russill uses James's particularism, with its emphasis on individuality and difference, as a corrective to the Dewey that appears to ignore irreducible otherness in experience. Above all, Russill (2005b; 2006) criticises James Carey's reading of Dewey for privileging dialogue over difference and individuality. That is, a laudatory view of communication as community is not sufficient; it can actually be detrimental. Russill (2005b, p. 298) argues that only an account of communication linked to an account of social inquiry will succeed. However, he identifies a potential deficiency in Dewey's treatment of the problematic situations that allegedly produce investigation and transformations of practices. While the leading classical pragmatist maintains that social inquiry, which produces *publics*, is pursued in order to resolve perceived problems, his theory is restricted to rendering indeterminate situations more determinate. Therefore, Russill (2006) suggests that the pragmatist canon

should be complemented by Michel Foucault's account of problematisation as a method for rendering the determinate more indeterminate. In other words, Russill appears to be looking for conceptual tools that would allow Deweyan social inquiry to perform as an active critique, *producing* problematic situations rather than merely responding to them. Here, it is not necessary to examine Russill's proposal to complement the pragmatist tradition with Foucault, but later in our discussion we will see that there are elements in classical pragmatism, mostly ignored by Russill, which might provide the kind of platform he is looking for.

Transformative Practices

While Russill places his discussion of pragmatism mainly in the context of debates in communication theory, Sandbothe (2005a; 2005b) chooses a more revolutionary course; he wishes to bypass or overcome traditional philosophical disputes in this sphere by espousing a Rorty-inspired neopragmatism. However, for the present discussion, Sandbothe's media philosophy is primarily of interest for its explicit criticism of Peirce, connected to Jamesian preferences that to a certain extent seem to corroborate Russill's approach.

Sandbothe (2005a, p. 78) delineates two paths for the media-philosophical project: (1) the *theoreticist* route, in which media philosophy is seen as a new foundational discipline within philosophy, taking the place of discarded alternatives such as metaphysics or epistemology, and (2) the *pragmatist* option, which does not present itself as a new foundation for philosophy; the latter is rather connected to a radical transformation of philosophy's self-image, associated with Rorty's pragmatic twist of the linguistic turn.

According to Sandbothe, theoreticism entails an "understanding of media philosophy for which theoretical reflection on the conditions of possibility for the generation of meaning and the constitution of reality have become an academic end in itself" (Sandbothe 2005a, p. 3). The theoreticist purportedly "abstracts from all *concrete* contexts of interest and all *particular* targets set by human communities" (Sandbothe 2005a, p. 82). The alternative pragmatist approach affirms the primacy of action but without thereby opposing theoretical work *per se* (Sandbothe 2005a, p. 6). Sandbothe (2005a, p. 3) advocates a media-philosophical development of neopragmatism, which purportedly "leads to the attempt to relate media-theoretically interpreted basic questions of modern philosophy to the socio-political horizons of action that guide democratic societies".

To understand the rationale and upshot of Sandbothe's neopragmatist project, it is important to recognise that he wishes to discard the long-running debate between realists and constructionists as a futile one that the pragmatic turn can overcome. By the "pragmatic turn", Sandbothe (2005b) understands "the transition to philosophical activity for which the representationalist question of our theories' reference to reality, with a view to their cognitive or truth value, is no longer central, but instead of this the anti-representationalist question of the usefulness of our thinking within the framework of concrete, historically contingent, politically and socially determined situations of action". He emphasises that it is important not to confuse this distinction with that of realism versus anti-realism. Following Rorty (1991, p. 2), Sandbothe claims that the quarrel between realist and anti-realist – that is, constructionist – epistemologies is one that could only arise *within* representationalism; under "the anti-representationalist banner cognitive feats are apprehended not as representations constructing or copying reality, but as pragmatic tools for changing reality" (Sandbothe 2005b). In Sandbothe's

and William Eddinton's (2004) terminology, this is a *deflationist* variant of neopragmatism that maintains that we should "view our knowledge as a collection of tools for the democratically-oriented transformation of reality" (p. 2); it is thus distinguished from such *inflationist* forms of pragmatism that strive to substitute an anti-representationalist epistemology for the representationalist one. Because of its commitment to radical empiricism, which entails a theory of knowledge, Russill's approach might be seen as a form of inflationism.

In contrast to constructionists, Sandbothe does not primarily ask how "reality" is constituted in mental representation; his principal question concerns how reality can be transformed by using and developing cognitive tools. To coin yet another ism, this *transformationalism* is a radicalised linguistic viewpoint, which "connects 'pragmatic' with 'transformative' in the sense of 'abnormal', 'innovative', and 'changing'" (Sandbothe 2004, p. 70); it eschews claims of universal scope, promoting the construction of new "local" vocabularies without shying away from explicit political commitments. Significantly, the basic intellectual support for this approach is found in James's philosophy. Sandbothe (2005a; 2005b) leans on James's (1907) characterisation of pragmatism as both a *method* and a *genetic theory of truth*.

As a method, pragmatism is to be understood as a tool for settling metaphysical disputes. The classic expression of this methodical approach is Peirce's *pragmatic maxim*:

Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object. (CP 5.402 [1878])

James (1898) approves of the general drift of Peirce's maxim, but maintains that it should be expressed "more broadly". However, this claim is contestable; while James does expand pragmatism in many ways, e.g. in the direction of a theory of truth and a specific philosophical world-view, he also restricts the scope of the meaning-theoretical maxim to *particular* experience. On the other hand, Sandbothe thinks that this narrowing of methodical pragmatism is a compelling reason to choose James and reject Peirce as the leading light of pragmatist media philosophy.

In contrast to James, Peirce, whose thinking by his own testimony took its point of departure from Kantian transcendental philosophy, construed the pragmatic maxim in the sense of an evolutionary conception of transcendental universalism. According to Peirce it holds not only that "the whole function of thought is to produce habits of action". But rather, going beyond this, he defines the "identity of a habit" in a transcendental manner, with a view to "how it might lead us to act, not merely under such circumstances as are likely to arise, but under such as might possibly occur, no matter how improbable they may be".

In opposition to this, for James it is the concrete and determinate, that is the particular, situationally codetermined consequences of a concept that constitutes its meaning. (Sandbothe 2005b)

The quote above reveals some of Sandbothe's reasons for ignoring Peirce and preferring James as "the more consistent pragmatist" (Sandbothe 2005a, p. 86). Terms such as "transcendental" and "universal" are abhorrent to most forms of neopragmatism; the former supposedly discloses a Kantian obsession with conditions of knowledge while the latter indicates a belief that philosophy should strive for knowledge claims of

universal scope rather than promote concrete, politically determined, and historically contingent transformations of action. Moreover, Peircean philosophy involves a suspect penchant for science and experimental thought, which James allegedly avoids. As Sandbothe (2005b) pithily declares, in “contrast to Peirce’s universalist transcendental pragmatism, which is oriented according to the model of scientific laboratory situations, James’s contextualist pragmatism can be directly applied to the multiply determined and contingently structured conditions of everyday life as well as to the strongly traditionally determined contexts of philosophy and theology”.

The genetic theory of truth, which Sandbothe commends as the second major contribution of James’s pragmatism, is a product of applying the pragmatic method, understood in a Jamesian fashion, to the concept of “truth”.⁸ Put very simply, the “true” is simply that which works in view of a specific problem situation. A true opinion is one that manages to produce coherence among the particular experiences confronting an individual; it is an idea “that mediates between the stock [of old opinions] and the new experience and runs them into one another most felicitously and expediently” (James 1907, p. 60). As Sandbothe (2005b) formulates the matter, truth so understood is no longer a mysterious property attached to ideas or propositions for all eternity, but rather a mark of performance that a particular idea may acquire in a certain context.

Here, we may see how Jamesian pragmatism meets radical empiricism. His “pluralistic pragmatism” defines truth in terms of the coherence of finite experiences; the proper sense of “true” is that of an idea that works to overcome a conflict caused by a new experience. This is a radically individualistic and particularistic point of view, as that which works for a certain individual in a specific situation, in his or her field of experience, is the truth – a particular, relative, and mutable truth.

Like Russill, Sandbothe appears to approve of the way James’s philosophy deals with indeterminacy; but whereas Russill finds an acceptable pragmatist metaphysics in radical empiricism, Sandbothe is more interested in the way James’s pragmatism opens up the doors for transformative media philosophy. Sandbothe (2005b) notes that James’s individualism does not lead to moral or political resignation, but rather to a promotion of activism, in which each agent is urged to do what he or she can to advance a globally inclusive society from his or her own perspective. Yet, James retains his characteristic sensitivity to conflict, that is, to the costs of such communal progress; the implementation of certain goods inevitably leads to the repression of other goods.

Nonetheless, Sandbothe detects lingering universalist traces in James’s reflections on moral and political goods, and here Rorty comes to the rescue.

When James opens up such global horizons he by no means does this as a relativist. The “we” which James speaks of encompasses humanity and is not – as it is today, for instance, by Rorty – ethnocentrically relativized to the western world. Therein lies a universalist aspect of James’s pragmatism, one otherwise bearing a contextualist signature. The history of our network of beliefs and the development of the forms in which we live together transcends, in James’s view, all cultural differences. James proceeds – like Peirce – from the assumption that there is a uniform history of our “ways of worldmaking”. However, whereas Peirce takes the view that this uniformity is founded in an external force – one fatefully determined from outside the evolution of our beliefs, so that in the long run they guarantee realistic correspondence with a reality which itself is developing – James thinks that such correspondence cannot be assured by anything and also that it need not be assured. It suffices for James that we be concerned with the uniform

development and internal optimization of our ways of worldmaking. The question as to whether, for its part, this internal optimization is to be explained once again remains unanswered with James. A consistent pragmatic answer to this question was first provided by Rorty, who understands the generation of global coherences ethnocentrically as being the dissemination through media transmission of political vocabularies developed in western industrial nations in the Enlightenment age in Europe and America. (Sandbothe 2005b)

Thus, Rorty's straightforward "ethnocentrism" is the only consistent pragmatist alternative in Sandbothe's view. Instead of looking for a universally acceptable stance, we should argue for what is best in the set of opinions and values that we happen to have been born into, and strive to transform existing practices in a piecemeal manner, with no claim to universal or eternal authority. Sandbothe's own specific contribution to the neopragmatist mission is the emphasis on new media as an arena for transforming political vocabularies and practices. Drawing additional support from Wittgenstein and Nietzsche, Sandbothe (2005a) articulates his primary anti-theoreticist "guiding maxim" as follows: "pragmatic media philosophy should avoid building up the words 'medium' and 'media' as key epistemological concepts with which the puzzles of the epistemological or linguistic tradition can now – finally – be solved after all, and should instead pay attention to the concrete use that we make, or don't make, of media in certain contexts of action" (p. 88). That is, the media should be approached as tools of worldmaking, connecting people and disseminating ideas – but always in view of political and historical context.

Sandbothe goes on to articulate his media-philosophical programme in some detail, linking representationalism to a book-printing tradition and anti-representationalism to an emerging new media culture, which opens up new arenas of transformation. In other words, Sandbothe seems to employ *media-ecological* (that is, *medium-theoretical*) arguments to support his contention that the present historical period is marked by a media constellation conducive to certain modes of thought and action (cf. Lum 2006; Strate 2006). If this reading is correct, then the new wave of pragmatism can be viewed as a product and a response to changes in the media environment (in the broad sense) as well as a source of tools for transforming the cognitive ecology that restricts and enables human action.

While it would be of interest to examine this form of progressivism further, we may halt here; we now have the materials we need to grasp the starting points and aims of Russill's and Sandbothe's pragmatist projects, and to understand their grounds for bypassing Peirce in favour of James. Indeed, in the lengthy passage cited above, Sandbothe reveals one of the foremost reasons for the neglect of Peircean pragmatism: its adherence to realism.

Consequences of Realism

While neither Russill nor Sandbothe have primarily set out to criticise Peirce, their respective ways of approaching the pragmatist tradition expose or suggest several potential weaknesses in Peircean pragmatism. In the final part of this paper, we will review some central critical points, and see whether we can find Peircean resources capable of meeting the implicit and explicit challenges. Admittedly, the relatively conventional scholarly framework of this discussion is more suited as a reply to Russill's reconstruction of the

pragmatist tradition than as a counterproposal to Sandbothe's media-philosophical activism, but reflections on what kind of pragmatism may prove most useful in the future should not be without interest for the latter.

The principal criticisms of the Peircean position may be conveniently summarised as follows:

1. Peirce advocates transcendental universalism.
2. As radical empiricism provides pragmatistic communication theory with an adequate starting point, Peirce is simply not needed.
3. Peircean pragmatism is realistic and therefore ill suited as a philosophical framework for critical communication studies.

Let us consider each of these claims in turn.

Avoiding Transcendental Universalism

One of Sandbothe's sharpest criticisms is that Peirce's Kantian pedigree twists his pragmatism into a transcendental doctrine. Peirce advocates the robust view that "the whole function of thought is to produce habits of action", but then he defines "habit" in terms of how it *would conceivably* lead us to act in probable or even improbable circumstances, rather than in terms of how it *will* cause particular action in concrete contexts. Thus, the meaning of a concept is defined in terms of conceivable practical consequences – the possible actions that the conceptual habit entails – and is not limited to specific effects that will occur in the life of an individual. Therefore, Sandbothe concludes that Peirce betrays his pragmatist insight because of an unfortunate transcendental yearning for universal meaning; Peirce's pragmatic method is not limited to particular experiential consequences for concrete, situated agents. To make matters worse, Peirce defines "truth" and "reality" in terms of a final opinion that is *fated*. This is allegedly a transcendental approach, for the concepts are unpacked in terms of conditions for inquiry.⁹ Moreover, Peirce at times appears to affirm a more metaphysical interpretation of this "convergence view". According to this position, external forces will in the long run compel any genuine inquirer to the one true opinion, a representation of the real.

Sandbothe is partly right but mostly mistaken. It is true that Peirce's philosophy has its roots in Kant, and some of his early writings can be said to be Kantian in a broad sense. Sandbothe is also correct in noting that Peirce's first pragmatist essays contain remnants of transcendental philosophy. However, as Peirce's thought develops, it moves away from Kant, and transcendentalism is eschewed.¹⁰ This is unambiguously expressed in the following illuminating passage:

I do not admit that indispensability is any ground of belief. It may be indispensable that I should have \$500 in the bank – because I have given checks to that amount. But I have never found that the indispensability directly affected my balance, in the least. When a hand at whist has reached the point at which each player has but three cards left, the one who has to lead often goes on the assumption that the cards are distributed in a certain way, because it is only on that assumption that the odd trick can be saved. This is indisputably logical; and on a more critical analogous occasion there might be some *psychological* excuse, or even warrant, for a "will to believe" that such was really the case. But all that logic warrants is a *hope*, and not a belief. It must be admitted, however, that such hopes play a

considerable part in logic. For example, when we discuss a vexed question, we *hope* that there is some ascertainable truth about it, and that the discussion is not to go on forever and to no purpose. A transcendentalist would claim that it is an indispensable “presupposition” that there is an ascertainable true answer to every intelligible question. I used to talk like that, myself; for when I was a babe in philosophy my bottle was filled from the udders of Kant. But by this time I have come to want something more substantial. (CP 2.113 [c. 1902])

As Peirce here admits, he has altered his position; where he used to speak of truth being fated, he now refers to it as a *hope*. Indeed, a careful study of Peirce’s original pragmatist essays shows that he later revised these texts, actually crossing over words like “fate” and “destiny” and replacing them by “hope”. Admittedly, Peirce sometimes speaks of the final truth as a rational assumption entertained by all genuine inquirers or as a requirement of logic; but this must be taken in a weaker, non-transcendentalist sense. The key here is the reference to the aims that motivate inquiry in a community.

We cannot be quite sure that the community ever will settle down to an unalterable conclusion upon any given question. Even if they do so for the most part, we have no reason to think the unanimity will be quite complete, nor can we rationally presume any overwhelming *consensus* of opinion will be reached upon every question. All that we are entitled to assume is in the form of a *hope* that such conclusion may be substantially reached concerning the particular questions with which our inquiries are busied. (CP 6.610 [1893]; cf. NEM 4:xii-xiii)

Observe that Peirce here prefers to speak of *particular* investigations. The hope concerning *each* case is then generalised, by a cognitive leap, so as to be stated as the law of excluded middle, applicable to *all* cases (NEM 4:xiii [1913]). This constitutes the basis of the idea of *one* final opinion. In spite of appearances, this hope does not require a strong commitment to total consensus; we “must look forward to the explanation, not of all things, but of any given thing whatever” (W 6:206 [1887-8]). In other words, the drive toward concord, systematised as “science”, is connected to the felt need to find a generally acceptable resolution to certain problem situations. As Peirce notes, processes of inquiry and communication do not only rely on a sufficient but inevitably vague common ground of experience; they also require differences in the experiential assemblages of individuals – the kind of divergences that Russill identifies as “contingencies” – in order to develop (see Bergman 2007). Universal consensus would be a state of permanent habits and stagnation.

There is no transcendental guarantee for truth; Peirce actually maintains that it may very well be that there is no such thing as “truth” in the absolute sense (SS 73 [1908]; MS 655:26-27 [1910]). On the other hand, the conception of truth emerges naturally in contexts of doubt, belief, and inquiry. What we believe in, we hold for true; consequently, in striving to fixate belief, we are already looking for truth. So far, Peirce’s position agrees with the Jamesian point of view, but he would add the requirements of sufficient time and effort; “when I say that a given assertion is ‘true’, what I mean is that I believe that, as regards that particular assertion, [...] sufficiently energetic, searching, and intelligently conducted inquiry, – could a person carry it on endlessly, – would cause him to be fully satisfied with the assertion and never to be shaken from this satisfaction” (MS 655:27 [1910]).

On the other hand, Peirce stresses the need to acknowledge the public or social – indeed, *moral* – dimension of truth.

Unless truth be recognized as *public*, – as that of which *any* person would come to be convinced if he carried his inquiry, his sincere search for immovable belief, far enough, – then there will be nothing to prevent each one of us from adopting an utterly futile belief of his own which all the rest will disbelieve. Each one will set himself up as a little prophet; that is, a little “crank”, a half-witted victim of his own narrowness. (SS 73 [1908])

It is important to realise that Peirce’s point of view provides no transcendental support for truth; as he stresses, his public conception is a mere definition of the *meaning* of “truth”, and not any kind of bedrock of infallible *a priori* knowledge. In fact, the interesting question here is whether the conception of inquiry implied by Peirce’s fallible but general conception is preferable to the ethnocentric viewpoint espoused by Rorty. In a sense, it is a matter of two competing ethical perspectives; but the Peircean alternative cannot be dismissed by simply branding it “transcendental”.

However, Sandbothe may mean something different by “transcendental”, namely Peirce’s tendency to define “meaning” as something that transcends particular experience. If this is the kind of “universalism” that Sandbothe has in mind, then Peirce must plead guilty. However, the Peircean viewpoint is arguably more nuanced than the neopragmatist critics realise. Peirce maintains that

...man is so completely hemmed in by the bounds of his possible practical experience, his mind is so restricted to being the instrument of his needs, that he cannot, in the least, mean anything that transcends those limits. The strict consequence of this is, that it is all nonsense to tell him that he must not think in this or that way because to do so would be to transcend the limits of a possible experience. (CP 5.536 [1905])

How does this viewpoint diverge from the Jamesian stance, which according to Sandbothe (2005b) only considers “concrete” and “determinate” consequences to be meaningful? Overlooking minor discrepancies, the central point of contention seems to be Peirce’s usage of terms such as “conceivable” or “possible”, which indicates a conception stretching beyond the particular experiential limits set by James. We will see that this is indeed a difference that makes a difference; but for now it is sufficient to note that Sandbothe’s austere, James-inspired neopragmatism reduces experience to actual experience. Classical pragmatism of the Peircean kind does not.

Beyond Pure Experience

Sandbothe’s explicit criticism is mostly quite easy to rebuff; it sets out from a few well-rehearsed neopragmatist clichés, ignoring all developments and nuances in Peirce’s thought. It is somewhat more difficult to motivate why a communication-theoretical reconstruction of the pragmatist tradition, such as Russill’s, would need Peirce’s contribution. The final pages of this article will suggest some reasons why the new wave of pragmatism in communication studies should genuinely consider the Peircean point of view instead of dismissing it lightly.

To a large extent, Russill bases his reconstruction of the pragmatist tradition on (1) the belief that Dewey’s philosophy builds directly on Jamesian pragmatism and (2) the assumption that the conceptions of inquiry and philosophy entailed in radical empiricism form a sufficient starting point and fertile ground for communication theory.

It is of course a fact that Dewey draws heavily on James, in particular in his early pragmatist phase. However, it seems equally clear that Peirce's role in Dewey's thought grows as time marches on; the later Dewey of *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* is arguably more Peircean than Jamesian. This gradual turn to Peirce is relatively well-documented in Dewey's writings;¹¹ it is connected to Dewey's growing appreciation of the social dimension of Peirce's theory of inquiry, something that Dewey finds definitely lacking in James (see, in particular, MW 10:77 [1916]). In fact, Dewey explicitly acknowledges his debt, and extols Peirce as "the first writer on logic to make inquiry and its methods the primary and ultimate source of logical subject-matter" (LW 12:17 [1938]).

Consequently, Russill's reconstruction of the pragmatist tradition ought to be augmented by a recognition of Peirce's role as a major influence on Dewey. Indeed, in view of the weight Russill correctly places on the connection between Dewey's theories of communication and inquiry, this addition would seem to be rather natural.

Furthermore, Russill's (2005b, p. 298) claim that Dewey's theory of knowledge could build upon the universe of James's radical empiricism is questionable. Recall that Jamesian empiricism limits philosophical constructions to elements directly experienced, including relations. That is, philosophy should always be grounded in particular experience, and whatever is not so substantiated ought to be discarded as superfluous. However, one should query whether such a conception of experience and philosophy is truly the most satisfactory one for pragmatist communication theory. As we have already noted, James's theory requires a strict adherence to direct experience, which it abruptly and uncomfortably abandons to acknowledge the role of abstraction. Radical empiricism finds itself ill equipped to handle the general conceptions ("universals") needed to make sense of the world. Strictly speaking, they should be limited to direct experience, if they are to be allowed in philosophical discussion at all; yet, as transcending particular experiences, they are shady intellectual constructions – necessary evils, perhaps. Here, Peirce's approach may provide an attractive alternative.

Peirce argues that we "must begin with all the prejudices which we actually have when we enter upon the study of philosophy" (CP 5.265 [1868]). This means *experience* in the full sense, the "total cognitive result of living" (CP 7.538) – a product of the fact that we are acting, intelligent beings in a world that often provides obstacles to our actions and surprises to our expectations. Experience is a product of certain transactions (to borrow a term from Dewey); as Peirce notes, the "very etymology of the word tells that [it] comes *ex perito*, 'out of practice'" (MS 681:3 [1913]). While he agrees with James that philosophy cannot transcend experience, his conception of experience is arguably richer. In a sense, Peirce's conception of experience is less pure than that of James; it is tainted by practices and habits.

In a criticism of Hegelian philosophy, Peirce asserts that philosophy ought not to start out from pure ideas, "vagabond thoughts that tramp the public roads without any human habitation" (CP 8.112 [c. 1900]).¹² While philosophy must in a certain sense set out from everyday experience, its primary goal is not to construct worlds from empirical atoms (things and relations), but rather to analyse how experiences connect to conceptions and habits of action, and – most importantly – how such habits can be criticised and reformed.

One reason, then, to prefer Peircean to Jamesian pragmatism as a framework for communication studies is that the former does not require that the world be constituted by particular experiences. Peirce's conception of experience is broader, and more naturally placed in a context of habits of action. Furthermore, by not restricting experience to

directly perceived things and relations, but including the conceivable within the experiential domain, Peirce leaves room both for a plausible variant of realism and paves way for a philosophy that is not restricted to description – as James’s radical empiricism should be, were it to adhere to its own principles. In other words, Peircean pragmatism encompasses an explicitly normative dimension. It remains to be seen what this entails, and whether it is a debilitating weakness or a potential strength.

Engendering Critical Inquiry

Of all the criticisms of Peirce emanating from contemporary pragmatists, accusations of “metaphysical realism” are probably the most popular. This is not entirely unfounded; some of Peirce’s realist proclamations positively invite such charges. Most conspicuously, his defence of “scholastic realism” and the reality of universals frequently troubles pragmatists. No doubt, given Russill’s and Sandbothe’s approval of Jamesian particularism, these kinds of concerns may partly explain the neglect of Peirce in the new wave of pragmatism. It does not seem too far-fetched to speculate that his realistic leanings, connected to the perception of realism as antithetical to critical inquiry, may be the main obstacle for a broader acceptance of Peircean points of view in contemporary communication studies informed by pragmatism.

Here, we cannot review the extensive debates that circle around Peirce’s scholastic realism; nor is it possible to examine the complex relationship between pragmatism and realism in any depth. Instead, let us consider how Dewey chooses to approach Peirce’s scholastic realism. Dewey notes that

Peirce repeatedly expresses his sympathy with scholastic realism as against nominalism and conceptualism. In so doing, he interprets the *Universalia* as natural operations, holding that the weakness of the other two theories arises from failure to note that ways of action are characteristic of nature. When the principles are repeatedly used as directive principles of operations, their consequences become more coherent and continuous; thereby existential material becomes more *reasonable*. Failure to note this latter point is the chief thing Peirce had against the pragmatism of James, both using test by consequences. (LW 11:108 n. 4 [1936])

Dewey interprets Peircean scholastic realism as the doctrine that universals are natural operations, more specifically ways of action characteristic of nature (in the broad sense that includes culture). In other words, they are habits. Understood in this naturalistic fashion, scholastic realism appears less stiff and “medieval”; indeed, Dewey indicates that this kind of realism is directly connected to the rational improvement of habits, and suggests that this is one reason to prefer Peirce to James. Dewey even contends that Peirce “was much more of a pragmatist in the literal sense” than James. Whereas the latter emphasised action as a means, the former viewed habits of reasonable action primarily as ends – and as Dewey notes, “ways of acting are immensely more important than is any particular result effected by action” (LW 11:483 [1937]).

However, Dewey’s position is somewhat muddled. Thus, it is useful to take several steps back and return to the roots of habit-realism in Peirce’s account of inquiry in “The Fixation of Belief” (1877) and “How to Make Our Ideas Clear” (1878). In these articles, Peirce offers an influential theory of the emergence of inquiry. In this naturalistic account, beliefs are connected to habits of action, law-like dispositions to behaviour, which form the core of the cognitive agent. If such habits function well, there is no need to question beliefs or to look for new plans of action; it is a state of bland normalcy. But

of course, active agents encounter resistances and surprises, which cause genuine doubt of beliefs and underlying habits of action. This is the root cause of inquiry, the aim of which is to establish new, more functional, habits of action.

Now, the significance of this account for present concerns lies in its simultaneous affirmation of the reality and modifiability of habits. In Peirce's parlance, actions performed here and now are not rational. Strictly speaking, they are not even intelligible, but can only be understood within a wider perspective of practice. But conduct, conceived as a *kind* of activity, displays the characteristics of mind and intelligence (Bernstein 1965, p. 77; cf. CP 8.315 [1909]). While "action" refers to something particular, "conduct" entails habituality; it is a form of action, which is rooted in natural, social, technological, and purposive contexts. That is, while every action has a cause, conduct is always connected to some purpose, no matter how trivial. Conduct entails reasons, which can be contemplated and evaluated. One of the central claims of Peirce's pragmatism is that rational cognition and rational purpose are inseparably connected (CP 5.412 [1905]).

The habitual setup of a human being is determined by natural dispositions as well as past actions and experiences; the present situation can only bring forth surprises beyond our control. But the perspectives of human beings are not restricted to the past and the present; as intelligent subjects, they are also capable of temporal projection and a certain level of control of future events.

We cannot certainly control our past actions, and I fancy it is too late to control what is happening at the very instant present. You cannot prevent what already is. If this be true, it is true that when we act, we do act under a necessity that we cannot control. But our future actions we can determine in a great measure; can we not? (EP 2:245 [1903])

According to Peirce, such control is achieved by comparison between actions, norms, and ideals (EP 2:245-55 [1903]). That is, present modes of conduct, be they primarily habits of action, of thought, or of interpretation, are judged on the basis of their purpose and their projected consequences. This reflexive deliberation is a complex process, which is performed on many different levels of abstraction. First, earlier actions may be evaluated in relation to certain previously given norms and ideals, but in subsequent deliberation the norms and ideals are compared to each other, so that resolves about future ideals of conduct are formed (CP 8.320). Ideals may be subsumed under more general ideals, and reformed in light of the new perspectives that emerge; there is virtually no end to this critical process. However, such reflexion is not extraordinary; it is simply the manner in which any human being gains control over his or her own actions, in everyday conduct as well as in more abstract endeavours. Ideals may be more or less comprehensive, but truly deliberate conduct is produced under the influence of an ideal, which is found to be adequate and attractive after severe criticism (EP 2:377-8 [1903]). In other words, human beings do not merely accept the standards of their social surroundings; they can to some extent modify their habits through self-criticism. In this sense, the human subject is capable of self-control.

This brings us to one reason for Peirce's insistence that the pragmatic method not be limited to particular, concrete, and determinate consequences. For criticism and the development of ideals, *imagination* – that is, the capacity to project consequences into the probable and improbable future – is crucial. Habits of action are real, and contain potentialities that transcend actual experience, but not possible experience. *Pace* James, universals may be abstractions, but some are nonetheless real – and not mere nominal

postulates – as they prove themselves in the test of experience. In spite of appearances, it is Peirce that stands out as the true pragmatist in this respect; if the general habit proves to be indispensable in practice, now and in the future, it is at least as real as any directly experienced thing or relation. This is *fallibilistic* realism; at no point is the reality of any universal absolutely certain, as the future may bring surprises. But as we live in the more or less vague conviction that some general conceptions are real, realism with regard to “universals” – that is, general habits instantiated as conceptions – is a pragmatically compelling position, finding additional support in the hope of attaining knowledge that drives inquiry.¹³ Whereas Jamesian particularism is ill equipped to handle abstraction, Peircean pragmatism acknowledges ways of abstracting as possible realities, instead of denigrating them as rationalistic fictions that for some inexplicable reason are needed to make sense of things.

It is the consequences of general habits that make it feasible for human beings to project meaning into the future, inquire, and experiment; arguably, a crucial task of pragmatist investigation is to trace the hypothetical effects of adopting and adapting certain habits, and to work for their general implementation where it seems useful and justified. Following this path, the Peircean conception of scientific philosophy, suitably adjusted and elaborated, might prove to be a fertile framework for critical inquiry.

On the other hand, Peircean pragmatism is hardly hospitable to transformative activism in Sandbothe's sense. Peirce argues that philosophy should *not* serve short-term practical needs or limited group interests. It aims at general knowledge (which may again lead to accusations of “universalism”). However, rather than merely accepting the status quo of common sense and waiting for problematic experiences to occur, Peirce's *critical common-sensism* undertakes to investigate beliefs that could not be doubted in the ordinary flow of life. This understanding of *laboratory* inquiry distinguishes it from James's particularism, which restricts its scope to actual experience. While there is no way to reject beliefs and prejudices *in toto*, the aim of Peirce's normative philosophy is to systematically criticise significant aesthetic, ethical, and semiotic habits with the hope of improving the capacity of intelligent beings to meet novel experiences. Thus, it would seem that his approach might provide space and means for *problematism*, understood as inquiry that does not merely resolve problematic situations, but actively introduces them with the hope of developing habits (cf. Russill 2006; 2007).

Admittedly, these remarks remain programmatic, at best. However, we have now seen how some of the explicit and implicit criticism of the new wave pragmatists can be met; and it has been suggested how a Peircean point of view can avoid some of the difficulties of Jamesian particularism while promoting a critical conception of pragmatism. Crucially, we have seen that realistic pragmatism cannot be divorced from concerns with inquiry. Thus, it seems only appropriate to conclude this brief critique of the new wave of pragmatism with some words from Dewey: “I can not close without inquiring whether recourse to Peirce would not have a most beneficial influence in contemporary discussion” (MW 10:78 [1916]).

Notes

1. This paper was originally presented in the working group for Media and Communication Theory at the NordMedia 2007 conference in Helsinki. I wish to thank the participants for a stimulating and useful discussion. I am also grateful to Chris Russill and Mike Sandbothe, who have kindly read the text and confirmed that I have not grossly misrepresented their views (which does not mean that they would have

- been fully persuaded by my arguments, of course). Their constructive attitudes stand out as admirable exemplars of the pragmatist spirit of inquiry.
2. I prefer to speak of a “new wave of pragmatism” rather than of “neopragmatism”, because some of the advocates of pragmatist ideas are consciously turning to *classical* pragmatists, such as William James and John Dewey, rather than to *neopragmatists*, such as Richard Rorty, in their attempts to re-evaluate the significance of pragmatism for the field. (For further evidence of a turn to pragmatism in communication studies, see, e.g., Jensen 1995; Langsdorf & Smith 1995; Perry 2001; Peters 1999.)
 3. Russill has thus far presented parts of his reconstruction in a series of articles (2005a; 2005b; 2006; 2007). These essays build and improve on a framework articulated in his dissertation (2004).
 4. Albeit not beyond criticism, Dewey’s approach arguably stands at the centre of pragmatism in both Russill’s and Sandbothe’s accounts. On the other hand, it is of interest to note that John Durham Peters, a communication scholar with definite pragmatist leanings, tends to prefer Jamesian dualism to Deweyan dialogism (see Peters 1999).
 5. For a useful article-length overview of pragmatism (albeit with bias for the Peircean variant), see Haack 2004. For an overview of pragmatist thought from a communication studies perspective (albeit with a bias for James and *neopragmatism*), see Simonson 2001.
 6. See Bergman 2000 for an attempt to present Peirce’s theory of signs in a manner conducive to communication inquiry in a pragmatist spirit. Bergman 2004 is a more thorough philosophical analysis of the communicative underpinnings of *semeiotic*.
 7. This is a term employed by Russill; Dewey actually speaks of the “metaphysical mathematics of the incommensurable” (MW 11:53). I am grateful to Russill for providing me with this reference. However, in view of the context, it remains far from clear that Dewey would be engaged in the kind of project outlined by Russill.
 8. James’s theory of truth has of course been the object of extensive debate; in this process, many *neopragmatist* defenders as well as analytical opponents of James have chosen to focus on his most rhetorical articulations of the theory, ignoring complications, nuances, and connections to Peirce’s belief-doubt model. Here, I merely discuss Sandbothe’s understanding of James’s controversial theory.
 9. An explicitly transcendental variant of this position has been developed by Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas.
 10. Possibly, Sandbothe’s reading is influenced by the dated but lingering interpretation of Peirce’s development as a movement from an early naturalism to a later idealism (repeated by Garrison [2001], for instance). Although it is true that Peirce occasionally associates his later “pragmaticism” with Hegelian ideas, his particular brand of idealistic philosophy is neither opposed to moderate naturalism nor “absolutistic” in a metaphysical sense. Arguably, the term “idealism” is too vague and burdened by history to be of much use here.
 11. See Colapietro 2004 and Prawat 2001 for illuminating discussions of the Peircean influence on Dewey; but see also Garrison 2001, in which a rather different reading of the relationship is defended.
 12. Cf. endnote 10.
 13. A Peircean critic might object that this account softens Peirce’s realism beyond recognition. After all, does not Peirce insist upon a definition of the “real” as that which is such as it is and is not affected by what any human being thinks about it? Does he not explicitly reject the conception of truth as mutable? Yes, he does. Of course, this indicates the need for a more extensive discussion of the nuances of Peircean realism. However, the habit-realism advocated in this article is compatible with the basic Peircean definition; if an agent has adopted a habit, then he or she *would* act in a certain manner in certain circumstances, no matter what any human being (including the agent) happens to think. As an ideal, the idea of the “real” indicates the aim to establish habits that would stand the test of time – we might speak of “final habits”. Yet, in spite of their reality as “would-bes”, habits are certainly not immutable; if they were, inquiry would be pointless.

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The Archived Website and Website Philology

A New Type of Historical Document?

NIELS BRÜGGER

Abstract

Website history can be considered an emerging discipline at the intersection between media history and Internet history. In this discipline, the individual website is regarded as the unifying entity of the historical analysis rather than the Internet or the Web. Writing the history of a website involves using many sources and methods similar to those used in writing the history of any other media type. But one document type requires special attention: the *archived website*. This is so because the problems involved in finding, collecting and preserving the website are different from those characterizing the archiving of other types of traces of human activity, including other media types. The primary problem is that the actual act of finding, collecting and preserving changes the website that was on the live web in a number of ways, thus creating a *unique version* of it and not simply a copy. The present article sets out, first, to discuss to what extent the archived website can be considered a new type of historical document and how its characteristics affect the task of the website historian who must later use it; second, the article discusses and attempts to formulate some methodological principles, rules and recommendations for a future critical textual philology of the website.

Keywords: internet, web, website, media history, archiving, archive, philology

Introduction

Website history can be considered an emerging discipline at the intersection between media history and Internet history. In this discipline, the individual website is regarded as the unifying entity of the historical analysis rather than the Internet or the Web.

Website history is a natural part of existing media history; the website can partly be seen as the latest acquisition in the history of co-evolving types of media, from print and analogue media to a whole range of digital media, and website history can partly focus on the same analytical domains as existing media histories have done throughout the years, such as institutional analysis, reception studies, studies of media culture and text analysis in a broad sense (analysis of individual programmes, genres, flow, range of programmes, etc.)¹ However, to some extent the traditional conceptual frameworks need to be re-evaluated.²

Website history is also an integral part of both the Internet and Web history. Internet history can be considered the broadest category – covering the history of, for instance, email, usenet, mailing lists, IRC etc. – while web history is a sub-discipline within In-

ternet history dealing with the history of the Web as such, the bloggosphere and so on.³ Website history, for its part, is a sub-discipline of Web history, and its subjects coincide at least in part with those of both Internet and Web history, as the history of a given website is closely related to the history of both the Internet and the Web. Nevertheless, the history of a website cannot be understood exhaustively solely by using concepts and insights from Internet or Web history (cf. also Brügger 2007a).⁴

Writing the history of a website involves using many sources and methods similar to those used in writing the history of any other media type. For instance, the research project 'The History of www.dr.dk, 1996-2006' (cf. below) will be based on such sources as memos, minutes of meetings, reports, policy documents, correspondences, organizational charts, job descriptions, dummies, retrospective research interviews, biographies, diaries, memorabilia, legal texts and statistics.

But one document type requires special attention: the *archived website*. This is so because the problems involved in finding, collecting and preserving the website are different from those characterizing the archiving of other types of traces of human activity, including other media types.

The primary problem is that the actual act of finding, collecting and preserving *changes* the website that was on the live web in a number of ways, thus creating a *unique version* of it and not simply a copy. Therefore, it could be argued that the archived website constitutes a type of historical document, which in many ways differs significantly from other well-known document types.

The present article sets out, first, to discuss to what extent the archived website can be considered a new type of historical document and how its characteristics affect the task of the website historian who must later use it; second, the article discusses and attempts to formulate some methodological principles, rules and recommendations for a future critical textual philology of the website. Satisfactory answers to these two clusters of methodological questions are necessary stepping-stones on the path towards writing website history.⁵

Finding, Collecting and Preserving Websites

If we maintain that the act of finding, collecting and preserving changes the website that was actually on the live web, it becomes relevant to identify the reasons for this assertion.⁶ In overall terms, one can distinguish between six ways of integrating web material in a web archive, and these six ways may be split into two main groups depending on whether the material is archived from the Net or delivered from the producer (some of the sub-groups may overlap).

1. Archiving from the Net:
 - a. Harvesting, capturing or filming
 - b. Harvesting, capturing or filming 'ghost websites'
 - c. Harvesting, capturing or filming websites archived on the Net by the producer
2. Delivery:
 - a. Delivery of non-archived material from the producer
 - b. Delivery of archived material from the producer
 - c. Delivery from other archives⁷

A Subjective Re-construction

Any kind of website archiving, whether done by means of harvesting, capturing and filming or delivery, is a *re-construction* based on the bits and pieces that stem from either the Web or the producer of the website. And this re-construction involves a number of subjective choices and unpredictable coincidences with regard to software, strategy and purpose, integration in an archive and so on (cf. Brügger 2005: 15-19, 30-31, 61-62; cf. also Schneider & Foot 2004: 115; Masanès 2006: 17-18, 76).

For instance, it must be decided whether one intends to harvest, capture or film the website, or employ a combination of these three methods, and if so, which combination? And does one intend to archive the entire website? How many levels should the archiving cover? Are photos, sound and moving images to be included? Is material to be collected from other servers? One must also decide the size of what could be called 'the archival element' (cf. Brügger 2005: 40) and the archiving direction; in other words, how do we intend to 'slice up' the website? By using a variety of start URLs on more than one level? And in what order are the archivings from the start URLs to begin? And, finally, a number of choices must often be made with respect to the subsequent montage of the archived material.

In this way, the archiving of a website stands apart from the archiving of other types of objects, be they physical objects, including types of media such as the printed media, photographs and film, or electronic 'objects', from radio and TV broadcasts to cellular telephone services. Regardless of who stacks yesterday's newspapers at the library, they look the same, just as the TV programme looks the same regardless of who puts in the tape and presses the record button. The subjective element almost exclusively lies in the act of selecting rather than in the archiving process itself, which by and large consists of taking the objects out of circulation and preserving them as they were, unchanged (cf. Brügger 2005: 15-19).⁸

In contrast, archiving a website is an active process from the very beginning, where to some extent the archived website does not exist prior to the act of archiving; it is only created through the archiving process, on the basis of 'raw material' from the Internet or the producer (elsewhere I have used the expression 'a document of the Internet' to refer to the archived (harvested) website, cf. Brügger 2005: 30). Two overall and interrelated consequences follow from this. First, the processes of research – for instance, the writing of website history – and archiving are closely connected, more than we know to be the case for other types of media. Second, archiving a website should be accompanied by deliberations as to method: Why and how has the archived version been created? (cf. Brügger 2005: 31-32, and Schneider & Foot 2004: 115).

The fact that the archived website is a subjective re-construction constitutes a fundamental condition of all of the six distinct ways of integrating material in a website archive. But besides this, each of them is characterized by specific problems.

Archiving from the Net

The problems related to website harvesting have set the agenda for discussions of web archiving for the past ten years, and by now many of the problems have been detailed and to a certain degree solved (for reasons of space, only the problems related to harvesting are in focus in the following pages; problems related to capturing and filming are discussed in Brügger 2005: 47-60).⁹ However, the dynamic character of the Internet will constantly be a source of uncertainty in relation to harvesting, above all, the dynamic

that I have called ‘the dynamic of updating’ (Brügger 2005: 21-27; cf. also Schneider & Foot 2004: 115). The dynamic of updating refers to the fact that the content of a website may change during the process of archiving, and we do not know if, where, and when the updates occur, which has the following two consequences:

The first and rather obvious consequence is that we cannot be sure that we have everything in our archive. We will always have lost something in the asynchronous relationship between updating and archiving. The second consequence is less obvious, but no less serious. Not only do we lose something that was there, we are also in danger of getting something that in a way was *never* there – something that is different from what was really there. My archived version of a newspaper’s website can be a *combination* of elements from two (or more) versions that were there at different times – but they were never there at the same time as they might now be in my archive. We thus face the following paradox: on the one hand, the archive is not exactly as the website *really* was in the past (we have lost something), but on the other, the archive may be exactly as the Internet *never* was in the past (we get something different). (Brügger 2005: 23).¹⁰

A variant of this problem is the fact that the greater the time span between two harvests of a website, the more difficult it is to date all elements on the website to a precise point in time. Thus, we cannot know to what extent the harvesting time is identical to the time of publication; in other words, we do not know how long the website, in all its dimensions, has been the way it is when the harvesting takes place. What is harvested is both a *point* in time (the time of harvesting) and a *period* of time (the period up to the time of harvesting). This characterizes all kinds of cross-sectional harvests made at considerable intervals.

The fact that evidence of human activities in the past cannot be dated to a precise point in time, or that the evidence might have been modified within a certain period of time, is in itself not new. Very often it is only possible to date utensils, documents and the like to a given period of time – an antique Greek vase was used between 200 and 100 BC; a document was written between the 8th and 9th centuries – but within the limits of this period of time, the object is identical to itself and is characterized by a one-dimensional temporal logic: It is the same vase or the same document; we are just unable to say precisely when it was created or used within the period. And even if the object has been subject to changes – the vase may have been re-decorated, the medieval hand-written manuscript overwritten, or pages added – the changes will almost always have left some datable traces, allowing us to date them within the period, based on a one-dimensional temporal logic with a clear ‘before’ and ‘after’.

The situation is different for a website harvested at considerable intervals of time or for the first time. In this case, we have an end date (the time of harvesting) and perhaps a kind of start date (an earlier version), but within this period of time a continuous process of publication may have taken place, and it is very difficult to say if, where, and when this occurred, as in most cases publication does not leave any datable traces. Therefore, such an archived website may not be identical to itself within the period that can be delimited, and it is based on a multi-dimensional temporal logic: some elements on the archived website are from one point in time, other elements from another point in time. Imagine a preserved newspaper composed of bits and pieces from several newspapers from the period prior to the copy in question, but without any temporal indication on the fragments. Concerning the website, we might even encounter a temporal logic that

not only extends back into the past, but also forward into the present or the future – for instance, when an older website contains commands that are set to get the current news headlines, weather forecast or the like from a web server, and will therefore get the news from the date of harvesting, and later on perhaps even present the news from the date the archive is consulted – like a year-old newspaper in the library suddenly showing today's weather forecast.

If we look at the second way of integrating web material in an archive, the harvesting of ghost websites, the problem is not the harvesting itself, or rather: the problems are not greater than or different from those encountered in harvesting in general. The problem is partly finding the material, partly dating it. First, we have to become aware of the existence of the material – here we often have to rely on other types of sources such as press releases, other media and other sub-sites. In this task, the producer will not always be much help, because systematic policies for discarding old material are rare. Second, we have to date a website that is harvested for the first time, and, as shown above, it may be difficult to determine how long it has looked the way it does at the time of harvesting.

The problems related to the third method, harvesting websites archived on the Net by the producer, resemble those characterizing the ghost websites; however, the problem of finding the material will probably be less significant, as it has been saved intentionally, which is why there will normally be links to it, just as it will often be easy to identify as archived material if it is marked with watermarks or the like.

Delivery

While harvesting has been setting the agenda in discussions of web archiving for some years, the problems that might be related to the delivery of old web material are unknown quantities, at least to my knowledge.¹¹ Hence, what is written about delivery in the present article is not based upon thorough discussions and experience; it should rather be considered a provisional catalogue of the possible problems.

In general, the fact that the archive is not in control of the formats of delivery (soft- as well as hardware) will constitute a problem for all three methods of delivery. First, reading the material can be problematic: File types may have gone out of use or it may be impossible to establish an adequate computer environment.¹² Second, integrating delivered material into existing archival structures and procedures can be problematic: must GIF, PDF or QuickTime files be converted to HTML or ARC files? Can an archive from 2007 integrate material from 1996 without automatically dating it to 2007? How can the material be made searchable if it is in a different format than the files of the archive and if it does not provide any kind of text (e.g., no URL, HTML); and must searchable data then be provided manually by the archive? How can material already in the archive be made to interact with delivered web material of the same website from the same date (e.g., individual files, sub-sites)? And so on and so forth.¹³

The problems related to the delivery of web material are supposedly not yet very great, which is probably a consequence of the fact that the number of websites archived by individual scholars (micro or on-demand archiving) is still rather limited. But assuming that website history – and website studies in general – will become more widespread, and that as a result the number of archives will grow, we may witness an increased demand for the mutual exchange of archived web material among scholars (micro to micro), on the one hand, and, on the other, retrospective collecting initiatives launched by the great (inter)national archiving institutions with the aim of supplementing

and completing the cultural heritage (micro to macro).¹⁴ Hence, we have good reason to put the problems related to the delivery of web material on the agenda.

If an archive is confronted with the first method of delivery – delivery of non-archived material from the producer – it will probably find the complex, fragmented, varied or unpredictable character of the material problematic. First, it may be difficult to re-create a meaningful unity – a web page, a website – out of a pile of heterogeneous bits and pieces.¹⁵ Second, dating the material may constitute a problem. In contrast to harvesting, the problems are even more difficult in this respect because, unlike the time of harvesting, one cannot even be sure of having one fixed point in time. With harvesting, the problem is not determining a period of time but rather the possible lack of simultaneity and self-identity within the period, but the problem with the delivered material discussed here is that it can be difficult to ‘insert’ a time period in the fragmented continuum of, for instance, a collection of graphic files, a CMS database or the like. Thus, the problem is not (only) dating the material on a time line, but rather re-creating something that can be related to a time line in a meaningful way, as we cannot be sure that there is any consistent division in either the points or periods of time inscribed in the material.

Different kinds of problems can be expected to arise from the other method of delivery: delivery of archived material from the producer. It will probably have a more systematic character, but this may also constitute a complicating factor if, for instance, an entire computer environment has to be established in order to restore a backup version. It will probably be impossible to integrate such an environment in an existing archive, which is why the archive might have to harvest the restored version. The result will be a kind of ‘double archiving’ where the website is both re-created and harvested, resulting in two archiving phases, each characterized by specific subjective choices. Besides, documentation may be lacking, which can make it difficult to use the material.

The last method of delivery, from other archives, can entail all the problems mentioned above, but they may be aggravated in connection with collections from micro archives, because the variations in, for example, archiving purposes and the use of archiving software are probably greater among ‘amateurs’ than professionals.¹⁶ Besides, the integration of corpora – material that has been archived as a whole, often to be used for a specific purpose in a research project – can constitute a special problem. In overall terms, a corpus resemble the strategy of event archiving, and in relation to this kind of material, it is important that the archived websites be marked as part of a corpus so that future users know why the material looks the way it does, as it was created with a specific purpose in mind; any supplementary documentation should also be supplied (e.g., the research questions, plans for the archiving process, the archiving log).

Besides all the problems emanating from both archiving the Net and the delivery of old web material, an overall problem for the archive should be mentioned: that of making the many different types of material in each of the six methods interact in a useful and meaningful way in the same archive, from both a technical and a conceptual point of view (cf. the question of the montage of smaller web elements into a meaningful unity is discussed in Brügger 2005: 39-62).

What Can We Expect to Find in a Web Archive?

As has been argued above, the well-known processes of finding, collecting and preserving appear to be different when the object in question is a website, both on a general level and when we look more closely at the six specific ways of integrating web material

in a web archive. However, if one wishes to write website history, this is the way things are, and as website historians, we cannot afford to leave the many bits and pieces of web material without trying to make them useful as sources by integrating them into an archive, one way or another.

If the considerations above are taken as a starting point, then what can the historian who intends to write website history expect to find in a website archive? He or she can expect two things. First, that if several archived copies of a given website exist from the same date, they are very likely to be different from one another (to various degrees). This is because of the elements of subjectivity, creation and coincidence, which generally characterize the process of archiving or integrating a website into a website archive, just as the problems related to each of the six specific ways of integrating material into an archive also play a role. Second, the website historian cannot expect to find an original in the form of the website as it actually looked on the Internet at a given time, neither in the sense of finding an original among the different versions nor in the sense of reconstructing an original on the basis of the different versions. In both cases, this is because a version in the archive may either be lacking something (an ‘incomplete’ original), or it may consist of something that has never been on the Internet at the same time (a kind of ‘incorrect’ original due to a possible asynchrony between the website on the Net and the archived version) – and we have great difficulty in determining with certainty if and to what extent a given version is either ‘incomplete’ or ‘incorrect’. In addition, some archiving software writes in the archived files (e.g., HTTrack), while other software does not (e.g., Heritrix).

Test of Versions in Existing Web Archives

If this is what can be expected, the question then arises of whether this is really what one finds when confronted with actual existing archives? In the spring of 2007, the research project ‘The History of www.dr.dk, 1996-2006’ was started.¹⁷ In the context of the project, a pilot project entitled “Method study of the integration of Internet material directly received from producers” was being carried out, and part of this pilot project was a test examining the appearance of a website that had been archived on the same date (and, if possible, at the same time) in different archives, where it had been integrated on the basis of harvesting, capturing, filming or delivery from the producer.¹⁸ Even if only four versions from one date have been tested thus far, the tendency is clear: with one exception, the four versions showed great differences in all respects.

A Critical Textual Philology of the Website

Because we can expect, on the one hand, that if several archived copies of a given website exist from the same date, they are very likely to be different from one another, and on the other hand, that an original in the form of the website as it actually looked on the Internet at a given time cannot be found, knowledge of an original website to which the different versions can be compared is still wanting, and we must therefore make do with *relative comparisons* based on an analysis of the differences and similarities between the existing copies. Therefore, if we intend to say something about how a given website looked at a given time on the Web – and if we want to do so on the basis of one or more archived websites – we cannot determine this with certainty, but only with various degrees of *probability*. Thus, professing to say what is true or false

is not an option, instead we must make do with maybe/maybe not. In this task, we are very close to textual criticism of the philology of manuscripts, in the sense of both manuscript books and draft manuscripts. What might begin to emerge could be called a critical textual philology of the website.

Today, the number of website archives is rather limited, and as a consequence the number of different versions of the same website is also limited. But the problems related to a critical textual philology of the website are still a matter of principle, and their practical relevance is expected to grow as more archives are established, professional as well as non-professional. First, an increased number of archives will also increase the number of versions. Second, one can expect two opposing developments to take place: On the one hand, we can expect more – and more skilled – professional Internet archives, which means better qualities of versions, but on the other hand, we can also expect more non-professional archives to be made by website scholars, which means more versions made by amateurs as well as more versions made for special purposes (e.g., corpora made for a specific research project).

What follows is a brief outline of some of the methodological principles, rules, and concepts that a critical textual philology of the website could use to consistently say something about the probability of how a given website looked at a given time on the Web.¹⁹ The considerations are based upon my work with archived websites from various archives – professional as well as non-professional archives – during the past six years, and their applicability and usefulness are being tested as part of the test mentioned above.

A number of the fundamental concepts and questions in ‘classical’ textual philology are relevant to a philology of the website, but they have to be brought into line with the archived website as a type of document based on a specific media materiality that is different from papyrus, parchment, paper, and printed books.²⁰ However, it should be stressed that the present article has no intention of giving a thorough presentation and discussion of textual philology in general, its epistemological history, different methods, schools, etc. The following lines are meant to be nothing more than a brief outline of some general lines of demarcation between ‘classical’ textual philology and website philology.²¹

From Manuscripts to Archived Websites

The objective of textual philology is basically to examine the differences and similarities between variants of textual evidence that resemble one another – fragments as well as entire works – with a view to either finding the most correct variant(s) or reconstructing a lost original, and to comment on these versions so as to give a critical account of their finding or creation and to make them understandable for future readers.

Within the textual philology of ‘old’ media, the variants being compared can vary in two respects. First, as regards the *media type*, one can compare variants written on papyrus, parchment or paper to each other (e.g., manuscript books or manuscript drafts), variants written on papyrus, parchment or paper to the printed version, and finally one can compare different printed variants. Second, with respect to the *process of (re)creation* of the variants, we can compare variants that are copies of one another (e.g., different copies of a specific manuscript book), one draft to another, a specific copy or a draft to the printed variant, and a printed variant to another printed variant (cf. Fig. 1).

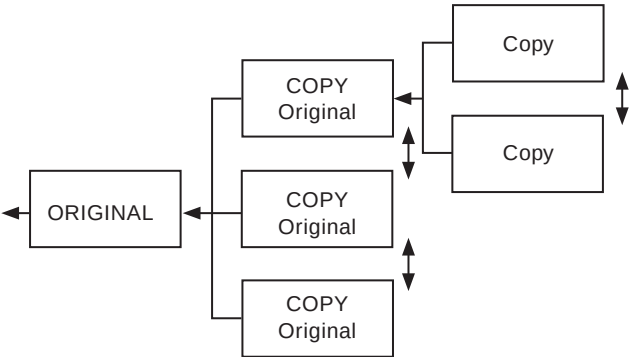
Figure 1. Comparisons of Variants with Respect to Media Type and the Process of (Re)creation

Process of (re)creation	Media type		
	manuscript to manuscript	manuscript to printed book	printed book to printed book
copy to copy	+		
draft to draft	+		
copy/draft to printed version		+	
printed version to printed version			+

Figure 1 illustrates that as we move horizontally from manuscript book (written on papyrus, paper, or parchment) to the printed book, and vertically from various copies to the printed version, we move at the same time away from the endless copying and changing towards the stable, authoritative printed version of a book, which constitutes an original in relation to which all earlier copies can be evaluated, and to which all later copies are identical.²² In this perspective, a textual philology of the website is close to the comparison of a copy to a copy, without any authoritative original at hand, as it is known from manuscript books or manuscript drafts.

The manuscript scholar who today is faced with a number of different ancient manuscript books or drafts knows for certain that they are identical to the manuscripts that actually were created and circulated in the past (given, of course, that they are not forgeries,). He or she ‘simply’ has to examine: a) the possible differences and similarities between them in order to determine if (and how) one or more of them constitute a source text or an earlier variant of a draft; b) the provenance and affiliation of the different variants backwards in time, because the question of a possible source text is related to variants that succeed one another in the past (cf. Fig. 2).

Figure 2. The Examination of Manuscripts



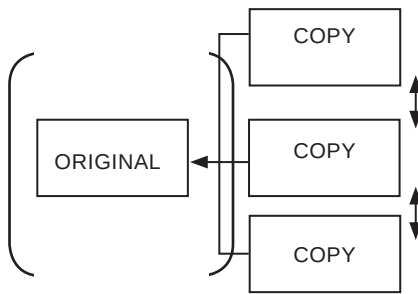
Note: The arrows indicate the direction of examination.

The website philologist, for his/her part, is subject to quite another media materiality, which is why he/she has to deal with other problems. His/her task is different from that

of the ‘classical’ textual philologist in at least the following seven distinct ways (cf. Fig. 3 for the first three points).

- 1) Because he/she has reason to believe that none of the versions of the archived websites are identical to what was actually on the web in the past, he/she cannot ‘just’ examine the eventual differences and similarities in order to determine if one/more of them constitute a source text.
- 2) In contrast to the ‘classical’ textual philologist who examines versions succeeding in time, the website philologist deals with archived websites that are more likely to be from almost the same point in time (day, hour, etc.), which is why he/she has to trace differences and similarities in simultaneity instead of tracing provenance and affiliation backwards in time.
- 3) Insofar as the website philologist can be said to examine things backwards in time, he/she only takes one step back, whereas the ‘classical’ philologist in principle can extend his examination several steps back into the past.

Figure 3. *The Examination of Archived Websites*



Note: The arrows indicate the direction of examination.

- 4) Due to the materiality of digital writing, the object of the textual philologist of the website – the text – can be examined on several levels. On the one hand, there is the immediately perceptible level, where we see/hear the signifying units directly on the screen or in the speakers. On the other hand, there is the variety of underlying textual levels that are not immediately perceptible, but nevertheless make possible what we see/hear: above all, the source code (HTML, XML, etc.), but also the different layers of the Internet (the TCP/IP model, the OSI model or the like), layers that are all texts written in a digital alphabet with only two letters, 0 and 1 (cf. Finnemann 1999: 142-148; Brügger 2002a: 21). The focus of the present article is mainly on the immediately perceptible layer, but obviously one can advantageously involve the non-perceptible layers.
- 5) Even if the archived website is preserved in an Internet archive, it may be subject to continuous re-writings in relation to long-term preservation, for instance when it has to be moved to another data format.
- 6) Due to the digital alphabet, it is possible to some extent to compare archived websites by automatic means (at least on the non-perceptible level).

- 7) It is possible that two exactly identical versions of the same website can exist in two different archives (most likely small, non-complicated websites that are rarely updated).

Bearing in mind the general considerations mentioned above, we shall now go into more detail about some of the possible methods and rules that can guide the work of the website philologist when he/she needs to say something consistent about the differences and similarities of several versions.²³

Source Criticism

First of all, the website philologist must keep in mind the possible existence of different archived versions of the same web activity. First, one has to realize that the version one has found is not necessarily the only existing version, second, that one should try to trace other versions (in the same or in other archives), and third, that the more versions that are available, the more likely it is that one can determine how close the different versions are to the website that was once on the live web – and the reverse: the fewer, the more difficult.

Navigating and Examining

An archived website will very often be faulty and defective. However, the faults and deficiencies are not always immediately visible, but are only gradually revealed as one uses the archived website. Thus, use and trouble-shooting coincide, and trouble-shooting is often an ongoing process, which means that very often one has to make use of an archived website in other ways than a website on the live web.

Some of the frequent faults and deficiencies are: first, that the link structure can be broken or defective in other ways, second, that textual elements or functions are missing.²⁴ In the first case, we have to navigate differently; in the second, we must examine the archived website using unusual means.

Navigating

In the case of a defective link structure, the following phenomena are often encountered, each in their own way forcing us to navigate with inventiveness and care.

- a) The link does not work, but the link target is in fact in the archive, which is why what has actually been archived is not always found (this error is often encountered in menu items, which might cause the user to believe that the link target – e.g. a specific sub-site/web page – is not part of the archived version). The following alternative methods of navigating might be used: use a sitemap if possible, make detours (a sub-site/web page is often linked to from more than one web page), click on anything, shift between text and graphic version (in older material), cut off the URL-address from behind (e.g. http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Temaer/Oevrige_temaer to <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Temaer> to <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder>).
- b) The link is working, but the link target has not been archived, which can have the following consequences: either we are actually informed that the link target is not in the archive (this is the case in the Danish national Internet archive *netarkivet.dk*), or the link takes us to the correct URL but from another point in time, for instance to another day, or to the live web (this is the case with the archive *archive.org*, and the ‘distance’

between the versions can be up to several years). I use the term ‘inconsistent linking’ for this last phenomenon, and it is not only due to errors in the archived version itself, but is rather a result of the version being part of an archive with porous boundaries between the versions or to the live Internet. Thus, inconsistent linking adds a new dimension to the unreliability of sources.²⁵ In the first case, nothing is found because nothing was archived, and there is not much to be done about it; in the second case, you find something that is not part of the version from which you departed, and here we have to navigate with great caution (for instance in the archive *archive.org* it is not indicated very clearly that the link is inconsistent, as only the URL-address in the archive changes, e.g. from <http://web.archive.org/web/20000228123340/http://www.yahoo.com> to <http://web.archive.org/web/20000229135040/http://www.yahoo.com/> (and inconsistent text is not marked)).²⁶

Examining

An archived website without missing elements or functions is very much the exception. However, valuable information about missing elements is often hidden in the archived website, thus making it possible to extract relevant information despite the fact that the information is not immediately manifest. The following three methods can be used to gain knowledge of missing elements (of the fact that an element is missing as well as what the element was).

- a) There is often a visual mark in the archived website, showing that an element – an image, a flash – is missing: Either the name of the file or file type appears, or a mouse-over dialog box communicates the file name or the function that should have been performed.
- b) The source code can reveal a great deal about what should have been displayed on the screen or why it looks ‘strange’ (for instance because a style sheet is missing).
- c) When it comes to missing web pages or sub-sites, the site map or the menu items can indicate what might be lacking.

Thus, in a number of ways, the archived website itself communicates its own faults and deficiencies in a somewhat systematic and predictable manner (I use the term ‘marked absence’ for this phenomenon).

However, we cannot rely on these kinds of marked absences. Sometimes an element is just absent, without any ‘explanation’ and often in an inconsistent manner (for instance an overall graphical element can be absent on, say, the front page, but present on a web page in a sub-site). Again, the above-mentioned click-on-everything method might come in handy.

All in all, with regard to deficient link structures and missing elements or functions, the overall method is: click on anything, use the source code, and examine every corner of the archived website, even if it appears useless at first glance.

Evaluating Probabilities

As mentioned above, the website philologist can only determine with various degrees of probability what a website or a given textual element actually looked like on the live web – either in terms of the element being present/not present at all, or in terms of the

‘content’ of the element, that is, *what* is present – and he/she therefore has to make do with relative comparisons. However, the nature of these relative comparisons is to be described in more detail. This will occur, first, by suggesting how relative comparisons can be performed, and second, with a view to guiding and improving these comparisons, by discussing the relevance of involving considerations of the proximity in time and space of the versions, the expected speed of change of the textual elements on the web page, as well as knowledge of the types of texts on the web page, of genre characteristics and of typical websites from the period in question.

The Least Deficient Version as Original

In light of the absence of an original, one way of getting as close to having an ‘original’ for the comparisons as possible is to use the least deficient version as the original (by ‘original’ is not meant ‘as it was on the web’, but just the most complete of the available versions). Thus, one could proceed in the following manner:

1. Evaluate the different available versions with regard to quality: Are all textual elements present, do they work properly, are all sub-sites present, etc.?
2. Choose the most complete as the point of departure for the comparisons.
3. Compare this version to the other versions in order to establish differences and similarities; the comparisons can either be *in toto* (if the similarities dominate) or be focused on specific points (the textual elements, the number of sub-sites, etc.) if the differences dominate, in order to avoid too complex a comparison.

Proximity in Time and Space

When we are to compare several web pages to each other, we could use the following five-step method, where proximity in time and space of the different archived versions is prioritized. We should compare the textual elements on the individual web page to other web pages from:

1. the *same version*
2. another version from the *same day* in the *same archive*
3. another version from the *same day* in *another archive*
4. another version from an *earlier/later day* in the *same archive*
5. another version from an *earlier/later day* in *another archive*

The steps are prioritized from top to bottom, indicating that we lower the probability the more we are forced to move down the list of steps, thus assuming the following rule: The closer the compared versions are to each other in terms of time (from same version to same day to earlier/later day) and space (same version, same archive, another archive), the greater the possibility of rendering probable what a given textual element actually looked like on the live web.²⁷ At first sight, this rule seems to conflict with the requirement mentioned earlier, namely that we should try to trace other versions, and that the more versions we have available, the more likely it is that we can determine how close the different versions are to the website on the live web. This is still true, but the rule of proximity primarily applies when we actually compare the different available versions, if we have been able to locate more than one.

Speed of Change

Based on the assumption that the various textual elements on a web page change at different speeds with regard to both position and content, one can place their expected speed of change within a given period (e.g., a day) on a continuum with two poles: stability and high-frequency changes. If the same textual element is present at the same position on more than one of the web pages of the website (or sub-site), it can be considered a stable element. And if an element is specific to an individual web page, it is more likely to be changing at a high-frequency. These considerations can be a cause for formulating the following rule: The more stable an element is, the greater the increase in the possibility of rendering a probable picture of what it actually looked like on the live web.

Types of Texts

Moreover, a web page can be considered a signifying unit, consisting of a complicated system of texts and paratexts, paratexts being the small textual elements that serve as a threshold to the text itself, either on the same page or on others – a menu item, a headline, interposed excerpts, a footer, ‘bread crumbs’ that indicate the position of a web page on a website, etc.²⁸ And these paratexts can form a network on either a local, ‘regional’, or global scale on a website: For instance, the main menu items that are present on all (or at least the majority) of web pages are global paratexts; some menu items are only present on the web pages of a sub-site, which is why they can be considered regional paratexts, and finally the local paratexts – e.g., specific headlines – are not present on more than one web page (cf. Fig. 4).

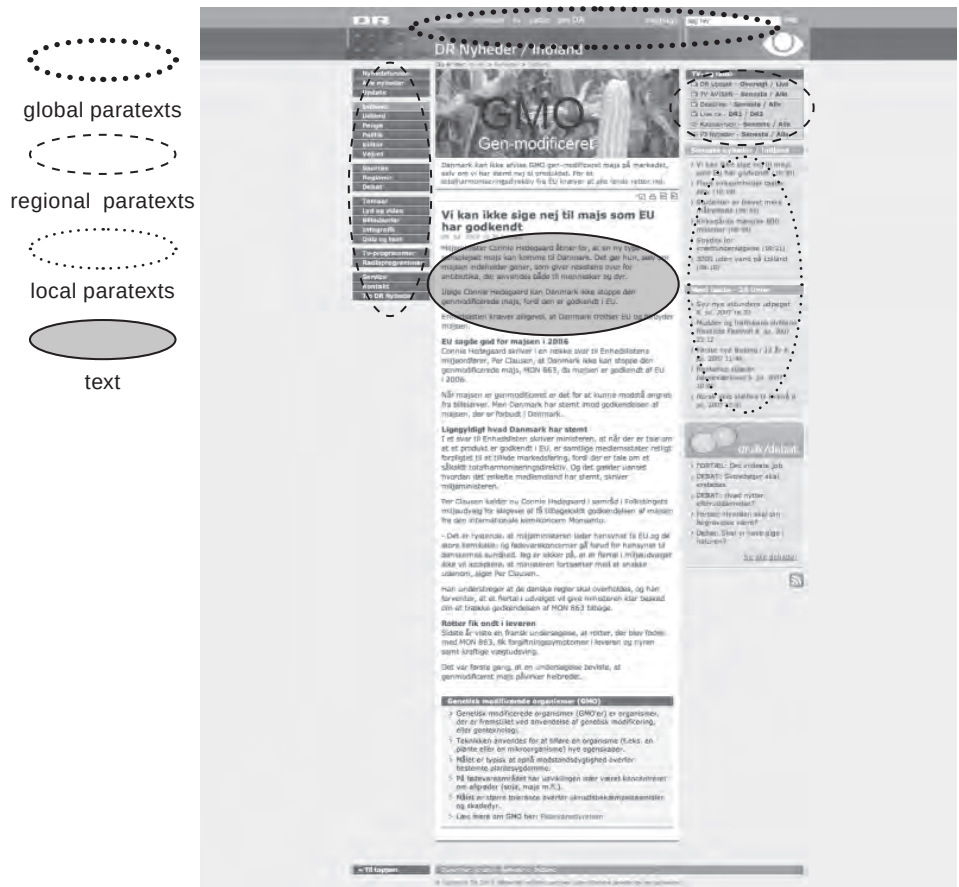
Following these lines of thought, we might assume the following rule: As we move from the global paratexts of the website via the regional and local paratexts to the text itself, we also move from stable to presumably high-frequency changing textual elements, thus decreasing the possibility of rendering probable pictures of what the element actually looked like on the live web.

However, concerning the texts themselves (and not the paratexts), different expected speeds of change also seem to be at work, depending on the type of content. A description of a television programme aired a month ago is probably stable; a news item that is continuously replaced or moved further down the web page can be characterized as mezzo stable, and text in debates or chat is supposedly changing at a high frequency.

Finally, one can point to other elements of expression that are presumably relatively stable, such as layout, backgrounds, typography, etc.

Genre Characteristics

The question of expected speed of change also applies to the entire website (or sub-sites) in terms of genre, because a website can as such be positioned on the continuum between stable and high-frequency changes. A few examples can illustrate this. A sub-site with games, etc., for small children is likely to be relatively stable. A sub-site made in relation to a weekly television serial is probably stable when the serial is not being aired, changing once a week when it is being aired. A news sub-site can, on the one hand, change rapidly, but on the other hand it can also have thematic sections (about elections, wars, etc.) that can vary between frequent changes as the event takes place, relative stability as it fades out, and the sub-site can end up being totally unchanged when the theme has ended. And finally, a sub-site with debate is likely to be characterized by high-frequency

Figure 4. *Texts and Paratexts on the Website*

changes. We can therefore formulate the following rule: A given textual element is less likely to have been changed if it is found on a website or sub-site that is supposedly relatively stable in terms of genre.

Characteristics Typical of the Period

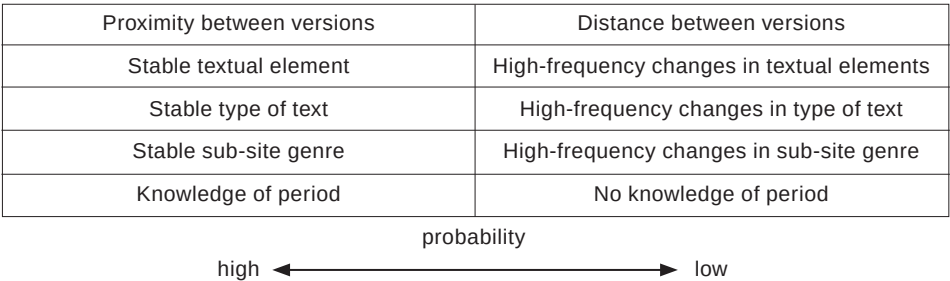
Finally, it can be relevant to involve knowledge of typical websites from the period of time in question. This could involve, for instance, knowledge about the characteristic ways of constructing web pages in general, what menu items, navigation features or other text items may look like and how they may be positioned, use of the paratextual system, etc.

A Constellation of Indicators

When we are to evaluate the probabilities of what a given textual element actually looked like on the live web, we can use the above-mentioned phenomena as a set of indicators. One by one, they can indicate whether the probability is high or low; for instance the probability is relatively high if we can compare web pages from the same version, and

correspondingly low if we have to compare web pages from versions from a different day in a different archive, etc. (cf. Fig. 5).

Figure 5. *Indicators of High and Low Probabilities*



Moreover, these indicators also interact. Thus, the probability is relatively high that a given element actually appeared on the live web as it is in the archive if, for instance, the same element is present at the same position in several versions from the same day in the same archive, and if it is a supposedly stable type of text on a supposedly stable sub-site genre, and if this is supported by knowledge of typical websites from the period. And in between the constellations of indicators that are either clearly high or low in terms of probability, we find a variety of conflicting intermediate forms where the more the indicators point in different directions, the more blurred the picture becomes.

What has been said thus far about the evaluation of probabilities can lead to formulation of the following general rule: the more indicators that point towards a high probability, the higher the probability becomes in general, and vice versa. Thus, using a method that aims at exposing the constellation of the indicators mentioned above enables us to be more precise when evaluating the probabilities of what a given textual element actually looked like on the live web.²⁹

Comments and References

In order to facilitate the evaluation of different versions of archived websites, it is recommended that one use the variety of information that in a number of ways ‘comments’ on the archived website. The following types of information can be of great help.

- a) The date and time of the archiving (can be part of the file name or the URL if the archive is accessible on the Internet (e.g., *archive.org*)).
- b) Supplementary documents, for instance a plan for the archiving process, a log book or log file (either manually created or automatically generated by the harvesting software); these kinds of documents may contain information about the software used, the starting/ending time and the intervals of the archiving, the starting URLs, the parameters set, errors encountered, whether the archiving is part of a corpus, etc.
- c) Other general information, for instance that a given version is part of a selective harvesting that has been performed several times a day.
- d) Information about how the material has been integrated into the archive, be it by archiving from the Internet or by delivery from the producer.

The more of these comments that are available, the easier it is for the website scholar to evaluate a version and to explain faults and deficiencies among versions. Besides, this kind of information can turn out to be very important, at least from the scholar's point of view, as existing archives become integrated with one another, for instance when material from the producers or the scholar who has archived a website as an object of study is delivered to a national Internet archive (cf. Brügger 2007a: 10).

This information will also make it easier to make unambiguous references to an archived website. In this regard it is suggested:

- That an archived website be referenced as it has been observed in a given archive, for instance: "www.dr.dk, 30 January 2005, 02:32, as seen in *archive.org*, 23 February 2007, <http://web.archive.org/web/20050130023236/http://dr.dk/>"
- That the reference always be as precise as possible, preferably referring to a specific web page (in the example above, the web page is the 'front page' of *www.dr.dk*)

Conclusion

As a new field, website history – and any kind of history writing that involves an archived website – is still in its infancy, but if it is to become an integrated part of media history as well as of Internet history in general, we must discuss how the archived website can be used as a historical document, and what a website archive should look like if it is to be as useful as possible for media scholars.

To summarize and conclude, it is argued here that any archived website is a reconstruction that does not exist in a stable form before the act of archiving, but is only created through the archiving process on the basis of web elements – both harvested and delivered – that are characterized by a variety of dynamics and temporal logics. Thus, the archived website stands apart from other archived media types, and it challenges the media historian in new ways, with regard to both the creation and the use of archived websites.

The media scholar who sets out to archive a website has to take into consideration, first, that the processes of research and archiving are closely connected, and second, that archiving a website has to be accompanied by methodological deliberations. In other words: What one wishes to examine in a later analysis should to a certain degree already be anticipated at the time of archiving.

And when the media scholar wishes to use archived websites as sources, he/she has to bear in mind that if several archived copies of a given website exist from the same date, they are very likely to be different from one another, and that he/she cannot expect to find an original in the form of the website as it actually looked on the Internet at a given time. Therefore, the archived website has to be treated differently than other well-known types of documents, even – or maybe especially – the website on the live web. The present article has attempted to outline some of the methodological principles, rules and recommendations that can help the media scholar in this task, based on the assumption that a number of the fundamental concepts and questions in 'classical' textual philology are relevant to a critical textual philology of the website, and that they have to be brought into line with the specificity of the archived website.

Finally, it should be stressed that the problems of the archived website are not only relevant to website history, as in practice most website studies are based on some kind

of archiving of the website with a view to preserving a stable analytical object, except for studies of the live web. Therefore, what has been argued about the special characteristics of the archived website is not limited to website history, but is in fact broader in scope, aimed at website studies in general.

The present work has made only a small contribution to the foundation of website history by putting some of the fundamental methodological issues on the agenda. Obviously, more work is needed in the future to elaborate and refine the theoretical considerations as well as the methodological principles, rules, and recommendations outlined above.

Notes

1. For an overview of some of the theoretical and methodological challenges and discussions within media history, see Bondebjerg 2002; Brügger 2002b; Dahl 2002; Dahl 2004; Djerf-Pierre 2002; Godfrey 2006; Jensen 2002; Salokanges 2002; Schanze 2001; Snickars 2006; Startt & Sloan 1989.
2. For instance, an adequate description of the website cannot be based on well-known text-related analytical concepts such as newspaper article, work, programme etc., just as reception studies must be based on new ideas of interaction. However, these re-evaluations are not only of relevance to website history, but also to website analysis in general.
3. Some of the first major contributors to Internet and web history are Poole 2005; Abbate 2000; Naughton 2002; Gillies & Cailliau 2000; Henderson 2002; Hauben & Hauben 1997.
4. An intermediate analytical level between the Web and the website could be what Schneider & Foot describe as 'the web sphere': "a set of dynamically defined digital resources spanning multiple Web sites deemed relevant or related to a central event, concept, or theme" (Schneider & Foot 2006: 20, cf. also 20-21, 27-35). In web sphere analysis, the focus is less on the individual web site than on the theme that unites various websites (one could maintain that it is a way of conceptualizing web activities that is similar to the archiving strategy of 'event harvesting'; cf. Brügger et al. 2003: 6-7).
5. The underlying and fundamental question of what is understood by 'website' will not be discussed in this article. It should just be mentioned that no matter which criteria one uses to delimit a specific website, historical studies of websites have added a new dimension to 'website studies', because it can be difficult to decide how the website should be delimited over time: Did it have the same boundaries two, five and ten years ago? For a definition of what can be understood by 'website' see Brügger 2007a: 84-87, Brügger 2009 (forthcoming), and Brügger 2008b (forthcoming).
6. For a general introduction to and discussion of web archiving, see Brügger 2008b (forthcoming).
7. These six ways of integrating web material into a web archive are clarified and discussed in more detail in Brügger 2007b: 3-6.
8. Other subjective elements are related to long-term preservation – for instance, when the material has to be moved to another data format or to another media type (e.g., analogue to digital). For a discussion of the problems of long-term preservation of web content, see Masanès 2006: 177-199.
9. Cf. Brown 2006, Brügger et al. 2003, Brügger 2005, Masanès 2006, as well as papers and proceedings from the International Web Archiving Workshop (IWAW, organized since 2001, see www.iwaw.net). Cf. also reports and other activities at the International Internet Preservation Consortium (<http://netpreserve.org>).
10. The problem of updating is discussed in more detail in relation to the front pages of newspaper websites in Falkenberg 2006: 8-9. What changes is the news item *in toto*, but on both a macro level (logo, overall structure and layout etc.) and a micro level (the actual text of the news item), newspaper websites tend to be rather static, as is evident, for instance, in the fact that the text of the news item is rarely changed once it has been published.
11. This also applies to my book *Archiving Websites. General Considerations and Strategies* (Brügger 2005), which only very briefly refers to delivery-related problems in the first chapter (p. 12). To my knowledge, one of the first experiments with delivery from the producer to an Internet archive was carried out in 2001 in the 'netarkivet.dk' research project, the precursor to the na-

- tional Danish Internet archive "netarkivet.dk", established in 2005 (cf. Brügger et al. 2003: 19, 36). This project has been followed (spring 2007) by another research project: "Method study of the integration of internet material directly received from producers" (cf. the section 'Test of versions in existing web archives' in the present article).
12. One of the lessons drawn from the 'netarkivet.dk' research project (2001) is that it is often necessary to establish an identical copy of the running environment (cf. Brügger et al. 2003: 19).
 13. Copyright and economic problems are other problems that could be pointed out (cf. Brügger 2005: 12).
 14. Evidence of the former is available on the Air-l-list from May 2007: "I just started to use Zotero [...]. Now I want to share my grabs with my colleagues. I think they have not yet attacked the sharing of saved pages and annotations. Or do I miss something?" (Posted by Frank Thomas, 10 May). An example of the latter is the retrospective collection of Danish websites that the National Danish Internet Archive "netarkivet.dk" initiated in 2005, aimed at media scholars.
 15. The problems related to the montage of harvested web elements are discussed in relation to micro archiving in Brügger 2005: 39-62. Several of these considerations also apply to the delivery of web material.
 16. For instance, a substantial part of my own web archive, begun in 2000, is made with Internet Explorer for Mac (creating WAFF files), which is why this material can only be displayed with this configuration. Besides, the archive also contains a number of screen shots and screen movies (i.e. files that are neither HTML nor ARC).
 17. The overall aim of the project is to write the history of the first ten years of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation's (DR) website, i.e. the period from 1996 to 2006 (dr.dk has been the biggest Danish website for some years). The project is supported by the Danish Research Council for the Humanities in 2007-8. The development of the project website www.dr.dk is supported by the "Knowledge Society" research priority area of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Aarhus.
 18. The aim of the pilot project is to analyze the archiving and research problems and possibilities connected with the collection of Internet material from the producer and the integration of these in the Danish National Internet Archive "netarkivet.dk" ("netarkivet.dk" is run by the Royal Library and the State and University library). The pilot project is being carried out in collaboration with the Danish State and University Library/"netarkivet.dk" and is supported by the research foundation of the Ministry of Culture. The technical results of the test with regard to the transformation of non-harvested web data into ARC files are discussed in Andersen 2007. The general results of the test are discussed in Brügger 2008a (forthcoming).
 19. As regards the website, the word 'textual' is meant to refer to coherent units or forms of expression such as written words, still images, moving images, and sound. Therefore, in the following, 'text' is understood in a broad sense and is not merely limited to written language. (cf. also Brügger 2007a: 75).
 20. Cf. the section "Finding, collecting and preserving websites" above. For an elaboration of the term 'media materiality', see Brügger 2002a; Brügger 2002b: 44-52.
 21. For a short introduction to and discussion of the different traditions within textual philology, see Cerquiglini 1999: 46-71; for a discussion of some recent tendencies, see the contributions in Tervooren & Wenzel 1997. In addition, it should be noted that when the theoretical and methodological influence between Internet theories and 'classical' textual philology is on the agenda, focus is mostly on how Internet theories in the broadest sense, for instance hypertext theories, could be used to enhance digital editions of medieval and other manuscripts (e.g., Stolz 2003; Carlquist 2004). The present paper sets out to discuss possible influences in the opposite direction, from 'classical' textual philology to Internet studies.
 22. That the printed copy is called 'authoritative' is understood in a merely technical way, as all later printed copies of a given edition are alike (cf. also Müller 2006: 187-188). This is a major difference to what characterized the scribe culture of manuscripts, where errors, corruptions and variations were the order of the day. However, errors and corruptions are also a part of print culture, but in contrast to scribe cultures, the number of errors decreases over the years and, most importantly, the printers, editors, and reading communities are conscious of the existence of different copies, a fact of which both the continuous publication of errata and the 'standardization of errors' (cf. Eisenstein 1996: 51, 59) as well as the actual establishment and development of a critical textual philology are evidence. But although erroneous or variant printed editions can be issued – for instance editions with misspellings, or editions based upon different sources and methodological approaches – once a new printed edition is published, all later copies of it are identical, thus making it 'authoritative'.

23. It should be mentioned that the methods and rules outlined in the following are not all relevant in relation to all types of archived websites.
24. A textual element is understood as a defined coherent textual unit, composed of one of the following four formats of expression: written words (or the like), still images, moving images, or sounds. Textual elements could, for instance, be a headline and the body text (writing), a photograph (image), a banner ad or a news story from television (moving images), or a piece of music (sound) (cf. Brügger 2007b: 84-85).
25. A special type of inconsistent linking is what could be termed 'inconsistent text', namely the fact that a textual element on an archived web page contains commands that are set to get the current news headlines, weather forecast or the like from a web server (cf. the section "Archiving from the net" above). In the archived version, this information will be retrieved automatically from the live web (if the URL still exists), but without making note of the fact. Basically, we are dealing with an inconsistent link, but the content of the link target is seamlessly merged into the text of the archived webpage, which makes the text as such inconsistent, a fact that is not brought to the user's attention.
26. This method of inconsistent linking in *archive.org* is part of a deliberate policy, cf. "Not every date for every site archived is 100% complete. When you are surfing an incomplete archived site the Wayback Machine will grab the closest available date to the one you are in for the links that are missing. In the event that we do not have the link archived at all, the Wayback Machine will look for the link on the live web and grab it if available" (<http://www.archive.org/about/faqs.php#202>, accessed 12 July 2007).
27. This method presupposes that one has more than one web page from the website in question, which is normally the case if one has access to an archived website. If one has only one web page from a given website (e.g., a pdf file or the like) and neither (parts of) the whole website nor versions from the immediately surrounding days, one is in an unfortunate position.
28. The history of paratexts is discussed by Gérard Genette in Genette 1997, mostly with regard to the printed novel. Danish scholar Finn Frandsen has outlined a development of Genette's insights in order to adapt them to the newspaper, see Frandsen 1991 and 1992. Cf. also Brügger 2007a: 86-87 for a brief discussion of paratexts in relation to the website.
29. This method focuses on the textual elements of the individual web page, but it will probably also be useful in determining the structure of a website, i.e. the presence of sub-sites.

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Professor Nukem

Communicating Research in the Age of the Experience Economy

KJETIL SANDVIK & ANNE METTE THORHAUGE

Abstract

The experience economy, that is, the creative and communicative turn in today's social, cultural and economic structures, implies, as explained by Pine and Gilmore (1999), that consumption is embedded in a communicative format that conveys some kind of experience to the consumer. The consumer in turn becomes more than just a passive user – he or she becomes an active participant in the experiential/communicative design. As such, the mode of consumption in the experience economy is an interactive and play-centric one. And the computer game embodies the very core logic of this experience economy. In the experience economy, the focus is not on consumption of commodities and services, but on the consumer's engagement in an experience that uses products, services and information as props and creative tools. Taking the user-centred mode of consumption as our point of departure, the present paper examines how the computer game format may be used as a new tool for communicating academic research to a broader audience. By applying some findings from a recent project, we will focus on the ways in which academic research can be communicated in a format that causes the recipient to take part in the process of communication and acquiring knowledge. This opens up new opportunities as well as challenges. On the one hand, communication of academic research is provided with new types of involvement, as the focus is not only on knowledge as content, but also on knowledge as activity. On the other hand, questions are raised here concerning what kind of knowledge is actually communicated/created in the process of active participation.

Keywords: computer games, experience economy, knowledge, research communication, play-like learning

Introduction

There is an increasing demand – put forward by politicians, business leaders, journalists – for researchers to communicate their research results not just within the academic system of conferences and peer-reviewed journals, but also in popularized formats to a broader audience. This raises the question of how scientific knowledge can be communicated in ways that can address and involve this broader audience.

The current article presents a research experiment into finding new formats for communicating the work of researchers. The project is grounded in the experience economy paradigm in which consumption of goods, services, information/knowledge has become a creative communication process in which the consumer is not only on the receiving

end, but is also embedded in this process as a creative and participating agent. In this context, communicating research is not just a matter of transferring knowledge, but of creating communication designs that allow the recipient to get involved – in playful ways – in the knowledge-producing process itself. This is related to educational paradigms such as ‘learning by doing’ and ‘play-like learning’, and it is also related to the use of (computer) games as educational tools, which will be discussed throughout the article in relation to our project. Furthermore, it is related to a systemic understanding of what knowledge is that does not limit knowledge to facts, but that also regards knowledge as understanding of what knowledge as such is and how knowledge-producing systems operate.

We wish to point out that, in the context of our project, the common denominator between the experience economy paradigm, these educational paradigms and a systemic approach to knowledge is that learning and acquiring knowledge are not just about reception, but also about production and participation. Communicating research to a broader audience in the age of the experience economy cannot – as we see it – just be a matter of transferring knowledge, but should facilitate ways in which the recipient can get involved in a participatory, knowledge-producing dialogue with the researcher(s) and the research material being communicated. He or she becomes a player participating in activities that should simulate research practice in various ways.

Presentation of the Project

Professor Nukem was an experiment on the use of computer games in communication of academic knowledge, and in this particular project academic research about the social and cultural impact of computer games. The project consists of two synergistically linked parts or two communication structures – a game-shaped part that should be played and a database-shaped part from which the user can get different kinds of information (about the project, research reports, etc.). The game-part of the project is designed in a relatively simple way by combining elements from two classical (computer) game genres: The quiz and the first-person shooter. In the game, the player is put in the role of a researcher – Professor Nukem – who in his studies on computer games is confronted with opponents in the form of prejudiced statements about computer games (like “computer games are addictive”) and graphically displayed as monsters. To beat these opponents, the player has to choose a weapon in the form of a counter-argument. There are more counter-arguments to choose between, and the player has to select the right one, that is, the one based on scientific inquiries and reports. Accordingly, this initial sequence has a classical quiz structure, and it is followed by a sequence that has more in common with the first-person shooter. In this sequence, the player has to use his or her weapon to shoot the opponent. It has an evaluating function with regard to the quiz sequence, as the player’s chances of overcoming the opponent depend on the choice of weapon. If the opponent loses life when hit, the right weapon has been chosen. If this is not the case, the wrong weapon has been chosen. If this happens, the player has the opportunity to put the game on hold and choose among the other alternatives. The shooting sequence ends as the player or the opponent runs out of life, and it is followed by an explanation that clarifies why a given counter-argument is right or wrong. These explanations represent the primary knowledge content that is to be communicated in the game, and they can also be found in the game’s “walkthrough” in the database part of the project. The game has four different levels focusing on different aspects of computer

games as they are often portrayed in the public: Computer games as addictive, computer games as violent, computer games as a socially isolating and, finally, computer games as a totally harmless activity.

Professor Nukem was part of a larger project focusing on the communication of research in the age of the experience economy. The project was called *Exhibit Öresund*¹ and was coordinated by Diginet Öresund (<http://www.diginet.org/>), a network for the digital experience industries in the Öresund Region. Exhibit Öresund involved several universities in the Öresund region: Höskolan Kristianstad, University of Lund, University of Copenhagen and the Roskilde University-center. The resulting experiments involve the communication of academic research in the form of podcasts, simulations and – in the case of *Professor Nukem* – the computer game format.

Computer Games and the Experience Economy

Taking the experience economical, user-centred mode of consumption as our point of departure, *Professor Nukem* was an experiment on how the computer game format can be used as a new tool for communicating academic research in an engaging and participation-oriented way to a broader audience. Our main reason for choosing the computer game as a communication format was simply that computer games (and game-playing activities as such) embody the core logic of the experience economy: “staging experiences is not about entertaining customers, it’s about *engaging* them” (Pine & Gilmore 1999, p.30)

The experience economy may be defined as an economy that is based on the increasing demand in today’s society for experience and that builds on the value of consumer creativity applied to both new and more traditional products and services:

When a person buys a service, he purchases a set of intangible activities carried out on his behalf. But when he buys an experience, he pays to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company stages – as in a theatrical play – to engage him in a personal way (op. cit., p.2.).

Computer games may be said to be characterized by a basic principle in the experience economy, as stated by Arvidsson and Sandvik (2007): the implementation of the consumer (which in this context rather must be termed user or player) as a creative and productive agent in the economical circuit. Thus, computer games illustrate the core logic of the experience economy in which the focus is no longer on consumption of goods and services, but rather on engagement of the consumer in an experience in which goods and services are used as props and staging tools (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) and which is characterized by mediatization of both production, marketing and consumption of experiences. Especially digital technologies – computers, mobile phones, Internet – constitute new experience economical arenas in which goods and services are embedded in digitally mediated and mediatized experiences that the consumer may be engaged and involved in, often via several media platforms.

As Pine and Gilmore point out in their book *The Experience Economy* (in which the concept is introduced for the first time), experiences as a mode of consumption are not so much about entertaining as about engaging the consumer, and this may take place on different levels of participation:

an experience may engage guests on any number of dimensions. [...] The first [...] corresponds to the level of *guest participation*. At one end of the spectrum lies

passive participation, where customers do not directly affect or influence the performance. [...] At the other end of the spectrum lies *active* participation, in which customers personally affect the performance or event that yields the experience. [...] The second [...] dimension of experience describes the kind of *connection*, or *environmental relationship* that unites customers with the event or performance. At one end of this spectrum lies *absorption* – occupying a person’s attention by bringing the experience into the mind – at the other end *immersion* – becoming physically (or virtually) a part of the experience itself. (op. cit., p.30-31)

But regardless the level of participation, designing experiences is a matter of scripting structures of actions and events that are open-ended in order to make room for consumer participation. Computer games are characterized by this logic: the consumer (the player) is participating in a way that contributes to the very experience the computer game has to offer. As such, computer games present themselves as performative in that they position the players as active subjects who have to take action in order produce and perceive the game experience. Looking at *Professor Nukem* from this perspective, the main purpose of the project is to create a communication design in which academic research is not only conceived by ways of reading a body of (more or less interactive) texts, but by ways of offering the user a certain role to play: In an entertaining and quite cartoonish way when playing the computer game part and in a more serious and investigative fashion when encountering the database part, the player is invited to play out a simulation of the activity of academic research and knowledge production, letting him/her experience the process of academic knowledge production, which includes making hypotheses, analysing and validating arguments, and so on.

The centrality of the computer game to the experience economy as a cultural paradigm is evidenced by the spectacular rise in the size of the computer games industry (by now outstripping that of the film industry), and by the prominent status of computer game aesthetics in films such as *The Matrix*, *Lola Rennt*, *Timecode*, *eXistenZ*, and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. We see the computer game format reproduced in marketing (implementing casual games in a viral marketing campaign), advertising (using adver-games or in-game advertizing), in communicating culture (e.g., the game-like online versions of art museums such as the Louvre and the Van Gogh Museum) and so on. And it can also be seen in the computer game’s importance to military applications such as flight simulators and other types of computer-based training systems, in the general “conflation and confusion of war and game” that has lead to “the development and proliferation of wargaming in the United States’ defense and foreign policies” (Der Derian 2003, p. 38) as well as in the use of game-like vocabulary in the ‘war on terrorism’ campaign. But this paradigmatic status is also, and perhaps primarily, illustrated by the technological form of the game medium itself.

As Arvidsson and Sandvik (2007) stated, computer games are part of the contemporary process of mediatization, by means of which new spatial and temporal dimensions of life are opened up for commoditization. This is particularly clear when the computer game spreads from the PC or the game console (PlayStation, Xbox and so on) to other technological platforms (the portable console, the cell phone or the PDA, or – even more significant – to the Internet), which make gaming possible in a much wider and more diverse range of situations, or when, as in the case of Electronic Arts’ adventure game *Majestic*, the gameplay includes taking clues from mysterious midnight phone calls, anonymous e-mails and faxes, and fake websites. *Majestic* was promoted as a game that would “take over your life” and produces a game experience along the lines of what

is experienced by Michael Douglas' character in David Fincher's *The Game*, and even though the game flopped and was taken off the market shortly after its release, *Majestic* forecasted the design trend called *pervasive gaming*, which creates gaming opportunities in the streets, offering a combination of tracking and location-based interaction, including cell phones with cameras, GPS and Internet access. A similar pervasive computer game (*In Memoriam* by Ubisoft) was released in 2004 with greater success; it includes e-mails and surfing the Internet as part of the gameplay. In these cases, the game platform tends to coincide with the contours of the life-world itself, as do other contemporary game formats such as *live action role-play* (see Sandvik & Waade 2007).

As an interactive medium, the computer (in all its forms and shapes) facilitates communication processes that differ from traditional one-way formats, in that the user has to take action in order to keep the communication going. This is particularly the case when it comes to the interplay between the user and the fictional universe of the computer game. As Pearce (2002) points out, the computer as a dynamic two-way medium enables game designers to create a "new narrative ideology" in which the designer creates a narrative framework for the players' own game-stories. Here again, the characteristics of computer games coincide with the core logic of the experience economy: "Indeed, at its best, theming an experience means scripting a story that would seem incomplete without guests' participation" (Pine & Gilmore, p.48). The designer does not simply function as a storyteller in the traditional sense. This becomes particularly clear with regard to so-called *Massively Multiuser Online Role-playing Games* (MMORPGs). These games, according to Pearce (2002), include both a *meta-story* in the shape of a pre-designed fiction world that contains a variety of story-lines structured in a progressive form like a series of missions for players to engage in, implying that players attain higher levels of experience, and a *story-system* that enables players to develop their own game stories in a variety of events and campaigns initiated by game clans within the framework of this world.

What we have here is a kind of user agency that is constituted by collective, collaborative and improvisational story production. It develops and evolves in realtime for the players who are logged on to the game. This 'realtime-ness' enables a blurring of the line between the fictitious world of the game and the world of the player, thus causing the game to transgress into the player's life-world where social activities and communities are mediatized by means of chat channels, blogs, and clan websites related to the game. Even though *Professor Nukem* is nowhere near entailing such a complex game model for its communication design, the large communicative and educational potential here can easily be imagined in light of what we have learned from this project. An example of how complex game models, such as those described above, can be put into educational use can be seen in the Danish project *Homicide/Drabsag Melved*, discussed in Jessen and Magnussen (2006). Here, the educational goal is to learn maths, physics and chemistry in the form of a role-playing game simulating a crime scene investigation, with the users in the role of technicians working with laboratory analysis of fingerprints, bloodstains, gunshot wounds and so on.

Computer Games' Educational Potential

Using the experience economy as a cultural paradigm and how computer games embody its core logic as our framework, we will put forward, in the following section, some thoughts on the educational potential of computer games, which is essential to how

computer games may be used as a participation-oriented method of communicating knowledge. We will do so by focusing on computer games in a cultural and historical perspective, in light of modern theories of pedagogy, on computer games as part of children's culture, and finally, on computer games as role-play.

Our point of departure will be an obvious yet important one: Computer games are games and thus related to play and games in a broader sense. When analysing the educational potential of computer games, we can start by examining the role of games in our culture as such. As pointed out by Carsten Jessen (Jessen 2001, Jessen & Magnussen 2006), in a broader cultural perspective games are not educational tools, instead they are means for creating playful social interactions. This does not mean that games do not involve learning. Many computer games are highly complex and require long learning processes, but (as also Piaget puts it when he analyses the role of children's play) "the learning is a means here, and the gameplay itself is the goal" (Jessen & Magnussen 2006, p.23).

However, in a cultural and historical perspective, games have never played an unambiguous role as just fun and entertainment (see Huizinga, 1963). The value of games has also been religious, political and pedagogical. In ancient Greece, games had a religious value in confirming and describing the cosmology: the relationship between the gods and humans. Concerning the political value of games, games created the very space and format for the political debate that constituted democracy (and at the same time had a practical-political dimension in that different games of contest and combat were used in, e.g., the selection and training of the state's soldiers). And finally, in a pedagogical sense, games played an important role in the upbringing of children and fostering of the population. The point is that games have not just been part of the field of entertainment and leisure time activities, nor have they been limited to childhood activities.

Still, the invention of childhood in the 1700s has had an important impact on how we regard play and games (see Egenfeldt-Nielsen & Smith, 2000). Play and games were increasingly regarded as something children do and something important in children's socialization: Play and games became a means for training children's ability to form social relations, and later on a cognitive-psychological perspective was added. Play and games train children's cognitive competences, as Jean Piaget points out (see Piaget, 1976). Piaget puts forth three categories of play – *play of function*, *play of symbols* and *play of rules* – which exercise these competences in different ways. One of the credos of cognitive psychology is that play is not just controlled by our instincts: it has to be learned and stimulated from the outside, as a stimulus for further learning. While the *play of function* is aimed at developing knowledge about the world and the *play of rules* is aimed at understanding as well as perceiving already fixed codes, the *play of symbols* (or role-play) is a kind of play that teaches the child to conceptualize the world and to abstract its thoughts.

Piaget's findings have had a great impact on modern theories of pedagogy and different learning theories proposing that we should regard learning as: a) complex processes, based on b) construction of knowledge, which are c) taking place across different contexts, d) placing the child in the centre, and whose e) primary modes are a combination of 'learning by doing' and 'learning by reflection' (see Sørensen, 2005). As a system of communication, this educational model, with its complex communicational processes, resembles the participatory and user-centred communicational logic of the experience economy and the interactive and play-centric communicational mode of computer games. This is opposed to a more traditional perspective on education, in

which knowledge can be regarded as a package of facts and skills that is conveyed by the teacher and ‘poured’ into the pupils, who in turn acquire these facts and skills. Thus, in terms of communication, learning is a result of one-way transportation of information in a classical Jacobsonian fashion. It represents a communicative paradigm in which media are regarded as ‘channels which transport information from one place to another’ (Qvortrup 2007, p.19). Current learning theories (see Gee 2004, 2005) focus on knowledge more as an activity, as a process, rather than content, which may be transported from teacher to student:

Any actual domain of knowledge, academic or not, is first and foremost a set of activities (special ways of seeing, valuing, and being in the world). Physicists *do* physics. They *talk* physics. And when they are being physicists, they *see* and *value* the worlds in a different way than do non-physicists. The same goes for good anthropologists, linguists, urban planners, army officers, doctors, artists, literary critics, historians, and on and on. (Gee 2005, p.1)

If we were to erase the boundaries between these two different types of learning, the concept of education may be expanded and the learning situation will probably become more effective. Of course children still need to acquire certain skills: they need to learn how to read, write, do maths and so on, but their interest in computer games and in being active players may be put to work here, as seen in the Danish *Magnus og Myggen* ‘learn-to-read’ game (Ivanoff Interactive, 2006) and in the above-mentioned role-playing game *Homicide/Melved* (LearningLab Denmark, 2006), which has been designed for high school science classes. These, naturally, are games designed for educational purposes in the same way as *Professor Nukem* has been designed for the purpose of communicating academic research, but even non-educational games may be used as pedagogical tools. Just to give a couple of examples borrowed from Danish game researcher Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen (see, e.g., Egenfeldt-Nielsen, 2005): If a class is to learn about the Medieval Ages, a realtime strategy game like *Age of Kings* may be used. In this game, you build your own kingdom using different units and buildings offered by the game. The player controls priests, knights, archers and so on. A variety of scenarios are based on historical events. The player may take on the responsibility for Joan of Arc’s desperate attempt to save France or the Scottish riot against English superiority. Introducing this game as a tool in the teaching of history may give children a ‘hands-on’ insight into the mechanisms and logic of wars and power. If children are to learn about the laws of physics, a game like *The Incredible Machine* may be used as a pedagogical tool. In this game, a variety of objects should be arranged in such a way that a small ball will roll into a hole. The game design applies different physical principles in this setup, and thus the game may be used as a means for making science more appealing and less abstract to children.

These, of course, are just a couple of hypothetical examples of how computer games, which have not been designed for educational purposes, may be used as tools for specific pedagogical situations. But computer games are – as games in general – also potential tools for acquiring skills and knowledge on a more general level. The media play a crucial role in the way in which modern human beings acquire information and communicate with each other: Modern, digital communication is – due to its interactivity – based to a high degree on computer game formats. This is why playing computer games may be regarded as a means to train general media competences as well as other competences needed in today’s hyper-complex society (cf. Qvortrup 2003). Here analysing and acting

according to complex structures of meaning is vital and contains a learning potential that may transgress the game itself. As pointed out by Bo Kampmann Walther (2005), the ability to adapt, the ability to be part of mobile teams, to believe in oneself, the ability to communicate a strategy and to understand information – which characterize e.g. the players of online multiplayer games like *Counter-Strike* – are qualities demanded by, e.g., the business community. Thus, playing computer games may be regarded as a way of managing complexity in a society that could be called “polycentric, i.e. a society of many centers, many contexts and many different basic assumptions and blind spots” (Qvortrup 2007, p.24)

Thus, computer games may function as media training and rehearsals in handling complexity, whether this takes place in the shape of violent play (when playing an action game like *Grand Theft Auto*), in the shape of mastering complex structures of meaning (when solving complicated puzzles in an adventure game like *Myst* or when building large systems in a strategy game like *Civilization*), or in the shape of experimentation with social structures (when playing the build-your-own-family game *The Sims*) (Sandvik 2006a).

In order to examine the educational potentials of computer games more closely, we may consider the communicative complexity of massive multi-player online role-playing games (in the tradition of *Ultima Online* and with *World of Warcraft* as today’s most prominent example) and examine their resemblance to educational formats such as the role-play used as pedagogical tools in, e.g., educational drama (see Sandvik 2004, 2006b). The gameplay activities here resemble the learning ideals found in modern learning theory and the educational practice found in the use of role-play as a pedagogical tool: Here we find complex processes, facilitated by the game designers, focusing on construction of a world, its characters and stories and on building different social, political and economical systems. And these processes work across different contexts when players are operating both inside and outside the game’s structure of actions and events, as agents in the game ‘story’ and at the same time as the creators of the very same story. And – as is true of all games – the player is placed in the centre as the main character in the course of events. And this double perspective, inherent in being both inside and outside the game’s structure of actions and events, contains a great educational potential in which children can be both ‘learning by doing’ and ‘learning by reflection’, which is one of the important principles of modern educational theory. The concept here would be what Joseph Gee calls “game-like learning” (Gee 2005). Game-like learning is used to describe a learning situation in which technology-based games simulate complex worlds or systems, thus giving pupils the opportunity to learn about a scientific field through participation in activities that simulate a specific practice within a certain field of scholarship and research. As pointed out by Carsten Jessen, the computer game as media “with its construction of rules, interaction and narrativity” may be regarded as “an educational tool which [...] may support the development of educational competencies” (Jessen & Magnussen 2006, p.7).

Forms of Knowledge in *Professor Nukem*

Thus, as has been argued above, computer games have a learning potential with regard to the communication of knowledge and training of specific competencies. As such, they also represent a new potential with regard to the communication of research and scientific knowledge. By turning the recipients into active participants, computer games

are possible vehicles of pedagogical experiments focused on a more complex, active and engaging learning process, as pointed out in the previous section. *Professor Nukem* is such an experiment, where statements about computer games are partly organized into a relatively simple gameplay, partly into a more complex database structure. As described earlier, the player has to choose between various statements about computer games in order to win the game and is subsequently given an explanation based on scientific knowledge. While the integration of these statements into a gameplay potentially heightens the player's feeling of engagement, it also raises some critical issues with regard to the concept of knowledge. That is, while computer games most certainly require knowledge and competences in order to be played and thus imply a learning process, the specific knowledge and competences involved are not necessarily equivalent to the knowledge to be communicated. Thus, it is necessary to be aware of what knowledge is actually to be communicated and whether this knowledge is actually an integrated part of playing the game.

On one level (the other levels will be dealt with below), *Professor Nukem* builds on a conception of knowledge as content and relates as such to what Gee calls "content fetish" (Gee 2004):

The content fetish is the view that any academic area, whether physics, sociology, or history, is composed of a set of facts or a body of information and that the way learning should work is through teaching and testing such facts and information. (Gee 2005, p.1)

Knowledge is regarded in this context as a phenomenon that can be organized into categories of right and wrong. There are right answers and wrong answers, and the right answers are those that can be supported by research reports and scientific publications. The player wins the game by choosing those counterarguments that are defined in this way as the right ones, and he/she subsequently receives an explanation as to why a given answer is right or wrong. These explanations represent the primary knowledge content that is to be communicated in the game, which means that the communicative value of the game depends on the player's willingness to read them. From a design point-of-view, we have facilitated this activity by removing any kind of time pressure on the quiz sequences. The player can take his/her time to choose a weapon or read an explanation without losing any points on that account. Still, this does not guarantee that the player will read the explanations – this ultimately depends on the player and the player group. What counts as relevant knowledge in order to play the game depends on the characteristics and motivations of the players.

When we developed the game, we defined our target group as schoolteachers, parents and politicians with an interest in children's use of computer games and media in general. We expected this group to possess sufficient reading skills to read the explanations and we expected them to have a level of motivation for playing that went beyond simply mastery of the game and towards gaining knowledge about research on the social and cultural impact of computer games. We have some indications that this is also the case. Thus, as part of the game development process, we asked a group of respondents to play the initial version of the game and comment upon it. The respondents who agreed to help us were a couple of grandparents aged 50+, a housewife and mother of three, a school teacher and a journalist. Apart from commenting on specific functionalities in the game, most of the respondents commented on the specific wording of the questions, answers and explanations in the game. For instance, they commented on the difficulty

level and on the grammatical structure of specific explanations. This implies that they actually read the text elements in the game as part of their playing activity.

However, after the game was published online and introduced to a broader group of players, we had a wider range of responses. These responses can be exemplified by a couple of teenagers we got a chance to observe playing the game on an informal occasion. The teenagers were a girl aged 13 and a boy aged 18 who teamed up and played the game together, with the explicit goal of getting on top of the high score list shown at the end of the game. After a few minutes of gameplay, the following analysis was given: *Quite easy: the right answers are the long ones we don't understand*. The teenagers did not care about the content of the questions and answers – their main motivation was to master the game, that is, as quickly and effectively as possible to kill the monsters and to proceed through the level structure, and to this end, the written content seemed to have little value to them. Baker et al. (2004) called this type of player behaviour “off-task behaviour”:

This set of strategies, which we will refer to as “gaming the system”, consists of behaviour aimed at obtaining correct answers and advancing within the tutoring curriculum by taking advantage of regularities in the software’s responses – systematically misusing the software’s feedback or help instead of actively thinking about the material. (ibid.)

This does not mean that their gaming activity did not involve any knowledge at all, but theirs was another type of knowledge: Recognition of the basic game logic (gameplay and the game mechanic characteristics of the quiz and first-person shooter), of a general pattern in the wording of the statements, and of how this was to be operationalized into successful manipulation of the game.

What the teenagers playing *Professor Nukem* did was apply their skills as computer game players, their knowledge about game genres, gameplay and game mechanics. When we are exploring how computer games may be used as educational tools and tools for communication knowledge, it is important to take this type of media-specific knowledge – which is acquired by players through playing games – into consideration.

It is evident that successful gaming (that is the playing of computer games) requires a particular kind of player socialization in which the player acquires the knowledge necessary to play the game. To pinpoint the main characteristics of computer games in this context, computer games may be described as computer-mediated settings in which the player is invited to take part as a major agent in the interactive structures of actions and events: They present themselves as interactive and “play-centric” (Pearce, 2002). Computer games are interactive in that they are constituted by interactions between a structure of actions and events (however complex and multi-threaded) and a player’s agency within and in relation to this world and structure. They are play-centric in that this interaction between game and player is not limited to mere reading or watching, but must be played. Thus, interactive and play-centric structures of actions and events imply a specific structure of communication and, as a result of this, a transformation of the recipient.

Many researchers along the line of Brenda Laurel (1991) have regarded the interactive communication structures of the computer and thus also computer games as a type of participatory theatre. And the same use of theatre metaphors may be found in Pine and Gilmore’s description of the communicational logics of the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore 1999). From merely playing the role of spectator to the dramatic story unfolding in front of him/her, the player is offered a role within the action and

event structure itself. But the transformation is even more radical than that: If we stick to theatre-metaphorical terms as they have been employed, the interactive and play-centric structure found in computer games dissolves the line between spectator and the structure of actions and events taking place on the stage; it dissolves the notion of spectator and stage all together, which is why it is not entirely correct to assume that interactive systems (“the computer as theatre”) mimic a situation in which the audience members enter the stage and become actors (Laurel, 1991, p.16). It makes little sense to talk about actors and audience in the traditional sense. There is no point outside the game from which an audience is intended to watch and therefore there is no one for the player as actor to act for. A game is not meant to be watched like a theatre performance. The central issue in a game is play. This means there are different demands on interactive and play-centric fiction than on traditional fictions, which are meant to be read or watched. Narrative contingency, psychological character development, depth of characters as well as story play a minor role compared to possibilities for the recipient to play a role within the story. The point is not to discover, reveal or to read the plot (see Brooks, 1984), but *to play the plot*.

In order to function as a competent player, one has to have acquired both the knowledge and skills that are generally available within the language of computer games in general: One must be able to function as a ‘social individual’ within the world of computer games. This connects to the dyadic system of various game universes and interactive structures embedded in computer games that the player can influence. This structure of game universe and possible player actions is what we usually term a game’s *gameplay*. Gameplay may be described as the pace and eye-and-hand coordination skills as well as the cognitive effort that the game requires of the player (Crawford, 1997, p.21). Different gameplay genres have demanded different sets of player qualifications throughout the history of computer games, and thus have created traditions for the socialization of ‘competent players’. Action games require the ability to operate the game interface at a high speed and to react in real-time to the multitude of choices constantly presented by the game, while adventure games demand skills of pattern recognition, logical reasoning, puzzle solving and so on; strategy games build on a player’s ability to construct and handle increasingly complex systems (a family, a city, an ecosystem, etc.). Even though the game genre landscape is much more complex now than when Chris Crawford formulated his trend-setting genres in *The Art of Computer Game Design* (1982), and contemporary game design tends to blend genres into action-adventure, action-role-playing, and realtime strategy, classic notions of gameplay genres still play an important role when games are released and promoted. As such, a new game will always be released into a context constituted by gaming communities (groupings of different types of players who exchange experience and engage in different kinds of fan-activities connected to certain games or certain types of game), as well as by the game tradition established by the historical development of different game genres.

At the level of the particular game, players are socialized through a wide variety of strategies: voluminous manuals, extensive introduction sequences, informative cut-scenes, tutorial levels, and so on. In highly competitive games such as action games, the possibilities for the player to get better at playing the game (pursuing ‘high-score’) are ensured by designers introducing ‘save-game’ functionalities that allow the player to install points in the dramatic story that he/she can return to in case the development proves to be unfortunate (e.g., the player-character dies). In games that focus on some kind of collective story-producing process, the gameplay includes the possibility for the

player to acquire important tools (acting techniques, dramaturgical competences and so on) that are needed to create fiction. This is the case with MMORPGs. These games contain not only tools for creating and developing a character, but also different kinds of ‘practice grounds’ in which players can try out their characters and certain possibilities for creating dramatic action. They are thus socialized into the game by the process of getting acquainted with the game rules, game interface and game fiction, and they use this knowledge to play the actual game, but also when encountering new games.

Returning to *Professor Nukem*, it is evident that this game involves several types of knowledge depending on the players. Whereas the knowledge to be communicated consists of explicit statements about computer games, the teenagers who tested the game ignored this construction and applied another kind of knowledge – a more or less tacit recognition of the language patterns in the quiz sequence combined with gameplay skills and knowledge about game genres (here: the first-person shooter genre). We describe this recognition as “more or less tacit”, as it is only made explicit because we asked the players about it. Although players may choose to verbalize and make explicit this type of knowledge in order to share, it does not have to be made explicit in order to be useful. In this way, the two types of knowledge involved differ with regard to their explicitness. Furthermore, whereas the explicit statements refer to the subject matter of the game, the analysis given by the teenagers refers to the way the game is constructed. The two types of knowledge involved are associated with different aspects of the game system.

Accordingly, if computer games are to be used as tools for communicating about research, we have to be aware of which kind of knowledge the term “research” is expected to cover and how this type of knowledge works in computer games. In the following section, we will suggest the distinction between factual, situational and systemic knowledge as a useful classification in this regard.

Factual, Situational and Systemic Form: A Theory of Knowledge

If games are to be used as tools for communicating about research, we need to define which form of knowledge we consider research to be and how it relates to other forms of knowledge. That is, we need a general explanation of the concept of knowledge. One such explanation is given by Lars Qvortrup, who takes a systemic approach to the question. Thus, with reference to Polanyi’s concept of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1967), he makes a basic distinction between immediate and reflexive capacities (Qvortrup 2004, p. 71-73). Immediate capacities are usually referred to as skills, whereas reflexive capacities are usually referred to as knowledge. However, Qvortrup points out that both are forms of knowledge. In the case of *Professor Nukem*, the explicit statements as well as the tacit understanding count as knowledge even though they represent different types of knowledge.

Qvortrup furthermore addresses two basic philosophical traditions with regard to the definition of knowledge: *Cartesianism* based on the works of Descartes in the 17th century, and *phenomenology* based on the works of Husserl and Heidegger at the beginning of the 20th century. From a classical Cartesian point of view, knowledge is a token of the relationship between the subject and the world (Qvortrup 2004, p. 76). Thus, as Cartesianism separates the subject and the world into two fundamentally different categories, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, knowledge resides in the subject’s contemplation of the world. However, this separation of subject and world into two distinct categories has been met with a great deal of critique, and phenomenology represents an alternative perspective.

According to a phenomenological standpoint, the subject and the world cannot be separated. The subject is in the world and a part of the world, and this is a basic condition for all knowledge (see Heidegger, 1935). According to this perspective, knowledge is not a token of the relationship between the subject and the world, it is a token of the subject's being in the world – a way of handling the complexity of the world (Qvortrup 2004, p. 82). The subject not only contemplates the world – it also contemplates its own being in the world as well as the world as a condition for the contemplation of the world. This gives way to several orders of knowledge: Factual knowledge, situational knowledge, systemic knowledge and world knowledge, as summarized below:

Table 1. *An Overview of Knowledge Forms*

Knowledge form	Knowledge system	Knowledge term
Factual knowledge	Knowledge about the world	Qualifications
Situational knowledge	Knowledge about knowledge	Competences
Systemic knowledge	Knowledge about the knowledge system	Creativity
World knowledge	Collective basis of knowledge	Culture

Source: Qvortrup 2004, p. 86.

World knowledge is a relatively abstract construction that resides not in the individual subject, but in the social community in general. As regards the other knowledge forms, however, they represent some very useful tools indeed. Seen in relation to *Professor Nukem*, factual knowledge represents a statement about the world such as: “gamers seldom display all necessary symptoms of addiction”. In comparison, situational knowledge refers to the specific knowledge situation: The statement above is part of a game, and it may thus represent a right or a wrong answer, which means that choosing it has consequences for the further progression of the game. Finally, systemic knowledge refers to the knowledge system that underlies at given statement. In this case, systemic knowledge represents the various research traditions that have different definitions of the concept of addiction, which determines whether it makes sense to apply a given definition in specific situations.

What we wished to communicate with the project was not just research results, but also the work processes of the academic researcher. By applying an experience- and participation-based communication design and a learning-by-doing mode, the intention behind *Professor Nukem* as not just to communicate knowledge on the first level in Qvortup's model, but also on the 2nd and 3rd level, dealing with how knowledge is created and how knowledge systems function.

Thus, according to the table above, what do we communicate when we communicate research? Are we communicating factual knowledge in the form of statements about the world or are we communicating systemic knowledge in the form of knowledge about those systems that condition the statements? We believe we do both. That is, communicating research means making obvious the connection between statements about the world and those knowledge systems that provide the statements with their truth-value. In the case of *Professor Nukem*, what is to be communicated is the relation between the counterarguments and the research that renders them true or false. As the teenagers' strategy indicates, this only happens to some degree. Thus, some of *Professor Nukem*'s shortcomings can give us an idea about future improvements.

Future improvements: The Lesson Learned from *Professor Nukem*

As described above, *Professor Nukem* is an experiment and part of a larger project focusing on the communication of research in the age of the experience economy. As such, it has been conducted under certain time and money constraints that limited the sort of game concept we could develop. For instance, development of a complex strategy game or a detailed simulation game was far beyond the resources at hand, and the result is a rather simple flash-based webgame that illustrates certain communication principles. As such, the game has its obvious shortcomings, and these shortcomings may bring about even more interesting conclusions than its possible advantages.

We have presented and demonstrated the project in various educational settings, and here a number of critical points have been raised that may serve to advance our discussion about games as conveyers of scientific knowledge a little further. Most severely, the game has been called a “brochure in the disguise of a game” where the game is at best “a bad excuse for bringing forth a specific story”. What this critique points to is the lack of coherence between content and form – knowledge and gameplay – in *Professor Nukem*. This is a problem because “gameplay is what the player will mainly focus upon in order to win the game”.

Of course, players are not all alike. As described earlier on, teenagers and school-teachers played the game differently, and thus gameplay is a variable concept too. Whereas the game may have been designed to be played in a specific way, different player groups may choose to play it in alternative and surprising ways. However, the critique is quite appropriate, as there is indeed no connection between the knowledge to be learned in the game and the different ways of manipulating the game in practice. For instance, there is no obvious reason why a correct answer should turn into a useful weapon, whereas a wrong answer renders the weapon useless. This may make sense at a metaphorical level, but it is easily ignored in the act of playing the game.

Restating this critique in terms of the knowledge categories presented above, *Professor Nukem* does not integrate the factual, situational and systemic knowledge forms involved in the game sufficiently. As already mentioned, the teenagers ignored the written content of the game and relied instead on an identification of the general language pattern and how it was to be operationalized into successful manipulation of the game. According to the table above, they focused mainly on the situational level, ignoring the content of the statements and their relation to a general knowledge system. And the reason why they could do so was that the situational knowledge – the knowledge required to play the game – was not sufficiently integrated into the other knowledge forms of the game. It was possible to play the game without taking into consideration the content of the statements. Thus, an important aim of further experiments should be to develop game concepts in which the immediate or reflexive capacities required to master the game, that is, the situational knowledge, is more closely connected to those reflexive capacities that are expected to be communicated by the game, that is, the factual and systemic knowledge. In an ideal situation, the knowledge required to master a game should be the logical link between the factual and the systemic knowledge of the game.

An additional point has to be made here. The knowledge required to master a game is rarely stated explicitly. For instance, the teenagers’ recognition of the game’s knowledge patterns had a more or less tacit character, in that they only verbalized it because we asked them to do so. In Qvortrup’s terms, their knowledge about the game had the form of an immediate capacity with a strong potential to become a reflected capacity. However, the aim of a project like *Professor Nukem* is to communicate knowledge in

the form of reflected capacities. Other types of educational games like, for instance, flight simulators may have immediate capacities, such as an intuitive understanding of a complex relationship or change in behavioural patterns, as their principal aim. In comparison, the communication of research as defined above implies making obvious the connection between specific statements and general systems of knowledge, that is, causing the player to reflect on this connection. In other words: It is not enough that the player manages to do the right thing or make the right choice in the game. The player must also be aware of this choice and able to explain why it is better than the alternatives. Ideally, the very structure of the gameplay should support and ensure this transformation of immediate capacities into reflected capacities. This does not mean that such games should not imply immediate capacities. This is not possible. Rather, the relevant immediate capacities should be transformed into reflected capacities by way of the gameplay itself.

This is quite ambitious. Integrating the factual, situational and systemic knowledge involved in playing a game and doing this by transforming immediate capacities into reflected capacities will require much more advanced game concepts than that of *Professor Nukem*. Most likely this will also imply larger budgets and more technical expertise involved in the development of the game. And these resources are not always at hand. However, economical constraints should not become an easy excuse for lack of original thinking. *Professor Nukem* certainly could have taken other forms that may have fulfilled our aim more successfully. For instance, an obvious solution that was not chosen would have been to use communication between players as a resource and a way to bring about an integration between knowledge and gameplay in the game. Thus, *Professor Nukem* should rather be seen as a first, modest step in the direction of communicating academic research by way of the computer game format, and hopefully more attempts at this will appear in the future.

Even though the project has its flaws and shortcomings, it demonstrates important issues that need to be discussed and tested in further research into communicating research in popularized formats outside the academic sphere. As such, our project has been an attempt to raise questions about what knowledge is and about how communication of knowledge in the age of the experience economy is not just a matter of transferring information, but about facilitating communication processes that focus on learning and acquiring knowledge as creative and participatory processes. Especially (computer) games facilitate those types of processes that transform recipients into participants (player), which is why they have great educational and communicative potential in this context.

Note

1. The project is now completed, and the website containing *Professor Nukem* no longer exists. The game-part of the project may still be played at <http://www.uovo.dk/clients/diginet/>.

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Youth as Producers

Digital Stories of Faith and Life

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Abstract

What are the actual inner processes taking place when youth shape and share stories about their lives through digital storytelling? In the present study, we follow an experiment in religious education in a local congregation outside Oslo. In the autumn of 2005, the Church of Norway initiated a project wherein young people raised questions of faith and life in short biographical mini-films called 'Digital Faith Stories'. As the title suggests, digital tools are central to the project. We focus on the youth participants, analysing their role as media producers and following the construction of their stories. The adult leaders of the project are also given some attention. The analysis shows that the method of 'Digital Storytelling' might lead to a more systematic educational method for including the *lifeworld* of the young in religious training. The research has been carried out in cooperation with Prof. Knut Lundby.

Keywords: digital storytelling, religious education, life stories, youth as producers

Introduction

The study of the uses and consequences of new media for leisure time, family life and the peer relations of young people has become an important field of research (Drotner, 1999; 2001; Heim et al., 2007; Kaare et al., 2007; Ling, 2006; Livingstone, 2002; Livingstone & Bovill, 2001). In modern Western societies, the emergence of new multimedia cultures is crucial to the lives of children and young people. As a result of their relations to digital technology, children and young people play, learn, communicate, work and shape their social and cultural relations in quite different ways than did their parents (Kaare, 2004). In recent years, several researchers have paid special attention to the development of media participation among young people, and actual participation in media production has been assigned great importance (Carlsson, 1999). Due to interactive media technologies, the younger generations in media-saturated countries have become, to a large extent, active and quite proficient media users (Drotner, 2001).

The digital revolution has been accompanied by an explosion of digital means by which young people produce and distribute stories and pictures of themselves (Scheit, 2006; Denzin, 2001). Young people's self-representations are to be found in various digital genres, above all on different forms of social network Internet sites (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Lenhart & Madden, 2007; Ogan, 2006; Polak, 2006; Scheit, 2006), but also in more modest genres such as the types of digital stories we are going to present here.

Educators are benefiting from the new digital tools. Much research has been done on the impact of new media and digitalization in schools and education (Buckingham, 2003;

Drotner, 2001; Gilje, 2005; Süss, 2001; Østerud, 2004). In recent processes of diversification of learning, the sites of education are changing, as well as the forms (Buckingham, 2003: 189-203). Informal learning is regarded as increasingly important in learning processes (Buckingham, 2003: 196-199; Drotner, 2006). Nevertheless, as learning is increasingly associated with digital technology, new sites and the leisure culture of the young are currently integrated into formal education, even religious education in Norway.

Experiments in Religious Education

In 2003, the Norwegian Parliament decided to fund a reform of religious education. Religious education is regarded as a task for the churches and religious communities, not for the public schools, as was the case until 1969. Currently, the Church of Norway is undergoing a period of experimental and developmental work. Its teaching focuses on key dimensions of human life, and its activities aim to stimulate the formation of a (religious) identity for young people to help them both master their lives and understand their cultural heritage and religious traditions. The Church of Norway has launched a five-year developmental period under the logo 'The greatest of all' [Størst av alt].

Here, we wish to present an experiment within this reform, for which the uses of digital media and digital tools are essential. Among a variety of different educational projects, in the autumn of 2005 the Church of Norway initiated an experiment on digital storytelling, where youth are encouraged to produce a short self-representational mini-film using the narrator's own voice. These films are called 'Digital Faith Stories' and are constructed within a specific genre of 'Digital Storytelling', which has evolved for several years as a media practice around the world (Hartley & Mc William, forthcoming; Hull, 2003; Hull & Nelson, 2005; Hull & Katz, 2006; Lambert, 2006; Meadows, 2003; Thumim, 2006). This 'Center for Digital Storytelling' model, which will be discussed in more detail later on, has been adopted in education elsewhere, especially in the US, where some practitioners use it as a method of building engagement and multimedia literacy.

When we look at the learning aspects of religious education, some special conditions deserve note. Unlike education connected to school systems, the religious education of members of the Church of Norway is voluntary and informal. It does not involve examinations, and it is usually associated, and in competition, with the leisure activities of the young. These conditions make religious education a challenge for teachers and supervisors as regards the use of pedagogical principles and the specific goals of education. If they do not succeed in their efforts to please young participants, children and youth might disappear to join other, more attractive, arenas of leisure activities. This is a real problem for the Church of Norway, as recruitment to this institution is at stake. The experiment of using digital tools in the learning process is an effort to reach the young by using cultural expressions familiar to them.

In the following, we will focus on the youth participating in the project, analysing their role as media producers and following the construction of their stories. Here we raise two key questions:

- What are the actual processes taking place when youth shape and share stories about their lives through digital storytelling?
- What are the consequences of introducing informal experiments such as 'Digital Storytelling' to educate young people in existential subjects such as faith and the mastering of life?

Theoretical Aspects

The specific case in focus can be analysed from different angles (Kaare & Lundby, 2008; Lundby & Kaare, 2007). Theories of youth culture and identity constructions, as well as the concepts of 'lifeworld' and of 'late modernity', are all relevant to the analysis of the present case (Drotner, 1999; Fornäs et al., 1993; Habermas, 1987; Heggen & Øia, 2005; Ling & Helmersen, 2000; Livingstone, 2002; Ziehe, 1995; 2001; Øia & Fauske, 2003), and we will briefly consider some of them in our discussion of the empirical data. However, the perspective we wish to focus on here, above all, is how the method of Digital Storytelling influences the learning process.

The emergence of new media cultures has definitely changed old hierarchical patterns of knowledge transmission and teaching, both within the family and in schools, ever since children and young people achieved skills in using digital media technologies (Gee, 2003; Himanen, 2001; Holm Sørensen, 2000; Kaare, 2004; Prensky, 2006). New generations are often optimistically ascribed ICT competence mostly owing to their young age (Jessen, 2000:149; Johansson, 2002:124; Papert, 1993; Tapscott, 1998). Young people's changing media environments have led researchers to claim that new media, particularly computers and the Internet, are accompanied by new forms of literacy (Livingstone, 2002:214), variously labelled 'media literacy', 'digital literacy' or the more limited 'digital competence'. In Scandinavia, researchers have developed the concept of literacy to include the German concept '*Bildung*' (or the Scandinavian equivalents *bildning*, *dannelse*, or *danning*). *Bildung* is a wider concept than literacy. At the beginning of the 20th century, acquiring *Bildung* above all meant learning to master inner collective common values such as control, dignity, obedience and grace (Drotner, 2006: 1). Today, the concept implies reflection, criticism, identity, competence and sense of community, and also, in the case of religious *Bildung*, experienced belief (Søbstad, 2006).

For generations, religious education in Norway represented a hierarchical transmission of Christian knowledge, which has been traditionally associated with an ancient, authoritative tradition and fixed content. Teaching aimed at formalized verbal correctness and strict social control of the behaviour of children and youth, and education was clearly more oriented towards the benefits of the collective than of the individual (Johnsen, 1993). Although, in recent decades, the focus of education has moved towards participation in the Christian community, the Norwegian educationalist Frode Søbstad questions the still-prevalent intellectual focus of such education. The main goal of the afore-mentioned educational reform is to hand down the Christian religious heritage to new generations, and to highlight central dimensions of human life. The aim is to tie instruction, knowledge and critical reflection together with experience and participation (Størst av alt, 2003: 4, 9). According to Søbstad, formulations such as these show that the reform may have the potential to become an arena of *Bildung* towards Christian conviction (Søbstad, 2006: 8). Here, we intend to analyse the consequences of rethinking in the education of religion and to see whether the experiment of 'Digital Storytelling' has the potential to be characterized as *Bildung* in religious education.

The Case

The case is located in the parish of Haslum, close to Oslo, Norway. This is an area with a high level of both income and education. Twenty-three young people between 16-18 years produced digital stories throughout the period 2005-2007. They created 29 digital stories altogether, while the adult leaders of the experiment produced 4. We finished

collecting our field data for the present chapter by interviewing youth from the first two groups participating in the project in 2005 and 2006. We also interviewed the youth minister who left the project after this period.¹ We are still observing the activities and collecting all the stories produced (2007-2008). Recruitment of young people to the project has been difficult. Because of the high level of income in this area, the project has to compete with a variety of leisure activities offered to the young. The youth participating in the project have a stronger personal connection to the church than do most young people in the area. They all attend high school; some of them go to special classes for media education.

The philosophy behind the Digital Storytelling concept is to enable people without a technical background to produce works that tell a story, using moving images and sound; however, the youth in our case are, on the whole, media literate. They are not especially preoccupied with digital technology as such, but digital tools are quite naturalized into their everyday lives. One of the female storytellers characterizes the event about which she is making her story as ‘one of the bookmarks of my life’. She is learning media at school, and she feels very familiar with digital expressions, which she characterizes as ‘modes that have no limits, a very fine way of mediating things’.

Research Methods and Ethics

We have decided to apply the perspective of the actors to the analysis of the empirical material. Therefore, much of our data derives from reflexive, in-depth interviews with the narrators of the digital faith stories. A self-reflexive approach like this is an important element in many media pedagogical works (Buckingham, 2003; Gilje, 2005: 50). Eleven of the fourteen young storytellers who took part in the project in 2005 and 2006 agreed to be interviewed (eight girls and three boys). We asked them questions about their experience of the process of creating their stories, what inherent meanings they ascribed to them (Rooth, 2005), and how they felt about sharing their personal narratives with others.

We also interviewed the leaders who made their own digital stories. While the youth were interviewed individually, the leaders were interviewed both individually and in a focus group, and they were also invited to a seminar to discuss the project. We took great care not to pass on information to the leaders that could be connected to a specific young narrator, but we discussed the progression of the project with them on a more general level. One of us is also active on the board of the project. Overall, these methods of research involved us in the foundational development of the project. In this way, we may have had some influence on the interpretations and expectations of the leaders, concerning both how the project should be understood and how it should be run.

The methods of data triangulation described above are of course very subjective, but for this reason our study soon turned into a process of increasing our own comprehension and it helped us develop a holistic perspective on the project. Through the individual interviews, we gained important insight into the *lifeworld* (Habermas, 1987) of the youth, their experiences of the process of creating the Digital Faith Stories and the individual values and meanings they ascribed to their stories. And in an extensive focus group interview with the supervisors after the first production was finished, we focused on their expectations before the project started, their experiences of being supervisors of an experiment with many undefined means and goals, their future aspirations for the next productions, and their efforts to develop a new digital genre, which they called ‘Digital

Faith Stories'. Looking at the responses, it is clear that much of the insight we gained using this data collection method would not have been articulated even to the leaders without the focus group interview and the seminar we arranged.

Both the case project (run by the Church of Norway) and the research project (run by the University of Oslo and funded by the Research Council of Norway) have been conducted according to strict governmental guidelines, given by the Data Inspectorate, designed to protect the privacy of the individual. The producers of the Digital Stories own the copyright of their digital objects. The supervisors, as well as Norwegian authorities (The Data Inspectorate), put restrictions on dissemination of the digital narratives, due to privacy guidelines for topics related to religion. When the present article was written, in June 2007, four DVDs, containing 33 stories all together, were produced and given to selected persons for use on appropriate occasions, mostly for educational purposes within the congregation. Some of the digital stories were even used for special occasions in the church, such as the confirmation service.

Digital Faith Stories

'Digital Storytelling' is both a method and a movement intended to give people a voice through the use of computer tools, and the narratives are usually produced in a workshop (Lambert, 2006). Digital Stories are a genre of mini-films, told in the first person, using the creator's own voice. The story defines and leads all aspects of the process. Pre-existing visual archives, i.e. the family album and home video, inspire the stories, which usually last for 2-3 minutes (Lambert, 2006: 45-60). To discuss their ideas, the storytellers are taken through a group script review process called 'The Story Circle'. For the actual production, they use standard software such as *Adobe PhotoShop* and *Adobe Premiere*. The finished stories are shared in a final presentation.

The method used for telling 'Digital Faith Stories' mainly follows this strict pattern of form. Participants avoid experiments with the form as they wish to ensure the quality of the final product. When it comes to form, the 'Digital Faith Stories' produced so far cannot be distinguished from other digital stories that follow the format outlined at the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) in California. The paradigmatic principles of 'Digital storytelling', as developed by the Center are, in short, that:

1. Everyone has a powerful story to tell.
2. Listening is hard. Stories unveil themselves in the encounter with an audience.
3. We all see, hear, and perceive the world in various ways, making our stories different.
4. Creative activity is human activity. Telling stories is part of this creativity.
5. The computer, with all its limitations, is a powerful instrument for creativity.

'Digital Faith Stories' as such are a non-existent genre so far, at least when judged by the outer form of the produced stories, but the *intention* of the project leaders is to develop a new genre. As one of the supervisors put it when the first round of production was finished, 'It is important not to make copies of stories already accepted as true stories of faith. We are not interested in stories like testimonies that are more outspoken and instructive'. Another supervisor said, 'The first DVD shows that we are in the midst of a process. By the end of the year, we will have 30 stories, next year we will have

60...’ The first DVD was regarded as a piece of apprenticeship. In contrast to the stories produced by the leaders, just a few of the stories produced by the youth openly referred to religious matters. Even so, the stories are interpreted in their context as *faith* stories both by the leaders, the young narrators and even by the congregation. This specific religious meaning of the produced digital stories can only be found by analysing their context, above all in relation to the importance ascribed by all participants to the method of creating the stories used in the story-circle and the workshop.

The digital *faith* stories are socio-cultural constructions. Guided by the adult leaders, the youth construct a multimedia self-representation. They search for relevant motifs that would make a good story – for pictures to illustrate or expand the perspective of the narrative as well as for sounds and artefacts that can be used together to construct a multimodal expression of an aspect of their life story. The youth are encouraged to develop a story based on some experienced event from their life.

The Content of the Narratives

Regarding the content, the Church is open to a variety of contents and individual meanings in the mini-films produced by the young. In principle, all stories by the young are to be accepted by the supervisors. When choosing the themes of their narratives, the young storytellers felt free to use whatever subject was important to them. ‘We just made a film about something we thought was important in life’, one of the girls said. ‘But the supervisors managed to focus on belief’, she added.

When supervising the youth, the adult leaders did not push them to talk about religious belief in the context of their Digital Stories. Speaking of one’s personal belief is not customary among most Norwegians. The supervisors did not want to tell the youth what they should believe; ‘We are working hard to elicit the thoughts they might have... They have to experience it [belief] themselves... It has to be experienced as true,’ they said. The content analysis shows that there are few explicit meaning statements or references to religion or the sacred in the stories produced by the youth. Except for a few narratives, the Digital Faith Stories approach questions of faith through the ‘belonging’ aspect of religion (Lundby & Kaare, 2007). Several of the young people put more or less hidden signs of belonging to the church in their films: there are pictures from their confirmation; one uses a bracelet with ‘What would Jesus do?’ on the personal photographs; another shows pictures from the congregation’s billiard room.

A content analysis of the stories reveals that the *explicit* content varies greatly; what they have in common is that they are all based on the personal experiences of the storytellers. When looking for the *implicit* content of the stories, they obviously have a great deal in common. Mastering life is a central theme in the stories produced by the youth; as young people, they have to struggle with growing up. In looking for the leading motif in their stories, the *Leitmotiv*, questions of existential importance are striking in most of the 29 stories produced so far; they are identity works on ‘being me’. Three aspects of this identity-shaping project are prominent. First, the youth talk about the choices they have made or have to make in their own lives. Second, they talk about their own performances in song, dance, swimming, rock or a television quiz. Through portrayal of their own performances, they use their films to share the experience of mastering something, an experience that scholars regard as key to the identity process (Heggen & Øya, 2005). Performing is a visible form of mastering. Third, several of the stories tell about strong relationships – not the ‘weak ties’ of contemporary network society

(Granovetter 1973), but the strong ties related to your best friends, an older cousin or a friend who died.

The young storytellers focus, in their individual stories, on subjects of urgent importance to them, such as the mastering of their existence, their life projects and their identity developments. All of their stories end with a positive statement, which they worked out together with the adult leaders in the workshop. In giving the stories a positive ending, the idea was to help the young better master their life by producing positive stories, stories that might also be helpful to other young people. The leaders' intervention in the process of creating the digital faith stories influences the choice of theme, as well as the content and structure of the stories.

The Digital Dynamics

What are the actual processes through which youth shape and share stories about their lives in digital storytelling? The supervisors' reflections, based on the first production of Digital Faith Stories, give important information about the digital dynamics of storytelling. The supervisors hold that the process of digitalization, like using one's own voice and own photos, gives young people an opportunity to construct stories that they never would have told without these technological tools. The supervisors regard the Digital Faith Stories as a valuable and relevant mode of expression, culturally familiar to the youth because of its multimodality. In one of their latest promotional flyers, they present the making of a film using digital tools as a goal in itself. One of the supervisors says that the use of digital tools in religious education is a great idea: 'I regard the digital tools as a catalyst, which is part of the process and pushes the process on'.

One main purpose of the in-depth interviews was to help the young filmmakers reflect on issues that might concretize the digital dynamics of this educational experiment. One of the girls said that, to her, the learning process of making the film was exciting: 'It was not difficult, but exciting to learn something new. Moreover, it was great fun to make a film. There are many [young people] who have not made a film before. It is a bit *advanced* to make a film. I felt *cool* making my own film'. Clearly, the excitement of creating a film is the central motive for partaking in the project, not the use of digital tools as such.

One of the girls explicitly claimed that the use of digital tools, in contrast to face-to-face communication, makes it easier to express what she wants in her story. The pictures make it easier: '"Pictures say more than a thousand words". That is what I have heard. [...] When I look at the pictures, I get ideas or remember things', she said. One of the boys indicated that digitalization is essential because it enabled him to share his story with many: 'Many [young] people will watch the stories. They will be more exciting [because they are digitalized]. And since the form is fixed, it will not alter from time to time.' What these young people emphasize about their use of digital tools connects the digitalization process of their stories to values such as being *cool*, to personal excitement, and above all to the satisfaction of being able to communicate with other young people using audiovisual expressions known within youth culture today.

Avoiding the Aesthetics of Boredom

When asked if Digital Faith Stories could help to renew the aesthetic forms used by the Church of Norway today, one of the supervisors said they could and insisted that digitalization is important, because 'a whole generation thinks the church service is deadly boring ... because the forms of expression are old fashioned'. He has observed

that the young filmmakers do not invest a great deal of reflection on the meaning of faith, not even on the importance of these Digital Faith Stories: ‘They join to have an *experience*. They join what they think is fun. They go where something is happening; “Here are computers, here it is camera-fun”. They go where it is interesting and exciting to be’. What he has observed should no doubt be considered in relation to the mediatized (Hjarvard 2008) leisure culture of young people.

One of the girls confirmed that the perspective of aesthetics is important to youth. When asked about her opinion of the use of digital tools in religious education, she said, ‘I think it’s smart, because the Church has always been rather boring and out of date in certain areas. Therefore, it’s a bit of a revolution that it’s become more technical, that you use a video camera and editing in the church. I think it’s great’. She said that the process of creating Digital Faith Stories gives her a new perspective on faith and on the Church: ‘Christianity is not just boring and dogmatic. I mean, it is a bit of the *future* in this [project], that they don’t cling to the idea that nothing should be digital or technological’. One of the main arguments for using digital tools in religious education is the possibility of presenting aesthetic forms that are familiar in the youth culture instead of using forms that young people conceive of as boring and out-of-date modes of expression.

Towards a Christian *Bildung*

The aim of the educational reform is to tie instruction, knowledge and critical reflection together. Does this turn from a traditional culture of teaching to a modern mode of learning change the mentality and pedagogical principles of religious education? What are the consequences of introducing informal experiments such as Digital Storytelling to educate young people in existential subjects like faith and the mastering of life?

Lifting the Veil

In the Digital Faith Stories project, the learning process works both ways –analysis of the present case shows that sharing experiences through the stories is very important. This very special *method of sharing* introduces the Church to a new pedagogical principle. One of the supervisors described the new principle as follows: ‘We should put away our own voices ... there are more voices coming into the Church, the voices of young people. The Digital Faith Stories are lifting the veil. They help us figure out what young people think, what is going on inside them’. Another adds, ‘We will gain unique knowledge about youth.’ The supervisors would like to integrate this knowledge into their further teaching.

The special *method of sharing* inherent in creating Digital Faith Stories could be characterized as a process of *developing* the faith of the youth, and thus a synergetic effect is produced. This project has long-term potential because the supervisors work with other projects in the congregation as well; they accumulate experiences that they can then use in other types of religious education. Young people’s inner thoughts about the mastering of life, about their faith and their beliefs, i.e. the lifeworld of the youth (See Habermas 1987, Ziehe 2001), as they are expressed in the Digital Faith Stories and in the workshops in the project, are in this way handed back to the collective memory of the congregation. The supervisors think that what they learn from the Digital Faith Stories could benefit the Church, and that their experience with this type of learning could be used in other congregations as well.

A Method of Bildung?

Explicit references to faith are rare in the mini-films of the young. Nevertheless, the process of creating Digital Faith Stories has an implicit learning aspect in relation to faith – not in the formal teaching of faith, but in *developing* faith. The supervisors indicated that ‘the faith story’ of an individual is not a fixed story; it is *a process* that goes on for years. Therefore, when teaching youth, what they try to avoid is to push for quick results about verbalizing faith more explicitly.

The formulations of one girl reveal that her own learning process could be classified as a classic process of *Bildung*: ‘... after having made one [digital story] I felt much more mature, and I feel that from the time when we started [until now...] I have developed a lot. Before, I was maybe not very sure about myself and my own faith. Now I feel more convinced. I think it’s great fun to make such films; and I want to make more of them’, she said. In evaluating the project, she explained that most important to her is ‘...the opportunity to develop oneself and one’s own faith. It is an enormous process of becoming mature, where you notice what you feel and believe, and you are always confronted with new aspects. And then you see what you believe in’.

The Digital Faith Stories produced so far end with a kind of ‘punch line’. Here the storytellers’ reflections are condensed into a statement that focuses on existential themes such as dreams for the future, joy, curiosity, friendship and love. One concluded, ‘I don’t regret my choice. ...What is the meaning of life, if it isn’t to follow a dream?’ Another said, ‘Singing and listening to music make me happy. I know that whatever I’ll do, songs will always mean something to me’. A third ends the story about her cousin by expressing how important it is to have a close relative and a close relationship. The above quotes show that the Digital Faith Stories actually focus on the main values presented in the slogan of the educational reform: ‘Faith, Hope and Love’. These Christian values are concretized in the mini-films and worked out as personal narratives, highlighting questions of the individual mastering of life. The focus of the educational experiment is on *Bildung*, more on identity and reflection than on learning some specific knowledge (Søbstad, 2006). The process of *Bildung* is thus unquestionably visible in the project.

The Church and Youth of Late Modernity

One overall question posed here is whether the Church of Norway has managed to incorporate the youth culture of today and the cultural traits of late modernity into their reform. The Church of Norway has long understood the need to alter their religious education and has gradually opened up to include rather modern cultural expressions in the education of the young. What is radically new and experimental in the Digital Faith Stories project is a learning process that has shifted away from the transmission of knowledge and towards a Christian *Bildung*. The Church’s reorientation towards open-minded listening to the voices of young people, talking about such fundamental questions as the mastering of life and individualized understandings of faith, is quite noteworthy.

When supervisors accept the creativity of youth, and want to enhance their own competencies, they learn about new, individual perspectives on faith through the production of the Digital Faith Stories. This does not mean that their own faith is at stake, but the Digital Faith Stories reveal young people’s reflections and give adults insight into their own *lifeworld*. Often, adults do not easily achieve such insights, especially not those who have a position as teachers of religion, who are supposed to pass on the ‘right’ beliefs and the authorized words.

The experiment of creating Digital Faith Stories might be seen as an embodiment of the meeting between the traditional Church culture and the strong cultural forces of late modernity. One consequence of this meeting can be seen in the transformation of the communication process – from handing over the authoritative heritage of knowledge of the right way of interpreting faith and living your life, to the reciprocal communication of individual interpretations and meanings, so characteristic of the reflexivity of late modernity. The Digital Faith Story method is well suited to incorporating the dominating cultural forces of late modernity. It is individualized, because it takes as its starting point a personal narrative. The content is often fragmented and disparate, because the raw material consists of individual life experiences. The method is anti-hierarchical in structure, because it is based on the notion that all voices should be heard, even the voices of youth and children. It also accepts the otherness of the young, by insisting that all voices are valuable and worthy of being heard in their own right. According to several scholars, characteristics such as these are the very essence of late [or post-] modernity (Buckingham, 2003:58-61; Drotner, 1999; Livingstone, 2002). Furthermore, according to Ziehe, the cultural complexity of late modernity is above all to be seen in the youth culture (Ziehe 1995, 2001; Drotner 1999:17).

Reflections on a Case in Progress

This specific case is only one limited attempt to experiment with method in religious education in the Church of Norway. The present experiment is not meant to replace more traditional forms of religious education, but to supplement them. Analysis of the case shows that reciprocity of communication, between supervisors and young students, may lead to a more systematic educational method for including the *lifeworld* of the young in religious training. The method of active listening by all parties replaces the hitherto prevailing communicative forms of traditional preaching, or more personal testimonies, both of which are more a question of one-way communication and pedagogical authority than are the experimental digital stories, which are open to different interpretations. We observe a transformation of the communication process from handing down the authoritative heritage of knowledge, to the reciprocal communication of the individual interpretations and meanings that characterize late modernity.

Changes in the communication process such as these benefit both the religious collective and the individual students. The religious collective, the leaders and the active participants in the congregation have entered a long learning process by listening to the Digital Faith Stories produced by the young members of their congregation. Younger points of view on faith and life, as expressed in the mini-films, are integrated by the older generations into their teaching and into how they deal with young people in their daily work, even into their conception of what might constitute faith and what meaning religion might have.

The present educational experiment makes evident the tension between tradition and modernity in religious education, and points to the importance of integrating the modes of digital expression into religious education in general. The analysis indicates that the Church of Norway may be able to adjust to the culture of late modernity. The youth culture of today, characterized by individualization, privatization, and a lifestyle dominated by leisure activities and heavy use of the media and ICT, has been incorporated into this experiment, which has increased supervisors' understanding of the *lifeworld* of the young people they are educating. Both sides benefit from this dialogue.

Note

1. The project may take a new direction, as the adult supervisors for 2008 are all new.

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Rethinking Cyberreligion?

Teens, Religion and the Internet in Sweden¹

MIA LÖVHEIM

Abstract

Since the coming of the Internet scholars have been discussing its implications for the future of religion. With its high levels of Internet use and low levels of religious practice Sweden represents an interesting case for studying these issues. This article presents findings from the first online survey of Swedish teenager's use of the Internet for religious purposes, conducted at one of the largest social networking sites LunarStorm. The results show that more young people seem to come into contact with religion via the Internet than through local religious communities. However, the findings also challenge several early expectations about the Internet as a new arena for religion in contemporary society. Thus the article initiates a critical discussion of what conclusions may be drawn from these results, and where future research on young people, religion and the Internet should be directed.

Keywords: Internet, social networking sites, religious change, teenagers, Sweden

Introduction

In the summer of 2007, the largest Christian daily paper in Sweden, *Dagen*, published an article entitled 'Religion on the Net – challenge and possibility'. The opening part of the article reads: "The number of churchgoers in Sweden has been steadily dropping during recent years. At the same time, many people turn to the newly opened religious Internet sites. This implies a challenge for churches and denominations that are trying to reach new groups." The article is a good illustration of expectations that have remained a salient theme in discussions about the impact of the Internet on religion since the early 1990s. Research on religion and the Internet has been carried out for almost a decade (Hadden & Cowan 2000, Dawson & Cowan 2004, Højsgaard & Warburg 2005). Religious organizations have been an important force behind the interest in studying these issues. As the article in *Dagen* shows, the Internet is framed as a crucial issue for the future of these organizations, and young people are seen as a key group in this respect. Churches and denominations develop their own websites and provide services such as broadcasting services online, discussion groups and possibilities to chat with or post questions and prayer requests to religious leaders. Furthermore, the fact that the majority of studies published so far focus on Christianity (*cf.* Campbell 2006:12) suggests that the interests of religious organizations have also played a role in shaping the aims of the research. The present study takes place within the scope of a research program on religion in young people's lives initiated by the Church of Sweden. The aim of the article, however, is to discuss the findings from a perspective that calls for

reconsideration of the expectations of the Internet as a new arena for exploring religion, as expressed in the article cited above, and to initiate a discussion on what this implies for future research in the area.

Religion on the Internet: Indications in Previous Research

In 2004, the Pew Internet & American Life Project in collaboration with Stewart M Hoover and Lynn Schofield Clark at the Center for Research on Media, Religion and Culture, University of Colorado at Boulder, published a frequently cited report called "Faith online"². The findings of their study show that 64 percent had used the Internet for religious purposes. This figure indicates that the Internet is a significant context for religion among American Internet users. However, their findings also show that their use of the Internet may not correspond to the expectations expressed by religious organizations: The majority of users were already members of local religious organizations, and the most frequent activities were sending and receiving e-mail with religious or spiritual content, exchanging online greeting cards related to religious holidays or reading news accounts of religious events and affairs (Hoover, Clark & Rainie 2004:i)³. For these reasons, the report "Faith online" provides an interesting point of departure for the present study. Do these findings correspond to the situation in another national context, and especially among young people?

The religious situation in Sweden differs in several ways from the American context. A national study of youth and religion in the United States showed that three quarters of American teenagers between 13-17 years of age consider themselves Christians (Smith 2005:31), and almost 60 percent attend services at least once a month. In Sweden, almost 80 percent of the population aged between 16-24 years are members of the former official national church, Church of Sweden. However, not more than a few percent of these attend services as often as once a month. Almost 36 percent state that they never visit the church⁴. In international comparisons, Sweden stands out as a country in which the general transformation of values in the Western world from traditional-religious values to secular-rational and individualistic values is most advanced (Pettersson 2000). Sweden has also undergone rapid development in computer-mediated communication (Nordicom 2007⁵). In 1995, 3 percent of the population had access to the Internet and less than a third to a computer. In 2006, 80 percent of all Swedes have access to the Internet and to computers, and three out of five use the Internet on a daily basis. Among Swedish teenagers about 90 percent have a computer of their own and access to the Internet via broadband. As a group largely distanced from traditional, organized religion, but highly connected to the Internet, Swedish youth provide an interesting case for studying the significance of the Internet as a new context for exploring religion.

Young people and their use of the Internet for exploring religion has been the topic of some earlier Swedish studies. Anders Sjöborg (2006) studied a website for information and discussions about the Bible set up in cooperation between Christian Churches. The study, which involves young people with varying degrees of previous experience of a Christian tradition, shows how they use the Internet in various ways to explore a traditional religious authority on their own terms. Other studies (Larsson 2003) have argued that the relative anonymity of computer-mediated communication makes it easier for young people to find alternative sources of information about religious beliefs and practices, pose questions to religious leaders or approach them in order to talk about problems and existential questions (Stenberg-Roos 2006). A central assumption in early discussions of

religion on the Internet has been that because the Internet expands the range of religions that most individuals have access to in the local context, people would primarily look for alternatives to mainstream religions online. Case studies of young people drawn to new religious movements such as Wicca and Satanism (Lövheim 2004, Berger & Ezzy 2004) show that the Internet not only provides access to information about these traditions, but is also supportive networks of likeminded individuals. This is also the case for young people belonging to newer religious traditions in Swedish society, such as Islam (Schmidt 1999). However, interviews with and observations of young people who interact in discussion groups on religious sites as well as social networking sites show that this may also bring new challenges (Lövheim 2004, 2007). The format of short, written contributions and the high inflow of new participants seem to encourage polarized debates rather than open dialogue. Whether an individual can develop the kind of trust needed to use the possibilities of the Internet for his or her purposes is also structured by the discourse and social relations formed in a particular setting (*ibid.*, see also Lövheim & Linderman 2003). This applies particularly to young women, while young men seemed to be more confident in using this kind of interaction.

In sum, previous Swedish case studies show some support for the expectations described earlier. The Internet gives young people several possibilities to approach religion beyond the organizational framework and to access information supplied by religious institutions and authorities, as well as to explore religion on their own terms alone or in networks of likeminded individuals. However, these studies also show that differences between young people with differing social and cultural backgrounds, including previous experience of religion, affect how they use these possibilities (cf. Lövheim & Sjöborg 2007). Because most previous studies have been small case studies focused on certain religious groups or uses of explicitly religious sites, there is a need for studies set in a larger and more heterogeneous group of young people. The present study is the first online survey conducted on a site in which large numbers of young people with diverse backgrounds meet, and which is not set up by a religious organization or oriented toward religion as such. Thus, the study provides a good possibility to discuss some indications, found in previous research, concerning the significance of the Internet for religion, and especially young people's relation to it.

The Study

The present findings are based on an online survey conducted in April 2007 on the Swedish-speaking web community LunarStorm (www.lunarstorm.se). During the first part of 2007, the site had 1,200,000 individual members and 363,300 unique visitors daily. At that time, LunarStorm was the largest social networking site for teens in the Nordic countries. LunarStorm provides members with a range of functions such as a personal webpage, chat, discussion groups and clubs. Among these were several focused on religion, faith and philosophies of life.

The total of 540,000 members are between 15-20 years of age. This represents almost two-thirds of the age group in the Swedish population⁶. The study consisted of an online survey directed to members of LunarStorm in this age group. The survey was distributed to a random sample of this population through LunarStorm's internal e-mail system "Lunarmejl". The respondents had seven days to answer the questions. A total of 1100 individuals answered the survey⁷. The survey consisted of eight questions based

on assumptions and indications from the previous research outlined above. These will be presented in more detail together with the results in the next section.

Age, Gender and Religion

Of the 1100 individuals who answered the survey, 49.3 percent were women and 50.7 men. The mean age of the respondents was 16.8 years. Compared to LunarStorm's members between 15-20 years, the distribution of respondent age is in accordance with the normal distribution, but there is a slight overrepresentation of men in our sample⁸.

The first four questions focused on the religious profile of the young people participating in the survey. When asked about their beliefs in God, the largest group chose the alternative "I do not believe in any form of God or supernatural power". Together with those who chose the alternative "I do not know what I believe", they make up the majority of the responses: 56 percent. Less than a fourth of respondents chose alternatives in line with traditional religious teachings about God, such as belief in a transcendent God or a personal God ("a God that exists within each individual"). When asked about how they would describe their own religiosity, the largest group, 42 percent, chose the alternative "I believe in my personal way". Almost a third or 27 percent described themselves as Christians, but not more than 4 percent as Muslims and only 1 percent as Buddhists⁹. Around 10 percent used the possibility to describe their religiosity in their own words, and among those around 3 percent described themselves as Satanists or Neopagans. Fifteen percent described themselves as atheists. When comparing these questions, we see that in most cases, the answers follow a pattern, in which self-described religiosity matches beliefs in God. Thus, most of the respondents believed in their own personal way and were uncertain about their beliefs about God or believed in a more general supernatural or spiritual power. Because the groups of Muslims, Buddhists and new religious movements were too small for a meaningful separate analysis, in the coming analysis they will in most cases be combined into one group of "other religions", which then make up a total of 16 percent.

Findings from previous studies show that there are several reasons for focusing particularly on differences between young people who participate in organized religion and those who do not. In Sjöborg's study of a website particularly aimed at discussions of the Bible, more than two-thirds of users were members of religious youth organizations and at least half of the respondents took part in services as often as once a month (Sjöborg 2006:120). In the present study, 15 percent of the respondents took part in organized religious activities such as youth programs or services as often as once a month. The majority of these individuals (61 percent) described themselves as Christians and believed in either a personal, inner God or a transcendent God. 12 percent described themselves as Muslims, Buddhists or Jews. It is a common pattern in studies of young people and religion that women are more active in organized activities than men are. However, in the present study, the number of men and women who reported being active in organized religion was not different from the sample in general – which implies a slight overrepresentation of men.

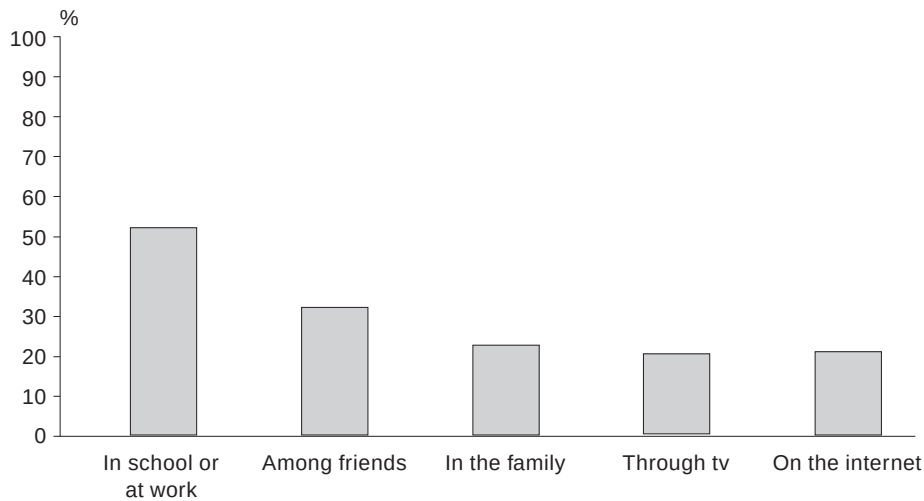
We have no figures on the rate of participation in organized religion among the population of members of LunarStorm in the age group under study. A survey based on a representative sample of the population of young people between 16-29 years (Ungdomsstyrelsen 2007:270) showed that around 5 percent take part in religious meetings at least once a month. Participation in confirmation classes is also higher in the sample,

40 percent, than the numbers for all 15-year-olds in Sweden, which in 2006 was 35.6 percent¹⁰. Thus, we may conclude that the young people in the present study who were active in religious organizations outside the Internet represented a minority of the sample, and that they also held beliefs closer to traditional religious beliefs than did the rest of the respondents. This group seems to be larger in the sample than among Swedish teenagers in general, but smaller than users of a more explicitly religious website in the same age group. The majority of the respondents, 85 percent, reported not being as active in organized religion, and most of them described themselves as believers in their own personal way or as atheists.

The Internet as a Context for Exploring Religion

In the survey, we wanted to know how young people value the Internet as a context for exploring issues of faith and religion in relation to other contexts in their everyday life, outside of organized religion. The question was: “In which of the following contexts have you encountered questions about faith and religion during the past 12 months?” The chart below shows what percentage of respondents chose the different alternatives given. More than one alternative could be chosen¹¹. About one-fourth or 25 percent of respondents chose the alternative “I don’t know”. These are not shown in the chart below, but this figure is important to keep in mind, as it indicates that a significant group of young people may not come into contact with religion in their everyday life through any of the options given.

Chart 1. *Percentages of all Respondents who during the Past Year have had Contact with Questions of Faith and Religion in Different Contexts (N=822)*



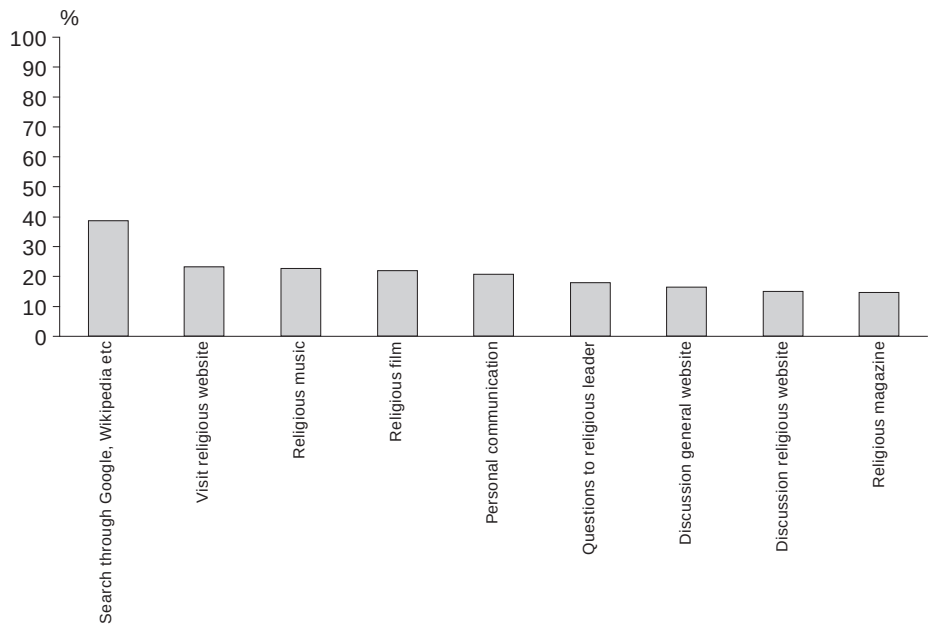
The responses show that the context in which Swedish teenagers most often come into contact with religion is in school (52 percent), and among friends (33 percent), while around 20 percent have encountered religion via the Internet, and an almost equal amount through television. Thirty percent responded that they have come into contact with religion through the Internet and television. The proportion of young people who say they encountered religion in the family is 23 percent. There are also differences in the groups of young people that come into contact with religion via the Internet. When

we compare¹² the responses of the different groups described earlier, we see that young people who are active in religious organizations are more likely to report that they have encountered religion in the family, among friends and via the Internet. Also, young men seem to have had more experiences of religion online than young women have.

Using the Internet for Religious Purposes

As a platform for computer-mediated communication, the Internet offers several applications for exploring religion. On the basis of previous research, nine different alternatives were listed, and respondents were asked to estimate how often they used these¹³. Responses for each of the listed alternatives show clearly that the majority of respondents reported never having used this application. Therefore, percentages for individuals who said they use these functions *a few times a year or more frequently* have been combined in the chart below to provide an overview of the results.

Chart 2. *Percentages of Respondents who have Used the Internet for Religious Purposes a Few Times a Year or More (N varies between 1073-100)*



This chart shows that the most frequent use of the Internet for religious purposes for all respondents is to use web browsers or encyclopedia sites to find information; 38.5 percent use this function at least a few times a year. Seeking information by visiting a religious website is less common; about 23 percent say they have done so. About 20 percent reported looking for religious music or film online. Seeking information and seeking religious entertainment on the Internet, thus, seem to be the most popular activities, while forms of social interaction are less popular. Here, the respondents seem to use personal communication slightly more than more public forms of discussion in groups. Twenty-one percent reported having had experience of personal communication through e-mail, MSN messenger or similar forms of communication, while a total of 19 percent have had experience of discussing religion in a group or chat. A closer analysis of these

respondents shows that the majority, almost two-thirds, reported discussing religion in both of the contexts given as alternatives. However, as the chart above shows, most of them discussed religion in groups provided by sites with a more general character, such as LunarStorm, while a smaller group used groups at explicitly religious sites.

When we compare different groups in the sample, it is, first of all, clear that young people active in organized religion reported using all of these alternatives more frequently than did those who are not as active (*cf.* Sjöborg 2006:131). The largest difference between the groups concerns activities that are more explicitly related to religious organizations or representatives. While more than 50 percent of those actively involved in religion offline have posed questions to religious leaders, visited religious websites or looked for religious music and film, less than 20 percent of young people who are not active in religious organizations have visited religious websites, or looked for religious music, magazines and films. About 12 percent of those who are not active have posed questions to religious leaders, and less than 11 percent have taken part in discussion groups at religious websites or read religious magazines.

Differences in self-described religiosity are small and somewhat difficult to read. However, it seems clear that Christians reported using all alternatives more frequently than others did, but most frequently religious websites, music and film as well as posing questions to religious leaders. The group that seem to use discussion groups as well as personal communication more frequently than others is the somewhat awkward category of "other religions", including among others Muslims, Satanists and Neopagans. Also the atheists reported using discussion groups at websites of a general character or personal communication more frequently than others did. Finally, those who believed in their own personal way seem to look for religious films and pose questions to religious leaders most frequently. The only difference related to gender seems to be that young men use discussion groups on religious websites more frequently than young women do.

The survey contained no questions about uses of the Internet for other purposes than religion. Studies of Internet use in a representative sample of the population (Nordicom 2007) show that the most frequently used activities in the age group closest to our sample, 15-24 years of age, are e-mail (54 percent), participation in chat or discussion groups (53 percent), looking for information (37 percent), listening to music (20 percent) and playing games (18 percent). Thus, some of the most frequently used options in our sample, such as information seeking and use of music and film, seem to correspond to young people's habits of Internet use in a more general sense. The most obvious exception is social interaction in the form of discussions or personal communication through e-mail, where young people in the sample seem to use these less frequently for religion than they do for other purposes.

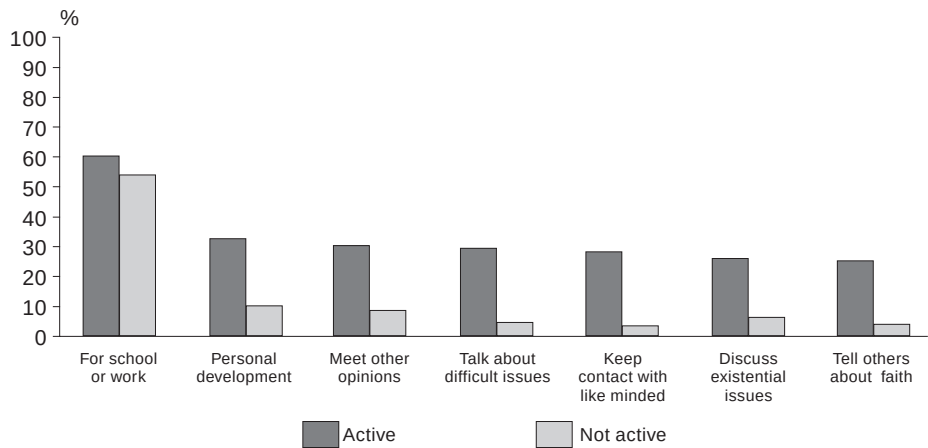
As described in the introduction, one assumption about the Internet has been that it gives access to a wider range of religions than what is available in most local contexts. Therefore we asked about what kind of religion young people look for online. The responses show that the religion respondents looked for most frequently was Christianity: More than 36 percent did so at least a few times a year. About 30 percent also looked for information about the other major world religions: Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism. Thus, new or alternative religious movements seem to be less popular than expected. Most popular was Satanism, which more than 25 percent reported looking for online a few times a year. When comparing different groups we can, again, see that it is the group of respondents active in organized religion that most frequently look for

information about all kinds of religion online. It also seems as if they mostly look for information similar to their own religious beliefs.

Why Use the Internet for Religious Purposes?

The final question concerned reasons for using the Internet for exploring religion. On the basis of previous studies in Sweden, we would expect to find differences between young people with regard to involvement in religious organizations offline, self-described religiosity and gender. Here, a number of alternatives based on indications found in previous research were presented. The respondents were asked to state whether they agreed with these reasons. In the analysis below, only the percentages of those who responded that they agreed strongly with the statement will be displayed¹⁴. When looking at the whole group, it is clear that the reason most of the respondents agree with concerns uses “for school or work”. More than half of the respondents, 55 percent, chose this alternative. The next two alternatives, with which more than 10 percent agreed strongly, were “for personal development” (13.4 percent) and “to encounter opinions other than my own” (11.6 percent). The pattern showing that these three reasons seem most in line with respondent’s experiences is similar for all groups regardless of involvement in organized religion, religiosity or gender. As can be seen in the chart below, young people who are actively involved in organized religion agreed to a larger extent with all of the given alternatives than did those who are not active. We can also see some between-group differences in the reasons given.

Chart 3. *Percentages of Respondents Active and Not Active in Organized Religion who Strongly Agree with Reasons for Using the Internet for Religious Purposes (N varies between 998¹⁵-1016)*



It seems as though the group of respondents who are active in religious organizations use the Internet to find someone to talk to about difficult issues in life, to tell others about their faith and to maintain contacts with likeminded individuals to a greater extent than do those who are not active. The latter group seems to use the Internet to discuss existential issues rather than to talk about their problems, their faith or to seek out the company of likeminded individuals. There are also some differences between men and women. Men seem to agree more strongly than women do with reasons concerning personal development, telling others about faith and maintaining contacts with likeminded

individuals, while women tend to stress reasons of school or work. Finally, the responses also show some differences between individuals who described their religiosity in different ways. These differences are small, but they indicate some interesting patterns: For those who described themselves as Christians, maintaining contact with fellow believers, sharing their faith with others and finding someone to talk to about difficult issues are the reasons most agreed with, while discussing existential issues and school seem to be less valued. This pattern is somewhat similar to the group of “other religions” (Muslims, Buddhists, Satanists, Neopagans), except that these respondents placed more value on the possibility of encountering opinions other than their own. The largest group, those who reported believing in their own personal way, seem to use the Internet primarily for reasons that have to do with school, personal development and discussing difficult and existential issues.

Rethinking Cyberreligion?

Since the advent of the Internet, expectations about its implications for the future of religion have been high, not least within religious denominations. Swedish teenagers are among the most active users of the Internet in the world, but does this also imply that they will embrace the Internet as a new arena for exploring religion? Although previous studies have indicated this potential, the findings of the present study challenge, in several respects, early expectations of the significance of the Internet as a new arena for religion in contemporary society. In this final part I will, first, summarize the findings of the study and relate these to some of the assumptions and indications outlined in the introduction. Second, I will point out some ways in which these findings can contribute to a discussion on future research in the area of young people, religion and the Internet.

Results of the Study

The findings of the survey presented here show that about 20 percent of the respondents have encountered religion and about 40 percent have looked for information about religion on the Internet at least once a year. A survey distributed among a representative sample of the Swedish population in February 2007 (Linderman 2007) shows a similar percentage of respondents between 15-23 years who have had contacts with religion on the Internet. This survey also reveals significant differences concerning such contacts between younger and older generations. While almost 20 percent of the young chose this alternative, only 7 percent in the total sample did so. As we have seen, other studies have shown that about 5 percent of Swedish teens visit organized religions at least once a year. In so far as these findings reflect general patterns among Swedish teenagers, then more young people do seem to come into contact with religion via the Internet than through local religious communities. However, the present study clearly shows that researchers need to be careful in drawing conclusions about the significance of the Internet for young people’s relation to religion based on such results. The present findings also show that, for the majority of respondents, the Internet is not the context in which they primarily come into contact with religion. Although Swedish teenagers spend considerable time online daily, school and friends are still the primary contexts for encountering religion in everyday life.

A majority of the survey respondents were not affiliated with organized religions, nor did they share the beliefs of these. Most of these young people had not had contacts with

religion on the Internet, nor had they used the Internet for any of the purposes listed. Thus, the present study gives little support to expectations that the Internet can be a way for organized religions to reach out to new groups. Instead, the findings in several ways support the results of the Pew report "Faith Online" (Hoover, Clark & Rainie 2004). Also among teenagers in Sweden, the Internet seems to be a significant context for exploring religion particularly for the "offline faithful". Young people who are active in organized religion outside the Internet, who describe themselves as Christians and whose belief in God is in correspondence with the teachings of the Church form a clear minority of the respondents in the present study. Yet this group contains by far the most frequent users of religious websites and discussion groups as well as religious music, films and magazines.

The group of respondents already involved in organized religion, and in particular the Christians, also stressed the possibility to keep in contact with likeminded individuals, to pose questions to religious leaders and to find someone to talk to about difficult issues in life more than the other groups did. Thus, the present results support the argument made by, among others, Campbell (2005) that, for individuals actively involved in offline religious life, faith-related activities online are a complement to rather than a substitute for organized religion. As argued by Hoover, Clark and Rainie (2004:ii), the Internet does provide access to resources outside formal religious contexts. However, these resources seem to be primarily of a kind that augments already strong commitments to people with whom these individuals share their faith offline. Also, it seems that the relative anonymity of interaction online may not in itself be enough for young people to approach religious groups or representatives when facing difficult questions about meaning, life and death. Some previous experience of religion seems to be needed to initiate such contacts.

The present survey shows clearly that most of the respondents used the Internet to look for information about religion through Google, Wikipedia or similar search engines or encyclopedia sites. The reason for using the Internet to explore religion that most of the respondents agreed with was "for school or work". One may argue that this finding is self-evident, given that schoolwork takes up a large part of young people's everyday lives. Nevertheless, it shows that researchers should be careful in interpreting the number of visits to religious websites as a growing personal interest in religion. The 13 percent in the study who chose the alternative "for personal development" does show that some young people seem to have such intentions. However, even in this case, we cannot conclude that the interest concerns the beliefs and practices of religious institutions. These findings rather point to a pattern in which religion on the Internet is more frequently used as a resource for purposes that relate to the individual and the personal concerns of everyday life, than for purposes that relate to social interaction within a religious community. The study shows clearly that discussion about religion in groups is much less popular among young people of all religious backgrounds, while searching for religious information, film, music and personal communication occur more frequently. Also in the Pew report, the most frequent uses of the Internet for "religious purposes", such as exchanging e-mail with religious or spiritual content and online greeting cards, relate to individual faith or at least social interaction in ways other than those traditionally offered by religious institutions.

The present findings show that those respondents who described themselves as Muslims, Buddhists, Satanists, Neopagans or atheists are somewhat more interested than others in using discussion groups. These respondents are, of course, different in many ways, but they share the experience of being seen as marginal groups in a society histo-

rically dominated by the major Lutheran religious institutions. Thus, these findings give some support to the indications found in previous research that young people in religious minorities can find access to alternative sources of information and form supportive networks of likeminded via the Internet. An interesting issue for further research is how such sites may come to serve as religious subcultures for these youth. However, we need more studies in order to draw further conclusions about such tendencies.

Finally, it is interesting to note that while the majority of the “online faithful” in earlier studies (Hoover, Clark & Rainie 2004, Sjöborg 2006) were women, the present study shows that young men seem to be more actively engaged in exploring religion on the Internet than young women are. The results show significant differences between men and women, particularly concerning the use of discussion groups, and telling other people about their faith. This corresponds to earlier Swedish case studies, where young men seemed more at ease with using public forms of discussion online than young women did (Lövhelm 2004). Also, young men seem to value the possibility to find someone to talk to about difficult events in life more than women do. Thus, these findings indicate that if the organized religions can hope to reach any “new” groups through the Internet, such groups might be young men, who in most offline contexts form a minority.

Concluding Discussion

In a review of the first decade of research about religion on the Internet, Lorne Dawson and Douglas Cowan called for reconsideration of early assumptions that the Internet *per se* is transforming religion (Dawson & Cowan 2004:6, *cf.* Højsgaard 2005:62). The present findings support this conclusion. Furthermore, previous research has primarily focused on specific religious groups or sites and on individuals who actively take part in activities connected to these, which may have contributed to an over-estimation of the significance of the Internet for religion. One fruitful approach for further research would be to situate research about religion online in the wider discussion of general transformations of religion in contemporary society, as well as research about the impact of the Internet on other areas of social life. I will end by pointing to two issues in relation to which the findings of the present study can contribute to a more refined discussion.

The first issue concerns how to evaluate the significance of the Internet for young people’s experiences of religion. It may be tempting to interpret the present results as showing signs of a resurgence of religion on the Internet. In line with the argument that young people’s attitudes and habits are predecessors of future trends in society (Inghelhart 1977), these findings suggest that the Internet will become a significant context for religion in the future. However, I would argue that rather than interpreting these findings as signs of a religious resurgence among young people, they show how traditional contexts for religious socialization, such as the Church or the family, are gradually being replaced by other contexts. The findings also indicate that mediated experiences of religion, here primarily via the Internet and television, may be almost as common as contacts with religion through friends. Thus, the media are an important part of this process, but we need further studies of the meaning of this transformation. Here, the findings also show that how young people make meaning of what they encounter in the media needs to be analyzed within the contexts given by the conditions and patterns of social interaction in the schools as well as in peer groups. Thus, by comparing the Internet and other contexts in which people encounter religion in contemporary society, we can gain a better understanding of how the Internet contributes to this development.

The second issue concerns how young people approach religion in contemporary society. Hoover, Clark and Rainie (2004:20) argued that the most significant impact of the Internet lies in augmenting a development in which individuals come to exercise more autonomy in relation to formal authorities and institutions in matters of faith. The study presented here also shows that young people's contacts with religion on the Internet primarily concern individual needs and interests. Overall, only a minority had experience of several of the activities and purposes given as alternatives. Thus, the present results call for reconsideration of the purpose for which people look for religion online. They also reveal how little we know about if and when religion becomes actualized in young people's uses of the Internet. One area in which this comes to the fore concerns why young people do not seem to use e-mail, chat or discussion groups, which they generally use frequently, for issues related to religion. This result corresponds to the tendency for religion to become more of a personal than a social matter, but it may also be a consequence of the questions used in the survey. Contrary to the assumptions of several earlier studies, the social contexts of interaction on the Internet do not seem to be religious discussion groups or e-mail lists. Lynn Schofield Clark (2004) argued for an approach to religion online that starts out from how new technologies become interwoven with the off-line, socially oriented meaning making practices of young people. The present study suggests that such practices can take place by sharing sources of information for schoolwork, music and films, the concerns of everyday life or by making connections across personal networks. These practices can also show where future research needs to be directed if we are to understand more about when and how issues of meaning, belonging, life and death, previously expressed in religious words and ritual, become actualized in young people's experiences online.

Notes

1. Paper originally presented at the NordMedia 2007 Conference 16-19 August 2007 in Helsinki, Finland by the author.
2. The study was based on telephone interviews with a sample of the American population aged 18 and older. The findings reported here are based on Internet users (1358 individuals out of a total of 2013 individuals).
3. 38 percent had sent and received e-mail with religious or spiritual content, 35 percent had exchanged online greeting cards and 32 percent read news accounts of religious events and affairs.
4. Statistics retrieved from the Church of Sweden statistical database (<http://www.svenskakyrkan.se/statistik/>, July 7 2007).
5. Nordicom-Sveriges Internetbarometer is a yearly study based on telephone interviews with a random sample of the Swedish population between 9-79 years of age.
6. It is, however, important to point out that the sample analyzed here should not be seen as representative of the Swedish population in the age group 15-20.
7. Surveys at LunarStorm are conducted by the administrators of the site. A survey is sent to a sample of approximately 2000 members and remains open until a requested number of responses, usually 1100, is reached. Thus, it is not possible to know the exact response rate. The number of participants, however, enables calculations of levels of significance for different groups. For all results reported here, p is lower than or equal to 0.05 (i.e. the probability of these differences being random is less than 5 percent).
8. The mean age of members is 18.1 years and the distribution of gender among members 15-20 years is 53 percent women and 47 men (www.lunarworks.se). LunarStorms statistics give no information about ethnicity or social background.
9. 4 persons also chose the alternatives Hindu or Jew.
10. www.svenskakyrkan.se/statistik 2007-07-10.
11. A closer analysis shows that the largest group of respondents, 41 percent, has chosen one alternative while 25 percent chose 2-3 alternatives, and 11 percent 4 to 5 alternatives. The majority of those who responded that they had three or more contexts for contact with religion were active in organized religion.

12. Comparisons made using cross tables and chi-square tests as well as Mann Whitney U-test (for gender and activity) or Kruskal-Wallis test (mean ranks, for categories of self-described religiosity).
13. The alternatives given were “every day”, “at least once a week”, “at least once a month”, “a few times a year” and “never”.
14. The alternatives were “agree totally”, “agree to a large extent”, “either/or”, “agree to some extent” and “do not agree”. These have been combined into three categories, where the first two form the category of respondents who agree strongly.
15. The lowest rate of responses is for the alternative “To tell others about my faith” (n=998).

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Regaining Impact

Media Education and Media Literacy in a Norwegian Context

OLA ERSTAD & ØYSTEIN GILJE

Abstract

Media education is regaining its impact in Norwegian education, both due to the development of a new subject at the upper secondary level and due to a renewed interest in media literacy across the curriculum. From being defined as a marginal issue in educational curricula and development during the 1980s and 1990s, media literacy has now become a key concern linked to technological developments in the Nordic societies over the past ten years. With the Norwegian context as a point of departure, the present article looks especially at media literacy as an expression of certain practices, and at how media education represents a distinctive prerequisite for understanding what young people do with media outside and inside the schools. The article presents results from the first national survey on media education in Norwegian upper secondary schools. A special focus is directed towards the diverse production practices among what are called “school producers” (SP) and “crossover producers” (CP).

Keywords: media literacy, media education, digital production

Introduction

The most recent turn of the century marks a radical change in media education in Norwegian upper secondary schools. In 2000, a new subject, ‘Media and communication’, was introduced as an option for students in vocational training at the upper secondary school level (age 16-19). The new subject became very popular, and the number of schools offering the course increased from less than 20 to over 120 in eight years. This development in Norway is part of a global trend towards interpreting media education as a strategy for student empowerment (Carlsson, Tayie, Jacquinet-Delaunay & Tornero, 2008).

Media literacy is a central issue in media education, and also an issue across the school curriculum. From being defined as a marginal issue in educational curricula and development during the 1980s and 1990s, media literacy has now become a key concern linked to technological developments in our societies over the past ten years (Livingstone, 2004; Martin, 2005; Comrie, Vaccarino, Fountaine & Watson, 2007; Zacchetti & Vardakas, 2008). Debates about media literacy vary greatly across different regions in the world and are embedded in technological, cultural and historical developments (Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, 1999; Carlsson et al., 2008). The status of media education internationally reflects an increased interest in how young people relate to media developments in our societies today, and what it means to

be empowered as a citizen in digital societies (Wilhelm, 2004; Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona, 2007).

With the Norwegian context as a point of departure, the present article looks especially at media literacy as an expression of certain practices, and at how media education represents a distinctive prerequisite for understanding what young people do with media outside and inside the schools. Media education provides a ‘bridge’ between everyday experiences of using different media and the knowledge building created within the formal school setting (Burn & Durran, 2007; Buckingham, 2007). In addition to outlining these broader developments of media education and media literacy, the present article focuses especially on the following research question: What impact do everyday experiences with media and digital tools have on students’ production practices in media education?

The article begins with a description of recent developments in media education in Norway and follows up with a discussion on literacy and media in the context of recent research. In the last part of the article, we present results from the first national survey on media education in Norwegian schools. We specifically look into the diverse production practices among what are called “school producers” (SP) and “crossover producers” (CP).

Preconditions: Access and Media Use in a Nordic Context

In the Nordic countries, the preconditions for media education and media literacy are strongly related to the overall access to digital media and the standard of living more generally, the so-called ‘Welfare State model’ of technology innovation and social transitions (Himmanen and Castells, 2004). In this case, the Nordic countries are of interest as a context for studies about the penetration and access to new digital technologies in societies as a whole and more specifically as a test-bed for media literacy. As digital technologies have become cheaper, easier to handle by most people, and available through different platforms (laptops, mobile phones and so forth) people’s ability to buy and access such technologies have increased.

In the Nordic countries, access to the Internet is over 95% among youth in the age group 16 to 24. People have access either at home, at school, work, libraries or other settings. More than 90% of young people in this age group use the Internet on a weekly basis. Compared to other countries in EU, the “Nordic context” for media use is quite exceptional with respect to the percentage of daily users and amount of time spent using digital media (Eurostat, 2007).

Several reports indicate that young people in Norway spend less time on traditional mass media and more time creating digital content as ‘advanced users’ (Brandtzæg & Heim, 2007). This social and cultural context, combined with high access to digital tools, makes children and youth in the Nordic countries heavy users of new technology compared to children and youth in most of the other European countries (Eurostat, 2007; Livingstone & Bovill, 2001; Drotner, 2001; Brandtzæg & Heim, 2007).

Reviewing Media Education and Media Literacy

Traditionally, media literacy is understood as the: “ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts” (Ofcom, 2006). Similar definitions have been presented that focus more specifically on the development of digital technologies.

In the report *Digital transformations. A Framework for ICT Literacy*, it is stated that: “ICT Literacy is using digital technology, communications tools, and/or networks to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information in order to function in a knowledge society” (Educational Testing Service, 2001). Most of these definitions of media or digital literacy specify the importance of being able to access media, to make judgements about information received, as well as to express and produce media content. Media education is most commonly understood as the context for teaching and learning about media, and: “media literacy is the outcome” (Buckingham 2003: 4). Media education, as a *specific* subject, is a formal learning context in which children and young people learn about media by learning theory, performing analyses and producing their own media products (Buckingham 2003).

The dominating perspectives on media literacy and media education during the past fifty years may be divided between a policy-oriented perspective and a user-oriented perspective. The first has been concerned with the consequences of media developments for the individual, and then using regulation, legislation and curricula to make statements about the importance of media literacy and media education. This approach is still a central part of the policy agenda (see, e.g., Byron, 2008). The latter has been more oriented towards the ways in which young people use media and how they make meaning, using different modes of digital content in the creation of media (Burn & Duran, 2007; Erstad, Gilje, de Lange, 2007a). The present line of argumentation follows the latter tradition, using the first as a frame of reference.

In Europe, a large study on ‘the current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe’ was undertaken in 2007 (Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona). This report emphasized the importance of media literacy as a key prerequisite for citizenship:

The aim of media literacy is to increase awareness of the many forms of media messages encountered in their everyday lives. It should help citizens to recognize how the media filter their perceptions and beliefs, shape popular culture and influence personal choices. It should empower them with the critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills to make them judicious consumers and producers of information. Media education is part of the basic entitlement of every citizen, in every country in the world, to freedom of expression and the right to information and it is instrumental in building and sustaining democracy. Today Media Literacy is indeed one of the key pre-requisites for active and full citizenship and is one of the contexts in which intercultural dialogue needs to be promoted. Also, media education is a fundamental tool to raise awareness on IPR issues among media users and consumers. (http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/index_en.htm)

The important question is then how this policy might have an impact on the individual level. The most interesting dimension, from our point of view, is the role of production practices in the context of media education. It is within media production using new digital tools that the most evident changes have occurred – changes that have implications for re-developments within media education during the past years.

Media and Literacy: An Interdisciplinary Approach

There is currently a growing body of research on the interrelationship between different media and the concept of literacy (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). As defined by the New London Group in their manifesto from 1996 (New London Group, 1996;

Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), the understanding of ‘literacies’, in plural, has moved more and more towards how people relate to multiple text formats, what the New London Group term ‘multiliteracies’ (ibid.) and ‘multimodality’ (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). New Literacy Studies, as it is now termed, is located in the intersection of sociolinguistics, anthropological theories of language, and educational and learning theory using mainly ethnographic and discourse methodologies. It opens up broader conceptions of what it means to ‘read’ and ‘write’ using available cultural tools (Schultz & Hull, 2002: 21; Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear & Leu, 2008).

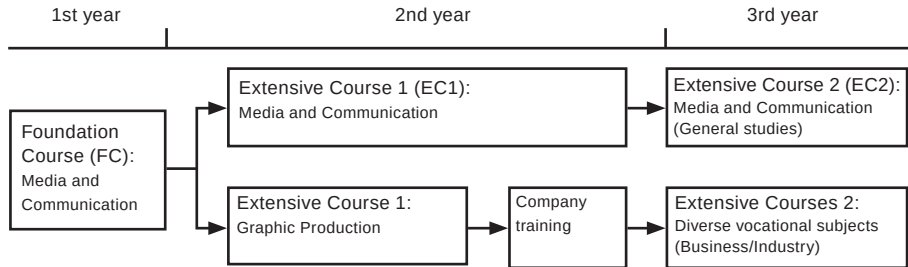
Of special interest is the visual and social approach emerging from the field of literacy studies, which offers new approaches to our understanding of media literacy (Snyder, 2007).¹ Several studies in this tradition indicate that young people today relate to many different modes of ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ in a variety of different contexts. One important aspect of media literacy is therefore the interconnection between formal and informal contexts of learning. In other words, how media education in schools relates to production practices that young people are involved in outside of schools. Literacies are defined as multiple and situated within *social and cultural practices* and discourses. Lankshear and Knobel, for example, state that; “Identifying literacies as *social practices* is necessarily to see them as involving socially recognized ways of doing things.” (2007: 4). Going back to the now classic text by Scribner and Cole (1981), they describe literacy in terms of “socially organized practices that make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it” (p. 236). The important aspect is to look upon literacy not as something static, but as changing over time. Literacy is not about being able to read and write a particular kind of script. It is more a matter of “applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use” (ibid.). And as Lankshear and Knobel explain; “Literacies call us to generate and communicate meanings and to invite others to make meaning from our texts in turn.” (2007: 4). From this point of view, it is necessary to look at and extend the notion literacy practices (Barton et al 2000) as social and cultural practices in media education. Studying the practices of literacy has become a central perspective in recent research on how young people relate to and use new technologies. Media education is of special interest within such a perspective, as it represents a context where other modes than the written language are focused more specifically.

Towards a ‘Production Approach’ in Norwegian Media Education

Media education has a long tradition in Norwegian education, going back to the mid-1970s (Erstad, 1997). However, like in most other countries the subject has traditionally had a marginal position in the national curriculum (Erstad, 2005; Domaille & Buckingham, 2004). Until the end of the late 1990s, the public discourse on media education as seen in curricula for compulsory schooling revolved around developing critical thinking among students in their relation to media messages. However, during the past eight years, there has been a shift towards emphasizing content creation and digital production. A new interest in media education emerged in connection with curriculum reforms in the late 1990s. This interest was due to the growing concern among interest groups in the graphic-design industry about implementing ‘media and communication studies’ at the upper secondary level (16- to 19-year-old students). The public debate was not only about the convergence of old and new media forms, but it was also strongly argued that there was a great need for such “media competence” in the future job market, especially in relation to production and design.

The course structure today (school year 2008/09)² is based on a joint first-year foundational course, after which students are to choose between a crafts-oriented specialization versus a course qualifying for higher education. The subject clearly emphasizes media production in both tracks. (See Figure 1)

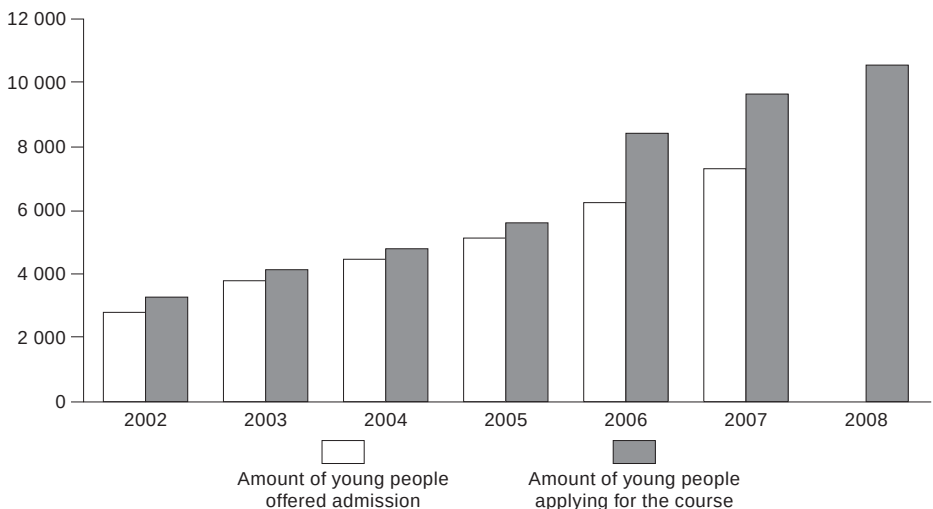
Figure 1. Structure of ‘Media and Communication’, vocational training, upper secondary level



In general, the course provides an introduction to basic principles in media and communication, combining text, image and sound so as to lay a broad foundation for higher education and employment. Furthermore, the course deals with various forms of communication, content distribution and expression within diverse media genres and fields (movie, photo, advertisement and web applications). The following core subjects are included in the course syllabuses: ‘Media and communication’, ‘The individual and society’, ‘Media design’, ‘Media production’ and ‘History of Expression’ (Erstad, Gilje & de Lange 2007a).

An increasing number of upper secondary schools in Norway have now chosen to offer Vocational Media and Communication courses due to their popularity. To give an indication of the increasing interest in this subject, Figure 2 shows the number of students applying to take this subject from 2002 until 2008.³

Figure 2. The Amount of Students Applying (and offered admission) for the Subject Media and Communication 2002-2008



Note: Directorate of Education⁴ – 2008.

Figure 2 shows an increase in the number of students applying to take this course in Media and Communication during the six years covered by these statistics. We can also see that from 2005 onwards the number of students applying increases more than the number of students admitted. The number of places available at the schools obviously does not cover the demand among young people for gaining qualifications within the domain of media and communication. This growth, both in the amount of students applying and the number of students admitted to this program, indicates a major change in the popularity and status of this subject in Norwegian compulsory education. Due to the increase of schools and students involved, as well as its relevance to issues of 21st Century skills and competencies (Lisbon Council, 2007; OECD, 2005), the program has developed into an important subject area at this level of schooling. Similar developments have not been seen in any other subject area.

Another explanation might also be that the new subject Media and Communication emphasizes media production over the more theoretical approaches. The student's produce media in a wide range of projects through the three-year vocational course using an array of different software and digital tools. In our national survey (Erstad, Gilje & de Lange 2007b), we decided to focus on two of these production processes, the *production of web pages* and the *editing of digital video*.

“Media Producers of the Future” – A National Survey

This section presents findings from the first national survey on the subject Media and Communication at the upper secondary school level in Norway.⁵ The initial steps of this national survey were two, ongoing PhD projects (for details, see Erstad, Gilje & de Lange, 2007a). The preliminary findings from these projects generated new questions and issues.⁶ The sample in the survey consisted of 735 students who were about to finish a three-year upper secondary level course in media education. It is reasonable to suspect that these students are more oriented towards media in general than other youth, as they applied for and followed this course. But at the same time, they might have had quite diverse experiences of producing media in their leisure time, which is a key question to explore in the present article. These are students with good grades on average, as there is competition for getting a place in this school programme (Erstad, Gilje & de Lange, 2007b). Compared to other students in upper secondary schools, these students have very good access to a computer with a broadband connection, both at school (100%) and at home (94%).

In this ‘digital’ context, we want to explore the diverse practices of two groups of students, school producers (SP) and crossover-producers (CP). In the next section, we will elaborate on these empirical terms and explore the production practices in relation to the *production of web pages* and the *editing of digital video*.

Multimodal Texts and Editing Software – Differences in Production Practices among SP and CP

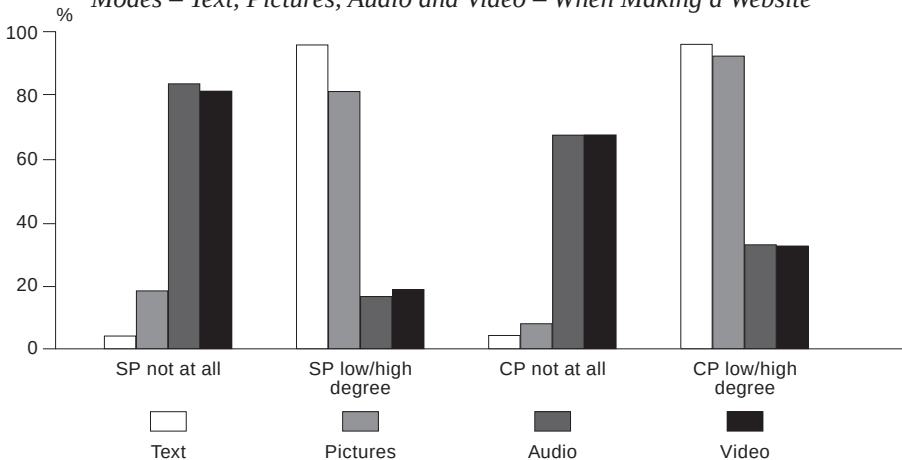
One important change relating to Web 2.0 is the development of web pages that use a broad range of different modes and media.⁷ In the past few years, it has become more common to use different media such as animation and moving images in addition to text and pictures on websites (Skjultstad & Morrison, 2005). In general the survey showed that most of the students only used text and pictures when they produced websites.

But one out of five (20%) had included sound or moving images. More students (over 40%) had experience with animation (flash) in their web production at school (Erstad, Gilje & de Lange 2007b). These numbers basically tell us that many students in media education use diverse experiences of text production where the purpose is to produce a web page.

In the survey, we asked the students whether they produced web pages and video in their leisure time. Those students who indicated production experiences from both the school setting and during leisure time were categorized as *crossover producers* CP (N=194/735). Those students who only had experience producing these media during the lessons in media education were categorized as *school producers* SP (N=176/735). In other words, we have used the production of *both* web pages and video as a decisive factor for dividing the students into two categories related to their production practices inside and outside the schools. These two groups (CP and SP), representing over 50% of the sample (194+176=370/735), represent a clear division among the students concerning their production practices. All the students produce both web pages and video at school. The crossover producers are *in addition* producing web pages and video during their leisure time, while school producers do neither. In addition to these two groups, we find students who either produce only web pages or only video as leisure activities. The latter group of students is very mixed and will not be discussed further here.

As Figure 3 below shows, use of text on web pages is more or less the same for school and crossover producers, and there is only a small difference in use of pictures between the two categories. This changes when we look at the use of audio and video. Crossover producers are more likely to integrate media such as sound and video (moving images) in their web productions at school. By looking at the two columns for audio and video, we can observe that more than 32% of the crossover producers use audio and video in their web pages at school, while less than 19% of the school producers use audio and video on web pages.

Figure 3. Comparison of School Producers' and Crossover Producers' Use of Different Modes – Text, Pictures, Audio and Video – When Making a Website

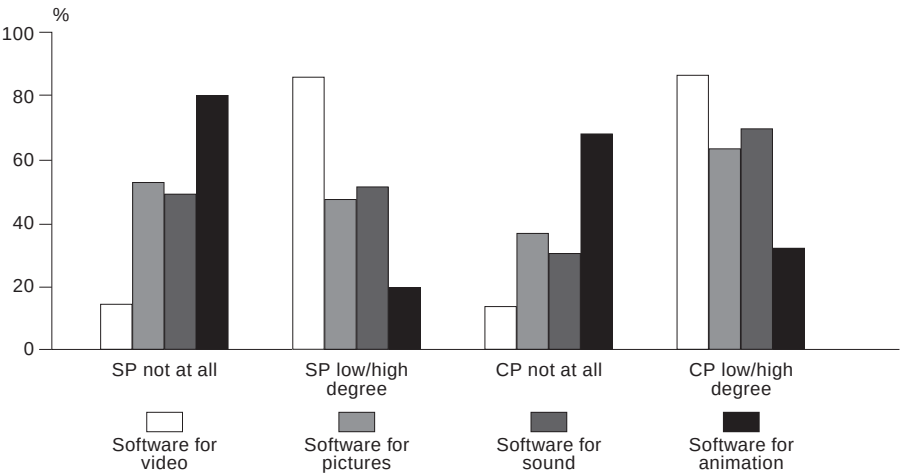


Despite the fact that we do not know the context and the assignment for these different web projects at every school, students in the two categories use different modes in their production of web pages at school.

The survey shows that more than 90% of the students make more than one video during the three-year programme. Regarding genre, short fiction movies and documentaries are most popular. But the students also make music videos, short animation movies and more experimental movies. Video is – despite the ‘digital turn’ – a medium in which conventions are related to the established use of moving images, sound and music. In other words, unlike web pages, the video medium is not in a process of change, despite technical aspects of the production practices that have been transformed owing to the digitization of moving images.

As shown in Figure 4, the school producers have a different pattern regarding use of software in the digital editing process of making video films. The use of software for images and sound is more common among crossover producers than among school producers. The crossover producers also use a wider range of different software when editing moving images (like Final cut Express, iMovie or Pinnacle), whereas the school producers’ use of different software is more restricted.

Figure 4. *A Comparison of Use of Diverse Software in a Project where Students were Supposed to Make a Digital Video*



These findings indicate that the majority of students perform advanced editing in their work with different modalities. In a qualitative case study, Gilje (2008) explored how googled and recorded semiotic material was edited and made ‘coherent’ in an array of different software when making a short documentary.

Publishing and Sharing – Diverse Practices among SP and CP

The last issue in this section concerns publishing practices and participation among SP and CP in different non-formal contexts with media productions made at school. Normally, the production of a web page or a short movie remains a school assignment. The students complete production projects defined by the teacher and framed by the school context – projects that are later assessed by the teacher. However, due to the introduction of Web 2.0, many students publish their assignments on the Internet for various reasons. In the survey, nearly 60% of the crossover producers reported that they published the web page produced in their most recent project at school. In comparison, less than

40% of the school producers had done the same. This may indicate that the crossover producers are more oriented towards publishing and do not only view web projects as school assignments. When exploring what kind of web page they had produced as an assignment, over 20% of the CP reported that they had made a site for a company or person outside the school, while only 11% of the SP had done the same.

The same pattern appears in regard to filmmaking practices. In recent years, students in upper secondary school have become an important group as regards contributions to national film festivals for young people (Gilje, 2005). More than 20% of the crossover producers report that they have entered a film on an official film festival for youth, while only 3% of the school producers had done the same.

Traditionally, student productions have only been shown at schools, and the audience consists of other students, teachers and friends. These patterns are about to change. The survey shows that media students in Norway make media content intended to be shared in contexts outside schools. Both films and especially web pages are published on the Internet. Some students make videos to be shown in professional TV programmes, and many students enter their films in special film festivals for youth.⁸ However, as presented above, different practices are observed between school producers and crossover producers.

Implications and New Questions

As stated in the introduction, the Norwegian context for media production in and out of school is quite exceptional, both with regard to the high access to technology and Internet, and with regard to the emerging new subject Media and Communication in the upper secondary schools. The data from the present survey show how students in this particular subject have diverse production practices, based on the fact that they have different experiences in their leisure time. The findings indicate that there is a difference between the practices of what we describe as school producers (SP) and the practices of crossover producers (CP). The main point has been to show how crossover producers (CP), drawing on their production practices from outside the schools, are more likely to:

- make more advanced multimodal texts than school producers (SP) do
- use a larger variety of software applications than school producers (SP) do
- publish their products on the Internet and participate in film festivals to a larger degree than SP do

Taking these findings into account, it could be assumed that media education has an impact on production practices outside school for those who have no experience of such production in their leisure time. Such an argument has many implications for ongoing debates on media literacy in Norway, on an European level and elsewhere. Of special interest has been the role of production practices, and how new tools, multimodal texts and software developments have had an impact on the practices in this subject and on the media literacies of students. In this way, media education in schools is interpreted as an interesting case of broader cultural production processes using digital tools (Jenkins, 2007; Ito, 2006). Based on the present survey, it is not possible to make any claims concerning these broader cultural processes and the more qualitative aspects of production practices. There is a need for more in-depth analyses of the relationship between production practices in and out of school.

In regard to access to technology and the use of digital tools, Norway and the Nordic countries are ahead of other regions in the world. However, there seems to be a growing and common interest, both on a European level and in other parts of the world, in how issues of empowerment, citizenship, skills and competencies should be worked out and realized as an educational subject in the school curriculum.

Both the *why* and *how* of media education has been much debated (Buckingham, 2003). The argument presented here is that issues concerning both *why* and *how* are changing and gaining interest in broader educational debates. We suggest that media education and media literacy must be framed in the intersection between formal and informal ways of learning among youth. This subject draws largely on the experiences of young people from outside the schools.

We now see developments in which media literacy is becoming an important policy issue throughout Europe (Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona, 2007). This is due to improved access to computers and the Internet in schools and increased interest in the educational use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Such technological developments are seen by many policymakers as related to the development of our information or knowledge-based society. This means that there is an increasing focus on media literacies as a core competence in functioning as citizens in our societies now and in the future. The present article contributes to the growing body of research across different scientific disciplines concerning the implications of digital media as an embedded part of educational practices.

Notes

1. The visual turn refers to the changing ways of meaning-making and multimodal communication, which are seen as part of literacy. The notion of multimodality highlights the diversity of texts in the new digital media landscape. In a multimodal perspective, literacy does not refer only to written language, but also to modes such as audio and music (van Leeuwen 1999), pictures (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996) and moving images (Burn & Parker 2003).
2. The course was re-structured from the year 2007/08, making 2008/09 the first year with the new course structure at every level.
3. Since the introduction of the subject in the upper secondary schools, the number of students has increased from 1500 to 9000, which means that one out of 20 students (5%) in upper secondary school (age 16-19) chooses this programme. The number of schools that see this as a chance to attract students has also increased, from 17 the first year (2000/01) to 120 in 2008/09.
4. By the time this article was finalized it was not possible to get access to the amount of students offered admission for the school year 2008-2009.
5. For a full version of the findings in the survey see: www.transactions.uio.no. The report is written in Norwegian and entitled: "Morgendagens medieprodusenter – Om mediefagselevs produksjonspraksiser i videregående skole".
6. The possibility to make online questionnaires has made large-scale projects easier to handle on a relatively low budget. Our survey was based on an online questionnaire containing 72 questions, covering a wide range of issues from how the subject is organized in terms of lessons to the student's use of different media in his/her leisure time. The survey was conducted from November 2006 to January 2007. In total, 735 students, in their third year of upper secondary school, answered the online questionnaire. The participation rate in the survey was over 80%.

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7. We understand mode as written text, a picture or a sound. Media may consist of one or several modes. As a medium, a web page today is multimodal in nature, combining different modes, and some web pages are multimodal, including, e.g., animation and moving images.
8. All the Nordic countries have several film festivals for young people. See www.dvoted.net for an overview.

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When will the Daybreak Come?¹

Popular Music and Political Processes in Ethiopia

KRISTIN SKARE ORGERET

Abstract

Popular musical expressions are important for discourses of citizenship and belonging. Focusing on popular music and political processes in Ethiopia today, this discussion uses Tewodros Kassahun *aka* Teddy Afro's music as an example. Teddy Afro is a popular voice challenging the prevailing political discourse in Ethiopia. Several of Afro's songs have been banned by the government on radio and television in Ethiopia, but are found to provide alternative sites of political and cultural resistance to the autocratic regime. Reasons for censorship are discussed as well as how music can provide alternative sites of resistance. The findings show that oppressing political expressions may not always kill the ideas, as they may find alternative arenas in the face of obstacles.

Keywords: freedom of expression, popular culture, censorship, music, public sphere

Introduction

Popular culture may have a central role to play in societies where the mainstream media do not allow for freedom of expression. The case in point here is Ethiopia, a country that, throughout the past decades, has seen processes of politics and conflicts in which individuals find themselves caught up, as they may have little or no say in these developments. It is a common assumption that the present government – led by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) that seized power through an armed struggle in 1991 – does not reflect the people's will or pursue common rights to any great degree. The current Constitution's Article 29 protects freedom of expression without interference, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, as well as freedom of artistic creation (in Gebremedhin Simon 2006). Despite these promising tenets, Ethiopia was recently listed among the ten nations worldwide in which press freedom has deteriorated the most over the past five years (CPJ 2007). Restrictions of freedom of the press are also underlined in the US State Department's report on human rights practices in Ethiopia (2007). During the political elections in 2005, Ethiopia became the second country in the world (after Turkey) in a ranking of countries by number of imprisoned journalists (Solomon Gashaw 2007). In 2006 alone, 18 journalists were jailed for their work – several of them faced the possibility of the death penalty, two foreign journalists were expelled, and the authorities banned eight newspapers and blocked a number of critical websites. Furthermore, Ethiopia is the only country in the world where the government has disrupted the possibility to send and receive SMS messages.

The present discussion will be centred on how popular musical expressions are important for discourses of citizenship and belonging in Ethiopia today. The main research question is: What is the value of popular culture in general, and popular music in particular, as a vehicle for political resistance? Other questions of interest for the discussion will be: Who has the right to interpret contemporary Ethiopian society and its history? Who has the right to define reality and impose meanings? What forms of resistance can popular music offer? What are the locations of and the routes for popular music and what spaces does it open for transformation and change? What paths can popular music and the reception of it take in the face of obstacles?

The situation of popular music in contemporary Ethiopia is approached through a case study of Tewodros Kassahun *aka* Teddy Afro's music and the reception of it. The research questions will be discussed from the perspective of DJs on national radio, owners of small, independent music shops in Addis Ababa, and a selected number of listeners through questionnaires, interviews and reception analysis. In an attempt to understand the space that music occupies in the listeners' daily lives, central topics are questions of language, music as opposition, identity, negotiation of meaning and control. To exemplify how popular music can provide alternative sites of resistance, the article proposes a close reading of two of Teddy Afro's songs.

Teddy Afro became an important voice in the national exchange of ideas during the period around and after the 2005 elections. Whereas national Ethiopian television and radio refuse to broadcast several of Teddy Afro's songs and videos, his music nevertheless plays a vital role in constructing patterns of belonging and in processes of negotiating identity, as the songs find other ways to reach their public.

Popular Music as Resistance and Field of Repression

Popular music, like popular culture in general, is a concept with a double-layered meaning owing to the word *popular*. The first and most commonly used meaning of 'popular' views music as part of the culture industry in which popular is defined in terms of commercial success. In Ethiopia, local popular music has outperformed its imported rivals in terms of popularity. Whereas newspapers or news talk shows reach mostly an elite section of the population, popular culture is successful in reaching a wide variety of viewers and listeners. Second, the word *popular* literally means 'of the people', and popular music hence can be referred to as music that concerns itself with issues to do with the existence and survival of 'the people'. Its production is understood as a social interactive process in which the musician on one level speaks to 'the people' and on another level speaks of and on behalf of them (Kwaramba 1997).

According to Stuart Hall (1994: 461), the popular can be defined as those forms and activities in society that have their roots in the social and material conditions of particular classes, which have become embodied in popular traditions and practices. Popular culture is defined in relation to the continuing tension, influence and antagonism of 'the people' in the dominant culture. The definition treats the domain of cultural forms as a constantly changing field. Experiences from other countries have also shown how popular music can be a central part of political struggles. For instance, popular music played a particularly important role in the resistance movement during the Apartheid period (1948-1991) of South African history (Shoup 1997).

It should be noted that music has always played an important role in Ethiopian culture. It is as important as it is diverse. In Ethiopia, music is part of all significant

movements, from ancient battles, through the periods of Haile Selassie's reign and the Derg regime, to the contemporary situation. Music is important in relation to religion; one can hear traditional songs from the Orthodox Church being chanted by priests at specific times of day both in the cities and rural areas, while other forms of traditional music are influenced by Muslim music. In Ethiopia, traditional music is often considered as popular among youth, as is more modern music (interviews, Addis Ababa 2007).

Teddy Afro, Banned but Everywhere

Addis Ababa. From big loud speakers outside little lopsided music stalls in narrow streets the same rhythms emerge. The many blue minibuses and Lada taxis in the crowded avenues project the same distinguished voice. From coffee houses, markets and outdoor restaurants – the city seems to move to the same tune. Street vendors and shoe cleaners know the lyrics by heart: *Emama – Ethiopia, Abyssinia – Ethiopia, Ethiopia – Emama, Ethiopiaye...* The sound track of Addis Ababa is performed by Teddy Afro. Afro is banned, but everywhere. (From researcher's field notes, January 2006)

Teddy Afro *aka* Tewodros Kassahun is the young singer and writer who has been said to bring the Amharic² language back to Ethiopian youth. His music often has a connection to reggae, and as a result Teddy Afro is commonly referred to as Ethiopia's Bob Marley. Afro's second album *Yasteseryal* (It Heals) sold more than a million copies in a few months after its release in 2005, and became the biggest selling Ethiopian music album ever. The album's 14 tracks³ once again proved Afro's extraordinary talent for timing. Afro/ Kassahun had already shown his aptitude for liking up with major Ethiopian moments in a highly appropriate manner several times before. He was timely in acclaiming the legendary athlete Haile Gebre Selassie, and the emerging star Kenenisa in *Tarik Tessera* (History is Made), right after Kenenisa and Haile came in first and fifth, respectively, in the 10,000 m race at the 2004 Olympics in Athens. Furthermore, for the 60th posthumous birthday anniversary of Bob Marley in Meskel Square in Addis Ababa in February 2005, Afro participated with *Shashamene*⁴, another *ad hoc* single, which went straight into the mood of the moment: "Promise...Rita Marley, Promise Ziggy Marley to bring his body!".

At the release of the long awaited album *Yasteseryal*, right at the time of the 2005 election, Teddy Afro further emphasized his sensitivity to presenting the right songs at the right time. The 2005 elections were surrounded by many expectations and represented a landmark in terms of voter turnout. For the first time in history, there was a real television debate in the period leading up to the elections. The period represented more openness, but was also characterized by more sensationalism in the media, particularly in the blooming private press. Against this setting, *Yasteseryal* appeared and summarized the history of the past fifty years of Ethiopia. The songs are about love, forgiveness and unity. They describe an embattled nation in search of new directions and repeatedly stress the need to improve and change the country. The timely launch of the album gave proof both of a strategist who knew the rules of the cultural industry and his market and of the work of a potential national poet. Two radio DJs expressed in interviews how the album consolidated Teddy's position as a national bard:

Teddy Afro is very aware of what is going on in the nation, more aware than any other artist (interview, DJ 1 2007)

Yasteseryal exhaled my expectations in every way. The synthesized sound use although present, the level of detail and songwriter-ship makes it tolerable. Sometimes the cheesy sound clips give the album a comical relief from the deep national trance it puts you in to (interview, DJ 2 2007)

After the general elections in May 2005, the optimistic prospects for more openness expired as a range of serious human rights abuses occurred when the opposition parties Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) and United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) refused to accept the announced results⁵. Protests against the election results, led by the opposition party CUD, began in November 2005 and resulted in several thousand people being arrested and at least 42 demonstrators and a number of policemen being killed. The reactions to the unrest that followed the May 2005 elections led to severe obstacles to the freedom of expression in Ethiopia. Shortly after *Yasteseryal*'s release, the Ethiopian state broadcaster banned many of its songs and videos. While songs were often banned because of their lyrics, one of the interviewed radio DJ's who experienced the banning also saw it in direct relation to the living images.

The videos – there was just no way they were going to play the video on TV. The video is sometimes much more controversial than the song, but played a part in having the song banned from radio (interview, DJ 2 2007)

On the other hand, banning is perhaps not an adequate term, as no restriction was officially made, but the songs were nevertheless prohibited from being played on the radio. Through the interviews with radio DJs, it became clear that, in Ethiopian radio, banning was more on the level of notices pinned in the studio prohibiting the broadcasting of certain songs. One DJ from Ethiopian Radio described how it worked in the following:

One would post a notice in the studio: these songs should not be played. When it came to Teddy Afro no notice was posted however, in that case people in the studio would tell you directly (interview, DJ 3 2007).

Another source, however, stated that there was a list of definite names of singers and titles of songs that should not be played; this list had been distributed to Ethiopian Radio staff members, and several of Afro's songs figured on it.

The fact that there is no open discussion about the need for banning may be a way to 'censor the fact of censorship'. According to Jansen and Martin (2003), the first and most obvious method to make censorship work is to try to reduce awareness that censorship has occurred. For example, when controversial works are submitted to the government-controlled radio and television channels, it is easy to reject them on the grounds that they are not of sufficient calibre or that they lack artistic quality. It is, however, difficult to use the argument of 'market censorship' or lack of popular demand in relation to the most popular album in Ethiopia, ever.

The notion that censorship of music could have a massive impact by deterring enlightenment came up often in my 2007 interviews. One interviewee said that the banning was very interesting, because it gave you a clear idea about what the Government likes and dislikes, more so than do more shallow, ready-made statements. Another interviewee probably reflected a view closer to the Government's own by arguing, on the contrary, that one could not talk about banning or censorship in the Ethiopian context at all. Some songs "are simply not played by ETV or radio, that is very different" (Interviewee, February 2007). The latter argument feeds directly into the discussion linked to the difference between banning and not playing.

Documentation of the existence of banning is essential to opposing banning; otherwise it would be difficult to prove that censorship has occurred at all. It is often impossible to find direct evidence, primarily because the censor has to cover the actions in legitimate terms. Furthermore, given that all legal broadcasting in Ethiopia takes place under government control, overt acts of censorship are unnecessary. As seen above, in the case of Ethiopian radio, somebody may say ‘Please do not play those songs’, but there might be no official restriction, and thus the banning is harder to prove. The existence of censorship may itself be censored through threats. In interviews with radio DJs, it became clear that self-censorship was widespread within the national radio, and there were numerous subtle ways in which DJs were discouraged from playing songs (assumed to be) critical of the Government.

One way to reveal censorship is to expose double standards. On the occasion of a concert at the Sheraton Hotel in Addis Ababa on the Ethiopian New Year’s Eve, 10 September 2005⁶, Teddy Afro himself revealed such double standards. Afro was invited to sing, but was told not to sing certain songs, such as *Yasteseryal*. Teddy Afro refused to entertain under those conditions and walked away from a deal, which according to the local press was worth over 130,000 Birr, or around 14,000 USD.

Jansen and Martin described how a standard method for justifying censorship is to attack the censored. A censored author, for example, might be castigated as incompetent, immoral, disloyal, unreliable, unstable, paranoid, or greedy (2003: 9). On 4 November 2006, Teddy Afro was arrested, apparently for bad driving and a hit-and-run accident involving an 18-year-old street boy. He was released shortly after on 50,000 Birr bail. Most of the people interviewed saw this as a trivial error or even as a constructed case that was used by government media as a rationale for discrediting the artist and his work. If, as many of my interviewees argued, Afro was an innocent victim in this case, this episode can be seen as an example of censorship through intimidation.

Can a government legitimately prohibit citizens from certain types of popular culture such as listening to certain sorts of music, or does this constitute an unjustified violation of basic freedoms? This question lies at the heart of a debate that raises fundamental questions about when, and on what grounds, the state is justified in using its coercive powers to limit the freedom of individuals.

Reasons for Censorship

Censorship, in the form of control of the information and ideas circulated within a society, has been a characteristic feature of dictatorships throughout history. Censorship occurs to varying degrees and goes back to ancient times. Every society has customs, taboos or laws that to some degree regulate individuals’ behaviour. As a result, individuals perform a kind of self-censorship, and such restraint can be seen as part of the efforts rational human beings undertake to participate in society and to enforce the prevailing conventions.

Also in societies mainly referred to as ‘democratic’, censorship is common under certain circumstances, often under the pretext of protecting three basic institutions of society: the family, the church or the state. Martin Cloonan (1996) investigated the ideas and policies that led to censorship of music on Great Britain’s BBC Radio 1. Whereas most songs were banned for promoting promiscuity, there was also a range of songs that were banned for clearly political reasons. During the first Gulf War, the BBC Radio training unit submitted a list of controversial records that became an unofficial list of

music to ban in British prime-time broadcasting⁷. During the Falkland war, more indirect musical censorship happened as local BBC radio DJs were asked to think carefully before playing songs such as Elaine Page's "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" or Split Enz' "Six Months in a leaky Boat", particularly close to news bulletins on the war.

National security, and increasingly also global security, has been and is an important rationale for suppression of information and ideas. The more difficult or challenging the national situation is perceived to be, the easier it seems to be for governments to justify actions to control the information and ideas people receive.

Liberals, however, will defend a strong belief in the concept of individual freedom, and against any regulation that interferes with that freedom. The only grounds that liberals typically regard as providing a legitimate reason for state restrictions on individual freedom is in order to prevent harm to others. To convince a liberal that free speech should be restricted, it should be proved that the utterance in question causes significant harm to others: either in a way corresponding to a narrow definition of 'harm', that is actual physical violence to others, or in relation to a broader, more interest-based conception of 'harm', that is that the expression violates important interests or rights of others (see, e.g., Dyzenhaus 1992, Feinberg 1987). The latter more interest-based right to protect people against harm became highly relevant in the debate following the so-called Mohammed cartoon case in 2006.

An integral aspect of the discussion on reasons for censorship is the theoretical arguments for free speech. The initial purpose of free speech was to empower the people with the use of their own minds, common sense and compassion and to use this to 'govern' the public realm. Today, the three most common justifications for the use of free speech in society are: the importance of open discussion to the discovery of truth; each individual's right to self-development and fulfilment, as restrictions on what we are allowed to say, write, hear or read inhibit our personality and its growth; and that public discussion is a political duty and a fundamental principle of democratic governance (Barendt 2005: 7-18).

The banning of Teddy Afro by Ethiopian radio and television can be understood in light of the argument that one of the main types of triggering factors for human rights violations in Ethiopia under the EPRDF government has been civilian display of protest (Tronvoll 2007). In the case of Teddy Afro's *Yasteseryal* album, several of the songs became lucid examples of a popular voice challenging the ruling political discourse. To a certain degree, the singing of/listening to a song could be seen as an opportunity to demonstrate one's support for the opposition. Resistance can take many forms, depending on the severity of state oppression. Although some of the texts, at least from an outsider's perspective, do not seem very radical or politically challenging, the songs apparently hit a national nerve at a decisive moment in Ethiopian history. The symbolic value of the songs was probably as important as a source of popular and political resistance as were the actual lyrics.

The Music Shops as an Alternative Public Sphere

If we are to approach popular music's place in society, in Ethiopia just as anywhere else in today's world, we must explore how the main culture industries and media institutions distribute it, but we also must attempt to understand the place music occupies in the listener's daily lives.

In spite of being banned or at least ‘not played’ by the public broadcaster, Teddy Afro still rules the streets of the capital and the countryside pathways of Ethiopia. In their article “Making censorship backfire”, Sue C. Jansen and Brian Martin (2003) discussed how attempts at censorship occasionally lead to far greater awareness of the target than would have occurred without the interventions of censors. They suggest, that

attempts to repress ‘dangerous ideas’ sometimes have the opposite effect: that is, they serve as catalysts for expanding the reach, resonance and receptivity of those ideas (2003:5).

In line with this argument, several of my interviewees emphasized that the banning of a song could bring about an opposite effect of suppression, as it brought more attention to the song:

The banning often makes people more curious to know the song. Look what happened to *Yasteseryal*. People were so interested in hearing the song that they were queuing to buy the cassette (Interviewee, February 2007).

Furthermore, based on observations and interviews carried out in five small music shops in the area of Casa Inches in Addis Ababa in February and June 2007, it turned out that in addition to such a possible ‘opposite’ effect, the small music shops played a vital role in serving as ‘narrow casters’ and loud speakers for Afro’s music. The music shops studied were usually owned by a man who had one or a few shopkeepers to help him at different times in the shop. A typical shop is only a few square meters in area, built of simple wood materials and covered from floor to ceiling with copies (both legally and illegally copied) of CDs and DVDs as well as with posters of local and international stars.

There are sometimes five-six persons inside the shop at the same time, mostly young people. It is a bit crowded, but it is ok. We discuss music, fashion, music, politics and music. Here we are free to speak our mind (Music shop assistant 1, interview 2007)

Hence, the tiny music shops not only promote the music they sell by playing it through big loud speakers, but they also represent a place where the topics raised by the songs’ lyrics can be commented upon, further developed and discussed. This was very much the case with Teddy Afro’s music.

There is little creative criticism in Ethiopia. It was a big event when *Yasteseryal* was launched. A big event! For weeks and weeks we only played that CD. Teddy’s songs opened new fields of discussion, and of course it happened in the period of the elections, so the two events went hand in hand (Music shop owner, interview 2007).

He [Teddy Afro] provided us with new tools to carve our reality. He provided us with new images, or rather, he opened our eyes to images that had been there right in front of us all the time, as the metaphor of the church and the mosque in Markato (in *Shemindefefer*). He showed us an alternative way seeing and from there we can discuss, agree or disagree (Interviewee, 2007).

This article only looks into the role these small shops play in one popular area of Addis Ababa, but it is assumed that they may play a similar role around the nation. Based on calculations from 2003, 57 percent of the population in Ethiopia, over 15 years of age, is illiterate (Gebremedhin Simon 2006). The findings from interviews and observations

in the music shops show that popular music can play a vital role as a storyteller for these groups of the population too.

Some of the people who come here frequently do not buy anything, but come here to listen to music and to discuss. We can talk about different things from gossiping to serious political issues – well that is gossiping too perhaps, because the media never tell what is really happening. But we talk about the things that we think should change (Music shop assistant 2, interview 2007).

Whereas a central criterion for the traditional Habermasian public sphere was that people came together as citizens and not as customers, the present study of the small music shops in Addis Ababa exemplifies that it is not always possible or appropriate to separate citizens from customers. People come to the music shops sometimes as customers, sometimes as citizens, and sometimes as both and use the space provided by the shop as a sort of alternative public space. Here the background and identity of the participants is not important, as long as one allows others to express themselves freely. The observation showed that although the shops are driven by commercial principles – the aim being to sell the CDs and DVDs they display – they also, to a certain degree, respond to the wish for a differentiated and pluralistic public space (as it has been described by, e.g., Benhabib 1992; Dahlgren 1995). As in most public areas in Ethiopian society, women were in minority also here, but several young women nevertheless said that they liked to take part in the discussions unfolding in the music shops and stressed that female singers, for instance Aster Aweke, have been important in giving women more space on the Ethiopian popular cultural arena (interview, 2007).

The small music shops seem to offer an alternative arena of expression and discussion in a situation where the traditional media are hardly able to serve as a platform for free discussions. One main weakness of this alternative public space is, of course, that it does not communicate with the state. However, if we follow the reasoning of Kimini Gecau (1996), who showed how songs that take the form of narrative may approximate a kind of oral journalism, we might argue that this is the case with Teddy Afro's songs and that the small music shops provide the medium of communication. In a commonsensical manner, the singer mobilizes a variety of methods to describe Ethiopian society and communicate its people's histories. In the interviews, it became clear that different listeners perceived Teddy Afro's texts as reconfirming the meanings they have made out of their daily activities in the context of social relations of power and inequality (interviews Addis, May 2007). Thus, in a socially conscious manner, the music can be used as a vehicle for conveying messages and may play a role in fragmenting and contesting political authority.

Teddy Afro's songs

In order to get a better impression of how Teddy Afro's songs have been important in launching discussions and how they act as popular resistance to a more restricted set of ideas, this part of the article will look more closely at the lyrics of two of Afro's songs, *Yasteseryal* and *Shemindefer*⁸.

The songs have been selected somewhat randomly, based on impressions from interviews and conversations indicating that they were both important to many listeners. It also appeared that these two songs had been central in launching various discussions, for instance in the music shops in Casa Inches.

Yasteseryal

Yasteseryal is the title song from the album launched in 2005 and became the most important song during the election period. The song begins with a description of the disgraceful downfall of the Emperor Haile Selassie, passes through the 17 years of military domination under the Derg, marred with massacres and exiles, and ends with the period of the current Ethiopian rulers. *Yasteseryal* pronounces a popular understanding of the ‘new’ politicians as similar to the old ones. Leaders have changed, but revengeful killings and detentions never ceased – the politicians only change seats, while nothing changes in the real battle for the country’s poor:

The Derg militia dressed in their warrior cloths,
they took the seat to bring change
But like the previous leaders they
punished the past leaders.
We only see leaders changing seats, but no development.

In this way, the lyrics negotiate dominant definitions and propose a sense of ‘we-ness’ among the listeners as opposed to the ‘others’ – the leaders – who are all more or less the same. Through this negotiation, the song may invite listeners to reflect on the dominant groups in society and open themselves to new readings and new ideas. Perhaps it is the refusal to conform to a single idea of what contemporary Ethiopia is and should be that indicates what is peculiarly ‘popular’ in Teddy Afro’s songs. Afro sings in Amharic, but the texts allow a broader understanding of the national than what the largest ethnic culture has defined it to be. For instance, the title of the song *Kab Dahlak*, on the same album, comes from the island of Dahlak in the Red Sea, which is now under Eritrean sovereignty, and refers to the Ethio-Eritrean divide through a metaphor of the fracture of a family. The lyrics of *Yasteseryal* propose a negotiation of the meaning of contemporary Ethiopia as they openly interrogate and oppose official truths.

The land is fertile, and we have all
It was because there was no love
that we are punished by hunger and can’t survive
But if we stand together and work hard
It will not be long before Ethiopia becomes powerful again

The theme of unity and forgiveness runs through the lyrics of *Yasteseryal*, which literally means ‘it heals’:

Revenge is not good – Emama
It will disconnect us from God in the end
Abyssinia – Emama
Living together in love will protect us from any danger
Oh! *Yasteseryal*.

The song’s lyrics stress the need to bring people together and to re-establish peace and brotherhood, as the word *Yasteseryal* repeated over and over again constitutes the core of each refrain. Afro refers to the prime example of reconciliation on the African continent, the socially sanctioned icon of peace, namely Nelson Mandela:

Forgiveness to Ethiopia
A walk to freedom
(...)

Osisa Osisa Osisa Mandela
Like he reconciled the opponent parties
Let different parties stand together
Let us keep God's word loving each other
Take the plough up and forgive one another

It is in the lyrics of *Yasteseryal* that we find the most direct connection to the political elections:

When one party blames the other
When that critic is in the air
We people are confused to choose the best leader

Yasteseryal would seem to be successful in demonstrating popular resistance to the political hegemony, as it repeats the need to open up the discourse and include concepts of forgiveness and inclusion. The lyrics also refer to the pandemic of HIV/AIDS that afflicts Ethiopia, but that is often ignored in the public discourse:

My people is dying of fire!

Part of the complex nature of the song is how well it fits the concept of 'layering'; the subtler the hint, the more numerous the layers of meaning will often be.

When will the daybreak come?

This is popular music as resistance to political hegemony. The lyrics can be seen as a way of deploying symbolic forms to define relations with the political leadership. As also became clear through the interviews in the Addis Ababa music shops and among students, Afro's music allows negotiation of dominant meanings and may create alternative meanings that make manifest the relevance of political struggle.

Shemindefeer

The lyrics of the song *Shemindefeer* also emphasize the need to work against the classic divisions in Ethiopian society and in the world as a whole. It is quite explicit about its aim to promote unity and understanding in the highly multicultural society Ethiopia is. The country is both multi-cultural and multi-lingual, with close to 80 indigenous languages.

Shemindefeer, which is Afro's take on the French words 'Chemin de Fer' (railway), is about the love between a Muslim man and a Christian woman. The lyrics of *Shemindefeer* can hence be seen as part of a popular resistance to cultural and religious taboos. The majority of Ethiopians identify themselves as either Christians (Ethiopian Orthodox, Protestant, Catholic) or Muslims (Gebremedhin 2006). According to estimates, between 45–50% are Muslims, followed by 35–40% who are Coptic Ethiopian Orthodox, 12% who are animists and the remaining 3–8% belong to other faiths (CIA, 2006).

The Christian orthodox St. Raguel Church and the Muslim Anwar Mosque are situated face to face next to the big market Markato in Addis Ababa. In *Shemindefeer*'s powerful metaphor, the prayers from both holy locations reach the same destination:

In Shegerr, Addis A'ba, your own home town, indeed;
Does Raguel Church not face Anwar Masjid?
Though parted by a mere mortal fence;
In concert to the skies their prayers rise, and hence;

Both the church's Qidassie and the mosque's Azaan,
The Creator hears them – in symphony – as one.

Hence, in the music shops, the lyrics of Shemindefeer feed into discussions of differences, of world terrorism and of religious taboos. Some of the interviewees even argued that the lyrics have had a direct effect on listeners, as a significant increase in the number of marriages between people of various faiths occurred throughout Ethiopia at the time of its release. The City Hall of Dire Dawa in South Eastern Ethiopia reported an unusually high number of marriage license applications being submitted within weeks of the release of Teddy Afro's new album:

We are working overtime to meet the high demand and handing out marriage licenses for people marrying a partner of a different faith. The album [*Yasteseryal*] seems to have an effect. (Mustafa Woldeselassie, Family Issues Department, Dire Dawa City Hall. Quoted in Ethiopis.com, 4 July 2005).

It is hard to tell whether Teddy Afro was once again clever in taking the national pulse by describing a popular trend before anybody else, or whether the increased number of cross-religious marriages was in fact influenced by *Shemindefeer*, as the representative of Dire Dawa City Hall seemed to believe. Perhaps the cross-faith weddings were both an inspiration to, and inspired by Afro's lyrics. All the same, Afro is right in arguing that Ethiopia indeed is a country where people of different religious backgrounds have coexisted in peace for thousands of years:

The age-old haven Our Ethiopia has been;
Where Muslims and Christians have long lived in love, as kin

The possibility for Muslims and Christians to live happily together is not least an important argument in our current global world. Teddy Afro's lyrics echo the argument claiming that a great deal of the new thinking about Islam is not taking place as much within the traditional realms of religious authority as within popular culture (e.g. Eickelman and Anderson 2003; Pond 2006). Kjetil Tronvoll (2007) emphasized that any statement indicating a correlation between ethnicity and human rights violations in today's Ethiopia will be considered highly provocative by the current Ethiopian Government. He links this to Ethiopia's historical background:

This is based on the reality that the leading party in the EPRDF ethnic coalition government the TPLF (Tigray Peoples Liberation Front) fought a 17-year long armed struggle against the Derg military junta with the objective to achieve political-cultural recognition and to re-establish governance accountability in relation to collective ethnic group rights in Ethiopia (2007: 6).

A closer look at the lyrics of Teddy Afro shows us how Afro, through his musical work, proposes that there are alternative answers to those being provided by the ruling regime concerning who has the right to define the society we live in.

Conclusion. Music and Belonging

Two points emerge from the above discussion. First, the enormous response to Afro's songs clearly shows the public's appetite for music that voices alternative stories and their desire for stories that involve different voices and different truths. This stresses how music lies at the heart of people's culture and sense of belonging. The second point

is that oppressing political expressions may not always kill the ideas, as they may find alternative arenas and roads in the face of obstacles.

It turned out that banning or “not playing” Teddy Afro in the national media did not make him less popular among the public. A total of 114 students at Addis Ababa University responded to a questionnaire with open-ended questions designed for the present study in February 2007. A majority of 67 percent of the students asked mentioned Teddy Afro among their favourite singers or as *the* favourite singer⁹. The notion that Ethiopian youth increasingly prefer music with texts in Amharic came up often in the interviews. This was supported by the questionnaires, as 57 percent of the students answered that they preferred listening to music with text in Amharic, 36 percent said they liked both languages equally, whereas only 7 percent preferred music with English lyrics.

When asked what music means to Ethiopian culture, the answers from the students were many and varied. Some stated simply “Everything”, while others said:

- Music is part of us. We all use it to express our inner feelings.
- It is a reminder of the past and the only way to express belonging.
- It means unfolding the values of various ethnic groups in the country.
- It is the manifestation of culture itself!



Music shop in Casa Inches, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Photo: Kristin Skare Orgeret

Asked whether banning of popular music had an effect on the public, most of the students argued that yes, it did have an effect. Some of the responses were:

- Yes. It unnecessarily polarizes the public against the government.
- It violates freedom of speech.
- It undermines the society's need for change and reform.

The data obtained from the questionnaires strengthened and developed the findings from the interviews and observations in the Casa Inches music shops and among the radio DJs. Seventy-nine percent of the students said they knew the title/s of one song/several songs banned by the ETV or Ethiopian radio. Very interestingly, 100 percent said they listened to some of these songs anyway. When asked about where they listened to these banned songs, the answers varied, including 'at home', 'in taxis', 'in music shops', 'in cafés and cafeterias', 'in public places, hotels and nightclubs'. One student even responded 'anywhere else than ETV and Ethiopian radio' and another 'whenever and wherever possible'. 'At home' was the most frequent answer, however, and a few students added 'locking up my door' or 'privately', while 'in taxis' and 'in music shops' shared the ranking as the second most popular location for listening to popular music that was banned by the national broadcaster.

Popular culture occupies a key position in identity formation, processes of empowerment, and in the construction of belonging among people of contemporary Ethiopia. The discussion above identifies some reasons for musical censorship or control and illustrates how popular music can provide new sites of resistance. Some examples of how people relate to censored music have been given. We have seen illustrations of how people, in times of suppression, may find new places where relevant issues can be discussed and new meanings can be negotiated. Keyan Tomaselli (2007) argued that the exigencies of being 'under fire' make it hard to find the discursive space in which participants can catch enough breath to speak the truths of their own participation. At best, the small music shops of Addis Ababa provide such a space, in which people can catch their breath and alternative approaches to reality can be discussed and created.

Notes

1. From Tewodros Kassahun's *Yasteseryal*.
2. Amharic is Ethiopia's official language and the most widely spoken language in the country. Around 41 percent could speak the language at the time of Ethiopia's last census in 1994 (Gebremedhin 2006).
3. The album's tracks are *Yasteseryal*; *Alamn Alena*; *Shemendefer*; *Ker Yhun*; *Kabdahlak*; *Lay Say (Bel Stegn)*; *Lambadina*; *Etege*; *Lemin Yihon*; *Ngeregn Kalsh*; *Semi Leleh (Afe)*; *Promise: Balderasu and Seleme*.
4. Shashamane, about 250 km from Addis Ababa, is the hometown of many Rastafarians in Ethiopia and is, apparently, where Marley wished to be buried.
5. Early results had shown the opposition with a great lead, sweeping all of the contested seats in the capital Addis, in the race for both parliamentary and local government. The vote tallying process, however, was ordered to stop when, during the evening of May 16, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi declared a state of emergency, banned any public gathering and replaced the capital city police with federal police and Special Forces drawn from elite army units. On August 9, official results were released, acknowledging that EPRDF had won 296 of the total 524 seats — about 56 percent — enabling it to form a government. In the middle of October, a draft report of a public inquiry into election-related unrests concluded that 193 unarmed civilians were killed and 763 injured during demonstrations.
6. Ethiopia follows the *Geez* calendar (close to the Julian calendar) with thirteen months, and the first day of a new year is on September the 11th (or 12th every fourth year). Depending on the time of year, the *Geez* calendar will be 7 to 8 years after the Gregorian/Western calendar, and the Ethiopian millennium change

is hence celebrated on 11th September 2007.

7. As Cloonan (1996) argued, if the background were not so serious, it would be hard to take the list seriously. The list of banned songs comprised titles such as Roberta Flack's "Killing me softly", Cher's "Bang Bang, my baby shot me down" and Bob Marley's "I shot the sheriff".
8. Translation from Amharic by Eyayu G/Selassie.
9. Also Aster Aweke, Ephrem Tamiru, GiGi, Johnny Ragga, Telahun Gessesse, Mahmoud Ahmed and Solomon Tekalign were frequently mentioned among the students' favourite musicians. A few respondents stated that they were not so interested in secular music, but preferred spiritual singers such as Tesfaye Gabiso, Tamirat and Mihiret.

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Acronyms

- CPJ Committee to Protect Journalists
CUD Coalition for Unity and Democracy
EPRDF Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
UEDF United Ethiopian Democratic Forces

Shame: Ingmar Bergman's Vietnam War

ERIK HEDLING

Abstract

Ingmar Bergman's film *Skammen* [Shame] (1968), about a married couple trapped between the warring parties in a bloody civil war, triggered fierce ideological debate in Sweden. According to the harsh critics of the film, among whom the leading critic was well-known author Sara Lidman, Bergman had managed to create propaganda for the American government and its controversial war in Vietnam. In the present paper, the debate is studied historically in relation to ongoing research about the culture of the late 1960s in Sweden. The studied material consists of press clippings, Bergman scholarship, and Bergman's own recently released papers at the Ingmar Bergman Foundation Archive in Stockholm. Furthermore, questions about meaning and interpretation regarding film viewing are dealt with, taking into consideration developments in contemporary film theory.

Keywords: Ingmar Bergman, *Skammen*, Sara Lidman, Vietnam war, film interpretation

Introduction

The relationship between the films of Ingmar Bergman and the affluent Swedish welfare society in which the films were conceived and received over a period spanning almost exactly 60 years has never really been a scholarly issue. Bergman's films have been studied academically from practically all possible angles; the purely ideological readings, however, have been scarce. This is because Bergman has often been considered apolitical. He was the poet of the tormented soul, certainly not an ideological demagogue.

In my ongoing research project, 'Ingmar Bergman and the Swedish Model Welfare State', I wish to address precisely this issue, trying to show that Bergman's films indeed were ideologically charged and that he certainly did represent an ideological stance to some of his contemporaries, albeit hardly a demagogical one. One of the most apparent ways to illustrate this is to study the political reactions found in the Swedish press reception of his films. Here, I wish to draw attention to the fierce debate surrounding one of Bergman's least well-known films.

Great Expectations

On September 29 1968, Bergman's film *Skammen* [Shame] opened in Sweden. Despite the massive interest shown him in the Swedish press at the time, he was an artist whose value was a somewhat controversial issue. In her reception study of Bergman's films, Birgitta Steene concludes that this was a result of the 'zeitgeist' of the period:

With the leftist turn in 1960s culture, the early view of Bergman as the 'sturm und drang' renegade of the bourgeoisie was exchanged for the portrait of the artist with an ideological handicap; a film-maker 'deplorably' rooted in the bourgeois world from which he descended. From having been regarded as the iconoclast, who threatened to undermine the values of this bourgeoisie, he had turned into a socially estranged beholder of people's souls (Steene, 1996: 109).

One of the best examples of this controversial tendency in the limitless discourse on Bergman is the ideological discussion triggered by *Skammen* in Sweden.

The film was about the married couple Jan and Eva, two chamber musicians played by Max von Sydow and Liv Ullmann. They have withdrawn from the terrible civil war plaguing their country to a secluded place in the countryside (the film was shot on the barren island of Fårö in the Baltic, Bergman's favourite film location).¹ The war, however, finally catches up with them, and towards the end of the film they have to escape over the sea, from the warring parties as well as from an embryonic guerrilla movement. But before their escape, they have experienced a humiliating metamorphosis – invasion, capture, torture, marauding, infidelity, and murder: in other words, 'Shame'. Or, as Örjan Roth-Lindberg has defined the meaning of the title in his contemporary essay on the film: the protagonists', especially the female character's (Eva's) "dependence on and participation in" this crime against humanity (Roth-Lindberg, 1968: 277).

To a present-day viewer, *Skammen* is an excellent film – Robin Wood, Bergman's first English monographer even claimed that it was the director's masterpiece – and also a unique specimen in Bergman's *oeuvre* owing to its many images of a devastating war: "The subject of war was simply not part of Bergmania", writes Marc Gervais in his extensive study of Bergman (Gervais, 1999: 107).

Örjan Roth-Lindberg's previously mentioned reading of the film is actually quite close to Bergman's own thoughts, described in the exhaustive notebook he kept as he wrote the manuscript for *Skammen*; the notebook is now at the Ingmar Bergman Foundation Archive in Stockholm.² From Bergman's notes, one can deduce that he at first wanted to create the story of the couple and that the war background came to mind somewhat later; this war is also described in quite an impromptu manner. Bergman was obviously interested in telling the story of two "normal" and "ordinary" people who happen to be artists. After some thought, he named them Jan and Eva Rosenberg, as they were "sprung from the same rose" (Bergman, 1967: January 30). A few days later, he added some further detail regarding their ideological normality: "They are Social Democrats, they have always voted for the Social Democrats, as that party supports the arts", he writes (Bergman, 1967: February 26). The film was initially called "Morning Dream"; when the manuscript was finished and the film was shot in the autumn of 1967, the title was changed to "Dreams of Shame". As an internal key to interpretation of the film, the German 18th century poet Christoph Martin Wieland was quoted on the first page of the manuscript: "Everything disappears and becomes dreams" (Bergman, 1967b: 1).

The press was waiting impatiently for the film. As early as February 1968, Bergman happily declared that "I am pregnant like a rabbit" regarding the film, which was at that point on the editing table (Vinberg, 1968). And in a lavishly illustrated full page in the Swedish tabloid *Expressen* in August, Alf Montan bowed to the great *auteur*:

Ingmar Bergman, fifty this summer, is a concept today – at home and abroad one of Sweden's most recognized artists – and he is so great that he is only compared to himself and his own films. Which he has to exceed on every occasion.

Every premiere must be wretched – just like a circus artist who has to perform everything with a breakneck somersault (Montan, 1968).

This type of Bergman celebration was, as we shall see, not always entirely popular with the contemporary leftist intelligentsia. *Expressen* also allowed Bergman – under his pseudonym “Ernest Riffle” – to so to speak preclude criticism of the film in an article published a few days before the opening. Here, Bergman faked an interview with himself in which he indirectly attacked the critical institution (Bergman, 1968). Suddenly the interviewer burst out:

If you do not cooperate, I will write something terribly nasty about you and your film. If I were you, Mr. Bergman, I would beware. You are no longer at the top. You are going down. You need us. We do not need you. You are terribly old. You are nothing. You are nothing really in any regard. [...] If you are aware of the essential nothingness of your work, why do you continue? Why do you not do anything useful instead?

Bergman responded apathetically:

Why does a bird cry from fear? Yes, I know that the answer sounds sentimental; I can see how the corners of your mouth under that disgusting little moustache descend into an ironic smirk. But I have no other answer. No, I have no other answer. But if you will, you can take down the whole lot: anxiety, shame, wrath, self-contempt.

Probably, Bergman here alluded ironically to the cool reception of his film *Vargtimmen* [The Hour of the Wolf, 1967] in Sweden in the spring of 1968 (Steene, 2005: 278-279). At the same time, he undoubtedly wanted to strike back at the critics.

Enter Vietnam

The journalist Nils-Petter Sundgren interviewed Bergman on television on the day of the opening of *Skammen* (Sundgren, 1968: 56-57). Here, Bergman claimed that the reception of *Vargtimmen* had been “dogmatic”. Regarding the inspiration for *Skammen*, Bergman mentioned the ongoing war in Vietnam:

It was an image from all these newsreels from Vietnam. I think it was a French reportage, where you could see a fantastically odd and at the same time deplorable scene. It was an old man and an old woman who walked with a cow, a farmer and his wife walking with a cow and then suddenly a helicopter started from the ground with a roar and soldiers ran up to it. The cow broke loose and the woman ran after the cow and the helicopter took off into the air and the old man stood there just perplexed, bewildered and heartbroken. In some way, more than any other atrocities one has experienced, I perceived there the misery of third parties, when everything breaks loose over their heads. It was this image of the small world that came to inspire *Skammen*.

Here, Bergman himself signalled a mode of reading the film to critics and the general audience – it should be mentioned that the word “Vietnam” does not even occur in the notebook. If Bergman himself referred to contemporary developments in Southeast Asia as the inspirational source of the film, however, it definitely came to be about the war in Vietnam. This type of intentionalistic mode of understanding a film was firmly

cemented in the general view of art at the time, not least owing to the influence of the by then thriving auteur theory, “la politique des auteurs”.

It should be noted that Bergman also emphasized this allegorical connection to the war in Vietnam in subsequent interviews, as in, for example, the interview volume *Bergman om Bergman*, published two years after the opening of *Skammen*. As in an echo from the notebook, Bergman stated: “At which point do we cross the line from being good Social Democrats to being functioning Nazis?” (Björkman, Manns, Sima, 1970: 252). Furthermore, he underlined the fact that the war in Vietnam entered the context somewhat later. About his work on the script for the film, he claimed: “I wrote it in the spring. In the spring of 1967. But we must not forget something. By then, Czechoslovakia had not been occupied and the war in Vietnam had not yet escalated. Had those things happened, the film would have looked different” (Björkman, Manns, Sima, 1970: 249). Because of this, one might deduce, there was no mention of Vietnam in the notebook. In *Images*, published twenty years later, Bergman continued, albeit more cautiously, to declare his ideological intentions behind the film: “To tell the truth, I was immoderately proud of this film. I also felt I had made a contribution to the current social debate (the Vietnam war)” (Bergman 1990:300). This would have been important to him at a time and in a social context, where he was openly accused of an all-too-egocentric focus on the eternal problem of the artist.

The Reception

Some of the first reviews of *Skammen* in the Stockholm press were favourable. In a lavishly illustrated reportage about the premiere in *Expressen*, the film critic Lasse Bergström (Bergman’s later publisher) gave the film top marks (Bergström, 1968). Bergström also concluded that the film was not “political”.

The film critic Urban Stenström, in the conservative *Svenska Dagbladet*, was more thorough in his review, also writing from a very sympathetic perspective. He emphasized the fact that Bergman had made “an unusually accessible film”. The basic theme could be described as follows:

It is evident that Ingmar Bergman has wanted to make an universal film on the devastating effect of war on human nature or on certain human natures. There is nothing to exclude the notion that the film describes a civil war in Sweden between a fascist military dictatorship and a socialist guerrilla. The only thing is that Bergman is not interested in this. He is not for any system. He is against war (Stenström, 1968).

Obviously, the reviewer emphatically agreed with this view.

In *Dagens Nyheter* (Sweden’s biggest daily), film critic Mauritz Edström would underline this relativist stance as the film’s fundamental weakness. Here, Edström attacked the irresolute attitude in Bergman. By pretending to be unconscious of present realities, Bergman in fact assumed a firm political stance:

Therefore ‘Skammen’ is, in spite of everything, still a political film, where Bergman describes his own confusion and protests against the war. He does not go further than he is able to. [...] He cannot provide a social or political definition of evil. One gets a glimpse of Vietnam and the conquest of the Baltic States as vague patterns, but ‘Skammen’ might as well be about Angola, Latin America or Czechoslovakia. Bergman just poses with his fear and despair and tries to supply a picture that makes us wake up (Edström, 1968).

Skammen, however, failed to wake Edström up; Edström also had reservations about the self-pity he could discern in the film's focus on the poor artist.

Film critic Jürgen Schildt even more forcefully expressed, in the Social Democratic tabloid *Aftonbladet*, the gist of Edström's criticism. Schildt marked the film as a turning point in Bergman's *oeuvre*. The poet of the tormented inner soul had suddenly crossed the border to the social domain. The review was somewhat ironic about the fact that a year earlier Bergman had been interviewed on television, and expressed his "exasperation with all these girls who go forward in their raincoats bearing witness about Vietnam" (Schildt, 1968). According to Schildt, Bergman himself had now reached that point, as "it is about East Asia, and the driving force is the whole complex about Vietnam" (Schildt, 1968). Schildt went on to state:

In the final scenes, the escape to another country is initiated, possibly into the future. The road is by way of a sea where bloated corpses push against one another like buoys against the horizon. It is the most quiet and terrible moment of the film, and at the same time a consequence – in order to stick to the allegory – which contains the only thing we know about the state of things in Vietnam (Schildt, 1968).

Schildt concluded by claiming that he could not follow the master's summons: "Shivers, forth! Feel fear! I do not know why, but personally I refuse to obey orders" (Schildt, 1968). The most pertinent aspect of Schildt's review, however, was its mention of Bergman's remarks on "girls in raincoats", a remark that would later come to haunt the director.

All reviews had political implications. In *Expressen* and *Svenska Dagbladet*, Bergman was the great artist, while *Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftonbladet* expressed concern about Bergman's view of the war in Vietnam, that is, a view that saw the war as a struggle between two equally corrupt sides. Even if the critique was not fully articulated – perhaps overly politically inflamed film reviews were against the general policy of the papers – one could discern in both Mauritz Edström and Jürgen Schildt signs of what was to follow later on.

Certain weeklies and specialized magazines also contained critical reviews of *Skammen*. In the intellectual weekly *Vi*, literary critic Carl-Eric Nordberg found several faults with the film, despite his general admiration for Bergman. *Skammen*, he claimed, "was a liberation, a departure from familiar ground. He has turned his back on the lonely brooder and his egocentric fight with God and his struggle with faith, instead turning towards the war-torn reality of the present and a society in flames" (Nordberg, 1968: 10). In his review, Nordberg took sides against what he perceived as anachronistic and overtly romanticized in Bergman's dwelling on the role of the artist.

The fault-finding was even more overt in a personally charged and ironic article by the poet Lars Forssell in *Bonniers litterära magasin*, one of the major literary journals in Sweden. This review was personal in the sense that the malicious undertones of Forssell's relationship to Bergman were quite clear. Forssell questioned the somewhat dubious status of film. He maintained that Bergman himself had once claimed that "film was a genre of entertainment that sometimes managed to reach the realm of art", that film had a "multilayered world audience", that film could "at the same time entertain and educate outside the more unique audience of the theatre" and finally, that Bergman enjoyed a media exposure similar to that of the popular singer Thore Skogman" (Forssell, 1968: 605).³ To this, Forssell added: "When he chose film as his form of expression,

the particular type of his talent must have been of importance” (Forssell, 1968: 606), a type of talent that was implicitly understood to be inferior to the muse – literature – that enlivened Forssell’s own gifts. It is difficult to read Forssell without feeling that his rhetorical strategy was to socially degrade Bergman and his art.⁴

More interesting in this context are Forssell’s allusions to the ongoing war in Vietnam. He concludes regarding *Skammen*:

It will drive leftist radicals nuts, since it refuses to part with any side. [...] The uncertainty triggered by the film is perhaps not a weakness, but it is irritating. One should of course think of Vietnam, but at the same time one should not think of Vietnam. It would be best NOT to think of Vietnam, in case one has taken a stand on that issue, and instead concentrate on the description of moral corruption, on both sides, that is characteristic of a civil war – but can one do that today? (Forssell, 1968: 607).

Here, Lars Forssell prefigured the severe ideological struggle regarding *Skammen* that was soon to erupt.

The Attack

Nearly 40 years after its release, *Skammen* is perhaps most interesting for the debate it triggered in *Aftonbladet*. This debate illustrated the “zeitgeist” and said a lot about how film creates different kinds of meanings in its audience. Reception of the film came to take place against the background of strong public opinion against the American war in Vietnam, at least with a substantial part of the audience. Some participants in the debate read *Skammen* on the basis of what was not explicitly expressed in the film, whereas others concerned themselves with what was actually represented in it.

The debate was initiated a week after the premiere in a by now famous article in *Aftonbladet* by well-known author Sara Lidman. Sara Lidman was a leading figure within the Swedish Vietnam movement, having published the widely read book *Samtal i Hanoi* in 1966, based on her own trip to North Vietnam (Lidman, 1967). Lidman commented on Bergman’s relativistic stance in relation to the question of guilt:

But when the female picker of lingonberries [Liv Ullmann] claims that ‘the war has gone on for so long that it is meaningless to question which side is right or wrong’, Bergman puts into her mouth the dream of Western military industries: that the war (their war), which does not occur in Vietnam but anywhere, will go on until nobody has the sense to ask what it is about. [...] Of course, the White House did not order the film. But it creates propaganda for the American administration far better than they could have dreamed of. [...] Bergman liberates (the Swedish-) American from such torments. Western society, napalm, Ky, Quisling, Thieu, the torture, the children – all this is only something that God dreams. Ingmar Bergman claimed a year ago that the worst thing he could imagine was a Swedish girl in a raincoat singing something about Vietnam. I know one thing that is worse: the American genocide in Vietnam. After this atrocity, Bergman’s prize-winning *Shame* is competing with Sentab [a Swedish building construction company], which is building a road for the American forces in Thailand (Lidman, 1968a).

Here, Bergman’s words regarding the girl in a raincoat were literally thrown back at him. Lidman’s attack, however, needs to be regarded in relation to the ‘zeitgeist’ and the social movement aptly described by Kim Salomon in *Rebeller i takt med tiden: FNL-rörelsen*

och 60-talets politiska ritualer [Rebels in tune with the times: the FNL movement and the political rituals of the 1960s], a movement that, according to the author, “worked as a catalyst and created hope for a better future. But this vanished in the maze of fundamentalism” (Salomon, 1996: 324). Bergman and his pacifism, possibly inspired by the anti-nuclear-weapons movement of the 1950s and early 1960s, now encountered a much harsher and more dogmatic judge. In his historical analysis of Swedish narratives between 1969 and 1990, Martin Wiklund concludes that to the hard-line leftists (he characterizes this movement as consisting of the Marxist-Leninists, in contrast to the “softer” new left), only one approach was possible:

The war in Vietnam was the focal point in the global struggle against imperialism and therefore the central conflict to relate to. The changed perspective also changed the perspective on modern Sweden. Sweden was not perceived to take a neutral position in regard to the struggle between West and East, as in the established perspective on the Cold War. Either it was on the side of imperialism or on that of anti-imperialism (Wiklund, 2006: 187).

This point of view was, according to Wiklund, developed after 1965 (Wiklund, 2006: 185). Thus, Bergman had clearly ‘gone wrong’ when trying to gear the interpretation of his pacifist film towards the war in Vietnam. If he aspired to be part of contemporary discourse on the subject, he had just not kept in touch, even if the film was conceived as early as 1967 and was hence ‘old’ by the autumn of 1968. Taking sides was now of the utmost importance – if you were not for, you were automatically against.

Even so, the present essay is not really about the war in Vietnam or the Swedish Vietnam movement per se (I will, however, briefly return to Kim Salomon’s analyses of Sara Lidman’s engagement). Here, it is more a question about the politics of Bergman and his interpreters and also about the general mysteries of understanding film, about reason or unreason in a complex process of reception.

Bergman and Others Respond

A mere two days after Lidman’s article was published, Bergman was interviewed in *Aftonbladet*: “Privately, my view of the war in Vietnam is clear. The war should have been over a long time ago and the Americans gone” (Sten, 1968). Regarding his moral outlook, he added:

As I see it, there is neither glory nor disgrace in war. All forms of war or violence, whatever they are about, are morally reprehensible and in human terms devastating. If one has to choose between violence and non-violence there is only one choice. Non-violence. However bankrupt the principle of non-violence, it is the only one. That is my point of view. I could argue with Sara Lidman word for word but am too tired (Sten, 1968).

Here, Bergman is seen to discuss the issue on Lidman’s terms: it is not really about the story of the film, which expresses exactly what Bergman says it does, but instead about the historical context, brought forward by Lidman but, as mentioned, initially invoked by Bergman himself.

Somewhat paradoxically, a certain amount of support for Bergman could be observed in the next article in *Aftonbladet*, which was written by leftist arts journalist Mario Grut:

I do agree with her that Bergman's political confusion works as conservatism in disguise. I do agree with her that it would be better if everybody was politically enlightened and worked consciously for peace and socialism. But I do not think that she does the cause any good by mixing disgrace with confusion. Nobody is a disgrace who does not consciously perform evil.

In that sense, I do not believe that Bergman is disgraceful. Maybe not woken-up. Certainly he is politically unenlightened. As Sara Lidman, others, and myself see it.

And I do not think that *Skammen* is about people in Vietnam. It is about people confronted with Vietnam and Prague and Santo Domingo and Budapest and Athens and Jerusalem (1967) and Moscow (1934) and Jakarta (1966).

It is about man confronted with war, violence, the person who wakes up one day and will panic-stricken believe all of this: all truth vanishes by power; with the force of power everything perishes: you and me, right and wrong, everything (Grut, 1968).

The author Elisabet Hermodsson agreed with Grut's patronizing of what they perceived as Bergmanian relativism (that is, in their view, naivety). She did not, however, want to go as far as Sara Lidman:

'Skammen' is not an urgent call in the current crisis that we all feel so seriously. But to go from there to saying that the film serves the American war of extermination in the same way as Sentab builds roads in Thailand is a bit too far. It is not a historically real war that Bergman depicts, but his own feelings about the demand for taking a stand in the present. In principle, Sara Lidman's judgement means that every author or artist is a traitor to Vietnam if they depict anything else than heroic resolution (Hermodsson, 1968).

And Sara Lidman made entirely clear that this was actually the case in her ensuing article. Regarding Bergman's view of violence as such as disgraceful, she exclaimed: "According to this view, the FNL and the Pentagon are on equal terms. I protest. The Pentagon's war is dirty, the war of the FNL is justified" (Sara Lidman, 1968b).

The only one who explicitly sided with Bergman in the *Aftonbladet* debate was arts journalist Bernt Jonsson, although his article was more of a response to Sara Lidman than an alternative reading of *Skammen*. Jonsson emphasized an "FNL-religion in Sweden with sectarian intolerance towards the unfaithful" (Jonsson, 1968). Jonsson was also emphatic about Bergman's principle of non-violence:

There is no and there never has been a justified war, and it is not until we accept this that we stand on firm ground in our criticism against the American war in Vietnam. It is the theoretical possibility of justified wars that has made this unusually dirty war possible (Jonsson, 1968).

Sara Lidman, however, quickly riposted. In strong words, she celebrated the war against that "bottomless degradation which colonialism and its contemporary representatives make people endure" (Lidman, 1968c). Furthermore, she told the heroic story of Nguyen Van Troi. Van Troi attempted to assassinate the American minister of defence Robert McNamara and was interrogated for seven weeks before being executed by firing squad. "During these 49 days and nights", Lidman exclaims melodramatically, "he did not disclose any of the names of his comrades in arms. It could be claimed that no one in Sweden is worthy of celebrating him" (Lidman, 1968c).⁵ We were now quite far from Ingmar Bergman's film *Skammen*.

Kim Salomon's polemics regarding the Swedish Vietnam war movement is relevant in this context, Sara Lidman illustrating his point that "reality was transformed in order to fit the preconceptions. This already-made image partly contained truth, but it was also an ideological fiction" (Salomon, 1996: 269). Salomon's example here is an article by Lidman in *Aftonbladet* in 1970, where she praises the heroism of the mortally wounded FNL soldier: "He removes the bundle of rice from his waist and gives it to his comrade with the words: 'Don't forget to eat, my brother'" (Salomon, 1996: 269). Salomon compares the rhetoric to the ironies in Jaroslav Hasek's novel *The Good Soldier Svejk*: "In contrast to Hasek, Lidman is deadly serious", concludes Salomon (Salomon, 1996: 269).

Author Ulla Torpe wrote the last article in the debate in *Aftonbladet*. She supported Sara Lidman, mocking Bergman's pacifism:

Skammen will travel the world. That it has borrowed its values from Vietnam will make it financially powerful, its audience attracted. The audience is the bourgeoisie of the West. What will happen? In the people of Skammen they will see themselves, their own private problems, their own lack of engagement, their own betrayal. So far everything is all right. But later they will discover that there really was no side to betray, no party in the war to commit oneself to, since the war in the film is war as such, and that is always terrible (Torpe, 1968).⁶

Thereby, the debate was concluded in *Aftonbladet*.

Bourgeois Reactions

The conservative and liberal press also reacted to *Skammen*, albeit from less ideologically charged perspectives. The author and artist Torsten Bergmark wrote the most ambitious article on the film in the daily press, somewhat paradoxically from a position within the extreme left. In *Dagens Nyheter*, on the same day that Lidman's first article appeared in *Aftonbladet*, Bergmark praised what he labelled Bergman's "change of position" (Bergmark, 1968). Like many other writers, Bergmark distanced himself from the private mythology of Bergman with all its dwelling on the problems of the poor artist, and instead cheered Bergman's social commitment. To Bergmark, this commitment necessarily implied an acceptance of the "disparagement of art" (that is, as art was an expression of the ruling classes, one must for reasons of solidarity accept "the proletarianization of art") (Bergmark, 1968). Oddly, Bergmark did not comment on the connection to the war in Vietnam.

Neither did the author and documentary filmmaker Erwin Leiser in *Expressen*. He complained about the lack of a moral standpoint in the film, however: "For my part, I cannot accept the idea that it does not matter which party you side with" (Leiser, 1968). The ending of the article is in line with Sara Lidman: "I do not believe that Ingmar Bergman stands 'nowhere', therefore I regret that 'Skammen' is set nowhere. It would have been stronger if the relations between the characters had corresponded to political realities instead of to private projections of fear" (Leiser, 1968). That Leiser was referring to Vietnam was made clear by the line "Life goes on in the villages that have been bombed a hundred times" (Leiser, 1968). Possibly, his defensive and cautious attitude could be related to the fact that the arts editor of *Expressen*, Bo Strömstedt, who certainly did not share the values of the left, was the one who himself came to finish off the entire debate:

What I wish to attack is the self-satisfaction, lack of generosity and human feeling which now – in the name of an abstract version of humanity – threaten to transform our discussion into a morass of Jesuitism, a jungle of pestilence where no living, visible man can move. The contagion is spreading like flies – and will eventually reach those whom one would least of all wish to be affected by it. With a shrug I can see – in the *Aftonbladet* ‘inquiry’ about ‘Skammen’ – the entire curia of little conceited cardinals who excommunicate the heretic who does not adhere to the catechism (Strömstedt, 1968).

In this way, the Bergman side, if such a structure existed, had the last word, in spite of the fact that it had been spurned during the debate.

Scholarly Discussions

In academia, however, the argument continued in the vast literature on Bergman. In a similar way, the views expressed here were determined by the individual scholar’s ideological preferences. In the decidedly leftist *Ingmar Bergman och den borgerliga ideologin*, Maria Bergom-Larsson maintained, “the views expressed by Bergman show a fundamental lack of insight and political analysis. Therefore, *Skammen* came to adhere to American propaganda” (Bergom-Larsson, 1976: 154). A very different point of view was articulated by the severe Bergman critic Vernon Young who castigated Bergman, both for portraying war as such as meaningless (in line with the Lidman approach) and for being bold enough to refer to the war in Vietnam:

When reporters asked him if a parallel with the Vietnamese might be drawn, he did not say no; he thought it might have that application. An honest answer would have retorted ‘Of course not! I know nothing of those people, the sound of their prayers, the taste of their rice, their powers of resistance or their timeless expectations’. To take credit for such an analogy is paltry and undiscerning (Young, 1971: 246).

Although Young’s criticisms concerned Bergman, they were also applicable to many of his assailants, that is, Sara Lidman was also talking about a situation, that of the fighting Vietnamese farmer, that she really knew very little about.

On the other hand, Paisley Livingston, author of one the most highly regarded monographs on Bergman, comments on Sara Lidman’s and Maria Bergom-Larsson’s points of view:

Such a critique is unacceptable and fails to grasp the film’s larger context: that of a world prepared for absolute warfare. [...] Bergman’s film is one of the few war films, which is not a mythical text, that is, which does not obscure the fundamental reciprocity of violence and the senseless identity of oppositional parties. The film directly confronts the impossibility of distinguishing between good and bad forms of barbarism when barbarism implies the destruction of all (Livingstone, 1982: 224).⁷

Mikael Timm makes similar points:

What is politically interesting in Bergman’s films is not that he takes sides in conflicts but that he shows both the difficulty and the necessity of caring about fellow human beings. The protagonists of *Skammen* contribute to their own destruction by shutting out the world. If there is any message in Bergman’s films, it is that

extreme individualism (egoism) always leads to catastrophe. The Bergman films that fail are the ones that do not feel for others. That the critics of the 1970s never saw this says more about the 'zeitgeist' than about the films (Timm, 1994: 94).

In spite of the fact that my own views, both regarding *Skammen* and the poetics of film interpretation, are closer to Paisley Livingston and Mikael Timm than to Sara Lidman, Vernon Young and Maria Bergom-Larsson, and morally closer to Bernt Jonsson than to Ulla Torpe, I will round off this essay by somewhat paradoxically arguing for Sara Lidman's way of interpreting a film.

The Perversions of Interpretation

In a classic but still relevant study of film interpretation practices, David Bordwell discusses four types of meaning: 1. Referential, 2. Explicit, 3. Implicit, 4. Symptomatic (Bordwell, 1989: 8-10). By referential and explicit meaning, Bordwell means literal meaning in the sense that *Skammen* is about war (referential) and that in this war everyone is wicked (explicit). Regarding this type of meaning, everyone involved in the debate about *Skammen* agrees. The other types of meaning, implicit and symptomatic, are what create conflict. Bergman himself as well as Mario Grut, Bernt Jonsson and Elisabet Hermodsson read *Skammen* in symbolic terms as an expression of pacifism (implicit). There are no meaningful wars and the only possible principle is the one of non-violence. Sara Lidman (and Ulla Torpe) emphasize symptomatic meaning, regarding which Bordwell writes, "In constructing meanings of types 1-3, the viewer assumes that the film 'knows' more or less what it is doing. But the perceiver may also construct repressed or symptomatic meanings that the work divulges 'involuntarily'" (Bordwell, 1989: 9).

Skammen was without a doubt an expression of Bergmanian pacifism, a theme enhanced by all the paratexts – for instance, public utterances by the director himself – that surrounded the film. Creating such a story in a time characterized by a controversial war, in respect of which many Swedish intellectuals took an active stand for one of the parties, was to Sara Lidman, by way of the internal logic of symptomatic interpretation, in itself an expression of a decisive point of view. In its relativistic view of the war in Vietnam, the film was a biased account, which served the interests of the American invaders. Is this a reasonable reading of the film? No, David Bordwell would say (and he would surely be able to produce a very impressive argument for it). Paisley Livingston, Mikael Timm, Mario Grut, Bernt Jonsson and Elisabet Hermodsson would presumably all agree. Yes, on the contrary, would be the answer supplied by Sara Lidman, Ulla Torpe, Maria Bergom-Larsson and even Vernon Young.

I also agree with symptomatic interpretation, as I believe that this is one of the most common modes of understanding fictional narratives, particularly if the narrative actively invites this kind of reading by referring to a well-known contemporary context. Film, for example, is often a veritable battlefield of symptomatic and ideological production of meaning. This is expressed by cognitive processes, which affirm, challenge, or even undermine the ideology of the individual film viewer. It is often here that the most interesting discussion about narratives can be found.

The ontology of symptomatic interpretation also adheres to Janet Staiger's intricate theory about "perverse spectators". Staiger claims:

I believe that contextual factors, more than textual ones [...], account for the experiences that spectators have watching films and television and for the uses to

which those experiences are put in navigating our everyday lives. These contextual factors are social formations and constructed identities of the self in relation to historical conditions. These contexts involve intertextual knowledge [...], personal psychologies, and social dynamics (Staiger, 2000: 1).

In this way, Sara Lidman's reading of *Skammen* can be understood within the confines of a given historical and social situation, in spite of the fact that the intentions of the author (Bergman), disclosed by the process described in the notebook, were entirely different. Staiger's way of describing this phenomenon – "perverse spectators" – means that this has nothing to do with right or wrong, just that the interpretation deviates from something, which is nearly always the case. Staiger also adds: "The term perverse also keeps me from necessarily assuming that deviance is politically progressive. Sometimes it is, sometimes it is not" (Staiger, 2000: 2). According to this logic, I think it is safe to describe Sara Lidman as a perverse spectator.

Conclusion

But I cannot entirely support Sara Lidman's romantic point of view and her completely uncritical way of celebrating what she perceived to be the struggle of the Vietnamese people for freedom. Far from supporting the American war in Vietnam, I would still claim that the political reasons for the war presumably were too complex for Swedish arts journalism at the time to grasp. (Nor were the historical consequences of the American withdrawal in the mid-1970s entirely unproblematic, with the creation of a communist dictatorship and the fighting of new wars resulting in economic disaster.) Kim Salomon generally emphasizes the two-faced appearance of the Swedish movement against the war in Vietnam. On the one hand, one protested against the war in Vietnam; on the other, there were domestic ambitions regarding Sweden: "That the dictatorship of the proletariat and the classless society were goals for many leading persons was something that only the Marxist-Leninists knew" (Salomon, 1996: 307).

To a person with hindsight, the ideological self-satisfaction and blatant naivety evinced in some of the articles are striking. In his history of the Swedish Welfare State, Göran Hägg writes amusingly about the leftist ideas "that became dominant within mass media and in the circulation of opinion. Very close to these small groups were cultural personalities like Göran Sonnevi, Göran Palm, Sara Lidman and Jan Myrdal. [...] Within the cultural elite, the commitment to leftist socialism became a kind of collective ideology, to which everyone at least paid lip service" (Hägg, 2005: 253). Bergman himself has bitterly summarized the period in his autobiography *Laterna Magica*:

It is possible some brave researcher will one day investigate how much damage was done to our cultural life by the 1968 movement. It is possible, but hardly likely. Today, frustrated revolutionaries still cling to their desks in editorial offices and talk bitterly about 'the renewal that stopped short'. They do not see (and how could they!) that their contribution was a deadly slashing blow at an evolution that must never be separated from its roots. In other countries where varied ideas are allowed to flourish at the same time, tradition and education were not destroyed. Only in China and Sweden were artists and teachers scorned (Bergman, 1988: 199).

Today – 20 years after the publication of *The Magic Lantern* – there is certainly much historical revisionism regarding the 'zeitgeist' of the 1960s. On the other hand, where

Skammen is concerned it is difficult to prove any intellectual damage other than the humiliation Bergman may have felt owing to the harsh criticism of the film. In a three-page interview by Bo Strömstedt in *Expressen* in 1969, Bergman complained about the “lack of generosity in the Swedish reaction towards ‘Skammen’, and of the provincialism of Sweden” (Strömstedt, 1969).

That criticism, however, he had to endure, even if it is ironic that the interpretation of *Skammen* came to be so symbolically charged, especially as Bergman happily wrote regarding his struggle with the final part of the manuscript: “Today work has been fine and I believe that I have found a way that is not symbolic and that does not seem to be too silly” (Bergman, 1967: May 4). The symbolism was already there in the vast sea of spectators, though, just like the corpses at the end of *Skammen*. And then, of course, the remark about the raincoat was of no help.

The story about the reception of *Skammen*, however, should make it absolutely clear that the films of Ingmar Bergman were understood and read in ideological terms, particularly, I would claim, in the 1960s, but also in the 1970s. By the latter decade, though, Bergman had managed to find a way that was clearly politically appealing to the Swedish leftists, as illustrated by the overwhelming reception of his television series *Scener ur ett äktenskap* [Scenes from a Marriage, 1973], which coincided exactly with the initial steps of a large-scale feminist movement, an increase in divorce rates, and the influx of highly professional women on the job market. In fact, at this time Bergman was at his “political” peak as a Swedish artist. The tax scandal of 1976 changed all this. But that is another story.

Notes

1. The ideological connotations of the Fårö landscape as a kind of existential critique of modern Sweden is dealt with in Erik Hedling (2006). The landscape depiction in *Skammen* has the same thematic implications.
2. The notebook was written between December 1966 and August 1967. I am grateful to the Foundation for letting me consult this manuscript and also to librarian Margareta Nordström for help with interpreting Bergman's handwriting.
3. Thore Skogman was an extremely popular Swedish singer whose cultural capital was particularly slight.
4. To anyone familiar with film history, Forssell's ideas appear to be pure nonsense. Bergman was a leading champion of what has been labelled the European Art Cinema, the kind of auteur-driven cinema that reached the same type of middle class audience as modernist literature or the theatre. The auteur cinema filled a cultural space, which was not already occupied by Hollywood; in material terms, it was for this very reason that the Art Cinema appeared in the 1950s. This kind of discussion of the sociology of reception is, however, outside the scope of the present essay. Reasons for a disrespectful view of film culture in Swedish literary circles are thoroughly discussed in Hedling (2001).
5. The attempted assassination of McNamara and US Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge occurred in May 1963. Van Troi was executed in public in Saigon in October 1964. He became a martyr and the object of a cult, both in Vietnam and among FNL sympathizers in Europe.
6. In both *Aftonbladet* and in Birgitta Steene's bibliography (Steene, 2005:284), the name of the author is spelled Ulla Thorpe. I am, however, taking for granted that the author is the author and literary scholar Ulla Torpe, which is why I spell the name accordingly. Regarding Torpe's article, one could comment on the naive view of film as a medium. *Skammen* was certainly no potential blockbuster, even if it is true that its audience would probably have been “bourgeois” in the sense that it consisted of people from the middle class.
7. Film critic Jan Aghed was one of Sara Lidman's backers. In his review of Livingston's book, he writes regarding the quoted lines: “This argument is of course crazy against the background of the obvious

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military reality and the tone of the debate in which Bergman chose to direct a metaphysical and abstract drama of invasion, civil war, and guerrilla war inspired by, according to what he himself confessed in a television interview, a newsreel from Vietnam" (Aghed, 1983:264).

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Popular Cultural Memory

Comics, Communities and Context Knowledge¹

KARIN KUKKONEN

Abstract

Conventions of genres, types and icons of popular culture are the shared knowledge of media audiences. Becoming acquainted with them through the reception of media texts resembles a socialisation process in its own right: It constitutes a community of media readers. The context knowledge they share is their popular cultural memory. On the level of the individual reading process, this context knowledge then provides the necessary guiding lines for understanding the connotative dimensions of a popular media text.

Popular cultural memory is a repository of conventions and imagery that are continually reconstructed in contemporary popular culture. Drawing on J. Assmann's writings on the functions and processes of collective memory, the present article develops popular cultural memory as a concept to describe the workings of context knowledge for media texts, while taking into consideration both the macrolevel of audience communities and the microlevel of the individual reading process.

The comics series *Fables* by Bill Willingham (NY: DC Comics Vertigo, 2003-) will provide the example through which the article explores the functions of popular cultural memory in media texts, which can take shapes as different as the identification of genre, the stabilisation of intertextual reference chains or the creation of round characters and complex reflexivity.

Keywords: collective memory, visual narration, comics, audience community, fairy tales, intertextuality

Introduction

Texts can never be understood in and of themselves. Recipients always need to be competent in the relevant context knowledge in order to make sense of the connotative dimension, the cultural conventions and value judgements the text draws upon. On a denotative level, a character might just wear a black shirt and a moustache. On the connotative level, we know that he is the villain of the piece.

As products of culture, texts always draw on their predecessors, be it through their choice of topic, genre or style. Their audience recognises these choices when it reads or watches a text and (usually)² classifies it accordingly. For understanding the connotative dimension of a text, audiences draw on their previous experience with media texts, recalling character types, iconography, speech styles or standard situations from their share in popular cultural memory and using these as context knowledge.

In popular cultural memory three dimensions of culture come together: the social dimension of the audience as its carriers, the material dimension of media texts and

the mental dimension of codes and conventions that facilitate the reading process (cp. Posner 1991 for this categorisation). These dimensions interact in many ways: Be it in providing the context knowledge necessary for the reading process, or in creating an audience community.

An audience community is a group of people who share a particular experience of media texts. Here, the repeated reception of the material dimension of media texts helps to build a common ground of codes and conventions, the mental dimension, and this common ground is the basis of an audience community. An audience community shares the same context knowledge of contents and codes. The idea of such collectively structured knowledge goes back to the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who details in his books *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (The Social Frames of Memory, 1925) and *La mémoire collective* (Collective Memory, 1950) how such knowledge can become the basis of a shared identity.

Jan Assmann takes up Halbwachs and his notion of the collective memory of communities when he develops his concept of “cultural memory” in *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis* (Cultural Memory, 1992). Assmann also explores the historical dimension of such context knowledge and the interaction of texts and their contexts, drawing on the art historian Aby Warburg. Cultural memory remembers textual elements in the abstracted or “objectivised” forms of codes and conventions, which are then reconstructed in specific contemporary contexts.

This interaction between objectivation and reconstruction is the basis of the imprecise intertextuality common for media texts. Media texts refer to the conventions and codes established through other texts, but they forget about the actual contexts and the specificity of their source texts. Rather, they refer to a genre, a tradition or a discourse mode as the “already-read”, the *déjà-lu* in Barthes’ terms (1988 [1973]: 288), and thus context knowledge works here through an imprecise intertextuality.

After developing the concept of popular cultural memory based on Assmann’s cultural memory in the first section, the present article will discuss its relevance both for the creation of audience communities and for the workings of imprecise intertextuality in the reading process of media texts. The examples will be taken from Bill Willingham’s comics series *Fables*, which employs a broad array of visual and narrative codes and conventions of the fairy tale in its storytelling.

Popular Cultural Memory

As an archaeologist, Jan Assmann concentrates in his discussions on ancient high cultures such as Egypt and Israel (J. Assmann 1992). His wife Aleida develops the implications of cultural memory in her work in literary studies, concentrating on the literary canon as the vehicle of what she calls “cultural texts” (A. Assmann 1998). The Assmanns’ approach to collective memory is quite one-sided, as they concentrate on phenomena usually classified as “high culture”: the literary canon or sites of national remembrance.

In his basic work on the memory concept, J. Assmann divides “collective memory” into “communicative memory”, the memory for which living witnesses still exist, and “cultural memory”, which is situated on the other side of this “floating gap” in the mythical past (J. Assmann 1988 or 1992; for an English translation of his basic assumptions, see 1995). While “communicative memory” belongs to the realm of the everyday and is

subject to constant change, “cultural memory” is part of the *longue durée* of a society; it is stable and linked to fixed points in the past (cp. J. Assmann 1988: 10).

This neat distinction, however, fails to account both for the longstanding historic continuity of popular culture itself, for example in the tradition of the fairy tale, and for such repertoires of genres, topics and styles which have moved across the high culture/low culture divide. Aby Warburg’s *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* (The Pictorial Atlas Mnemosyne), which shows the continuities of ancient conventions of pose and gesture, features stamps, advertisements and newspaper clippings next to works by Delacroix (2000 [1929]: 128) or Botticelli (2000 [1929]: 132). We find the same memory content in works of both high culture and low culture, which are conceptualised by J. Assmann as cultural and communicative memory, respectively. Moreover, the cultural memory of the canon can be subject to politics and market laws to the same degree the communicative memory of the everyday can have conduits that last longer than the *saeculum*. Fairy tales, for example, are not limited to the present, as is communicative memory, but they also do not fulfil the high culture criteria of cultural memory.

In recent years, the Assmanns’ concept of cultural memory has been used for analyses of popular culture successfully, for example in the work of Astrid Erll on British and German novels on the First World War (Erll 2003, 2004) or the work of Gabriele Linke on popular romances (Linke 2003). Going through Assmann’s main criteria for “cultural memory” (1995: 133f.)³, we will discuss in the following how the concept can help to connect the dimensions of the social, the mental and the material for media texts, and thus develop our own understanding of *popular* cultural memory.

The first criterion for cultural memory is that it allows for the *concretion of an identity* through the community of its recipients. Both the national communities of Assmann’s memory cultures and the fan communities of today’s media culture emerge from common reception experiences. Shared reception experiences form an in-group of those “in the know” – those who have developed the necessary context knowledge to understand certain connotative dimensions. For the nation, these reception experiences are externalised and structured in remembrance rituals and school education; for the communities of popular media texts, they are implicit and informal. Audience communities will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

The second criterion of cultural memory is its capacity to be *constantly reconstructed* in relation to the current situation. As fairy tale research⁴ shows, the versions of fairy tales over time clearly reflect the discourses and values of the time of their emergence. Perrault’s *Cendrillon*, written in 17th century aristocratic France, highlights “la bonne grâce” (2006 [1697]: 269) as a woman’s most important virtue, whereas the Grimms point out *Aschenputtel*’s bourgeois diligence and the Disney *Cinderella* is prim and proper. Willingham’s bratty Cinderella works as one of the Fabletown government’s secret agents and, thus, *Fables* brings the character into a new context: that of the espionage thriller. The interaction between text and context knowledge through reconstruction will be discussed in the section on the comics series *Fables*.

Characters, genre conventions and discourse types are unspecified elements of the recipients’ context knowledge, but they become specified when they are realised in actual texts. These “unspecified elements” are the result of what Assmann calls *objectivation*. Textual elements become generalised when they enter cultural memory. They are taken out of their immediate textual surroundings and original social contexts and turn into conventions, icons, character types and standard situations of popular media texts. Cin-

derella, her shoe and the spell being broken when the clock strikes twelve can then be reconstructed in new contexts and can express or comment on them, as we saw above.

This exchange of objectivation and reconstruction processes in popular cultural memory is similar to the workings of the hermeneutic circle Hans-Georg Gadamer describes in his *Wahrheit und Methode* (Truth and Method, 1965 [1960]): Readers of media texts bring their previous knowledge, their “Vorwissen”, to the text, which provides the context knowledge against which they understand the text. “Vorwissen”, which includes the objectivised conventions, icons, character types and standard situations, provides the lay of the land, which is then modified during the reception process as these objectivised features are reconstructed as elements of the current text and thus confirm or change the “Vorwissen”. Through the reception process, context knowledge develops and can provide a new perspective and new expectations already for the next reading process. Context knowledge as a central factor for the reception process of media texts will be discussed with reference to Assmann’s objectivation/reconstruction interaction later on.

As all collective memory has to be mediated in order to be circulated among the community of its recipients, historical changes in memory can be clearly related to changes in media production (Schmidt 1992: 47; J. Assmann 1992: 24; cp. A. Assmann’s account of the development of the canon 1998 or 2004). Elements of collective memory can only be transferred through the generations only through their mediation in images, texts, films or (narrative) conventions. As the media themselves, their producers and their audiences change, so does their function as a conduit of memory. Pierre Nora describes acceleration as characteristic of today’s media consumption (1989: 7). In contemporary mass media, collective memory is only temporarily stable because of this acceleration (cp. Zymner 1998: 40). Therefore, one of the tasks of media texts is to provide clear referential patterns into context knowledge so the texts can locate themselves with relation to the tradition, thus enabling meaning-making in the reading process.

Popular cultural memory is a transmedial phenomenon. Its contents are drawn from many different media and can be reproduced via different media again. Ever since memory studies’ “foundation myth,” the story of Simonides of Ceos, the visual element and spatial order seem to be dominant: Simonides identified the individual members of a symposion party killed by a collapsing roof by picturing the image of their seating order. *Imago* and *locus* have consequently been the two key terms in mnemonics. The image (*imago*) identifies the concept, the place (*locus*) determines the concept’s hierarchy and order. This basic convention has been employed time and again, from Renaissance cosmology (cp. Yates 1966) to today’s household graphics in newspapers and schoolbooks.

Even though memories can be elicited through different channels such as words and sounds, smell or even taste, as with Proust’s famous madeleine in *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913-27), it has been claimed that images have a special “power of appeal” (“appellative Potenz” Reichardt 2002: 230; see also Kansteiner 2002) to memory. They seem to elicit the remembrance of earlier texts more easily and readily than words do. Proving this contention is the work of cognitive research. For the present purpose, suffice it to say that images are one of the main modes through which popular cultural memory is elicited and around which communities of recipients form. Consequently, the basis of the discussion of popular cultural memory in the present article will be visual texts like the comics series *Fables* and fairy tale illustrations. In today’s multimodal media environment, however, recipient communities certainly retain a widely varied reading experience in their popular cultural memory.

Audience Communities

The connotative meaning of Cinderella and her shoe or of the man with the moustache in the black shirt is known across the Western world and makes only for a very vague audience community. Looking at media texts for which smaller communities exist and which have crossed cultural boundaries renders more perceivable the connections between the audience, text and conventions, and thus the workings of popular cultural memory.

Previously, the nation state has been considered the platform of collective memory. It has provided the delimitations within which the community of those who share a common collective memory is located. Today, as the nation state is considered “a given” (Nora 1989: 11) and loses its relevance due to both local and globalising phenomena (cp. Robertson 1992 or Wood 1999), memory is again called upon to create a community. And again, mass media take on a central role in responding to this call. Communities of media recipients emerge, created through the socialisation process of media consumption. Through repetition of the same representations society reproduces its cultural identity: Growing up in the same culture, we acquire a common cultural background, a common collective memory and a common identity (Kansteiner 2002: 190). Consumption of the same media, however, is no longer necessarily equivalent to living in the same culture anymore as mass media and their contents become globalised themselves.

The genre of Japanese samurai films, for example, builds on the long national tradition of telling the story of a conflict between personal integrity (ninjō) and loyalty to the liege (giri). From Akira Kurosawa’s *Seven Samurai* (1954) to the anime series *Samurai Champloo* (2004-2005), top knots and katana are paraded and adored in the West, too. It does not seem necessary to know the traditional tales and kabuki plays from which the popular cultural memory of samurai emerges in order to become a member of the community of recipients of “samurai fiction.”⁵ Popular cultural memory works through imagination and appropriation rather than through research and historical exactitude. Having seen enough films and animes or having read enough manga of the samurai genre suffices to develop an understanding of its values, codes and conventions. The audience learns about the basic principles of the samurai code of conduct (bushidō) and honour suicide (seppuku), which are the dramatic mainstay of these stories. The more genre texts an individual audience member has read, the more sophisticated and detailed will his or her context knowledge be, as the hermeneutic circle starts turning.

Context knowledge of the conventions and codes of the samurai genre then provides the basis of communication and the in-group characteristic of this particular audience community. Obviously, the community of recipients of samurai tales is not identical with “Japanese nationality”. Even though it develops out of a national context, it moves beyond these borders through globalised media. Japanese film and manga have become fashionable in the West and the local knowledge of conventions spreads. Westerners become part of the community of recipients as they acquire the necessary popular cultural memory through the repeated consumption of these media contents.

Audience communities develop out of such shared reception experiences, which lead to a common context knowledge. Those “in the know” of this context knowledge, those with a share of the popular cultural memory of a particular genre, are then part of the in-group of this audience community. They can make sense of the connotative dimension of media texts through their possession of the relevant context knowledge.

The Interaction of Text and Context Knowledge

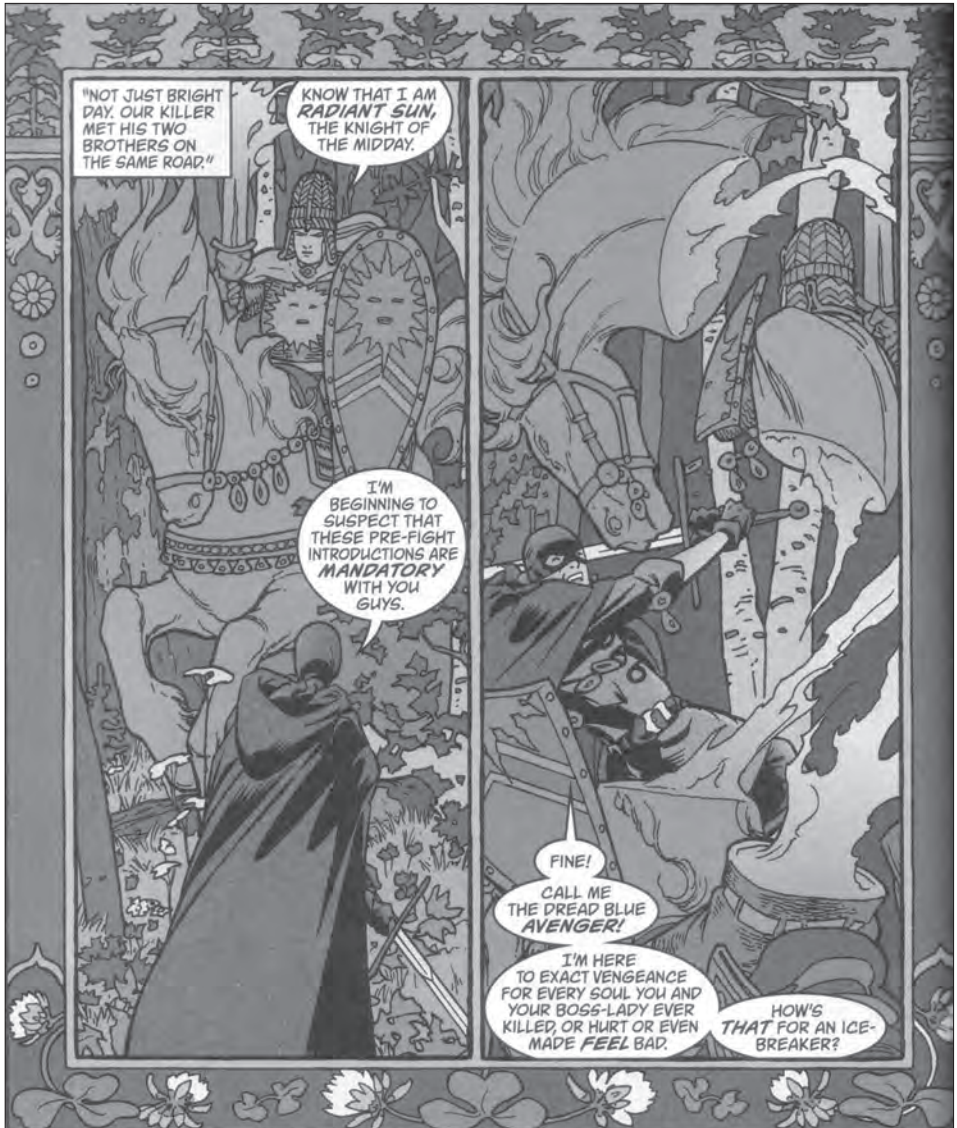
The reading process of media texts always unfolds in interaction with its relevant context knowledge as audiences make sense of its connotative dimension. One relevant context of Bill Willingham's comics series *Fables* is the visual tradition of the fairy tale found in descriptions, illustrations and film versions. *Fables* uses its fairy tale context with different strategies: The interaction of text and context, of objectivation and reconstruction central to popular cultural memory, allows both for the stabilisation of a tale through the identification of characters and settings and for its reflexion and problematisation.

Fairy tale illustrators quite often create a "strange familiarity" (Patten 1988: 20) in their audience by drawing on well-known earlier texts: We encounter the composition of Rembrandt's *Nightwatch* in one of George Cruikshank's Cinderella illustrations or Rosetti's *Lady of Shalott* in Walter Crane's *Sleeping Beauty*.⁶ Objectivised elements like poses and iconography are taken up in reconstructions to create this "familiarity". When *Fables* introduces the Snow Queen of Andersen's tale, for example (6: 97⁷), illustrator Mark Buckingham takes up the composition of H.G. Ford's classical illustration of the same tale in Lang's *Pink Fairy Book* of 1897. Buckingham's image is no precise reproduction of its predecessor, but an imprecise reference. It reconstructs objectivised textual elements and creates thus Patten's "strange familiarity" in those readers who have read Lang's *Fairy Books*. This "familiarity" is not based on research into the relevant period, but on a common reimagination. It is, speaking with Patten, a "minutely detailed projection of the audience's dreams" (1988: 25f.) or, in more sober terms, popular cultural memory.

When Little Boy Blue, a character from a British nursery rhyme, embarks on a trip through the Russian fairy tale homelands, the Rus, in *Fables* 6: *Homelands*, he finds himself in a comparatively familiar visual realm: that of the illustrations of Ivan Bilibin. Bilibin's illustrations of *Vasilissa the Beautiful* are, probably due to Bilibin's working period in Paris, the best-known Russian fairy tale illustrations in the West. Illustrations like "The Knight of Middy" (1900) came to signify "Russian fairy tale". Thus, when Little Boy Blue enters the realm of the Rus, his surroundings look very similar to those of Bilibin's illustrations (Fig. 1).

In both instances, that of the Snow Queen and that of the Rus, popular cultural memory takes a specific instance and turns it into a general context. The specific source texts, Lang's *Pink Fairy Book*, or actual circumstances, like Bilibin's illustrations for Western publications of Russian fairy tales, are not relevant. As a Western audience, we are likely to associate Bilibin's illustrations and Russian fairy tales, because we are used to Bilibin's style as their visualisation, without necessarily knowing that it refers to one particular artist or knowing that artist's name. When we thus see the knight of Fig. 1, we associate "Russian fairy tale" with its style of depiction. Similar to the process Barthes describes for contemporary myth, the original context is "forgotten" (1993 [1956]: 707). The specific instance with its complexities and contradictions is no longer important, as the simplified myth becomes "natural" (1993 [1956]: 699) – an element of popular cultural memory. The creation of Barthes's contemporary myth is a process similar to the emergence of the objectivised cultural elements in J. Assmann's cultural memory (1988: 13f.) or the formation of Halbwachs's *cadres sociaux* (1952 [1925]: 152f.). What we remember is a myth that is part of our popular cultural memory (cp. Gedi & Elam 1996: 48). This myth creates stability and simplification. Of course, the individual reader may be able to identify Bilibin's illustrations and may be informed about the artist's contemporary cultural contexts, yet instances of cultural memory always work with greater generalisations.

Figure 1. *Fables 6: Homelands* (2005) Mark Buckingham (pencils) & Steve Leialoha (inks). New York: DC Vertigo. © DC Comics; used with permission.



This imprecise intertextuality of the objectivation/reconstruction process in popular cultural memory gives stability to the connotative dimension because it precludes the infinite regress of references. Similar to Assmann's cultural memory, which prevents the infinite regress of memory through a fixed canon, popular cultural memory establishes, through the process of objectivation, sign posts and fixed meanings to remember.

A text cannot only locate a story but also establishes characters visually through this process of stabilisation. In the classical fairy tale versions of the Grimms or Perrault, fairy tale characters are usually not described visually.⁸ Most of the classical illustrators did not endow the fairy tale characters with distinctive features. Cruikshank's Cinderella

looks like any blonde and Crane's Snow White could be easily mistaken for Briar Rose as she lies sleeping. These early illustrators, however, worked in the context of one story at a time, and the lead characters were clearly identified through the title of the tale, as the stories were published as individual issues of a series. Because of this publication convention, illustrators did not have to distinguish the characters from each other. *Fables*, however, brings fairy tale princesses like Snow White and Briar Rose together and has them interact as individual characters. The comic therefore has to present them in a visually distinct way.

As the Disney versions have been the most thoroughly mediated versions of the tales in the West owing to the Disney Corporation's immense publication and merchandise machine, these versions of the characters have come to dominate Western popular cultural memory. The simplification achieved through the reduction in cartoon animation helps us remember the Disney characters easily.

Even though characters like Cinderella and Snow White do not interact in the Disney films, the makers of these films rendered them visually distinct in order to make them instantly recognisable. The authors of *Fables* take up this iconography and the background of the stories themselves to distinguish the characters. Snow White looks like the description in the fairy tale "with skin as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and hair as black as ebony" (Grimms 1993 [1819]: 215). When she first appears in *Fables*, her overall looks, fair skin, blue dress, red nails (1: 8f.) match the white-blue-red colour scheme of Disney's Snow White. Later on, as the character has been established, she wears a range of different colours. Cinderella, too, is presented in the same colour scheme as her corresponding Disney character: She is a blue-eyed blonde who often dresses in white and blue.

With *Fables*' Cinderella, we can also observe the mechanisms of iconography at work: She often wears ornaments, like necklaces (8: 98) or hairclips (5: 9), in the shape of her trademark slipper. According to Erwin Panofsky's model for visual analysis, iconography is the employment of a set of learned conventions in order to convey meanings and narratives (1979 [1932]: 219). Usually, iconography is employed for standardised symbolism in what is considered high culture. Yet I would argue that the same process may be at work in popular culture as well. Little Red Riding Hood wears a red cap and coat – Pallas Athene sports an owl and a helmet and the narrative of both is elicited from their attributes. The main difference is the attributed status of the portion of collective memory recipients must have to decode the symbolism and identify the character and story, not the image or narrative itself.

Similar to iconography, caricature and physiognomics can also be understood as a matter of cultural literacy.⁹ As some fairy tale illustrators come from the field of caricature (e.g. George Cruikshank), it is quite common that dress code and physiognomics are used to depict the moral qualities of a character (cp. Bottigheimer 1988 or Patten 1988). Yusuf, Sindbad's evil vizier in *Fables 7: Arabian Nights and Days*, is characterised by his lean and crooked figure. This strategy of signifying meanness through physiognomy has also been employed in the depiction of Jafar, the evil vizier in Disney's *Aladdin*.

As *Fables* refers to its context, the popular cultural memory of fairy tales, it follows different ends: localising, identifying and characterising. A fourth instance of such a stabilisation of meaning in *Fables* would be the general page layout. We usually have decorative frames on the sides, which denote the place of the action in the panels in the middle, and an emblem signifying the interacting characters on the top of the page. This layout not only has the narrative function of indicating which focalisation or perspective the story takes, it is also reminiscent of the classical fairy tale illustrations by artists like

Walter Crane, who used a similar technique of frames and emblems. Similar to locating the story of Little Boy Blue in the Rus through imagery, this layout describes the mode of the story: It locates *Fables* itself in the discourse of fairy tales.

As we have seen, through popular cultural memory a text can simply identify locations or characters or set a general mood. The objectivation/reconstruction process of popular cultural memory then stabilises a text through its employment of context knowledge. The “Vorwissen” is invoked, but not modified. However, a text can also evoke conflicting instances of context knowledge and modify the readers’ “Vorwissen” through the dialogue it elicits between them.

Fables’ treatment of the character Hansel from the Grimms’ tale “Hänsel und Gretel” is a good example of such a conflicting and modifying use: Hansel appears for a short cameo in the first volume of *Fables*’ spin off series *Jack of Fables*, where his story is described as an example of the cruel tradition of fairy tales. When Mr Revise, the personification of all attempts at fairy tale sanitation, asks Jack “Do you even remember anymore, Jack? How much more sensual it used to be? How violent? How concupiscent?” (*Jack* 1: 49), these questions are posed in a panel drawn in the style of the French fairy tale illustrator Gustave Doré. Gustave Doré’s illustrations of Perrault’s fairy tales are among the most sensual ones, both in style and content: He depicts Little Red Riding Hood in bed with the Big Bad Wolf, a narrative fact that other contemporary illustrators like Arthur Rackham or Walter Crane chose to leave out. The general sensuousness of the Doré imitations and the popular cultural memory (some) readers have of his actual illustrations serve to illustrate the point that fairy tales used to be much more sensuous and violent. Hansel is part of this gruesome tradition through his complicity in the murder of the old woman in the gingerbread house.

He makes his next appearance in the 9th volume of the main series, *Fables 9: Sons of Empire*. Here, Hansel has changed from a plump, sensuous child to a lean, restrained man. He is portrayed in the context of New England Puritanism, as his general attitude and the visual attribute of the 17th century hat suggests. *Fables*’ retelling of the “Hänsel und Gretel” tale, which follows Hansel’s arrival in Fabletown, traces Hansel’s conversion to the witch-hunter. This retelling, which contextualises the character for those readers not familiar with the Grimm tale, portrays Hansel and not Gretel as the one who pushes the witch into the oven (cp. Grimms 1993 [1819]: 94). He develops a fascination for killing witches: “I want to tarry and watch for awhile [sic]. – To make sure she burns complete.” (9: 64). In the following extension of *Fables*, which goes beyond the Grimms’ story, Hansel displays Puritan ideas (“I have an inkling God above has a specific plan for our lives.” 9: 64), he rejects the Fabletown amnesty for evil deeds of the fairy tale characters and leaves the community of fairy tale characters to join the European witch-hunts. Hansel comes to the US, where Fabletown is located, at the time of the Salem witch trials. It almost seems as if Hansel were a personification of witch-hunts: He has to re-enact his story over and over again in order to serve his narrative purpose, to fulfil his “function”, speaking with Propp.¹⁰ As the historical belief in witches and their persecution vanes, he leaves Fabletown for the Homelands, the original realm of fairy tales, and the rule of Hansel is over.

Hansel’s iconographic attribute of the Puritan hat and his lean physiognomy contextualise him in the Puritan and Salem witch trial tradition on the one hand. However, they also associate him with the witches of classical fairy tale illustrations on the other. The hat was a standard dress item of the 17th century but in the iconography of the English fairy tale illustration 200 years later, it turns into the signifier for an old woman, be

she the good fairy in George Cruikshank's *Cinderella* illustrations or the bad fairy in Rackham's illustrations for *Sleeping Beauty*.

Thus, the iconography presents two conflicting contexts for Hansel in *Fables*: Through the association with the Puritans, he connects to the tradition of the witch-hunter, through the association with the fairies, he is brought into the position of their victims. Popular cultural memory contextualises Hansel and describes his role in the story ("inquisitor general" 9: 25), yet at the same time, its diversity reflects this role: Is Hansel a witch in fact, through his righteousness?

Juxtaposing objectivised instances of popular cultural memory, as the text reconstructs them, can serve different purposes: It can help to create a round character¹¹ like Hansel, it can give clues to the solution of a suspense story or it can create parody. The frontispiece of the story "Cinderella Libertine" (5: 6), for example, shows a headless horseman. The horseman is reminiscent of Jacques-Louis David's horse portrait of Napoleon and, thus, points towards the setting of the story, which is France. It helps to identify one of the main characters, Ichabod Crane from Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1822), and suggests the demise of that character as he is killed by the statue. Taking the image popular cultural memory has of Napoleon into account, the headless horseman can be seen as a parody on the delusions of grandeur Ichabod Crane displays in the story.

As text and context knowledge interact in the reading process, readers' objectivised context knowledge of popular cultural memory can be used to establish familiarity and to stabilise meaning. However, the reconstruction of objectivised textual elements can also lead to a modification of this "Vorwissen", its extension through the creation of round characters or to unsettling it in parody.

Conclusion

The concept of popular cultural memory is a concept which touches both upon the microlevel of the individual reading process, which is marked through the interaction between text and the recipient's context knowledge, and the macrolevel of audience communities, which are based on a common context knowledge.

Contemporary communities of media recipients emerge through the consumption of contents of globalised mass media and are not limited by the border of the nation state. These new communities are not mutually exclusive: Just as Halbwachs describes the individual as being embedded in the different social memories of his/her family, religion and class in *Les cadres sociaux*, so can today's mass media recipients be members of various communities of popular culture, be they as diverse as samurai films and Western fairy tales. Also, these new community affiliations and identities always exist alongside the more classical formations of nation and social standing.

The repeated consumption of media content constitutes a socialisation process of its own, providing mass media readers with a common context knowledge, i.e. a share in the popular cultural memory of the field, the resulting increased competence in reading these texts and, eventually, a sense of identity. Of course, some members of an audience community have taken an extra turn in the hermeneutic circle, have read more and thus acquired more detailed context knowledge of a particular genre. However, it is still the same context knowledge that provides the mark of the in-group member and the basis of communication within such an audience community. The audience community *Fables* addresses is a Western audience raised on fairy tales in different media versions (like

illustrated storybooks and films) and the series gives prominence to the Anglophone heritage, as characters from specifically English nursery rhymes like Little Boy Blue or King Cole have central roles. The story can be understood with a fairly general level of context knowledge in Western fairy tales already. *Fables'* finer points, however, require more detailed context knowledge in illustration traditions and the history of the fairy tale.

Popular cultural memory allows us to combine the social dimension of the audience, the material dimension of media texts and the mental dimension of codes and conventions for a discussion of the workings of context knowledge. It accounts both for the phenomenon of audience communities and for the interaction of texts and contexts in the individual reading process. Here, the objectivation/reconstruction process has the potential for ideological foreshortening by reducing complexity, but is equally capable of providing the resources for showcasing a complex interplay of references. The coming together of the audience, the texts and the conventions in popular cultural memory does not determine its functions. It only provides a matrix of possibilities.

Notes

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2. Of course, texts can always be read against the grain, be it intentionally, as through practices of "textual poaching" (cp. de Certeau, M. (1988) *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press or Jenkins, H. (1992) *Textual Poachers*. New York & London: Routledge) or unintentionally, as Gombrich describes the misidentification of the Angel of Christian Charity for Eros on the fountain in Picadilly Square (1979:388f.). However, in all of these cases, the text in question is compared against the context knowledge of the audience for identification and meaning construction.
3. I refrain from a discussion of all of Assmann's criteria, because only concretion of an identity, reconstruction and objectivation are central to popular cultural memory. The remaining criteria can be found in Assmann 1995.
4. See for example Zipes, J. (1991) *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilisation*. New York: Routledge or Tatar, M. (1987) *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*. Princeton, Princeton UP.
5. Title of a film by Hiroyuki Nakono dealing with the samurai tradition in a self-reflexive way (Japan, 1998).
6. For the similarities of Tennyson's poem and the fairy tale from an archetypal perspective, see Poulson, C. (1996) 'Death and the Maiden: The Lady of Shalott and the Pre-Raphaelites', in Harding, E. (ed.) *Reframing the Pre-Raphaelites: Historical and Theoretical Essays*. Aldershot: Scholar Press.
7. I cite instances from the comic *Fables* according to the following convention: (volume: page number).
8. With the exception of tales like *Snow White*, for which the looks of the characters are an integral part of the story.
9. The debate about whether the associations with specific facial features are naturally conditioned or culturally learned is centuries old. See for example J.K. Lavater, *Von der Physiognomik* (Of Physiognomy) and G.C. Lichtenberg's satirical reply *Fragment von Schwänzen* (A Fragment of Tails). As the physiognomics discussed here have already clear precedents in cultural texts, they can be regarded as a cultural convention. Current discussions on stereotyping as a cultural/social practice are also of interest here. See Hinton, P.R. (2000) *Stereotypes, Cognition and Culture*. Hove: Psychology Press or Pickering, M. (2001) *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
10. Vladimir Propp identifies 31 functions characters can have in fairy tales in his *Morphology of the Fairy Tale*.
11. According to the classical definition in E.M. Forster (1962 [1927]). *Aspects of the Novel*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, "round" characters have divergent characteristics, whereas the characteristics of "flat" characters are streamlined into stereotypes.

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Overview of Nordic Media Research on Immigration and Ethnic Relations

From Text Analysis to the Study of Production, Use and Reception

KARINA HORSTI

Abstract

Nordic media and communication research had reacted to the ethnically/racially and culturally changing societies since the 1980s, and the multidisciplinary field of migration, ethnic relations and the media has been shaped. This overview draws upon existing body of research, particularly on recent literature since the early 2000s, and aims to sketch out the rough lines of Nordic media research by mapping and comparing developments in this area. In addition, it points out some major outcomes and, finally, suggests future developments. The longest line of research is based on text analysis, mostly quantitative and qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis of majority media's texts on immigration and ethnic minorities. Later on, the research focus has widened to cover various dimensions of media output as well as production and reception. Although the field is intensively developing, comparative research among the Nordic countries, and between other European countries, is scarce.

Keywords: Nordic countries, migration, multicultural society, ethnic relations, media research

Introduction

Immigration to the Nordic countries from elsewhere in Europe and the world is by no means uniform. Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark have received immigrants in unequal numbers, in different time periods and from different countries. Therefore, the immigrant communities and ethnic groups vary a great deal in their establishment, size and composition of countries of origin. This is one of the reasons why media performance related to migration and the multicultural society varies as well. In addition, there are differences in media use among the minorities. Therefore, the overview begins with a mapping of general migration trends to the Nordic countries between the 1990s and 2006.

Nordic media and communication researchers have reacted to the changing demographic and cultural societies in all countries, and the multidisciplinary field of migration, ethnic relations and the media has been shaped more in earnest since the early 1990s. There have been initiatives to bring Nordic media research on migration and ethnic relations together in Nordic conferences and seminar exchanges. In recent years, the research community has become more connected and an institutional basis is currently

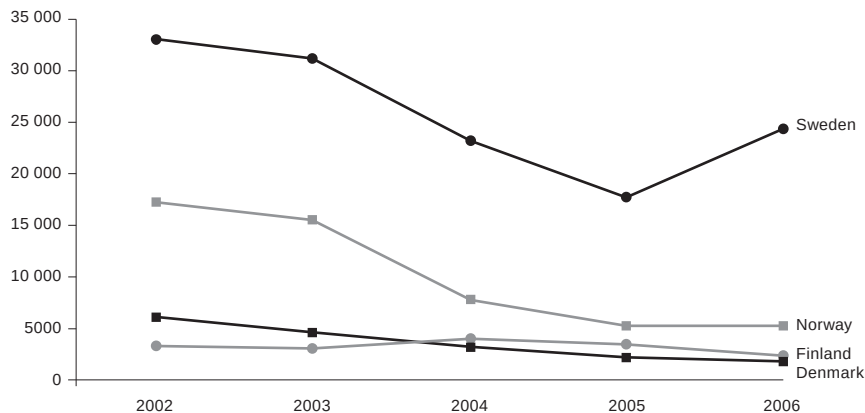
being developed through a Nordic research network for media, migration and society and the Nordic IMER association¹. However, researchers seem to tend more towards British and American research traditions than towards their Nordic colleagues with regard to referencing and inspiration. This overview looks back to the early 2000s and aims to sketch out the rough lines of Nordic media research by mapping and comparing developments in this area. In addition, it points out some major outcomes and, finally, suggests future developments.

To make this overview, I sent an enquiry to Nordic researchers who have published or worked in the area of ethnic relations, migration and the media. The outcome of the enquiry illustrates well the need for mapping and collaboration. In addition to publications, I asked their opinion on the level of Nordic research in the area and their future perspectives to develop the field². Thirteen researchers replied. Surprisingly, many felt that the last question was too difficult and were not able to say anything about Nordic research. Well, I have to admit that preparation of this overview opened my own eyes to the Nordic media research dealing with migration and ethnic relations. There were numerous studies I did not know about and that I did not find using the typical search engines. However, as did all the Nordic researchers I was in touch with, I acknowledged the need for collaboration. This overview is intended to contribute to this development: It aims at giving an overview of the main research paths taken in the Nordic countries (excluding Iceland) and the main research findings. By doing this, I hope to find connecting points, promote inspiration and ideas for collaborative research designs, and point out some of the main black holes in this rather young research field.

Recent Migration Trends in the Nordic Countries

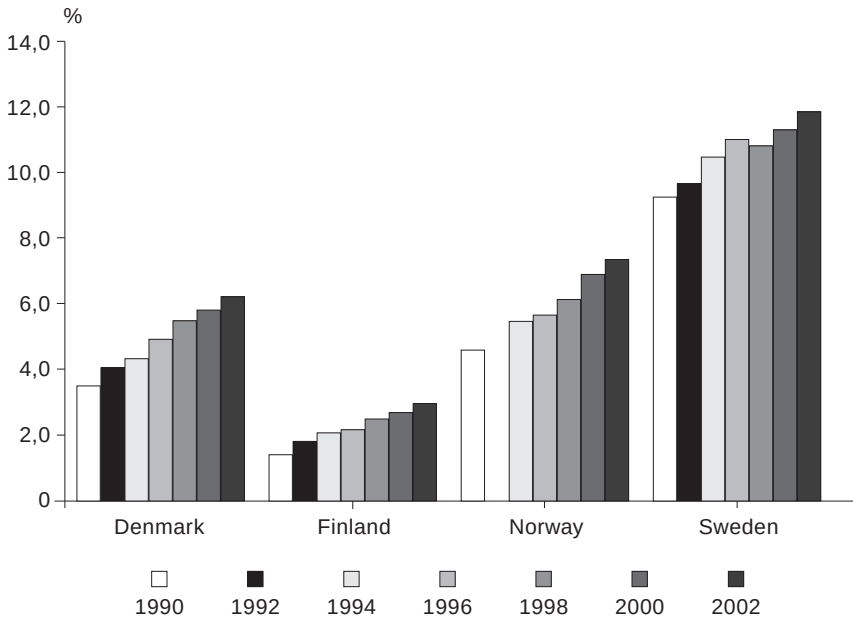
The number of immigrants has grown in all Nordic countries particularly since the early 1990s, although there has been a recent dip in the numbers of asylum seekers. Increased control of asylum policies in the European Union has decreased numbers of asylum seekers (see Figure 1). Sweden has the largest foreign-born population in the Nordic countries, Norway and Denmark have the second largest populations, and Finland has the smallest (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Numbers of Asylum Seekers in the Nordic Countries in Years 2002-2006



Source: <http://www.migrationsverket.se/>

Figure 2. *Per Cent Age of the Foreign Born Population in the Nordic Countries 1990-2002³*



The composition of foreign-born nationals varies from country to country. The impact of neighbouring countries is significant in Finland and Norway. In Denmark, the largest immigrant groups are from Turkey and Iraq, and in Sweden after the Finns come countries in the Balkans and Iran and Iraq. In Finland, the largest groups of immigrants come from the neighbouring Estonia, Russia and Sweden. Norway attracts immigrants especially from Sweden and Denmark, but significantly more also from other West European countries (See Table 1). Approximately half of Norway's immigrants come from other Nordic countries. Therefore, Denmark has more non-Nordic immigrants in relation to the total population.

Table 1. *Largest Groups of Immigrants in the Nordic Countries⁴*

Finland	Sweden	Denmark	Norway
Russia	Denmark	Turkey	Sweden
Estonia	Poland	Iraq	Denmark
Sweden	Iraq	Germany	Poland
Somalia	Finland	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Germany
Serbia	Norway	Norway	Iraq
China	Serbia&Montenegro	Great Britain	Great Britain

When the Eurobarometer public opinion study of 1997 surveyed the degree of expressed racism in Europe, the figures from Denmark were higher than in other Scandinavian countries. This survey measured the self-perception and self-expression of the degree of racism, and therefore it portrays the acceptance of racist attitudes in society rather than actual racist actions. However, other opinion surveys (e.g., Eurobarometer and European Social Survey) show that the Finns are sometimes closer to the Danes and even

more reluctant towards immigrants and multiculturalism. In a European perspective, the Nordic countries are generally on the positive end of the continuum as regards acceptance of immigration and multiculturalism. Norway is not included in these European Union opinion polls. (For a summary of the surveys, see Majorities' Attitudes towards Migrants and Minorities. Key Findings from the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey 2005.)

Scope of the Overview

Mapping research of such a multidisciplinary area is a difficult exercise, and therefore this overview should not be read as covering all research. For practical reasons, some exclusion needs to be made. First, the studies referenced here are mainly publications that focus on mass media and (new) immigration. There are a number of relevant studies that touch upon media as one of several foci, but these are not included in the present overview. Second, in this diverse field, one needs to look for previous research in many disciplines intersecting with various disciplines such as political studies, gender studies, anthropology, sociology, social psychology, demography, geography, cultural studies, journalism and mass communication studies, media studies, film studies and so on. In the present overview, I have concentrated on research conducted in journalism and mass communication studies and media studies. Third, the field is diverse in terms of methodological and paradigmatic research paths. However, I have aimed to cover most of these main paths.

In any case, knowing the limitations one has in mapping this diverse research domain, I still find it relevant to take a more general view on the research paradigms and paths that have been taken in different countries. This article will therefore give a macro level mapping of research: general designs, methodologies, questions and findings in the area of media, immigration and ethnic relations. By doing this, I hope to make this crossroads of various disciplines more accessible for students and researchers and to help them articulate the role of mediated communication in demographically and culturally changing societies. Mass media and communication are crucial in all phases of immigration. Mass mediated images of Scandinavia and transnational communication among migrants and ethnic minorities contribute to the mobility of people. Mass mediated framings of immigrants and minorities influence the attitudes in host societies as well as integration and immigration policies. In addition, the media play a role in integration, identity and belonging.

The overview focuses mainly on research published in the period 2000-2007, as the first doctoral-level research projects were published in the early 2000s in all countries. Dissertations are important to the development of the field, because they provide overviews of previous research and analyse the state of the art in depth as well as contribute to the development of theory and concepts, which does not take place to the same extent in other research reports and journal articles. Previous research is mapped out in a European overview coordinated and published by the EUMC (ter Wal 2002)⁵. In addition, there are three published overviews in national languages: 1) an overview focusing partly on the Swedish mass media research presented in Paul Lappalainen's (2005, 127-169) report on power and structural discrimination, 2) Thomas Tufte's (2001, 5-16) overview of Danish media research on ethnic minorities and 3) Karina Horsti's (2000, 79-88) overview of Finnish research⁶. The publications have been collected from various databases (Nordicom, EBSCOhost Electronic Journals Service, SAGE Communication Journals,

DOAJ Directory of Open Access Journals). In addition, together with Leonor Camauër I conducted a questionnaire survey among Nordic researchers working on ethnic relations, migration and the media in December 2006 – March 2007⁷.

Research on ethnicity, migration and the media is highly multidisciplinary in nature, which makes mapping the field complicated. Both migration research and media research are multidisciplinary. Therefore, researchers working at the crossroads are affiliated not only with departments of communication and media studies, but also other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Therefore, it is quite impossible to treat this area of research in terms of traditional academic divisions into disciplines and departments. Instead, we should consider this domain as a multidisciplinary research area that has emerged out of various networks and theoretical and methodological perspectives, which overlap at various points. This creates both challenges and numerous possibilities for researchers working in the field. The concepts are not always understood similarly, and theoretical and methodological backgrounds vary. There are different trends in migration research, and the interest in tackling these issues has increased significantly in many social and humanistic sciences since the 1980s.

General Characteristics of the Multidisciplinary Research Field

Scandinavian countries have organized well their multidisciplinary research field of ethnic and migration studies⁸ by forming national associations (IMER Sweden and Norway, ETMU Finland) with regular conferences. In addition, a Nordic association was initiated at the 14th Nordic Migration Researcher Conference in November 2007. However, these joint enterprises have been more focused on demography, political science, sociology and anthropology. Media and communication sciences have just recently joined these activities. Moreover, there is an increasing interest in creating research environments around the multidisciplinary field of ethnic and migration studies: CEREN at the University of Helsinki, Finland, CULCOM at the University of Oslo, Norway, IMER at the University of Bergen, Norway, CEIFO at Stockholm University, Sweden and AMID at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

There has been a range of Nordic collaboration between communication researchers at the Nordic Media and Communication Conferences (Kristiansand Norway 2003, Aalborg Denmark 2005, Helsinki Finland 2007), where working groups titled “Ethnic minorities and the Media”/“The media in multiethnic societies” gathered Nordic researchers active in the field. A Nordic research network was launched at a seminar organized at Södertörn University College in 2004, “Seminar of the Nordic Research Network on Media, Migration and Society”. A Nordic research funding institution NordForsk has granted the Network funding for 2007-2010,⁹ which will develop collaboration significantly in the near future.

In all of the countries, the studies are mainly small-scale projects conducted by one or two researchers. Larger national projects do not exist, except in Sweden, where the Ministry of Justice has published a number of research reports including media studies in their research programmes on integration, structural discrimination and power relations¹⁰. Media research was part of this effort. Furthermore, there is a conspicuous lack of comparative research between Nordic countries as well as between European and Nordic countries.

Scientific development in terms of qualifications began around the same time in all Nordic countries. The first doctoral dissertations on the subject of migration, ethnic

relations and the media were published in the early 2000s¹¹. However, Birgitta Löwander defended the first doctoral dissertation in the area in 1997 in Uppsala, Sweden; the work dealt with racist and anti-racist public debate. The research focused on neo-Nazi events in Sweden in 1991-1992 and public debates on these events. Löwander claims that the Swedish news media pathologize racism, presenting it as a problem of some individuals, not as a problem of society at large. The study has remained the only larger project specifically dealing with the representation of outspokenly racist groups, on the one hand, and with anti-racist campaigning, on the other.

Media research on the representation of ethnicity and immigration can be roughly divided into research on ethnic minority media and on majority media. In Finland and Norway, there is a lack of research focusing on minority media, which is most likely a result of the number and composition of migrant communities. There is significantly less ethnic media produced in these countries than in Denmark and Sweden. It is not only the number of people with an immigrant background that counts, but also the countries of origin. Both Sweden and Denmark have proportionately higher numbers of non-Western European migrant communities, which creates more need to produce minority media. In any event, the research on ethnic minority media and transnational and diasporic media has increased in all Nordic countries, a trend also seen in other European countries and the United States. As Leonor Camauër (2003, 69) points out, both majority and minority media are vital components of ethnic minorities' communication environment¹².

Media have been analysed from three main perspectives: 1) media production, 2) text (including visual images), and 3) reception and use. This division does not mean that there are not studies combining these perspectives. For instance, Elisabeth Eide (2002; 2003) combines analysis of journalistic professional practise, text analysis and interpretation of the interviewees with an immigrant background. In the following section, I will give an overview of research conducted in Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark on mainstream media, and I will organize the sections according to the three perspectives, beginning with text analysis and then moving first to production and second to use and reception.

Where it all Began: Quantitative and Qualitative Text Analysis

Analysis of media texts forms the largest body of research in all countries¹³. This is the viewpoint from which examination of the field began. The roots generally lead to a research tradition that began in the 1970s and that analysed representations of gender in media texts. The research on mainstream media can be divided into analysis of mainstream journalism (especially the news and current affairs), multicultural initiatives and entertainment. Research on these three areas exists in all Nordic countries.

There is a large variety of text analysis in Sweden, and clearly this line of research is most developed there. For instance, there is analysis from a historical perspective comparing coverage in different periods (e.g., Brune 2004; Hultén 2006), from the gender perspective (e.g., Brune 2003; 2004) as well as analysis of various genres such as film (e.g., Wright 1998; Tigervall 2005), multiculturally oriented journalism (e.g., Christiansen 2001), news in national press (e.g., Brune 2004; 2006), news in local press (Hultén 2006a,b; Johansson 2006), current affairs programmes and talk shows (Ghersetti 2001; Camauër 2007), sports journalism (Eriksson 2006), educational television programmes (Runcis 2001) and mainstream media's treatment of minority media (Graf 2007).

The first publications on immigration and media were published in the 1980s from the perspective of mainstream news coverage of immigrants (Hedman 1985; Hultén B. et al 1988; Brune 1990). Content analysis of various time periods (Hedman 1985; Asp 1998; Hultén G. 2006a) reveal that coverage of immigration and ethnic relations has increased significantly over the years from the 1960s to the present. For instance, the news coverage was three times more intensive in 2000 than in 1965 (Hultén G. 2006a). The reporting has varied thematically over the years, but since the 1990s, the multiplicity of framings and sources has increased. However, new immigration, criminality, cultural affairs and sports have maintained their general popularity as news topics throughout the years from 1965 to 2000 (Hultén G. 2006a).

Similar trends have been seen in other Nordic countries, however, with a shorter time period. For instance, in Finland, Sari Pietikäinen (2000, 151) demonstrates that the coverage of ethnic minorities and immigrants quadrupled from the mid-1980s to the early 1990's in the main Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*. Moreover, new immigration and problem-oriented news themes are accentuated in the general coverage in Denmark and Finland as well. However, it is impossible to compare the coverage, as all countries use different categories in their coding sheets. For instance, a news media monitoring project in Finland illustrates that the main topics in the news between the years 1999-2004 have been 1) the relations between Finnish society/citizens and migrant groups; 2) law and administrative actions; 3) infringement of judiciary (without violence); 4) court proceedings and 5) arrival of new immigrants (Raittila and Vehmas 2005, 15). This may suggest that the Finnish coverage is slightly more framed in terms of administrative control than it is in Sweden. Furthermore, the lack of ethnic minorities' appearance in the sports section in Finland compared to the other Nordic countries is a significant difference. Of the Nordic countries, Finland still has the smallest proportion of immigrants for the least number of years, and news trends may reflect this early stage of development of a multicultural society. The media are still more focused on administrative issues, whereas the issues of the ethnic minorities themselves have not come into focus. However, the monitoring research indicates that some changes are occurring in Finnish society. A significant increase has occurred in the coverage of court proceedings, but also in the themes of unemployment and job application, which could indicate an increase in framing minority issues more in terms of integration.

In Norway, Elisabeth Eide (2002; 2003) discusses changes in the journalistic perspective between the 1980s' stress on the exotic and culture and the 1990s' focus on problems and negative issues of immigration. Eide's research material focuses on problems, notwithstanding the existence of "multiculturally" oriented feature stories.

In Denmark, the research field began to develop from a text analysis perspective in the mid-1980s (Tufté 2001, 9), but in further studies various other perspectives have been taken as well. There is research on representations of Muslims and Islam (Hussain 2000; 2002; 2003; Hervik 2002), on the gender perspective (Andreassen 2005), historical perspective (Jensen B. 2000) and on multicultural documentaries (Marselis 2003). The Prophet Mohammed caricature case generated a number of research projects in Denmark (Larsen & Seidenfaden 2006; Hervik 2007). The Muslim issue has been controversial in Denmark even before the cartoon case. Muslims have been presented as the main deviant group in the news media, and they were positioned as the opposite of ethnic Danes and Danishness already in the 1990s. Moreover, the Danish media tend to frame Islam in the context of fundamentalism and extremism, which increases the images of threat (Hervik et al. 1999; Hussain 2000; Hervik 2002). The routine news

coverage in Denmark is mainly negatively biased: The main topics in 1996 in the news broadcasted in public television and radio were first of all crime and violence and second immigration and asylum seeking (Hussain et al. 1997, 52). More recent research reveals that problem framing and nationalistic orientation dominate the news coverage (Madsen 2000; Andreassen 2005).

In Finland, the coverage of Russians and Estonians has received some particular attention in the research (Raittila 2004; Jerman 2004; Haavisto 2005), which is important given that these groups are the most negatively represented in the Finnish media. In addition to the focus on Russians and Estonians, Raittila (2004) has developed a methodology for analysing agency and dialogic communication within single news stories.

In Norway, media coverage of immigrants was first discussed at the end of 1990s in a more journalistic publication (Fjedstad and Lindstad 1997, 1999). Among Norway's immigrants, Europeans form the largest group and they are presented more positively than are immigrants with origins outside Europe.

News coverage of immigrants and ethnic minorities was the first area researched in Sweden as early as in the 1980s and early 1990s, particularly by one of the pioneers, Ylva Brune. Ylva Brune and Gunilla Hultén used both quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods. Moreover, both compared journalistic output over time. Similar research designs combining quantitative data and more intensive analysis with qualitative methods have been applied also in Finland (Pietikäinen 2000; Raittila 2004, 2002; Haavisto 2004, 2007) and in Denmark (Hussain et al. 1997). These studies reveal that it has been crucial, especially in the early stage, to map the coverage using quantitative methods and to obtain more detailed knowledge of the subtle mechanisms of discrimination using qualitative methods.

Ylva Brune (2004; 2006) and Gunilla Hultén (2006a and b) looked not only at the representation of immigrants, but also at the representation of Sweden and Swedishness. Journalism tends to frame Swedishness as a goal every immigrant should, first, strive for and, second, adapt to. Sweden is presented as the "drömlandet" (literally, "dream country"), as Brune characterizes it. The identifications of the majority have also been the object of analysis in other countries. When the media produces images of minorities, they also produce images of the majority. However, it is quite interesting how the representations of the majority are not equal across the Nordic countries, but instead how they vary from one imagined national community to another. Whereas in Sweden the national imaginary highlights "folkhemmet" (literally, "the people's home"), which has qualities that will "rescue" immigrants from their "backward" lifestyles, the Norwegian image stresses the "superpower of human rights" (Eide and Simonssen 2007). In contrast, the Finnish reflection in the ethnic mirror is totally different from the two above, which contribute to a self-image of a powerful and great nation. The media in Finland repeatedly construct the fantasy of a hiding place where the Finnish people can be homogenous and safe. Finland does not carry the burden of colonialism, but is itself been "colonialized" by Russia and Sweden. The media discourse claims that because Finland is small and in the periphery, it has no obligation to help the Other (Horsti 2005, 291-292; 2007b).

Although the Swedish research has mainly focused on the mainstream news media, there are also studies on entertainment genres, such as Carina Tigervall's (2005) dissertation in which she uses discourse analysis to study ethnic and national identities produced in Swedish films in the period 1970-2000. Movies both created and challenged existing power relations between the Swedes and the Others. Immigrants were

presented as “sympathetic others” in anti-racist discourses. However, these “positive”, yet patronizing, framings and identifications did not weaken the division between the majority and the minorities. Immigrants were still presented as the opposite of Swedes. For instance, when the films wanted to criticize the materialistic (Swedish) way of life, immigrants represented a traditional way of life.

In Finland, there have been few entertainment programmes and films produced that have an ethnic minority dimension. However, a new shift was experienced recently in Finnish television when a number of fiction series were introduced. These programmes catalyzed public debates, but not yet research. In Norway, Elisabeth Eide and Anne Hege Simonsen are launching a research project to analyse the “minority beat” in journalism and fiction.

In the Swedish research, the gender dimension has been influential and incorporated into many of the studies (see, e.g., Tigervall 2005; Hultén G. 2006a; Brune 2004). The Swedish academic debate has found intersectionality a crucial concept, and researchers pay attention to the interplay of ethnicity, gender and class. Gender issues have been important in Europe, especially in the British research tradition on race and ethnicity, and should be more developed in the Nordic countries. The popular image of a strong, equal and independent Scandinavian woman brings its own challenges to the media analysis, which could be worked out together among Nordic colleagues.

The “honour killing” of Fadime Sahindal in 2002 in Sweden is one key event that was debated in all Nordic countries. The gender dimension has been important both in the public debate and in academic examinations of these debates. The case has evoked research in Finland¹⁴, Norway (Simonsen 2004) and Sweden (Grip 2002; Reimers 2005; Strand Runsten 2004). In Sweden, the debate was framed largely in cultural terms: A dichotomy between Swedish culture and Kurdish/Muslim cultures was created. Simonsen (2004), in her comparison of Norwegian and Swedish tabloid newspaper coverage of the issue, argues that the case was framed according to a Romeo and Juliet mythical story: The Swedishness of Fadime’s boyfriend was stressed instead of his partly Iranian background. In this way, the story could be told in terms of clashing cultures. Key events such as Fadime Sahindal’s killing are the thickenings of multicultural debates in which cultural and national definitions are negotiated in the public space. Therefore, cases that are discussed in different countries simultaneously offer good crossroads for comparative research.

Research on media texts with new focuses is currently being conducted in all Nordic countries. The historical dimension is being applied in Norway in a project directed by Elisabeth Eide (Eide & Simonsen 2007), which looks back on one hundred years of Norwegian news journalism. Media representation of Islam and people with an Arab background is a focus that has been given significant attention in Nordic media research in the past few years¹⁵. One example of this tendency is the bi-annual Nordic media research conference where, in 2007, five presentations out of 12 were related to Islam. Moreover, the Prophet Mohammed caricatures event provoked a number of studies in the Nordic countries as well as an international comparative study (Kunelius & Eide 2007). In the comparative field there is also Reeta Pöyhtäri’s (2007) ongoing doctoral research on periodicals in Finland and the Netherlands, Anne Hege Simonsen’s already mentioned study on coverage of “honour killing” in Norway and Sweden, Pekka Kuusisto’s (2000) doctoral dissertation on linguistic manifestations of ethnicity in British and Finnish newspapers as well as research on Finnish and Swedish newspaper coverage of the African migration “crisis” in Spain from the perspective of the European public

sphere and mediatized ritual (Horsti 2007a, Horsti forthcoming). Furthermore, there is new research on genres such as the women's magazines (Marselis 2005; 2006; Pöyhtäri 2007) as well as on new media such as blogs (Mainsah 2007).

Journalistic Production: Focus on Minority Journalists

In the analysis of production, the focus has been on journalists with an immigrant background. How have they made it into the media profession in the Nordic countries? How have the newsrooms and other production companies encountered the demographically and culturally changing society? In addition, multicultural initiatives in the mainstream media, such as educational and consultative projects and special programming, have received academic attention (Christiansen 2001; Horsti 2005, 183-276; 2007b). There is a lack of research on the journalistic process and professional practices as well as on other media production in fiction and entertainment. We cannot really know how the tenacious frames are being produced by only focusing on the output. There are negotiations and debates going on inside the editorial rooms that are not explicit in the news story. How is selection and salience negotiated? Are the debates merely issues of political correctness or are there more profound debates in the newsrooms? Furthermore, transnational media enterprises and circulation of formats, ideas and readymade stories may be increasingly contributing to the changes in the representation of ethnic minorities.

Studies on journalistic production are rather scarce in all Nordic countries, although in Sweden there are studies on journalists with an immigrant background, focusing on career development and multicultural editorial rooms (Djerf-Pierre & Levin 2005; Camauër 2006). In addition, a mapping project was conducted among the main media and schools of journalism in Denmark, Norway and Sweden by Elin Svensen (2000) to get an overall picture of the involvement of journalists with an immigrant background in the media field. In Denmark, Iben Jensen (2000) has analysed in more detail the career development of journalists with an immigrant background. Recently, research projects have been initiated that will apply similar perspectives¹⁶.

There have been numerous multicultural initiatives to foster the careers of journalists with an immigrant background and to increase studies in journalism among young people with migrant families in all Nordic countries. There are no studies concentrating on these initiatives, although research on career development often touches upon the role of multicultural projects. Leonor Camauër (2006) argues that journalists with a minority background in Sweden experience a great gap between rhetoric (policy) and practice. A similar division is presented by Christian Christiansen (2001) in his analysis of the Swedish public broadcaster's multicultural policies and actual programming.

Based on the research mentioned above, the challenges and possibilities of increasing diversity in journalistic production in the Nordic mediascape can be divided into three groups: structural issues, cultural competences and cultural-structural mechanisms. Structural diversity refers to various educational, professional and institutional discriminatory mechanisms that marginalize minorities as well as "positive discriminatory" mechanisms aimed at promoting diversity in the journalistic profession. The main obstacles to improving diversity are, first, the class-specific nature of the journalistic profession in Sweden, second, weak networks with the social elite among the socio-economically less advantaged minorities (an obstacle also for the young people from less advantaged Swedish families), and third, migrants' low level of mastery of the Swedish language and – more importantly – the assumption of poor language skills. Quotas have not become

popular in any Nordic newsroom or university offering journalistic education, although in 2006 Oslo University College introduced a quota system for five students per year with ethnic minority background, based on a recommendation from the Ministry of Education¹⁷. However, multiculturally oriented projects that aim to increase minorities among both journalism students and journalists in the mainstream media are run in all Nordic countries, and there seems to be great confidence among journalists, minorities and educators that these projects offer the best solution to the lack of diversity.

There are obstacles and opportunities related to cultural competences. Swedish research stresses that employers appreciate diverse cultural capital in their editorial rooms. It is interesting how certain events have exposed the need for diversity within newsrooms. For instance, the disco fire in Göteborg, where a number of especially ethnic minority youth died, revealed to the mainstream media that their editorial rooms did not have contacts with the people affected by the tragedy. Still, journalists with an immigrant background are often regarded as having a poorer understanding of the Swedish culture and society than native Swedes do. These attitudes among employers seem to be changing slowly, as similar arguments are used in Finland (which as a more recent immigration) (Suihkonen 2003). Moreover, families with an immigrant history tend to value more traditional professions such as business, medicine and law (Jensen 2000). Thus, a journalistic profession is not as appreciated among these families as among native Swedish families. Some explanations for this bias are that young people perceive the journalistic profession negatively (dangerous, involving censorship) due to their greater transnational perspective and experience. Moreover, lower wages, discrimination and racism associated with media representation of ethnic minorities reduce the attractiveness of a journalistic profession. These types of issues have not been analysed in other Nordic countries, which makes comparison impossible.

Cultural-structural mechanisms of both decreasing and increasing minority participation in the journalistic profession reflect the combination of cultural specifics and structural features. Minority media are one such important opportunity for both journalists with an immigrant history and young people from immigrant families, but brought up in Nordic countries, to find their way to the profession. Other studies in Finland (Suihkonen 2003) and Norway (Svensen 2000) discuss the same insights as the Swedish research (Djerf -Pierre & Levin 2005): On the one hand, minority media both offer a space to practise journalism on one's own terms and offer easier entrance into the field; on the other hand, the step to mainstream media remains wide and the ideas and views presented in the minority media still do not spread to the wider society. Moreover, minority media and mainstream media's multicultural initiatives are strongly dependent on shifting policies and orientations as well as volunteer work (Camauër 2003, 84).

Iben Jensen (2000) presents three strategies to increase the participation of people with an immigrant background in the journalistic profession. First, the media field and universities should make the profession seem more attractive among the young. Second, people with other academic qualifications should be encouraged to enter the field. Third, mainstream national media should recruit journalists working in the local media (where it is easier to enter). Leonor Camauër (2006, 21) concludes that increasing awareness of discrimination in the newsrooms and the need for diversity together with multicultural media policy and critical public debate can be seen as a sign of changing journalistic values and routines.

More research is clearly needed in the field of production, as the field is still under development, not only in the Nordic countries, but also in other European countries.

Nordic countries could develop research designs and propose research questions and conduct comparative pilot projects in this domain to develop analysis of journalistic production from the viewpoint of multicultural societies. Analysis should be conducted both in mainstream media and in minority media and extended to a variety of genres and media. First, the process of framing news stories on immigrant- and ethnic-relations-related events remains under-analysed: How do certain themes, frames and narratives persist in the news coverage? How are new ways of reporting discovered and how are practices changed? Second, the diversity and multiculturalism of media companies and newsrooms need more research. What are the dynamics of multicultural working environments? How do diverse cultural competence and transnational networks influence journalistic processes?

Global Public Space: Immigrants' Transnational Media Use

The media use of immigrants and people with a migrant background is still a rather undiscovered research area in the Nordic countries, even though the area is now being examined by prominent senior researchers and in major projects. Analysis of reception has focused almost solely on the media use of minorities. Reception, effects and interpretation of majority audiences are still rather neglected¹⁸. A number of research initiatives have been taken in the field of media use of minorities:

In Finland two interrelated projects have been launched in 2007. Kaarina Nikunen (2007) focuses on the media use of young people with an immigrant background and Heikki Luostarinen, of the University of Tampere, is directing a three-year project that will, first, map the media use of immigrants in general and, second, examine the reception of immigration-related news among both native Finns and some immigrant groups.

The media practices of immigrants were studied in Sweden for the first time in the late 1990s in a survey based on interviews with 470 people (Weibull & Wadbring 1998). However, more detailed analysis is currently being conducted. Ingegerd Rydin and Ulrika Sjöberg, of the University of Halmstad, are conducting a project entitled "Media practices in the new country". This project analyses the media use and practices of families with an immigrant history using ethnographic methods, the focus being on young people between 12 and 16 years of age.

In Norway, at the University of Oslo, Henry Mainsah has worked on Cameroonian-Norwegian audiences and is conducting doctoral research on migrants' use of the Internet. Sharam Alghasi, of the University of Oslo, has analysed the media practices of Iranian-Norwegians¹⁹ and is continuing this work in his doctoral dissertation. Eva Bakøy, of the University College of Lillehammer, is conducting research on television use among migrant women.

In Denmark, research on minorities' media practices began relatively early. In 1999, Connie Caroe Christiansen (2003) analysed media use among the largest immigrant groups originating from outside Western Europe. Thomas Tufte (2000; 2002; 2003) studied the media use of young people in one area in Copenhagen and analysed media use more generally in collaboration with Maja Riis (Tufte & Riis 2001). In addition, Peter Hervik (1999) analysed reception among majority audiences in 1997. The research design included both textual analysis of *Ekstrabladet's* and *Jyllands-Posten's* journalistic content and audiences' reception of the same newspapers. Hervik concludes that the xenophobic attitudes among audiences were mainly based on the negative representation of immigrants repeatedly produced in these newspapers.

Concepts of identity, transnational and diaspora are widely used and currently explored in Nordic research on media use among minorities. Research results suggest that people with a migrant background live increasingly in a global and transnational public sphere. They gather information from a variety of sources, while stressing the media in countries of origin and international media. Nevertheless, what media people follow depends greatly on their country of origin. For instance, African television channels are not available in the Nordic countries. National Nordic media are often experienced as presenting immigrants negatively and increasing hostility in the surrounding society (Christiansen & Sell 2000; Alghasi 2007; Mainsah 2005). Mustafa Hussain (2002; 2003) suggests that this is one of the main reasons why people with an immigrant background in Denmark prefer to get their information from international sources.

In the public debates, the media use of immigrants is often approached as an integration issue, the starting point being the general assumption that transnational media use decreases integration and loyalty to the new country. However, this nationalistic view has been disproved in the research, for instance in studies by Christiansen (2003; 2004) and Tufte (2003), who claim that in a transnational situation it is natural and facilitative of integration to follow media in a diverse manner. Actually, participation in the public debates and interest in social issues in the new country are related to social capital and self-esteem. Therefore, migrants who are active participants in transnational communities are often active participants in the host society. Christiansen (2004, 188) suggests that watching television news from the homeland should be characterized as a transnational practice. Migrants are generally gathering information and entertainment through more multiple channels than are the native-borns, and therefore they live in a much more transnational space. However, depending on the language skills, it is not only the news from countries of origin that migrants tend to follow, but also international media such as Al Jazeera or BBC World are among the channels that are often watched. The reasons for not choosing to watch Danish language channels are experienced racism within the news texts and lack of sufficient language skills (Christiansen 2004, 193). Moreover, Tufte (2003) highlights that the media use of the young is diverse. American talk shows, series and movies unite the young no matter which background they have. Still, young people are very much aware of the “ethnic” conflicts that receive intensive media attention. Their experience supports the claim that news coverage constructs a division between “us” and “them”.

For Future Research: New Perspectives, Comparative Research and Collaboration

To sum up, the development of the field in the Nordic countries started in the 1980-1990s and was based on text analysis, mostly quantitative and qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis of majority media’s texts on immigration and ethnic minorities. The first research initiatives asked what topics were raised by the mainstream media, what viewpoints and sources were stressed. Later on, the research focus has widened to cover various dimensions of media output as well as production and reception. Nordic researchers are currently taking these steps as research initiatives are being pursued from new perspectives. Still comparative research among the Nordic countries, and between other European countries, is scarce. This is surprising, especially considering that there is no language barrier to comparison, as Nordic people can understand each other’s languages, except that the Finnish language media cannot be understood by

other Scandinavians. One reason for the lack of comparison may be that many studies are financed by national institutions and associations aiming to produce knowledge for national policy making²⁰. Furthermore, the policy orientation influences the quality of research: A substantial part of the research tends to be descriptive mapping and reporting rather than theoretically and methodologically innovative research. In addition, there is a lack of international publications, although some of the studies, e.g. doctoral dissertations, are of high quality. There is only one Nordic publication within this theme (Tufte 2003), albeit excluding Finland.

There is clearly a need to develop collaboration among researchers studying ethnic relations, migration and the media at various levels – national, regional, European and global – to solve some of the problems in the field. Due to the relative youth of the field in many countries and its multidisciplinary nature, the networks of individual doctoral students and senior scholars as well as institutions should be wider. Not all institutions have expertise in the field, which makes international mentoring schemes, seminars and summer schools crucial for young researchers. Furthermore, media and communication sciences should increase its presence within international research associations dealing with migration and ethnic relations.

Notes

1. At the time of writing, a multidisciplinary Nordic IMER association is being established, the chair located at SAXO Institute, University of Copenhagen. More information about the Nordic Research Network for Media, Migration and Society please visit <http://sockom.helsinki.fi/ceren/migranord/>
2. This last question was as follows: How would you characterize Nordic research on ethnicity, immigration and the media? What should be strengthened methodologically, theoretically and/or empirically?
3. Migration Policy Institute, MPI Data Hub. www.migrationinformation.org. [Referred 16.5.2007].
4. Finnish data on “foreign-born nationals” from 2006 published by the Ministry of Interior, Työministeriön maahanmuuttotilastoja www.mol.fi (referred 9.5.2007), Swedish data on “immigration” from 2005, (Statistics Sweden, SCB, gives a list of countries of origin of immigrants by year, which makes comparison difficult. Therefore, this list characterizes the immigrants who arrived during 2005 (excluding Swedish nationals). Danish data from 2006 Statbank Denmark www.statbank.dk (referred 9.5.2007), Norwegian data from 2006 Statistisk sentralbyrå www.ssb.no (referred 9.5.2007).
5. Overview of research in the EU15 countries illuminates the state of research between 1995-2000, including Finland, Sweden and Denmark (ter Wal 2002).
6. See also an earlier overview by Pietikäinen and Luostarinen (1997).
7. I would like to thank all the researchers who replied to the questions. Special thanks to Leonor Camauër who has initiated the Nordic collaboration in the first place at Nordic conferences of communication researchers and within the Nordic research network. I am also thankful to Eija Poteri, Nordicom Finland, who performed the data search.
8. In the Nordic countries, this research field is characterized mainly using the terms ethnicity, ethnic minorities, immigration, migration and integration. Terms such as race and race relations are not generally used, although the role of socially constructed “race” is recognized in research on discrimination and racism.
9. Nordic Research Network for Media, Migration and Society. For further information: <http://sockom.helsinki.fi/ceren/migranord/index.html> or contact project leader Karina Horsti at <http://sockom.helsinki.fi/ceren/english>
10. These reports are available electronically at SOU (Statens Offentliga Utredningar) documents. <http://www.sou.se/sb/d/108;jsessionid=aeh7odptLbie> [Referred 28 August 2007].
11. In Finland, doctoral dissertations in the field so far are Männistö 1999 (media images of Islam); Pietikäinen 2000; Kuusisto 2000; Raittila 2004; Horsti 2005; Nordberg 2007 (partly media related). In Sweden, Löwander 1997; Brune 2004; Nygren 2004; Roosvall 2004 (partly related to ethnic minorities), Dahlstedt 2005; Tigervall 2005; Hultén 2006. In addition, Merja Ellefson and Anna Levin are defending their dissertations in 2007. In Denmark: Marselis 2003 and Andreassen 2005. Prior to these dissertations, books by Mustafa Hussain, Ferruh Yilmaz & Tim O’Connor (1997) and Peter Hervik (2002) were central to the development of the field in Denmark. In Norway, only one doctoral dissertation has been published to

- date on the topic under analysis here; it is by Elisabeth Eide (2002). However, Eiri Elvestad at NTNU in Trondheim will soon defend a dissertation on media use of Norwegian-Vietnamese.
12. Minority media in Finland (Kauranen & Tuori), Sweden (Camauër) and Denmark (Hussain) have been mapped in a project coordinated by Myria Georgiou. Reports available at <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/EMTEL/Minorities/reports.html> [Referred 28 August 2007]. For a mapping of Swedish minority media see also Camauër 2005.
 13. By the term 'text' I mean all genres of media texts and images in print media, television, radio, and the new media.
 14. Suvi Keskinen at the University of Tampere, Finland, is currently analysing media coverage of the case as one part of her post-doctoral research on ethnicity and violence directed at women.
 15. In addition to international research on the Prophet Mohammed caricatures (Kunelius & Eide 2007), there is research in all countries on Islam and Muslims in the media. Danish research in this area was referred to earlier. In Finland, Mari Maasilta, Pentti Raittila (both University of Tampere) and Karin Creutz (University of Helsinki) are currently conducting a study focusing on mainstream media's presentation of Islam and Muslims.
 16. A joint research project on multicultural newsrooms in Berlin and Stockholm was initiated in 2007 by Heike Graf and Gunilla Hultén of Södertörn University College. (*Mångfaldslinjer: Journalistisk produktion ur ett mångkulturellt perspektiv i Stockholm och Berlin*). Gunn Bjørnsen, Høgskolen i Oslo, is working on a doctoral dissertation on cultural competence in editorial rooms and journalist education.
 17. The journalist programme at the university had a committee that also discussed several strategies to increase the number of ethnic minority students. To qualify for the programme, the student and/or both parents have to be born outside of Norway. Source: Interview with lecturer Anne Fogt 18 August 2007.
 18. There has been pilot focus group research on the reception of majority youth and adults in Finland (Nikunen 2007; Raittila 2007).
 19. <http://www.culcom.uio.no/forskning/artikler/mainsah-eng.html> [Referred 23. July 2007.]
 20. Some examples: In Sweden, the first study in the field was published by the Labour Market Department (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (Hedman 1985) as part of a report on discrimination. In addition to universities and colleges, other institutions financing and ordering research in the Nordic countries have been the national journalist's associations, various state departments and ministries.

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The Othering of Islam in a European Context

Polarizing Discourses in Swedish-Language Dailies in Finland

KARIN CREUTZ-KÄMPPI

Abstract

Media representations of Islam mostly appear in the Finnish media in connection with events in other parts of the world. In this context, Islam is often treated as something distant and ascribed the role of the Other. These representations function as definers for collective categorizations, having an impact on which categories for self-identifications are relevant in specific cases. The aim of the present article is to discuss othering discourses on Islam in Swedish-language dailies in Finland on the basis of the debate following the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. These discourses build upon a broader tradition of othering and have a great deal in common with medieval representations, thus the othering of Islam in a historical perspective is also briefly discussed.

Keywords: media representations, Islam, discourses, stereotypes, Europe, opinion journalism

Introduction

The media contribute to the production and maintenance of discourses¹ that effect our daily lives and create the surroundings in which our knowledge of ourselves and the world is formed – the media unite the subjectively experienced with collective praxis (Real 1989, 15). Media representations and common perceptions of Islam form each other reciprocally – common perceptions are visible in the media and at the same time as media representations influence how common perceptions form and change. Thus, the media mirror, manifest and confirm competing societal and political discourses, at the same time as they have an impact on how future fields of meanings are constructed and in a broader sense on the directions in which society may develop. The media discourses also operate within the common world of knowledge of the individual, forming his/her conceptions of the surrounding world by establishing what is considered positive or negative, good or bad. This article discusses discourses on Islam that are reproduced by Swedish-language dailies in Finland and the broader historical context of these discourses.

The globalization of information technology has brought the media public into a global public sphere (Volkmer 2001, 69). This means not only a greater involvement in events in other parts of the world, but also a reassessment of one's own position in the enlarged society. Media representations of Islam are visible in the Finnish everyday public sphere on a local basis, for example in relation to discussions about a "multicul-

tural” society, but they are to a larger extent actualized outside the immediate surroundings, in connection with events in different corners of the world – generally conflict related (Raittila et al. 2007). Thus these media representations create pictures of “the outside world” at the same time as they are part of the constructions of categories for self-identification – the rhetoric of global issues and polemics, for example “the War on Terrorism”, raises questions as to “whom do I represent” and “who represents me” to the media public. Although there is an awareness of the “propaganda machinery” behind political polemics of this kind, the rhetoric may still affect the individual’s picture of the world. In the debate that is analysed here, Europe is the common denominator for self-identification and the othering of Islam. This is interesting, because the global dimensions, without any direct relation to the everyday life of Finnish society, could be considered as lacking importance for the collective identification of the Swedish-speaking minority, but instead of referring to “Finnishness” or the language minority, the emphasis throughout the material is on perceptions of Europe or “the Western world” as entities for collective identification.

My empirical material consists of newspaper articles covering the debate about the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, from seven Swedish-language dailies from Finland during the period 10.12.2005-9.5.2006. I have analysed the material using qualitative methods focusing on discursive formations of polarization in which Islam is depicted as the Other – as an antipode to Europe or “the Western world”. These discourses overlap and build on each other, but differ to the extent that they can be described as different categories. In these discourses, the role of Islam in European history is neglected, and Islam is generalized and simplified – Islam includes a variety of traditions, interpretations and cultural routines. Religionization is also a central aspect – the emphasis is on religion even in cases where aspects other than religion are more relevant.

I will begin this article by discussing the production of collective knowledge and categories of inclusion and exclusion. I will then present central findings from the analysed media texts, and finally discuss the othering of Islam from a historical perspective. Within this frame, the polarizing discourses of Islam are produced and maintained, and the discourses on their part maintain these perceptions. The purpose of the present article is thus both to analyse the dichotomizing discourses in the debate and to discuss their wider historical context.

Othering Discourses and the Construction of Boundaries

Society constitutes the fund of knowledge from which the individual abstracts the material for his conception of the world. The subject’s reality is built on different interpretations and applications of subjective perceptions and discourses present in society. Only a small part of the substance on which the Self and the worldview are based is gained through one’s own experiences – the greater part is mediated through the social world (Berger et al. 1971, 69-89; Heiskala 2000, 100-103; Saaristo et al. 2005, 100-104; Schütz 2002, 37-39; Sevänen 2004, 6-8). Communication mediates our relation to reality, at the same time as it connects us with the predominant social terms, customs and structures of power (Kunelius 1998, 10-11). During acts of communication, expressions are chosen from the collective stock of knowledge that is based on the collective memory, at the same time as this stock is rebuilt through the act of communication. In this sense, history and ideology are always present as unconscious but constantly renewable structures (Raittila 2004, 42-43).

The relation between a text and the surrounding society is reciprocal; at the same time as the texts are formed socio-culturally, they affect their environment by reproducing or reforming prevalent perceptions (Fairclough 1997, 51). In history writing and news reporting, a causal relationship between the texts is created – these are chosen and presented with the aim to create a continuous narrative in which repeated structures can be filled with meanings (Hietala 2006, 96-97). Every story, and the effect it has, is only an interpretation of the world; the ingredients are gained from the stock of available information, and structured consciously and unconsciously in ways that benefit the aim of the topic.

The historical context contains significant information about the case per se, and by analysing the case one can also acquire knowledge of the social surroundings. Historical representations are therefore relevant in striving for an understanding of media representations. The discursive whole that the texts build up is significant; when an individual reads a text or is part of conversation, previously acquired knowledge is activated. The subject moves between different worlds of experience, submitted to different terms, negotiating his/her own position – when we read, the reality within the specific context is brought to the fore, and conceptions in this setting are activated, as are the notions of the Self (Karvonen 2004, 59-80). Thus, some categories ascribed to the Self (identification) are active within specific contexts, as for example when a protestant Swedish-speaking Finn reads about Islam in the world news and unconsciously positions himself as a representative of Europe or “the Western World”.

Otherness and Categorizations of the Self

The human world is marked by imaginary boundaries, but our unawareness of what lies behind these boundaries leads us to misinterpretations and fallacious categorizations (Bauman et al. 2004, 54-55). Social anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen sees categorization as a human tendency. To be able to orientate in this complex world, the individual constructs systems and organizes his/her surroundings, at the same time as he/she creates meanings and the context for his/her actions (Eriksen 1998, 128-133). The Self is both surrounded by and conscious of the interacting subjects, and structures its social spheres – the Self identifies itself with an Us, and a We can only exist when there is consciousness of a Them (Schütz 1982, 32-33; Schütz 2002, 41-42; Bauman 1992, 53; Bauman et al. 2004, 47-48).

In relation to the discussion of boundaries between subjects or collectives, *otherness* is a central theme. The distinction between difference and otherness is that difference is descriptive, whereas otherness is strategic. Otherness describes the distribution of power; the differences between known and unknown are not mediated equally or neutrally, othering always refers to the other party being repressed in a relation. When the Other is being judged, the emphasis is on what differentiates instead of what connects. The encounter with the Other is dominated by our preconceptions, which depend on public representations (Löytty 2005a, 162-182; Löytty 2005b, 89-90). The less one knows about distinct people, the easier one interprets these people through presupposed characteristics; the “knowledge” and perceptions one gains are stabilized as simplifications and stereotypes that become part of the common stock of knowledge through inter-subjective activity (Ålund 1999, 48-49).

When the world perceived by the individual widens from the immediate surroundings to a global perspective, the individual has to re-define his/her own position, taking into

consideration the new context. Nationalism is a central ideological aspect of boundary making and can be seen as a mental structure that organizes our thoughts, the central task being to categorize the complexity of “reality”. However, regarding the discussion of Islam in a global perspective, the nation seems to be of less importance as a source of identification (Creutz-Kämppi 2007). Europe instead is given the role of an entity where “one’s own and the right” values and traditions are to be found – the We category as a collective refers to “Europeans”. Although nationalism and europeism can be simultaneously active on different levels within the individual, europeism can be studied as a form of nationalism – concerning substance and structure it follows the same patterns. By emphasizing some values, norms and cultural attributes, a common denominator for collective identification is constructed, and is given a meaning beyond the immediate content.

The discussion about nationalism can be brought to a supranational level, where the substance for identification may be more vaguely defined, but it still springs from the conception of a defined collective – which in the case of Europe is an institutionalized concept. When the Finnish public debate in relation to Islam is often positioned on a supranational level, europeism functions as a defining factor in the categorization of the surrounding world. The relevant aspect is thus how the individual defines him-/herself and with whom he/she identifies him-/herself – not to what extent he/she actually is part of or related to this category. The feeling of belonging is based on subjective perceptions of the surrounding world and the available views of reality.

Polarization is a strategic form of boundary making. The Other is not only a stereotype of what is unfamiliar and excluded, but also an opposite in the sense of self-categorization – an imaginary collective gets its distinct form and substance when it is mirrored against the idea of an outer collective. The aspect of exclusion is characteristic for the construction of unities; the negative aspect of identification appears when the Other is depicted as a threatening stranger, not when difference is presented per se. The dichotomy between the Self and the Other has been central to the construction of the idea of Europe, and throughout history Islam has often been given the role of the Other (Delanty 1995, 4-6, 23-29).

Representations of Islam in a Public Debate – An Analysis of the Discourses of Otherness in Opinion Journalism

I have studied the public debate in the Swedish-speaking dailies in Finland that followed the publishing of the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, focusing on the othering discourses visible in opinion journalism (Creutz-Kämppi 2007).² The total material consisted of all articles mentioning Islam or Muslims from the period 10.12.2005-9.5.2006, covering seven Swedish-speaking newspapers. These articles were analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods (coding, discourse analysis and rhetorical analysis). Here, I will present some central findings of the discourse analysis. The material for this analysis consisted of the editorials, the columns and the letters to the editor. It is important to bear in mind that the articles are part of a debate, which implies that opinions may be presented in an exaggerated form – the language being more colourful and caricatured than the terminology used in news-reports and notices, and the arguments more polemic. However, the debate provides a useful basis for a study of repeated themes and rhetorical choices. I have analysed the aspects of othering to gain insight into how otherness is constructed in relation to Islam. The debate also included positive aspects – voices that criticized polarization, dichotomous models of thought

and discriminatory argumentation; in these texts, an effort was made to overcome a way of thinking in dichotomies, and openness and respect were stressed.

In the material, myths about Islam as a violent or backward religion are strongly present. Although the aspect of exaggeration is occasionally easy to perceive, stereotypes such as these may unconsciously form categories in the subjects' conception of reality, and these are more seldom questioned. As well as the othering, media representations of Islam and Muslims create a specific kind of picture of Islam and Muslims, and they also have an influence on the kinds of categories for self-identifications that are produced – defining “a Westerner” or “a European” (Said 1995, 75-77). In the articles, the discourses of otherness separate Islam from Europe and “the Western World”³, but mention nothing about Finland – the categories for self-identification are those of Europe, not of the state. Interestingly, the themes on which the ideological aspects of Europe are built in the texts – such as concepts of civilization and modernity – are quite distant from daily life and from the subjective sphere of experience. This shows the role of the collective sphere of information, as for example the media, as it offers means for categorization of the Self and the surrounding world, and structures for gaining and establishing a specific worldview. The cartoons were not published in the newspapers in Finland, and the demonstrations in Finland following the publications abroad were peaceful. Still, throughout the material, the situation is depicted as a conflict between *Us* and *Them* – *Us* being a European or “Western” collective and *Them* being Muslims.

The othering of Islam is a central aspect in the analysed articles, and the basis for this dichotomization is a conception of belonging to a specific collective, distinct from Islam. Although the concepts used are the same within the different discourses, their substance varies to some extent – the Enlightenment is the central definer for what “European” stands for in most of the discourses, but some arguments are additionally based on notions from the Christian humanist tradition. I have distinguished four repeated othering discourses: *the discourse of violence*, *the colonialist discourse*, *the discourse of secularization* and *the discourse of the clash of civilizations*. I will briefly present these discourses below (for a more detailed presentation, see Creutz-Kämpfi 2007).

I. The discourse of violence: Following the attacks on the World Trade Centre, the terminology used in media coverage concerning Islam has to a growing extent come to be connected with terrorism and political violence; historical conflicts are brought up to show that there is some kind of “natural leaning” towards violence in Islam (Akar 2004, 18). The aspect of religionization is central here – Islam is brought up as an explanation for the violence, regardless of the context. In the analysed writings, violence is seen as something connected to religion or culture. Muslims are depicted as a coherent group – aggressive and threatening, or with a tendency towards these attributes. Strong and charged words are used. The following quotation is from a text in which the author criticizes the actions of the Danish imams in connection with the caricatures.

1. “Instead they incited the mob in a series of countries to bring the whole of our legal system to its knees for their culture of violence and for Sharia⁴ by using violence and threats of murder.”

Demonstrating Muslims are called “rabble” and “mob”. The words “violence” and “threat” are used repeatedly. The Sharia is always mentioned in negative contexts. Quotation 2 is a typical example of the discourse of violence, both concerning the

representation of Muslims and Islam – it also resembles the medieval polemics of the Crusades, where Muslims were often pictured as decapitating infidels.

2. “How far are we ready to go, to avoid provoking an aggressive Muslim opinion? Do we have to accept the prohibition to question religious sets of values at all? Even when somebody cuts the throat of odious “non-believers” with reference to God’s commandments?”

As mentioned earlier, Muslims are repeatedly depicted as a uniform group, connected to emotionally charged attributes and verbs – such as “screaming” and “brawling”, or “furious” and “threatening” crowds. Terms used to describe the demonstrators were, for example, “fierce Muslims”, “Syrian troublemakers” and “a many-headed mob”; the reactions and demonstrations were described as: “the raging Islamic reaction”, “the Islamic world explodes in fury”, “the rage of many Islamic countries” and so on. The actions were often described in an index-like manner, as in the next quotation:

3. “Who would have imagined half a year ago that millions of Muslims throughout the world would demonstrate against Denmark, burn Dannebrog /the Danish flag/ and trample on it, burn dolls depicting the Danish Prime Minister, attack the embassies and threaten the cartoonists with death and boycott Danish dairy products?”

It is frequently emphasized that, for example, Christians never would act in a similar way, and in this discourse, “Europeans”, who always bear the prefix “us” in the texts, are depicted as rationally thoughtful and sensible. Regardless of attempts at some kind of understanding, the arguments still spring from a preconception that there is a tendency for Muslims to become “fundamentalist and dangerous”, and it is also taken for granted that this preconception is conceived in this way.

4. “One might think that Muslims would not turn so fundamentalist and dangerous if the girls dressed like their western sisters. In reality the reactions would probably be exactly the opposite.”

Arguments of this kind would hardly be used in connection with other religions. Another example of this type of reversed reasoning is when the Finnish Muslims are described in connection with the demonstrations:

5. “Luckily it has been less important for them to explain their case with violence or to tell other people to burn in hell”

One may ask why it should be presumed that it could be in someone’s interest to explain something with violence. The Prophet Muhammad is also targeted in the debate, as has been the case in polemics against Islam since the Middle Ages (Cardini 2001, 11).

6. “The cartoons might be tasteless, but the part that depicts Muhammad as a terrorist might not be entirely without a point.”

Within this discourse, the “European” represents a sensible and placidly deliberating individual, while the “Muslims” are ascribed the roles of fanatic and irrational masses with a tendency towards violence – the polarization is based on a picture of Islam as aggressive and threatening.

II. The colonialist discourse: In the colonialist discourse, Muslims are depicted as incapable of managing by themselves, and Islam is presented as socio-culturally backward. The values of the Enlightenment are used for judging Islam, but with Christian humanist principles and a patronizing attitude – Muslims are seen as a collective in need of enlightenment. The tone is reformist; the task of “the West” as “more advanced” is to help the “Islamic world”, both politically and ideologically. The focus within this discourse is on Islam as underdeveloped – this conception also has its roots in medieval continental representations of Islam, which place Islam “outside the civilized world” (Smith 1999, 322). The spread of values from the Enlightenment is offered as a solution to the “problems” – which is also seen as a way to inhibit the spread of “incorrect values” within Europe.

7. “What the Muslim world needs are not insults, but calming doses of enlightenment, freedom of speech and democracy.”

The tone is superior and brings to mind the colonialist polemic of “the white man’s burden”. In addition to “helping” and “developing”, it is also stressed that European countries already have helped “the Islamic world”, as in the next example:

8. “The ironic thing is that the hate of the Islamists has been directed against the small nations that probably have helped the Muslims most during recent decades. Both with financial support and hospitality.”

Europe is not only seen as “helping Muslims” economically, but also by accepting immigrants. It is repeatedly asked why these people cannot understand that “the Western World” is on their side. The religious and political leaders are pointed out as the primary problem, and “bad leaders” who lead the people astray with their poor judgment are frequently discussed – for example using terms such as “non-independent servants” led by “Islamist dictators”.

9. “There has to be a target for frustrated and poor people. Now Islamic leaders help the people find targets by pointing them out unequivocally.”

It is emphasized that with *Our* help, and within the framework of *Our* society, *They* can become like *Us*. Pictures of Islam as underdeveloped have been typical stereotypes in continental European writings for centuries (Cardini 2001, 3). Muslims are depicted as a collective, unable to decide over their own matters and without control over their own feelings. The picture shows masses manipulated by “bad leaders” that are led by their own interests, unable to understand that they are being used. It is also emphasized at times that these groups of people are not dangerous, only a bit immature:

10. “The significance of screaming demonstrators who burn flags should not be exaggerated, however” /.../ “They always do this, it is only a way of venting one’s feelings.”
11. “They do not intend it to be that bad” /.../ “They only want to protest a little”

Within the colonialist discourse, Islam is ascribed the role of the backward Other, which can be developed with the help of “the Western World”, and cease to be a potential problem. The arguments are one-sided and coloured by a feeling of superiority. In this discourse, Islam represents primitiveness, and Europe modernity. Muslims are

depicted as an underdeveloped and helpless mass, while the task of the “European” is to try to help or support Islam in “reaching enlightenment”.

III. The discourse of secularization: Like the colonialist discourse, the discourse of secularization is also based on values from the philosophy of the enlightenment. However, strategically the question is not one of “reforming Islam” – the starting points are a critical air, a negative attitude towards religions, and occasionally even a scolding tone. The premises are ideological – religion is seen as a problem and “the secularized West” is seen as holding universally valid values and norms. While Islam is seen within the colonialist discourse as “harmless, but backwards”, the discourse of secularization presents a more threatening picture of two antipodes. In the texts, there is an emphasis on “not giving in”. Paradoxically, specific values of the Enlightenment are called “holy” and occasionally the value-system has a religious outlook, at the same time as religious values are held in contempt.

12. “In the sense that it is possible to find any arguments of the perpetrators of the outrage, it is that in Islam it is forbidden to portray the Prophet Muhammad. But in a democratic society there are no picture bans. Criticizing God, Allah and any other deity is a right in the democratic and enlightened part of the world. It is even an important right, with an important function.”

Arguments such as these are typical of the discourse of secularization; it is defined what one can do, and this is absolute. The importance of a critical attitude to what is held as holy is frequently stressed, although this seems to be the case only with regard to the values of the Other. At the same time, the attitude towards the norms that are referred to, such as freedom of speech and the rules of democracy, has a strong emotional connotation and the philosophy of the Enlightenment is praised. In a few cases, the well-known quote “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it” is used⁵.

13. “When the wrath and fear have calmed down little by little and apologies have been exchanged, we will be able to state: The satire is a fundamental right in our culture. Everything and everyone can be portrayed. Keeping nothing as holy is our holy right.”

The othering plays a central role in this discourse as well: *We* have the right values – *They* cannot see this as they are blinded by their religion. The tone is superior, when “Western rationality” is in question – the talk is about “achievements that must not be questioned”.

14. “But in principle it can’t be prohibited for a non-Muslim to publish pictures of Muhammad. Not even pictures with a satiric view on Islamism as a totalitarian ideology. We Europeans have taken the right to place ourselves above religious authorities. It has taken a few hundred years. This right must not be negotiable.”

Within the discourse of secularization, “law” is positioned as an opposite to “emotions”, as characteristics of a polarized worldview. The law represents “the rational and secularized European”, while Muslims are presented as basing all arguments on “religious and irrational feelings”. The law is seen above all as *subjective* and *emotional*. In some of the texts, it is sarcastically suggested that the Qur’an and the law

should be set against each other, to see which applies here. “Western” and “Islamic” values are seen as incompatible.

15. “But for prime ministers – or other politicians for that matter – to officially apologize for something published in newspapers or on the web does not go together with what generally is called Western democracy. The limits of freedom of speech shall ultimately be decided by courts, not by prime ministers and definitely not by a manipulated mob on the streets, be it in Damascus, Beirut or Copenhagen.”

Central to the discourse of secularization is the dichotomy between Europe as a rational and enlightened community and Islam as an irrational and backwards collective. As in all the othering discourses, Muslims are represented as masses – in this discourse though as a bit more threatening than in the colonialist discourse, although there are close points of similarity between them, such as statements about Islam being backward and subordinate to the enlightened “West”. Islam, however, is not presented as a physical threat as in the discourse of violence, but as an ideological threat – as a threat to the “right values”. The statements are unconditional: We have our world of ideas, *They* have theirs – and these are incompatible; for Islam to be a part of Europe, an assimilation towards “Western conceptions” is expected.

IV. The discourse of the clash of the civilizations: It is polemized in an article by Samuel P. Huntington (1993) and later in the book *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996) that the fundamental conflicts in the time after the Cold War will be of a “cultural” nature. Huntington’s polarizing speculations place the global conflicts between the nations and specific civilizations, and he states that these will dominate global politics. Huntington focuses in his texts on “the conflict between Islam and the Western nations”; these theses have been criticized as islamophobic and self-fulfilling, but have still received a large distribution – also on a political level, for example within NATO (Linjakumpu 1999, 99). This discourse has a central position in the public debate following the caricatures: Islam is presented as an ideological and threatening antipode – a war of religions or cultures is presented as a field of vision.

16. “One can naturally try to look beyond the actual conflict with traditional western analysis. That it is a question of something more fundamental than only the lacking of respect for religious symbols is not difficult to interpret. More difficult for the ones that try to understand it is to admit that religion here is being used to escalate even further the polarity between the two ideologies. The fundamental question is whether there are in the parties enough moderate forces that truly want to respect each other to prohibit the war from moving to the second and maybe determinant stage.”

Occasionally it is also suggested that even though many organizations are taking advantage of the situation, there is still no actual threat of war:

17. “Why chaos should burst out five months after the publishing was incomprehensible. Small incidents have sometimes started powerful processes, but still there is no one who believes that the last battle between Christianity and Islam now would be imminent.” /.../ “One has to play it cool. And to learn how to count. Right now one can state, for example, that the Muslim world cannot win a war of religions. One can sabotage one’s income from oil and turn off the lights in the West for a while, but not win.”

Christianity, the Enlightenment and “the West” are used synonymously. Sometimes the tone is frightening, sometimes arrogant, as in the quotation above. It is prophesized that giving up on specific norms may be a symptom of a greater threat.

18. “Are we ready to pay the price to reach an end to the protests? Especially as the conflict between the Western World and the Muslim world now seems to be so deep, that there surely are enough other sparks that lighten powder magazines after the cartoons have fallen into oblivion.”

The editorial “Cartoons catalyst of West contra Islam friction” emphasizes that after the Cold War, it was thought that the antagonism between “east and west” would be replaced by one between north and south, but in actuality the main antagonism is now taking place between “the Western world and the Muslim world”.

19. “How might the friction afterwards be described? May God – and Allah – forbid that it one day will be called the third world war. It is not a war between religions, not even in the forms of “Islam against all others”. The religion is of course an underlying cause, but it seems to be about a cultural clash of a larger sort. Islam is not homogeneous either; the doctrines and interpretations vary greatly. Unfortunately this is not a cold war, as it claims victims on a daily basis. It is a warm war – yes, hot here and there.”

Within the discourse of the clash of civilizations, reactions to the publishing of the cartoons were seen as part of a larger “cultural struggle” between Islam and “the West”. It is frequently emphasized that the reactions had little to do with the cartoons – these simply triggered events that would have occurred anyway. The polemics here are not only simplifying and generalizing, they also activate polarizing conceptions about Islam as “the real enemy of the West”. Within this discourse, a dichotomy is made between “Islam” and “the West”, as civilization antipodes, the representation of Muslims being as an “undefined Islamic community”. The foundation for this discourse is both a normative ideological polemic, and a polemic about Islam as dangerous. The aspect of danger and the concept of war are central. In some of the texts, there is even an apocalyptic tone when speculating about “the friction of the present situation”. As for the other othering discourses presented in this analysis, interaction and coexistence are not brought up, except in a few cases, when talking about the need for the Other to adjust.

Othering Discourses of Islam in a Historical Perspective

In the analysed debate, Islam is ascribed roles as a violent or a backward religion. These perceptions are not only visible when studying the media – they are central elements of a wider tradition of othering Islam. These same conceptions have defined the typical stereotype of Muslims for centuries, although the societies have varied greatly. I will now briefly present some central elements of conceptions of Islam from a historical perspective, in order to show how specific discourses have gained foothold over a longer period of time.

Knowledge about Islam was very vague in Europe until the twelfth century, when the situation changed due to the Crusades, and the mythical stories of the crusaders (Armour 2002, 51). During the Middle Ages, people acquired knowledge about Islam from discourses produced and reproduced in stories and songs, the agenda being to justify and

promote the crusades. During this time, the traditions of song and drama were central to the production of knowledge, as the majority of Europeans were illiterate. Muslims played a central role in the *chanson de geste* – poetry, where racist myths and polarizing polemics on Islam worked as strategic justification for the battles against Islam (Cardini 2001, 11; Goody 2004, 69-71; Männistö 1999, 57-58). Although the European intelligentsia thought highly of Islam because of the strong tradition of science in Islam, there were contrary conceptions among the people, who depicted Muslims as backward and uncivilized. From time to time, Muslims were also represented as aggressive and fanatic, both by the people and the elite. Irrespective of what kind of polemics was used, the majority of the conceptions about Islam were based on a dichotomization between Us and Them (Männistö 1999, 52; Smith 1999, 321-322).

Although there were Christian and Muslim scholars who were in dialogic relations in their writings, Islam was strongly targeted in continental Christian European writings – this discursive polarization was expressed in polemics with a religious connotation, about Islam as a heresy, as a violent and aggressive religion, as immoral, and by depicting Muhammad as a false prophet (Cardini 2001, 89). Although there was occasionally more insightful information about the religion and its founder, the discourses mostly spread negative stereotypes (Armour 2002, 52, 54-57; Gunny 2004, 53-59).

Because there was no information about Islam based on Muslim sources before the twelfth century, all available information was based on common conceptions (Armour 2002, 51). It is important to emphasize, however, that the picture of Islam varied widely based on geographical position: in Western Europe demonizing pictures of Islam dominated, but the conceptions among Christians in the Middle East – where interaction across religious boundaries were part of everyday life – differed greatly, according to Christian sources from the eight century (Hämeen-Anttila 2004, 31-32).

In connection with the advancement of the Ottoman Empire, the mythical fear earlier directed towards the “Saracens” (and also against the Spanish Moors) turned towards the Ottoman Turks. However, as the power of the Ottoman Empire started to fade out, the interest in “the East” increased. This curiosity broke through within the European art scene, and during the seventeenth and eighteenth century it started to take shape as exoticism (Männistö 1999, 55-63). This did not mean, however, that the polarizing discourses ceased to exist – they just partly changed, and only within specific spheres.

The conceptions of “Islam as dangerous” and “Islam as backward” have existed side by side. These conceptions about the Other (and simultaneously about “one’s own”) are anchored in discourses within the common stock of knowledge – discourses that the media make available for the individual. Anssi Männistö, researcher in journalism, emphasizes the importance of studying media representations of Islam in a historical perspective. One of the central myths of the 1990s has been the conception of Islam as a civilisatory threat against “the West”; according to Männistö, racism in Europe is clearly directed against Islam. One reason for this is the stereotypes in the media – conceptions of Muslims as a violent mass, or of Islam as backward and hierarchically subordinate to “Western hegemony”. Männistö also criticizes the fact that the role of Islam in Europe throughout the history is overlooked or denied. The polarization, however, has had an essential function within the construction and maintenance of the idea of Europe and European categories of identification (Männistö 1999, 1-4, 38).

The representations of today have a great deal in common with medieval representations. Common stereotypes compete with ethnocentric ideas of dominance in the media, even though these do not exclude each other – they support each other, as they

maintain the same dichotomization, they act within the same field and reproduce and maintain the same othering discourses. Europe is also used synonymously with “the West” or “the Western world”, and a distorted distinction is made between “the modern” and Islam – this conception connects “the West” with modernity, while Islam is seen as something backward (Cardini 2001, 1-3). This is highly relevant in the case of the Finnish public sphere, as a large number of media topics are based on European news sources and dominant discourses (Creutz-Kämpfi 2008). Some of the polemics used in connection with Europe would not be accepted within a national theme; moralizing and imperialistic sets of thoughts that would be pointed out as discriminatory are accepted within specific European discourses (Wæver, 1989, 284-285).

Epilogue

Collective representations are more than the sum of individual opinions – they form the network of social life, establishing meanings and creating feelings of belonging through communication and social interaction. Media as a stock of symbols and meanings play a central role within the production, maintenance and changing of collective representations, as ideas, categories, myths, values and systems of belief (Lundby 1997, 146-148).

A large part of the public discussion concerning Islam is conflict oriented (Akar 2004, 16; Raittila et al 2007). This is not a new phenomenon, even though inter-religious co-existence has worked without friction in most parts of the world. But at the same time, with the conflict-oriented worldview, there exist structures of thought with opposite premises – worlds of knowledge in which interaction is a routine and daily praxis. Islam has been an important part of Europe throughout history, since the arrival of the religion in Spain during the eight century to the world of today, and history has been defined by co-existence not only based on political and economic relations and structures prevailing through active trade on the Mediterranean, but as part of everyday life within Europe: in Barcelona, Palermo, Tirana, Athens, Budapest and Kiev and on Crimea, to name some regions where Islam has been a central factor (Goody 2004, 5-18). Europe has never been a solitary Christian territory – more accurately, the territory has been marked by a movement of cultural and social forms in multiple directions. Thus there are parallel worlds of knowledge with opposite premises, and for different individuals these form different realities.

The present article covers boundary making and polarizing as discursive activity – in its concrete form discourses of Islam as the Other. I have discussed different discursive themes – the discourse of violence, the colonialist discourse, the discourse of secularization and the discourse of the clash of civilizations – in which Muslims are depicted as the Other. These perceptions build on a broader tradition of othering – thus I have also briefly discussed their historical context. Our “worlds of knowledge” – “realities” – are constructed through inter-subjective activity; a central aspect is how these are naturalized – by appearing in a common daily form. When the individual swiftly flips through the pages of a newspaper at breakfast, previously formed conceptions are activated by frequently repeated themes.

Sometimes we rely upon the human capability to question information – it is emphasized that it is easy to see through rhetoric that is coloured by hidden agendas, failing to notice that polemics easily leaves a trail in the unconscious – especially when it has been naturalized and common, as in a public debate. Needless to say, the work of the researcher is also marked by his or her own ways of thinking. But with reflexive media

analysis, it is possible to identify features distinct in the society. And with a reflexive attitude towards all knowledge, the “common” newspaper reader may find a more open view of the world. The media offer a possibility of creating a more diverse “reality” – throughout history, dialogue has been the ground on which a shared future is built.

Notes

1. A discourse can be defined as a series of statements that offers a language for representing a specific form of knowledge about a topic; when statements about a specific theme are made within a specific discourse, the discourse enables a construction of the theme in a specific way, at the same time as it limits the other ways of constructing the theme. The discourse consists, in other words, of a series of inter-related statements, not defined according to the traditional division into thought and action, language and activity; the discourse is knowledge production within the language, created through social activity – discursive action creates meanings. The discourses do not function as static entities; they interact and produce webs of meanings (Hall 1992, 291-292). Within their own sets of rules, the discourses create their own representations of “reality”; they regulate how thoughts can be combined and what can be seen as causal. By analysing discourses, one is able to grasp the ways in which individuals give meaning to the world, and how the individuals experience the world (Välvirronen 1998, 17-18, 25).
2. The quotations in the present article are translated from Swedish by the author. For more details on the analysis and the original quotations – see Creutz-Kämpfi 2007.
3. From a historical perspective, “the Western World” has referred to the Western [Roman] Empire, later it has come to be connected to the perception of Islam as an antipode to Europe, defined as “the Western World”. With time, the United States came to be included, and in connection with the Cold War, it came to stand for an amount of geographically divided countries (the Western bloc) (Männistö 1999, 38). In the debate “the Western World” is used synonymously with Europe – however in the discourse of the clash of civilizations, it is used more widely (including for example the United States).
4. Sharia is a form of legal system based on the Qur’an.
5. These words were actually written by Evelyn Beatrice Hall, although most often credited to Voltaire, as in this debate.

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Watching Politics

The Representation of Politics in Primetime Television Drama

AUDUN ENGELSTAD

Abstract

What can fictional television drama tell us about politics? Are political events foremost related to the personal crises and victories of the on-screen characters, or can the events reveal some insights about the decision-making process itself? Much of the writing on popular culture sees the representation of politics in film and television as predominately concerned with how political aspects are played out on an individual level. Yet the critical interest in the successful television series *The West Wing* praises how the series gives insights into a wide range of political issues, and its depiction of the daily work of the presidential staff. The present article discusses ways of representing (fictional) political events and political issues in serialized television drama, as found in *The West Wing*, *At the King's Table* and *The Crown Princess*.

Keywords: television drama, serial narrative, popular culture, representing politics, plot and format

Introduction

As is well known, watching drama – whether on TV, in the cinema or on stage – usually involves recognizing the events as they are played out and making some kind of judgment (aesthetically, morally, or otherwise) of the action the characters engage in. As Aristotle observed: Drama is about people performing actions. Actions put the interests and commitments of people into perspective, thus forming the basis for conflicts and choices decisive to the next course of action. This basic principle of drama was formulated in *The Poetics*, where Aristotle also made several observations about the guiding compository principles of a successful drama.

Today, Aristotle's principles are particularly notable in mainstream cinema as well as in popular television drama, where the predominant narrative technique requires action and character as main entry points for the viewers' understanding and experience of the story. As for the aims of the plot, the conflicts evolving, the inter-relation of characters and their place in the story, this emphasis on events and characters favors easily accessible narratives. Accordingly, due to these narrative forms, viewers will find it easy to become engaged in the on-screen events that develop.

However, this emphasis on plot and character means that stories are anchored in personal rather than communal experiences. It is indeed a comparative advantage of television drama as a narrative form that the story will find a place for a whole ensemble

of more or less equally important characters. Yet the tendency to focus on plot and character implies a privatization of experiences and a resulting emphasis on the emotional aspects of conflict. Popular culture, specifically in the shape of mainstream cinema and television drama, is often criticized for not being capable of describing complex processes, structural mechanisms and the operative functions of institutions.

In a now canonized article on melodrama, Thomas Elsaesser notes that "the persistence of melodrama might indicate the ways which popular culture has not only taken note of social crises and the fact that the losers are not always those who deserve it most, but has also resolutely refused to understand social change in other than private contexts and emotional terms."¹ Brian Neve, in an evaluation of a large number of films about the U.S. presidency, echoes Elsaesser in his conclusive statement, arguing that "neither film nor other forms of popular culture seem to have the power to provide effective models of political participation or action."² In Neve's view, films from earlier periods were more frequently aimed at setting a political agenda. In the 1990s, however, Neve notes an increasing degree of disbelief in the political system as such. The critical approaches to popular culture evoked in the above by Elsaesser and Neve, suggest a continuation of the elitist cultural understanding represented by the Frankfurter school, whose approach underlies the still dominant view that popular cultural expressions are generally unfit as vehicles for social analysis.

Melodrama is, no doubt, the dominating mode of popular television shows. In effect, the narrative structures of mainstream film are the *modus operandi* of television series as well, if for no other reason because they are seen as normative. For any drama aimed at a larger audience, the communication of plot and emotion is fundamental. This begs the question, in light of the quotes by Elsaesser and Neve above: Would any conflict portrayed in the traditional drama format inevitably focus on the fate of individuals, or is it possible to place individual experiences within a larger structural frame and still maintain the need for narrative progression and closeness to personal conflict inherent in the traditional drama?

The present article will discuss the representation of political relations and political issues in popular television drama.³ The main question is not whether popular television drama can depict true-to-life political events (although that is an issue as well, albeit of lesser concern), but rather whether the dramatic focus relates to the political sphere or to the private sphere. As noted, popular drama subscribes to a narrative form in which the action informs how we perceive the characters, rather than knowledge about a community or an institution. Communities and institutions can serve as a background to the action or represent limitations to what can be done, but their integral dynamics and working logics are seldom scrutinized. However, this last assertion seems to miss some of the narrative possibilities upon which popular drama in its serialized form can draw. Using extensive courses of events and wide casts of characters, the television drama is well suited, often more so than the feature film, to enhanced plots and in-depth portrayals of relations and backgrounds.

Yet it is still expected of a television drama that it fulfill the popular demand for plot enhancement and for vitality in conflicts. This implies several dilemmas in the presentation of political action in a dramatic context. The nature of politics involves numerous formal procedures, lengthy documents, long meetings, complex discussion, drawn-out bureaucratic processes and undefined deadlines, whereas a television drama demands a clearly defined course of events, strong individuals, clear-cut conflicts and progressive suspense.

As indicated above, it is indeed questionable whether the dramatic format is really a suitable framework for depicting political action. Is it really possible to credibly present political processes and issues in a television series without compromising the need for action and plot in a drama? This is the dilemma discussed in the following analysis of three serial television dramas centered on the world of politics; *Ved kongens bord* ([*At the King's Table*] screened on the Norwegian state channel NRK, 2005), *Kronprinsessan* ([*The Crown Princess*] screened on the Swedish state channel SVT, 2006) and the first two seasons of *The West Wing* (screened on the US network channel NBC, 1999-2006).

These three series illuminate a number of issues relating to the representation of politics in a dramatic format. First, they focus on two entirely different political environments, i.e. Scandinavian parliaments and government and the Administration of the U.S. President. Second, the presentation of the mechanisms of politics differs widely between the Scandinavian series and *The West Wing*. Third, the formats of the three series provide different frameworks for their respective plots. Yet there are many similarities, too, most strikingly in that the lion's share of the action takes place in the corridors and offices housing the strategic political operations. While advisers and bureaucratic staff play key roles, a bare minimum of the events relate to the elected chambers (Stortinget in Norway, Riksdagen in Sweden, the Senate in the U.S.) or the population. Accordingly, a major topic in this discussion will be whether these dramas seek to reflect real-life politics and political institutions or whether scandal, emotional conflict and dramatic events tend to dominate their plots.

Politics in the Shape of Drama

Totaling at 155 episodes and screened on the network channel NBC, *The West Wing* featured a rich ensemble cast throughout its seven seasons. Executive producer Aaron Sorkin wrote most of the episodes of the first four seasons. It is relatively well known that Aaron Sorkin, together with producers John Wells and Thomas Schlamme, originally planned for the President to appear in *The West Wing* only occasionally. Sorkin's primary focus was on White House staff. But he changed his mind eventually. The President was going to be at the heart of events after all and star in every episode. However, this change of direction did not affect Sorkin's original idea. Apart from the president himself, *The West Wing* features at least five central staff members at the core of events, a large number of individuals representing different roles at the White House and members of the President's family.

Several characters bear a striking resemblance to persons who in real life made a mark as White House aides in the Clinton Administration, some of whom later became notable political commentators (George Stephanopoulos, Dee Dee Meyers, Paul Begala). Sorkin himself rejects the Clinton association as purely coincidental.⁴ Less coincidental, no doubt, is the frequent use of consultants with ample real-life White House experience, such as Dee Dee Meyers (Clinton's Press Secretary), Patrick Caddell (who arranged polls for Jimmy Carter) and a number of other Washington insiders (Democrats and Republicans). Also, Sorkin communicated regularly with members of staff to find new ideas for his plots and for feedback on his scripts. Meyers and Caddell, both listed as project consultants throughout the first season, even helped write some of the episodes. For the second season, Sorkin also employed Marlin Fitzwater, a former adviser to Ronald Reagan.

The two Scandinavian series share a number of characteristics and have very similar basic ideas as their starting point. Though the influence of *The West Wing* is noticeable, these series are distinctly different. A mini-series spanning six episodes, *Ved kongens bord* centers on Health Minister Tove Steen, with events stretching over approximately one year. *Kronprinsessan* spans four episodes and places Environment Minister Charlotte Ekblad at the core of events. Both series focus on a relatively young woman with a family who unexpectedly is offered a seat in the Norwegian and Swedish governments, respectively.

Ved kongens bord was screened on NRK in the spring of 2005. It was co-written by the experienced director and screenwriter Leidulv Risan and journalist Nina Sandås, with Åse Vikene as dramatic adviser. Roy Jacobsen, well-known author and supporter of the Labor Party, was script consultant together with author Arne Berggren. Reflecting an idea strongly promoted by NRK, their point of departure was to create a Norwegian variety of *The West Wing*. As noted above about the American series, the Norwegians too made use of heavy political experience, most notably by employing as project consultant the previous State Secretary to the Prime Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre (the current Minister of Foreign Affairs).

The creators of this series wished to present a broad picture of political processes and to stimulate public political discussion. In fact, it was a written ambition to "present a truthful depiction of contemporary politics in Norway."⁵ Director Leidulv Risan also expressed a hope that he could contribute to building up increased respect in the public for the choices forced upon politicians by the dilemmas facing them every day in their work.⁶ This view, too, aligns well with the ideals formulated by the creators of *The West Wing*. Yet *Ved kongens bord* also follows another major trend in serialized television, namely celebrating the heroes of everyday life. This was hardly new to NRK Drama. Previous NRK productions attempting this – with various levels of success – include *Brigaden* [The Fire Brigade] (2002) and *Skolen* [The School] (2004). In American television this trend is clearly noticeable in series such as *The Third Watch* (NBC, 1999-2005) and *E.R.* (NBC, 1994-). *Ved kongens bord*, as well as *Skolen*, could also be seen as an attempt at reaffirming NRK's long-standing tradition for popular education, due to its commitments as a public broadcasting channel. In serialized drama, these educational ideals had been virtually absent since *Offshore* (1996), a long-running series aimed at describing Norway's watershed transformation into an oil economy.

Kronprinsessan, a Swedish-Danish co-production, was screened on SVT in the winter of 2006. The director, Kathrine Windfeld, is Danish, and the screenwriters, Sara Heldt and Pia Gradvall, Swedish. Produced by Anna Croneman and based on a novel by Danish author Hanne-Vibeke Holst, *Kronprinsessan* had an all-female team heading the production. Apparently, one of the reasons that the series became a Swedish production was that the story was considered too close to Danish political reality. Hanne-Vibeke Holst is a former journalist whose substantial authorship conveys a clearly feminist profile. The follow-up to *Kronprinsessan* (2002), *Kongemordet* [The King's Murder] (2005), deals largely with the same political circles and according to recent plans, this work, too, is to be filmed as a Swedish TV series directed by Kathrine Windfeld.

***The West Wing* – Making Meaning by Means of Melodrama**

There is little doubt that *The West Wing* helped re-shape American television viewers' perceptions about politics. During the 2000 election campaign, you could see "Bartlet for President" stickers on cars. One poll actually asked respondents how they would

have voted had Bartlet run for president. It is tempting, perhaps, to attribute such phenomena to mere nonsense or to lacking competence in distinguishing reality from fiction. However, many Americans may sense that the real presidents and White House staff do not possess the kind of respect for their office and commitment to ideals expressed by President Bartlet and his staff in the fictional *West Wing*. President Bartlet, by the way, has frequently been described as a Clinton without vices. One common criticism, unsurprisingly, has been that the series is too much of a wishful Democrat dream, and inevitably some prefer to call it "The Left Wing."

In the first season of *The West Wing*, there is a great deal of emphasis on the President's outsider background. Bartlet, a winner of the Nobel Prize in economics, is a true intellectual who makes frequent references to Roman history in his discussions with military leaders, lectures his staff in Latin phrases and has a firm grip on the text of the Bible. The President is portrayed as a Washington outsider, in the sense that Washington is often seen as dominated by professional politicians out of touch with the public. The President's staff comes forward as forming a harmonious, almost idyllic, work environment.⁷ They are depicted as hard-working, dedicated people who, in combination with the immense human and intellectual capacity of the president, aim to restore public confidence in Washington by demonstrating how politics can be consistently idealistic, yet also pragmatic.⁸

The West Wing is a hybrid form of the episodic structure of the series format and the continuous dramatic involvement of the serial format. In a series there is a beginning and end to a main course of events in every episode; in a serial events continue to develop from episode to episode. Basically, *The West Wing* follows the pattern of the series – a majority of the political issues are solved in every episode, but some issues may resurface later. At the same time, a number of parallel events relating to the individual regular characters continue to develop throughout the season. The hybrid format is even more distinct in the second season, which begins with a double episode about an attempted assassination, and the last four episodes deal with how the staff members relate to the news that the President has MS.

All in all, the series presents a wide range of issues to be handled by the White House. Each episode features at least one main event, and two or three additional events that may or may not be connected with the main event. In most cases at least one event is unrelated. There are also several story lines that deal primarily with the private life of a staff member, but that might also have political implications. An example would be Sam's acquaintance with a call girl or Leo's history of alcohol and drug abuse, which are subsequently exploited by political opponents as weak points of the Administration.

The continuous personal stories relating to most of the staff members add depth and development to the characters; Sam's vainglorious showing off of his brilliance, C.J.'s frequent flirts with the journalist Danny Concannon, President Bartlet's worsened health condition and its effects on his wife. These stories force us to perceive the characters not as mere figures, but as persons with real qualities and histories. This is also why it becomes so important to us, the viewers, that the characters succeed in their political processes – this is not about the issues as such, but about our sympathy for the position of the character dealing with them.

The political issues in an episode are somehow nearly always connected with a personal relationship. A point in case is "Six Meetings Before Lunch" (season 1, episode 18), where Mallory, a teacher, cancels her date with Sam because he wrote a memo containing criticism of the public school system. In the following discussion about school politics,

the big question building up is whether Sam will manage to argue his case well enough to get a new date with Mallory or if he will have to change his opinions to win her over. Following events reveal that Sam had been instructed to write a memo reflecting the views of the opposition, but refrained from telling Mallory in order to let her have the pleasure of arguing her own views, even if that implied putting the proposed date at risk. The complexity of it all lends political *and* dramatic potency to the scenes involving Sam and Mallory, while viewers are rewarded with a happy romance after all.

The most profound inter-relations between personal relations and political conflict, however, involve the President himself. In "Take This Sabbath Day" (1.14), the President has 48 hours to pardon a prisoner on death row. Sam and Toby are devoting their time to the cause of the convicted prisoner. President Bartlet is opposed to capital punishment, but unsure whether the right thing to do is to follow his own conviction rather than acting in line with public opinion. The president appears increasingly paralyzed by indecision as the deadline approaches. At last, he decides to call his childhood priest to the White House. The final scene sees the president kneeling before his priest in The Oval Room to ask forgiveness as time runs out for reprieve.

The tableau-like scene at the end, with the kneeling, bowing President, contrasts sharply with many other episode endings. Quite frequently at the end of an episode, central staff members are seen gathered in some sort of formation. In "In Excelsis Deo" (1.10), they are seen finding their place in a row, one by one, while watching joyously a child choir singing a Christmas psalm. This scene is crosscut with a volley of shots from the military funeral of a homeless veteran. In "Let Bartlet Be Bartlet" (1.19), Leo, the chief of staff, has called the troops to his office for a pep talk. Josh, C.J., Sam and Toby form a semi-circle as they take turns repeating the oath they made upon entering their White House posts: "I serve at the pleasure of the president." "Mandatory Minimums" (1.20) sees the staff one by one visiting the presidential bedroom, where Bartlet has withdrawn to nurse his flu, in order to seek his advice and support.

These tableau-like endings belong to a long-standing melodramatic tradition, but serve a number of functions in *The West Wing*. They demonstrate the joint strength of the main characters, whose trials and tribulations help build a mutually reinforcing community. At the same time, the president, whose support and belief in their shared efforts is indispensable, becomes a father figure to his staff, thus reflecting the national position of the White House office as a place for leadership and security.⁹

Melodramatic narrative structures are applied not only occasionally; they are dominant throughout the series. According to some writers, *The West Wing* fits neatly in the traditional romantic mythical structure, as defined by Northrop Frye and later applied by Hayden White and others.¹⁰ *The West Wing* narratives subject the president and his staff to numerous and difficult trials, which only helps to reaffirm, however, the image of the United States as a military and moral superpower led by a fundamentally patriarchic office.

Information and Dilemmas

The events in *The West Wing* are purely fictional. The show seemed to mirror current real political issues in several of the episodes, and in many cases the show became a point of reference for political commentators and other insiders.¹¹ Several episodes had stories based on real events or hinted at how White House staff would have acted in a given situation. The political subject matter can be roughly divided into four sub-

categories: response to particular events in the public, like hate-triggered crime ("Take Out the Trash Day", 1.13) or an appeal for pardon ("Take This Sabbath Day"), is one. A second category, the relationship between the White House and Congress, is covered extensively, specifically on the many occasions where the staff have to maneuver between special interest groups and elected representatives to secure a majority vote ("Five Votes Down," 1.4). Military operations on foreign soil constitute a third category ("A Proportional Response," 1.3); a fourth would include federal issues ("Six Meetings Before Lunch"). Departures from these topical categories include fund collection ("20 Hours in LA," 1.16) and, in "Let Bartlet Be Bartlet," the role of presidency weighing Bartlet down. Moreover, as most episodes include a handful of interconnecting issues, every episode covers a variety of topics.

However, if the wide scope of political issues and topics helps paint the big picture of White House operations, the focus remains primarily on the preparation and handling of political issues rather than on their outcome. For instance, in questions regarding military intervention ("A Proportional Response"), we learn how the commander-in-chief and his military leaders evaluate various forms of retaliation after a minor attack on US troops. All events in the episode take place in the White House. There are no confrontations with next-of-kin or witnesses to the military action in question. The suspense in this case lies with the President's own doubts: Will the generals respect his position as commander-in-chief? After all, he has no military background. Moreover, should the President let himself be led by his growing rage on behalf of the nation and accordingly mount a military response that is out of proportion? President Bartlet's frustrations and doubts evolve into a debate on the United States' role as military superpower. Bartlet's war rhetoric brings to mind White House policies in the wake of the 9/11 attacks – but in this fictional case, the military leaders win the president over with sensible counter-arguments.

In "Five Votes Down", the Administration needs five more votes to ratify new legislation that will regulate public access to automatic weapons. Strikingly, there is little information in the series about the intended effects of such legislation, lobbyists are notably absent and there is no footage of street gun sales. Instead, the focus is purely political, with heavy emphasis on the use of the party whip to establish a majority, a process that also provides a glimpse of the delicate balance of power between the President and the Vice President. The thin lines between the abstract and the specific are also apparent in "Six Meetings Before Lunch." The issue at stake here is a potential compensation to be paid out to slave descendants, estimated at a stunning 1.7 trillion dollars. One might assume that such an amount would render all discussion irrelevant, but not here. Indeed, it is the discussion itself that provides the lifeblood of this story, despite or maybe because of the lacking prospect of a solution. The sharpening of minds through endless discussion is what keeps the Democrat discourse going.¹²

For what it's worth, *The West Wing* could be defined as politically educational television, and given the topic, its overwhelming success amongst American viewers may be perceived as an unexpected phenomenon. Yet, in combining dramatic narrative techniques with the presentation of political issues, the creators of *The West Wing* may have found an effective new recipe for popular television. The quite equally distributed attention awarded the various characters enables frequent scene changes and parallel events, typically two to four story lines in each episode. In most cases, each story line involves several staff members. But in most discussions, staff members appear in a variety of pairs, in short, intense scenes (called *snippets*).¹³ For example, Donna, walking

hurriedly through the corridors, will be talking to Josh about a pressing issue. In the next scene, C.J. will join in and continue the conversation with Josh; Donna steps aside and Josh ends up in Leo's office to hear his opinion. All this walking and speedy talking in corridors might appear slightly frantic, but it does provide the conversations with a pictorial dynamic, and the frequent change of interlocutors prevents deadlock in the dialogues.

While some critics have commended *The West Wing* for a realistic (as in close to reality) representation of the corridors of politics, others argue that its depiction of the White House work environment is quite unrealistic. To support the latter argument, critics point to an all too harmonious presentation of the staff; there is no internal rivalry or conflict, no favoring of any one in particular, no staff member with controversial career ambitions. They are all allowed to speak openly – even to the President – with no risk of being left in the cold. The only exception to this administrative ideal is the Vice President, but he has a political agenda of his own. Indeed, the tackling of several issues is no doubt rather unrealistically presented, such as when the President appoints new members of the federal election committee without going through the House of Senates ("Let Bartlet be Bartlet"). In real life this would be preposterous. In the episode in question, Bartlet's course of action implies that he, the President, has regained the political initiative – in his opinion he doesn't need to follow consensus in all matters at hand.

Critics praising the series tend to emphasize its brilliant portrayal of White House operations. The discussions and issues are rich in perspective. For example, Josh and Donna's many dialogues cover a wide range of topics: should the budget surplus be distributed to the population or used to finance public spending ("Mr. Willis of Ohio," 1.6)? Is it legitimate to use taxpayers' money to save Mexico from a financial disaster ("Bad Moon Rising", 2.19)? In season two, Sam and Ainsley Hayes have numerous conversations about the dividing lines between the ideologies of the Democrats and the Republicans.

Significant political statements are explained through engaging dialogue, never preachy but with ample room for the pros and cons. Also, the characters display a genuine devotion to their causes. The episodes deal with a number of topics relating to form of government and democracy. Viewers learn about the impact of polls on the preparation of issues, the basic principles of census, the meanings of "lame duck sessions" and "filibusters". Bartlet's MS announcement to his staff in season two entails discussions on several constitutional questions: Has Bartlet misled the American people, and, if so, what are the legal implications? In this, and similar situations, *The West Wing* provides valuable insight into what goes on behind closed doors, where the media are never let in.¹⁴

Never Just a Politician

The protagonist of *Ved kongens bord* (*At the King's Table*) is a former elected representative for Conservative Youth (Unge Høyre). Unexpectedly, Tove Steen is appointed Minister of Health in a fictional right-center coalition government, not unlike the Norwegian Bondevik government in the years 2001-2005, which was headed by a pragmatic prime minister from the Christian Democrats (Kristelig folkeparti) and had the Conservatives' party leader as Minister of Foreign Affairs. A real life model for Tove Steen could be the former Minister for Local Government and current leader of the Conservatives, Erna Solberg. Like Solberg, Steen is relatively young and went directly from public anonymity

to national fame as an outspoken member of the government. Both are unafraid to front unpopular issues or budget cuts in the media and eager to argue that political decisions should follow ideological guidelines to a larger degree. Less importantly, they are both connected with Bergen, Norway's second largest city. But whereas Solberg was a seasoned politician when she became a minister, Tove Steen was called into office owing to her background as a health economist.

In *Kronprinsessan* [The Crown Princess] the leading character is Charlotte Ekblad, who quite out of the blue is short-listed for the post as Minister of Environment, as the Social Democrats prepare internal changes in the government. Although this series was based on a Danish novel, the story is smoothly adapted to Swedish politics. Charlotte Ekblad (Charlotte Damgaard in the novel) has been associated with the Dane Anita Bay Bundegaard, Development Minister in the government of Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, and the Swede Mona Sahlin, the former Minister for Sustainable Development in Göran Persson's government.¹⁵ As with Tove Steen, Charlotte Ekblad's main force is professional expertise, owing to her background as leader of an influential environment group. Expertise is an important, if not singular argument for offering Steen and Ekblad a government seat. Norway's and Sweden's (fictional) governments both need fresh blood to tackle the major challenges ahead.

The two Nordic drama series have even more in common. At the beginning of the drama series, both Tove Steen and Charlotte Ekblad are preparing to move abroad. Their husbands have been offered vacancies as guest lecturer at Harvard and leader of a development project in Uganda, respectively. Modern, equal women with a career of their own, both see their husband's new job as an opportunity to realize an old dream previously rendered impossible due to family obligations. In both cases, when the call from the Prime Minister comes at the very moment suitcases are packed and everyone is set to go, the husbands convince their wives to say yes to the chance of a lifetime. But as events evolve, their initial enthusiasm wears off. On several occasions, both Tove Steen and Charlotte Ekblad sense that their husband feels ignored and let down by his wife's massive workload. Simultaneously, Tove Steen and Charlotte Ekblad suddenly find themselves caught in a political crossfire involving an aggressive press, backfiring from fellow members of party and government and urgent decision-making. Despite mounting pressures, however, the political power play has an intoxicating effect. Both ministers jump at the chance when offered a secure seat in the next election by their constituencies. The following election becomes a success just as predicted, but the controversial ministers both end up withdrawing from the government following devastating political intrigues.

There are multiple pressures on the two female ministers, in the shape of political operations, domestic demands and an acute media interest owing both to their lack of political experience and to their position as inspiring and attractive women. This brings to mind Liesbeth van Zoonen's analysis of the relationship between politics and popular culture. In *Entertaining the Citizen* (2005), van Zoonen demonstrates how leading female politicians are consistently faced with a discourse relating to their role as mother and wife.¹⁶ According to van Zoonen, this habitual association corresponds closely with the portrayal of women in film and television as "the glue" of the family and chief provider of welfare for husband and children. In van Zoonen's view, this pop-cultural frame of reference continues to inform media and public expectations about female politicians. Public interest in female politicians still tends to focus on domestic sacrifice, rather than political issues and achievements. But how would van Zoonen's analysis apply

in the Scandinavian countries? According to Gunhild Agger, who conducted numerous interviews for an article on *Kronprinsessan*, indeed it does: Female politicians are still asked frequently to comment on how they tackle the double role of mother and minister; male colleagues who are also fathers rarely face the same question.¹⁷

Although both Scandinavian productions take this perspective into account, the presentations differ. In the Swedish series, emphasis is on the media hunt for delicate details in Charlotte Ekblad's family relations. The break-up of her marriage in the wake of her husband's affair hits the tabloid front pages immediately. Media attention is also paid to her personal finances and the use of a government car to pick up her child from kindergarten. There is no such pressure on Tove Steen. Although her private life, too, hits the front pages eventually, the reason is more connected with hard politics. Steen enters into a love affair with the leader of the parliamentary health committee, who moreover is from the Labor Party. Tove Steen's insistence that this affair belongs to the private sphere is naïve at best, and a clear indication of a lack of regard for the ethical guidelines of politics.

Kronprinsessan and *Ved kongens bord* both deal extensively with the demands on family life faced by people in a leading political position. Both series provide a critical stance on media interest in infidelity and other private topics. However, the communication of this criticism is double, in that so much attention is paid to conflicts arising from such issues. Hence, these series also validate exactly the sort of stereotypes outlined by van Zoonen. Charlotte Ekblad and Tove Steen are the only political office holders shown in family settings.¹⁸ Only the female politicians have to relate to expectations of a harmonious family life. A similar topic, by the way, is dealt with in ABC's series on the first female president of the USA, *Commander in Chief*, where Macenzie Allen needs to tackle not only politics, but also her capricious teenage daughter and grumpy husband.

In many respects, this is a striking contrast to *The West Wing*, but even the President has interest in his roles as father and husband. This is the case particularly in "Ellie" (2.14), where Bartlet is seen struggling with his relationship with his second-oldest daughter. In the first as well as the second season, there are also several husband-and-wife rows. Yet these family conflicts are never completely removed from or uninfluenced by the political business of the President. Bartlet is never observed being just husband or father, he is always also the president.¹⁹

Love and Murder as Dramatic Engines of Politics

Ved kongens bord, a mini-series that follows events from episode to episode, is different from *The West Wing* with regard to format, but there are aspects of the hybrid format even in *Ved kongens bord*. For instance, each episode features conflicts that are left behind in the following episodes. In the first episode, Tove Steen, not yet toughened up by her advisers and bureaucrats, is seen making a stumbling performance in a parliamentary speech. Following Steen's announcement of a political departure from her predecessor, her parliamentary adviser decides to go behind her back. In the second episode, Steen needs to handle an internal leakage to the press and at the same time defend a controversial government policy in dealings with a mortally ill boy. In the third episode, Steen is looking for a solution to a temporary crisis in the cooperation with Russia whilst dealing with a refugee who has kidnapped his children. The fourth episode includes negotiations with the parliamentary opposition in a case that threatens to split the Government, and in the fifth episode, Steen is on the campaign trail for the

coming election. The final episode has a parallel climax of dramatic events in the Russia cooperation *and* in Steen's love affair with Harald Dahl.

Unlike *The West Wing*, *Ved kongens bord* is not based on events that are imitations of real-life events, at least not as regards the main story about cooperation between health institutions initiated at the government level in Norway and Russia. This is definitely a future scenario moved to the present. The series speculates in what might happen if a Norwegian hospital were to establish a joint venture with research labs in Russia. As the story unfolds, good intentions inadvertently lead to a number of serious ethical dilemmas. *Ved kongens bord* thus presents a fictional case of real Norwegian politics.

The dramatic line of conflict, however, centers not on the political issues as such but on the intrigues of power and influence. The political process as such, involving alliances across party lines and bilateral negotiations, is concluded. The cooperation with Russia, then, primarily involves sorting out the difficulties that arise and relating to a critical press. Whether the depictions of ministerial bureaucracy are true to form is hard to determine. The focus here is on the pressures experienced by the minister, and the presentation of those pressures seems real enough.

The cooperation with Russia eventually unveils a major political scandal, including illegal activities, possible financial corruption and the murder of a Russian journalist who asked one question too many. This course of events is quite far removed from real-life Norwegian politics. A Norwegian journalist who is familiar with Russian conditions – and happens to be a close friend of Tove Steen – uncovers the circumstances of his Russian colleague's murder, which is related to delicate information about the Norwegian hospital in Russia. This part of *Ved kongens bord* is reminiscent of a number of American films about political journalists exposing uncomfortable truths with serious political implications.

The other major dramatic conflict in *Ved kongens bord* concerns personal relations. There is considerable quality in the descriptions of the private costs of a political position, in the form of long workdays, frequent traveling and removal from the family. Only the depictions of private and personal situations bring viewers really close to the characters. Typically, the political implications of Steen's affair with Harald Dahl never really surface, and the ethical dilemmas of their relationship are hardly discussed at all. Public knowledge of a secret affair between a member of government and an influential member of the largest opposition party would have wide-ranging ramifications, politically *and* private, but the main concern of these two lovers is keeping the relationship secret to protect their families. In real life, the stepping down of at least one of the lovers involved would be inevitable, as would a noisy public mess in the media and the parliament. In *Ved kongens bord* the political implications are somehow removed from the events to enable sharper focus on the circumstances of the relationship.

As a dramatic format, the mini-series implies a dualism in its dramaturgic development. It requires a solution to be found in the last episode for the plots triggered by events introduced in the first episode, often within a short time frame. The traditional means to this end is to tighten up events in the two final episodes, often with a soft ending following the final climax. However, as events develop through several episodes, new dramatic threads are spun off, some of which serve only to keep up the intensity throughout the rest of one episode. In *Ved kongens bord*, the scandal with criminal aspects and the love story both serve as dramatic engines through several episodes. In reality, there is a large degree of consensus and remarkably few saucy scandals in Norwegian politics, which may be a good excuse for taking such dramatic liberties as

in *Ved kongens bord*. But in consequence, attempts at providing political insight are largely overshadowed by the dramatic course of events.

In *Kronprinsessan*, there are no events at this scale and the progression is more episodic. Yet, here too there are dramatic elements that tend to overshadow the political issues at hand for Charlotte Ekblad. At the core of the story, there is an ever-growing sense of conspiracy, and eventually it will lead to her downfall. The Prime Minister and most of his ministers are uncooperative, there are unfaithful servants in Ekblad's staff and a ruthless press is at her. And, to make the mess complete, her husband has an affair. With personal pressures mounting at the core of events, there is barely a glimpse of Charlotte Ekblad's political agenda.

Idealism, Reality and the Ugly Face of Power in Scandinavian Politics

Halfway through the third episode of *Ved kongens bord*, Health Minister Tove Steen calls a meeting with her most senior staff, the State Secretary, the Political Adviser, the Press Spokesman and the Secretary General. In a short span of time following her appointment, the Minister's standing has taken substantial beatings: Polls are unfavorable and media pressures are high. The collaboration with Russia, inherited from her predecessor, appears to involve an illegal market for donor organs. With party leaders and fellow ministers failing to support her and members of parliament looking to table a vote of no confidence, misery seems complete for the outspoken, reform-zealous Health Minister. She desperately needs a victory, personally *and* politically, to regain momentum and reset the political agenda.

In the hectic but efficient meeting, Tove Steen demands space for creative thinking. The minister and her staff develop a number of new ideas around the table. Analyses and proposals are discussed, concerns with public opinion and government partners evaluated, and a forgotten but valuable report is put on the table. At the end of the meeting a whole new set of measures is ready. New legislation relating to donors is to be presented together with a new fund for families involved, so as to take into account both ethical considerations and political gains. In the process, the Health Minister displays ample capability for renewal, pragmatism and competence and is yet again well positioned on a winning track.

The scene described above is decisive to the dramatic course of events to follow. Such core scenes tend to direct events toward a turning point, introducing new aspects and actions that may change the direction of subsequent events. At this point in the story, Tove Steen has faced skepticism and misfortune at every turn. The time has now come for her bad luck to change – at least temporarily. But from a viewer's perspective there is credibility at stake: Is staking out new policies through brainstorming, in the course of an hour just after breakfast, a truthful presentation of policy-making? Do health policies really undergo major changes of direction without any involvement from lobbyists or workgroups, outside the parliamentary committees and with no internal discussion in the party?

Of course not. Despite questionable credibility, however, what this scene, and the series as a whole, does communicate successfully is that policy-making results from decisions made by individuals, or workgroups, not from processes or systems. In other words, policies need be linked with a person or they cannot be implemented. It is hardly a completely true assertion; political decisions require a whole set of systems and processes, including legislation, party groups, lobbyists and bureaucratic bodies. But strong

will and intelligence will certainly help push an issue through the system. What *Ved kongens bord* does is to skip the first part of the process and focus exclusively on the personal concerns of political decisions. The few attempts at showing the consequences of the decisions made are carried out in a purely fictional fashion.

To a large degree, it is the individual issues discussed in every episode that best illustrate the political work of a minister and the issues surfacing in the process. The political content and related dilemmas are particularly pronounced in the second episode. Shouldn't "the world's wealthiest country" open its funds wide for the treatment of patients, as the populist view would have it? Health Minister Tove Steen argues that "you can't buy yourself out of human suffering," a difficult yet more realistic and politically unpopular stand based on balanced principles. Steen sticks to principles even in her election campaign. The underlying intention, it appears, is to evaluate the nature of politics and the room for decision-making allowed politicians in a modern, media-focused society. If confidence in politics and, consequently, in democratic processes, is to be restored, politicians need to be more honest about their prioritizations and the press should avoid distorting the issues discussed.

In line with this view, the portrayal of Tove Steen in *Ved kongens bord* is of a model idealist politician. However, the series does question whether such a politician would actually survive the current political system with her idealism intact. The political activities and party-political relations depicted in *Ved kongens bord* are drenched in intrigue and double sets of morals. Power will corrupt any one who gets close to it. Hence, the game of politics overshadows its execution and personal interests are stronger than public interests.

The scandal uncovered by Tove Steen leads to her resignation as a minister. She also withdraws from the party, but decides to keep her seat in Stortinget as an independent representative. Interestingly, Norway's Constitution (from 1814) defines the parliament as a collection of individual representatives. It was written 60 years prior to the first formation of a political party in Norway. Tove Steen's decision to continue as an independent representative appears to imply also that you will truly serve your electorate only as an independent and act in line with your convictions only if you stand alone.

Charlotte Ekblad in *Kronprinsessan* is also a politician who emphasizes ideals. Her most prominent idea is to construct a system for keeping accounts of politicians' performance. This implies that all elected politicians should provide a review of their deliverance on all campaign promises. The intention, of course, is to re-establish confidence and fight the growing apathy of the electorate. As a result, Charlotte Ekblad becomes more of an ombudsman for the principles of democracy than a devoted Minister of Environment. Her lack of a background in the political establishment enables her to express the sentiments of the people. Avoiding diffuse statements and pragmatic positions and helped, no doubt, by her visual appeal, Ekblad soon enjoys immense popularity.

The political process in *Kronprinsessan* is consistently obscured by fractionalist activity in the government and the disloyalty of certain staff members. The shaping and making of policies and decisions are notably absent. Negotiations are scarce. Instead, the core issue, again, is the power game as such, with Charlotte Ekblad unwillingly at center stage. Political content is replaced by a cynical game in which positioning is everything – the building up and breaking down by the press and intolerable costs to family life are inevitable side effects. In this rather gloomy perspective, losing one of the most talented politicians becomes a calculated though necessary risk.

But despite this bleak depiction of political life in Sweden, *Kronprinsessan* ends well. Charlotte Ekblad celebrates her election to Riksdagen with her electorate. Unsubdued by the destructive elements of politics, Charlotte Ekblad promises to continue her fight for public interests. Thus, there is hope for change if people choose to give their support to those who deserve it. It is this basic democratic principle, rather than real politics, that is the major concern of *Kronprinsessan*.

Political Lessons

The West Wing, *Kronprinsessan* and *Ved kongens bord* share a desire for idealistic political action. *The West Wing* depicts a devoted staff and a paternal president united in their fight against external forces. Though they sometimes struggle to defend their pragmatic liberalism, they never lose sight of it. In *Kronprinsessan*, the government says no to Ekblad's radical proposal that politicians should be held accountable for their deliverance on promises. Charlotte Ekblad's honesty inevitably leads to her resignation. But the idea of the politician as the people's ombudsman lives on through Ekblad's convincing election to Riksdagen. *Ved kongens bord* is far more pessimistic. Here, political ideals are about to disappear all together. It remains possible to maintain idealist approaches, but only outside the confinements of the system.

In light of the perspectives on popular culture outlined initially, one may ask to what degree *The West Wing*, *Kronprinsessan* and *Ved kongens bord* connect dramatic conflict with personal interests or whether these series also manage to provide a presentation depicting processes and systems. In this respect, *The West Wing* is close to perfect. Indeed, there is ample use of pathos-heavy melodrama, with emotionally engaging scenes crucial to every episode. But the dramatic aspects never overshadow the presentation of political subject matter. On the contrary, the emphasis on the personal only serves as the engine needed for the presentation of political content.

Neither *Kronprinsessan* nor *Ved kongens bord* manage to achieve this. Here, the personal stories of the leading characters are completely intertwined with their political roles and in *Kronprinsessan* to such a degree that the two roles become nearly inseparable. Both Scandinavian series describe the internal mechanisms of politics from the point of view of one person. *Kronprinsessan* may seek to provide a presentation of women's conditions in top league politics in general. But its intense focus on a single person leaves little room for debating the condition of the system itself. Instead, any change that might occur would have to involve a change in attitude amongst the other characters involved.

The event-rich drama depicted in *Ved kongens bord*, too, concerns person rather than issue. The given conclusion, where the protagonist withdraws from her party to be able to pursue her political goals, hardly reflects a general analysis of the system. Up to the final episode, *Ved kongens bord* has personal and political events drawn up in parallel lines. However, in total, the extensive drama format, with Tove Steen facing multiple challenges involving staff, the press, fellow politicians and her own political field, enables a broad depiction of everyday politics. In this view, *Ved kongens bord* could be said to provide a reasonably well-made presentation of political activities and their preconditions.

Translation from Norwegian: Morten Solli

Notes

1. 'Tales of Sound and Fury', in Gledhill, Christine (ed.) (2002) *Home is Where the Heart is*, Bfi publishing, p. 47. Elsaesser's article was first published in 1972.
2. 'Frames of Presidential and Candidate Politics in American Films of the 1990s', *The Public*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2000), p. 29.
3. "Representation" can be a slippery term, but is here used much in line with the various articles in *Representation*, edited by Stuart Hall, where it signifies the meaning-making process. See Hall, Stuart (ed.) (1997) *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage.
4. Waxman, Sharon (2003) 'Inside *West Wing*'s New World', in Rollins, Peter C. & O'Connor, John E. (eds.) *The West Wing: The American Presidency as Television Drama*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
5. Quoted from 'Dramabrosjyren 2005', NRK Drama's presentation of its own productions.
6. For example, this link.: <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/kultur/2340100.html>
7. Levine, Myron A.: 'The West Wing (NBC) and The West Wing (D.C.)', in *The West Wing: The American Presidency as Television Drama*.
8. Lehmann, Chris 'The Feel-Good Presidency: The Pseudo-Politics of *The West Wing*', in *The West Wing: The American Presidency as Television Drama*.
9. Parry-Giles, Trevor & Parry-Giles, Shawn J. (2006) *The Prime Time Presidency. The West Wing and U.S Nationalism*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
10. *The Prime Time Presidency*.
11. Clark, Elizabeth J. (2005) 'The Bartlet Administration and Contemporary Populism in NBC's *The West Wing*', in Hammond, Michael & Mazdon, Lucy (eds.) *The Contemporary Television Series*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
12. Chambers, Samuel A. 'Dialog, Deliberation, and Discourse: The Far Reaching Politics of *The West Wing*', in *The West Wing: The American Presidency as Television Drama*.
13. Smith, Greg M.: 'The Left Takes Back the Flag: The Steadycam, the Snippet, and the Song in *The West Wing*'s 'In Excelsis Deo.'', in *The West Wing: The American Presidency as Television Drama*.
14. Pompper, Donnalyn 'The West Wing: White House Narratives That Journalists Cannot Tell', in *The West Wing: The American Presidency as Television Drama*.
15. See Agger, Gunhild (2007) 'Den dobbelte referanceramme – Kronprinsessan på dansk og svensk', in *Mediekultur*, 42/43.
16. van Zoonen, Liesbeth (2005) *Entertaining the Citizen: When Politics and Popular Culture Converge*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
17. In Norway the situation is less one-sided. Though the dailies have shown great interest in the private lives of politicians such as Karita Bekkemellem (the Labor Party) and Kristin Krohn Devold (The Conservative Party), there are numerous examples of male politicians interviewed about their families, including Lars Sponheim (The Liberal Party), Bjarne Håkon Hansen (Labor) and Erik Solheim (The Socialist Party). It is now legitimate in Norway even for a male politician to explain withdrawal from prominent positions with family considerations.
18. In *Ved kongens bord* we also see Harald Dahl, leader of the Health committee, occasionally with his wife who suffers from a serious case of multiple sclerosis.
19. In season five, however, when his daughter is kidnapped, Bartlet temporarily hands the presidential office over to the Republican majority leader.

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End-game Strategies in the Swedish National Tabloid Industry

KARL ERIK GUSTAFSSON

Abstract

Based on decades of comparative research on the national tabloid industry in the Nordic countries, a forecast is made, based on the product life cycle (PLC) theory, that the Swedish national tabloid industry will decline. As PLC theory is a blunt forecasting instrument, every precaution is taken; still a forecast is made that the No.2 tabloid will lose the present end-game to the market leader and disappear in 5-10 years time. End-game strategies as well as exit barriers are discussed in detail. The conclusions are valid for the national tabloid industries in the other Nordic countries following the same pattern of development. In passing, the question is raised of whether Internet publishing will change the rules of the game.

Keywords: national tabloid, PLC, declining industry, end-game strategies, exit barriers

Introduction

It took the Bonnier family, the biggest media owner in Sweden, 25 years to get the evening tabloid *Expressen* started in 1944 in Stockholm, the Swedish capital. The family council could not agree on whether the planned popular evening daily would hurt the reputation of or even overtake the position of its quality morning daily, *Dagens Nyheter*, as the biggest Swedish newspaper.

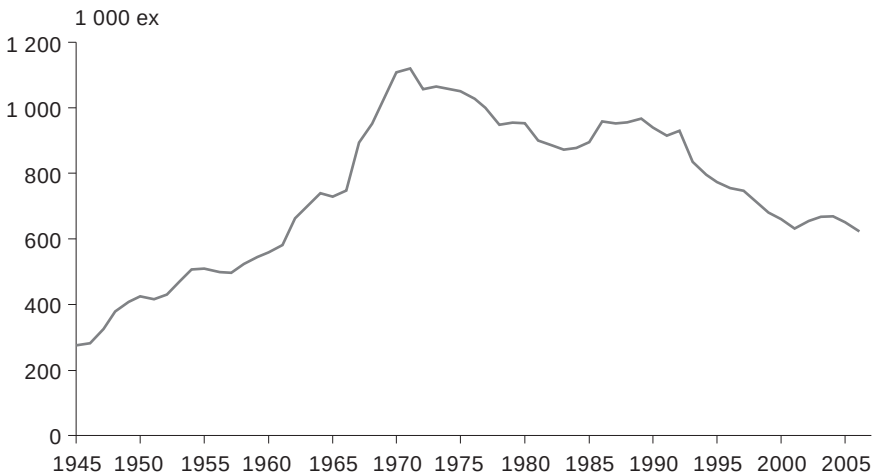
Some 25 years following its launch, *Expressen* hit a circulation record of 620,000 copies daily. Twenty-five years later, circulation numbers plunged to the lowest level ever. Now, 10 years after the plummet in circulation, which signalled a new negative trend, doubts could be raised as to whether the paper will be around another 25 years.

The Theory of the Product Life Cycle

There is a substantial risk that, in 5-10 years time, *Expressen* will lose the present end-game in the national evening tabloid industry to the current market leader, *Aftonbladet*, also published in Stockholm, but first launched in 1830. My doubts regarding the future of *Expressen* are based on the theory of the product life cycle.

Two-century Old Theory

Since the mid-1940s, the Swedish national tabloids *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen*, as an industry, have developed according to the s-formed curve called the product life cycle (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Aftonbladet and Expressen: circulation weekdays 1945-2006*

Note: The two regional evening tabloids, *Kvällsposten* and *GT*, are not included. They were bought by *Expressen* around 1990.

Source: *TS-boken*, yearly.

From the middle of the 1970s, when I started my research on the Swedish evening tabloid industry, PLC theory has been one of my starting points.

As a theory, PLC takes a resource-based competition view. Historically, this view dates from the beginning of the 19th century and is based on works by the economist David Ricardo (1772-1823). In modern times, these theories have been developed at the company and industry levels by Edith Penrose (1914-1996) and Michael Porter (1947-). The best-known work by Penrose is *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm* (1959). Porter's foremost work is called *Competitive Strategy* (1980).

The starting point of the resource-based competition theories is Ricardo's concept of comparative advantages. These advantages consist of differences in resources between companies in an industry and their relative ability to make full use of their unique competencies.

Approved Model of Analysis

Any schematic presentation of the life cycle shows that the Swedish national evening tabloid industry is in the decline stage. The outline of Porter's work follows the life cycle pattern and accordingly the book contains a chapter on "Competitive Strategy in Declining Industries". The strategies that are suitable for the phase of decline are called "end-game strategies". The schedule adjoining the outline of the chapter is reproduced here. It works as a guide to my forecast.

Outline Competitive Strategies in Declining Industries

1. Structural determinants of competition in decline

Conditions of demand

Exit barriers

Volatility of rivalry

2. Strategic alternatives in decline

Leadership

Niche

Harvest

Quick divestment

3. Choosing a strategy for decline

4. Pitfalls in decline

5. Preparing for decline

Source: Porter (1980), Chapter 12, pp. 254-274.

Porter's text builds mainly on a dissertation from 1979, completed at Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, by his doctoral student Kathryn Rudie Harrigan. Her empirical foundation consisted of data from about 60 companies in seven industries. The dissertation was later published under a new title: *Declining Demand, Divestiture, and Corporate Strategy*. Today, Rudie Harrigan is Henry Kravis Professor of Business Leadership at Columbia University in New York.

The account of the Porter chapter on the phase of the decline starts with a description of the conditions of competition in this phase. Then follows a description of the strategic alternatives and what these demand from the companies. The choice of strategy is discussed in regard to the comparative advantages and disadvantages of companies in a declining industry. Lastly, Porter warns of common pitfalls in decline and gives general advice to competitors regarding how to prepare for decline. David Ricardo would have appreciated Porter's presentation.

Blunt Forecasting Instrument

The analysis I present here is solely based on PLC theory. The question is whether one should do this. Is it really a reliable theory? The decisive test of any theory is whether one can make safe forecasts by applying it. In this case, there are three types of uncertainty: the division into periods, the development pattern, and the dynamics of competition.

Duration of Development Periods Uncertain

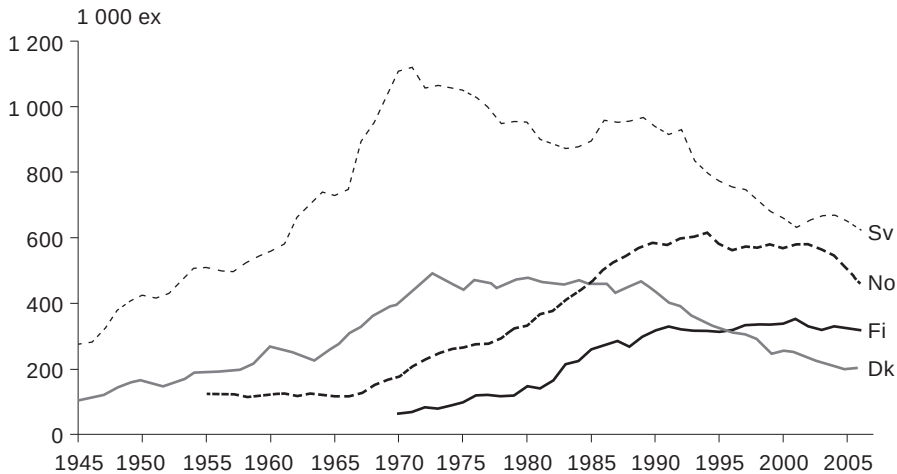
The phases of development – introduction, growth, maturity and decline – are of different length in different industries and it may be hard to determine in which phase a certain industry is at a certain point in time. This is a minor problem, because I concentrate on one industry. Furthermore, I corroborate my conclusions by comparing them with results obtained for the development of tabloid industries outside Sweden. Nevertheless, one has to admit that the theory in question is uncertain as an instrument of forecasting.

Diverging Development Patterns

The life cycle curve is not always neatly s-formed. Some products may just skip over the introduction. In the 1950s, television showed a steep growth curve instantly. Industries may prolong their maturity by adding attractive features to their basic product – the augmented product concept – or in that way even turn decline into growth. When

television changed from black and white to colour around 1970, a new growth phase followed with an even steeper growth curve.

Figure 2. National Evening Tabloids in the Nordic Countries 1945-2006



When I compare the development of the national evening tabloids in Sweden with the pattern of those of the other Nordic countries I feel assured. Comparable curves are presented in *Figure 2*. In all four Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, regional evening tabloids saw the introduction of the national evening tabloid as a new newspaper genre. They were issued in capital cities and were mainly sold in the capital region. The growth period started with a change in their business idea from a regional to a national newspaper.

This process began in Sweden in 1944 just with the start of *Expressen*, which did not wish to compete with the existing *Aftonbladet* concentrated on the Stockholm market where it was well established. The national tabloid *Expressen* gained such a lead in circulation that the *Aftonbladet* managers finally understood that it was no longer feasible to stick to the regional market idea. *Aftonbladet* followed suit and turned into a national tabloid. The competition between them led to further growth in the national tabloid market as more and more readers bought both tabloids. This dual buying was responsible for about one-third of the total circulation of the two tabloids.

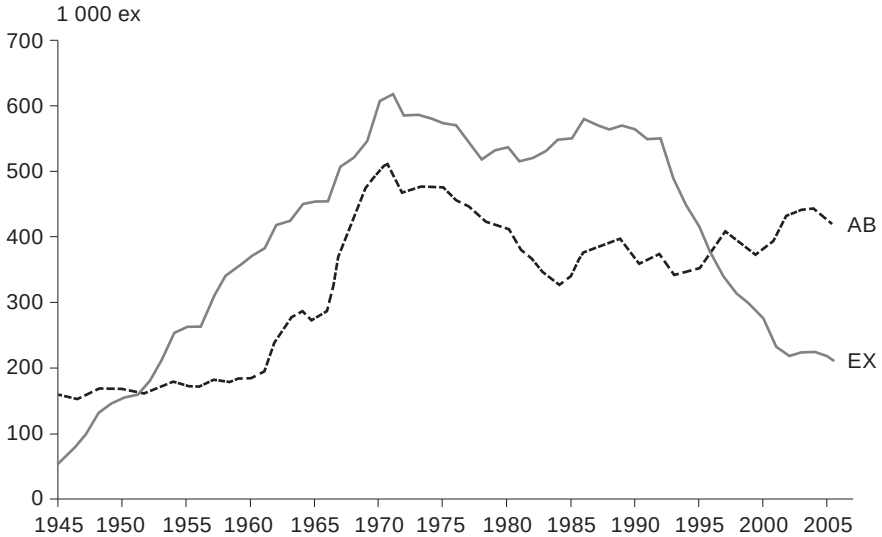
In Denmark, the two regional tabloids, *B.T.* and *Ekstra Bladet*, copied the Swedish national tabloids, as did *Dagbladet* and *VG* in Norway. National markets replaced regional capital markets. The Finnish national tabloid market started to grow in 1980 with the emergence of *Ilta-Sanomat*, to rival the region-based *Ilta-Sanomat*. Both became national tabloids.

In Finland, growth became rather drawn-out in time. In Denmark, attracting tabloid buyers using Bingo games prolonged maturity. This promotion method was practiced in Sweden in the 1960s during growth. Games propelled *Aftonbladet* into the national tabloid market.

The Swedish national tabloids were more successful than their Danish counterparts in prolonging their maturity period, to the extent that a new peak in the circulation curve was reached. Starting in 1984, supplements were issued systematically as circulation

promoters. *Aftonbladet* relaunched its Sunday supplement under the editorship of Amelia Adamo. These supplement offers boosted the Swedish national tabloid industry: an additional product at a low price. The results of the supplements can be observed in *Figure 3*, which shows the circulation figures for *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen*. *Aftonbladet* gained a comparative advantage regarding the supplements, which was difficult for *Expressen* to match. Perhaps the newspaper was prevented from doing so to avoid interfering with Bonnier's publication of magazines.

Figure 3. *Aftonbladet and Expressen 1945-2006*



At this troublesome moment for *Expressen*, Bonnier made a desperate move. According to Alsing (2005), in the summer of 1987, Albert and Lukas Bonnier called upon Thorbjörn Larsson, chief editor of *Aftonbladet* and

offered him a gilt-edged contract if he left *Aftonbladet* to become CEO of the Bonnier magazine group. The package included a grand and well-paid job for (his wife) Amelia Adamo as well as a long stay for them in the US where they without hurry would travel from the east coast to the west coast and study the world of printed press.

Thorbjörn Larsson told the owner of *Aftonbladet*, the Labour Union, that he would stay only if he was appointed editor-in-chief. The owner acquiesced.

It belongs to the history of the Swedish tabloid that a similar offer was made by Bonnier in the middle of the 1960s to Sven Sörmark, who spearheaded the successful turning of *Aftonbladet* into a national tabloid. Bonniers' bid that time bore fruit directly, and Sörmark left *Aftonbladet*. After pressure by the Labour Union, disappointed with Bonniers' trick, Sven Sörmark was allowed to return to *Aftonbladet* after some years.

Returning to present time, eventually, first Amelia Adamo and then Thorbjörn Larsson left for the Bonnier camp and stayed.

But it did not take much time for *Aftonbladet* to fill the sudden vacancies and the Bonnier family once again failed to break *Aftonbladet*. However, it apparently comforted

the Bonnier Group to at least have persuaded the successful magazine maker Amelia Adamo to join its ranks.

Capricious Competition

Of course, companies regard the life cycle curve as a challenge, particularly those in a declining industry. The competitive process of moves and responses may influence the course of the curve. The competition between *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* during the 1960s pushed the circulation curve to the highest level owing to dual buying. The introduction of supplements prolonged the maturity phase.

I thought that with its enormous success in Sweden *Expressen*, given its comparative advantages, would choose to expand abroad during maturity on the Swedish market. My speculation was based on the fact that at the beginning of the 1980s Bonnier started *Illustrerad Vetenskap*, a popular science magazine in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden at the same time. After a few years, a Finnish version followed. Bonnier-owned *Dagens Industri*, a tabloid financial daily, began its internationalization of the business tabloid. This started with *Äripäev* in Estonia. Why didn't *Expressen* go international, I wondered?

True, *Expressen* did engage in a daily in Riga, a daily established jointly by the Latvian government and *Expressen*, called *Diena*, but that was a quality morning daily. There were promising evening dailies to buy in Latvia, e.g. *Rigas Bals*, owned by the town of Riga for that matter, if *Expressen* as a risk minimizing strategy had wanted to take authorities onboard. Other markets in the east were just as open for the tabloid daily, a category that readers demanded most after the fall of communism. However, the inner compass did not work: In the east, the successful Swedish evening tabloid instead engaged itself in a traditional, quality morning daily.

Finally, *Expressen* found its way in the internationalization process and entered the Polish market as part owner of the tabloid *Super Express*, which was started by journalists who left another daily. For *Expressen*, however, it was too late for a wider diffusion of the concept. Instead the Ringier family, a newspaper owner in Switzerland, took over the tabloid markets in the east. In Switzerland, Ringier published the tabloids *Blick* and *Sonntags-Blick*, the two biggest Swiss papers. The tabloid Ringier started in 1994 in the Czech Republic was called *Blesk*, which simply means *Expressen*. It quickly became the biggest Czech paper. Ringier succeeded just as well in Hungary.

One may look indifferently on the failure of *Expressen* to go international. The Ringier family took charge of what the Bonnier family might have taken charge of. Family versus family, as the Swedish daily *Sydsvenskan* wrote when the Bonnier family in 1994 bought that paper from the Wahlgren family.

In any event, *Expressen* missed the train and in Sweden its circulation continued to drop. When the circulation of *Aftonbladet* plunged in the 1970s, it was cushioned by readers of social democratic leanings who began to grow in numbers when local and regional social democratic dailies all over the country had to close. *Expressen* had no such political base of support.

On the contrary, reader segments began migrating one after another: The sport fans were no longer interested in its hackneyed and monotonous sports reporting about alleged prearranged matches, immigrants who otherwise liked the paper for its layout, legible text and pictorial content could not possibly stand debasing banners calling on the authorities to "drive them out". To our advantage, they were not deported but did quit buying *Expressen*.

When Bonnier bought *Sydsvenskan*, the regional evening tabloid *Kvällsposten* was included. The latter was started at the end of the 1940s to prevent *Expressen* from penetrating South Sweden. At *Expressen*, managers saw an opportunity to enlarge circulation by turning *Kvällsposten* into an edition. This idea was realized when Bonnier added the regional evening tabloid *GT*, relaunched in the 1940s as a defence against an expansion of *Expressen* at that time in Western Sweden. The new edition *GT/Expressen* appeared in February 1998 and the new edition *Expressen/Kvällsposten* in April 1999. The expected synergies failed to materialize. The plunge of *Expressen*'s circulation was too big.

Common End-game Strategies

The three warnings against using the theory as a forecasting instrument call for discretion. Porter recommends that one first carefully analyse the development and current situation of the industry to determine whether the theory can explain the development.

Undoubtedly, the evening tabloid industry is in decline. You cannot explain the decline as part of a business cycle. *Expressen* lost 350,000 copies. More than half of its circulation disappeared. The paper has recovered a couple thousand copies. From 1994 to 2002, the aggregated financial losses amounted to 130 million Euros. A couple hundred thousand of that has been recovered. But none of this helps us answer the question of how much longer *Expressen* can sustain itself before dying: five, ten or twenty years? My guess is that it will happen 5-10 years from now.

Rudie Harrigan and Porter developed four decline strategies following a study involving about 60 companies. Transferred to the evening tabloid industry, the Swedish tabloids, depending on position and comparative advantages, might choose to

1. Seek a leadership position: the market leader *Aftonbladet* may concentrate on becoming the sole national tabloid. In such a position, the paper may increase its profitability by economies of scale in spite of savings from today's industry cooperation, e.g. in distribution and the selling of ads. In order to become the sole national tabloid, the market leader has to invest continuously, always raising the stakes, never giving the others a helping hand, and above all not increasing the current very low cover price. The market leader may lower the competitors' exit barriers by buying their assets. *Aftonbladet* might acquire one or both of the regional tabloids, *Kvällsposten* and *GT*, from *Expressen*, or produce its "TV-Guide" or Sunday supplement, and so on.
2. Differentiate: The other tabloids may find a geographical niche or other niches as a survival strategy or as a halting-place of exit. *GT* might become a city tabloid in Göteborg, while such a solution in Malmö would not be viable for *Kvällsposten*, as Malmö has always been a weaker market for tabloids than Göteborg has. *Expressen* might create a niche in Stockholm, a solution to which I will return.
3. Disinvest in controlled forms: The strategy implies different ways for the threatened papers to increase their cash flow by eliminating new investment, cutting maintenance and maybe, but this is a bold proposal, testing a price increase. However, if the tabloids in question lack advantages of strength they will not succeed. The reputation of *Expressen* has been badly hurt and it has few friends.
4. Divest quickly: In Denmark, *B.T.*, the second largest tabloid, turned into a more family-oriented magazine, but still it is tottering. As of April 2007, it is reported that it would offer more sex material on its pages, although not front page nudes. Once,

B.T. was the sports paper of choice and represented “the Danish smile”. It became the first tabloid in the Nordic area. A small-sized paper in Austria-Hungary inspired its creator during the First World War.

Expressen stands between the last two strategies. It will not do to try to augment products despite its close relations to the book publishing and DVD production by Bonnier companies. Here it is worth mentioning that one reason for *Dagens Nyheter*’s purchase of the film company Svensk Filmindustri in 1973 was to be able to distribute videogrammes with *Expressen*. One might say that *Dagens Nyheter* foresaw how things would turn out. In the summer of 2006, thirty-three years later, the copy buyers of the printed tabloid were offered DVDs at a very low price, and in the summer of 2007 (April to September), readers were offered a complete set of James Bond movies: twenty movies, one by one, week by week, for 59 crowns each. The Bond series was followed, starting in September 2007, by a 30-week series of classic books by “the world’s best authors”.

Bonnier has entered the free sheet industry by launching *Stockholm City*. One alternative for *Expressen* might be a merger with *Stockholm City* in order to respond to the competition from *Metro*, the pioneering free daily tabloid.

Pitfalls of Decline – And of Forecasting Decline

Porter mentions a number of potential pitfalls in decline and one of them is the failure by the industry to recognize the downturn. “They look for optimistic signs since pessimistic ones are so painful.” Firms in a declining industry might try to harvest without clear strengths.

These pitfalls of strategy might be regarded from another angle. They might be looked at as pitfalls of forecasting.

The Key Role of Aftonbladet

Should we believe that end-game is imminent in the national tabloid industry in Sweden? Is it not easy for the tabloids in question to avert the gloomy forecast? PLC theory is a blunt forecasting instrument precisely because of the dynamics of competition. Perhaps the incumbents, on the contrary, would like to quit the game, but not the market, and share the cake? However, it would be a shame if the evening tabloid industry were to end up as a cartel case for the competition authorities.

Does *Aftonbladet* really want to win the game, get rid of its competitors, and get the victory cup? *Aftonbladet* could easily help *Expressen*, as it does in a joint advertising selling operation, and by increasing the single copy price, and it did so not only once, but twice. On Monday the 26th of June 2006, *Aftonbladet* raised its cover price from eight to nine crowns on weekdays, and from nine to ten crowns on Sundays. Wednesday the 28th of June 2006, *Expressen* followed suit. On Monday the 25th of June 2007, *Aftonbladet* raised its cover price from nine to ten crowns on weekdays. Tuesday the 26th of June 2007, *Expressen* followed suit.

As expected the circulations fell but still the increase meant a surplus of revenue. In 2006, *Aftonbladet* gained 66 million crowns from copy selling and *Expressen* 50. The estimated price elasticity is -0.3.

My forecast for *Expressen* is based on the assumption that the market leader *Aftonbladet* would settle for a knockout. It would give it the chance to grab an estimated 40 per cent of the circulation of its competitors of about 300,000, i.e. a net gain of 120,000

copies. That would bring about great economies of scale. Its circulation would reach more than half a million a day. This would be tempting enough, I suppose.

Will Expressen Accept Losing?

Will Bonnier really divest its investments in the national tabloid industry? The Harvard academics propose a number of exit barriers that every forecaster should have in mind.

The costs of exit might be too high. Perhaps managers, but not all employees, could be moved to other parts of the Bonnier Group. There might be long-term contracts preventing exit. Simply, it still makes sense to continue producing *Expressen* and its sister tabloids *GT* and *Kvällsposten*.

There might be a number of strategic exit barriers. According to Bonnier, it might be of great value to continue producing *Expressen*, a comparative advantage. Are there synergies involved in issuing both the morning quality tabloid *Dagens Nyheter* and the evening tabloid *Expressen*? How important are the cultural pages of *Expressen* for promoting the book publishing business of Bonnier? What could be gained by closer relations between *TV4*, the Bonnier TV channel, and *Expressen*? Is it important for the identity of Bonnier? Is the paper significant for the liberal opinion camp, promoting non-socialist governments, which it succeeded in doing in 2006? Perhaps employment at *Expressen* is an important way of recruiting leading persons to other positions in the Group?

There might be emotional attachments to the tabloid. *Expressen* was started by one of the Bonnier family members, Albert Bonnier Jr. The tabloid became a pioneer in many fields. It created the modern national evening tabloid and gave it its position as a major newspaper category. Are there some persons at management level or among the owners whose all time favourite is *Expressen*? The employees whose jobs are threatened might react. An exit might hurt the pride of management as well as of owners. An exit might signal that Bonnier puts money before journalism. For these reasons, the owners might be prepared to transfer money from other parts of the Group to save *Expressen*.

There are differences between parts of the Bonnier Group. By and large newspapers are old and are seldom closed. Bonnier has never closed a newspaper. Among the published periodicals closure is common. Periodicals going below a certain circulation level are simply closed. Publishers have no mercy with periodicals. The family magazine *Året Runt*, which was also started by Albert Bonnier Jr., was sold to the archrival *Allers* without any tears.

New Rules of the Game?

Gradually, the uncertain demand for the national evening tabloid is being determined by the Internet substitute.

Aftonbladet became the first newspaper on the Net in autumn 1994. In cooperation with the School of Journalism in Stockholm, it published cultural texts on the Internet. Half a year later, daily news was added. In the summer of 1995, *Aftonbladet* established an electronic database. In 1999, its Net paper became a separate company. At the latest turn of the century, about half a million visitors were registered during weekdays. About 80 percent of the texts of the printed version were also published electronically. *Expressen* followed the example, but *Aftonbladet* maintained the lead.

Thus, both national evening tabloids are investing in the Internet substitute industry. If the substitute industry becomes even stronger, forecasting the print version of the national evening tabloid might become a purely academic matter. However, the most important question is whether the rules of the games will change such that the substitute becomes the real product. Will it perhaps be a chance for *Expressen* to make a comeback and regain its market leader position? This depends on whether we regard the conditions of competition as similar. Another important issue is whether the business model of the national tabloid – 25 per cent of revenues from advertisers and 75 per cent from readers – will hold for the Internet market.

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The Visual Form of Estonian Newspapers from 1806 to 1940 and the Appearance Spiral Model

ROOSMARI KURVITS

Abstract

Changes in the visual form of newspapers are considered to be connected to changes in society, technologies, and aesthetic ideals. The present chapter explores the changes in the visual form of Estonia's major newspapers between 1806 and 1940, and whether Mervola's model of visual changes, in Finnish newspapers, is applicable to Estonia's newspapers. Content analysis is used to analyse the data. The analysis shows that Estonian newspapers considerably changed their visual form twice during this period. These changes in visual form were linked to social and economic factors, and three specific influencers were present prior to both instances of change. At first, rapid social changes caused a volume-jump in the newspaper issue (1.5 times in five years), and then competition and journalistic professionalization were needed to trigger the changes in the visual form. Technical evolution did not force newspapers to change, but was instrumental only when social factors demanded changes.

Keywords: visual form of newspaper, Estonia, newspaper history, content analysis, volume of content

Introduction

The visual form of newspapers is changing constantly. Visual form includes typography and layout, but also the size of the page, habits of illustration and segmentation, etc. – everything a newspaper uses to present its content.

Only a few researchers have studied the history of the visual form of newspapers. Allen Hutt (1973) studied the typography and layout of English and American newspapers during the period 1622-1972. He focused on type and technology, not on wider changes in society or journalism. A. Kiselev (1990) described the development of the form of Russian newspapers from 1702 to 1917. Barnhurst and Nerone (2001) gave an overview of the form of North American newspapers between 1750 and 2000 and connected these changes primarily to changes in civic culture and journalism. Pekka Mervola (1995) studied the visual form of Finnish newspapers from 1771 to 1994. The visual aspects of Swedish newspapers in historical perspectives have been covered in a few books (Ekecrantz & Olsson 1994; Becker, Ekecrantz & Olsson 2000).

Typically, visual changes are considered to be linked to social changes, technological innovations, and changes in aesthetic ideals (e.g., Hutt 1973; Garcia 1987; Kiselev 1990; Barnhurst & Nerone 2001).

Finnish researcher Pekka Mervola (1995) created the 'Appearance spiral model' to explain the visual changes in Finnish newspapers¹. He argued that the visual form of newspapers is socially determined, but social and economic situations do not influence the form of newspapers *directly* rather through the volume of contents of a newspaper issue (i.e., articles, advertisements, etc.). The volume of contents, on the other hand, is connected to the economic and social situation at the time of the newspaper issue's origin.

The Appearance Spiral begins with the particular visual form of the press. This form is created in accordance with the volume of contents of its time. The volume of contents will increase with time, and pressure will then be built up on the visual form. This pressure is released as a new visual form when suitable changes occur in the newspaper's environment, which provide a trigger for change. The new visual form is again balanced with the volume of contents at the time. Smaller changes always occur in newspapers, but greater structural changes occur because of increased volume of contents. There are also other kinds of developments in the visual form of newspapers. Different typefaces, for example, are favoured at one time or another, but the Appearance Spiral model is unable to explain aesthetic changes (Mervola 1995: 353-361, 416-425).

Mervola showed how the Appearance Spiral has completed three rotations in Finnish newspapers.

Initially, Finnish newspapers were similar to books. This visual form became untenable in the 1850s when the average volume of the newspaper issue (in square meters) had been tripled. The decisive environmental change that released the built-up pressure occurred in printing technology. Iron printing presses permitted an increase in page size.

Thus, a new visual form of the newspaper was created, and newspapers entered the Era of the Corset (1860-1910). Page size increased to A2 and larger, and up to 10 columns were printed per page. Texts were column-wide and illustrations were rare.

Several changes in Finnish society occurred during this fifty-year period that influenced the newspapers, increased potential readership, and emphasized the role of newspapers. Consequently, the average volume of content tripled.

The main environmental changes were the strengthening role of news and the competitive situation of newspapers. Newspapers began to concentrate the main news items on a few select pages, provided eye-catching headlines and added photographs. Mervola called these pages Parading pages. The Era of Parading Pages became established at the turn of the 1910/1920s and lasted until the 1960s.

The aims of my article are to describe the changes in the visual form of Estonian newspapers during the period 1806-1940, to explore factors that influenced the visual form, and to study whether the Appearance Spiral model is valid for Estonian newspapers.²

Method and Material

The method of my research is content analysis, which enables the researcher to describe the visual form in a measurable way (Riffe, Lacy & Fico 1998).

I have selected for my data three Estonian newspapers at five-year intervals from 1806 to 1940.³ Two newspapers were only published in Estonian between 1806 and 1856: *Tarto maa rahwa Näddali-Leht* (1806) and *Marahwa Näddala Leht* (1821-1823, 1825). The years 1806, 1821 and 1825 were included in the sample.

A regular Estonian press started in 1857, but only a few newspapers were published at first. Hence, until 1870 my sample includes two papers for each selected year: *Tal-*

lorahwa postimees (1859)⁴; *Perno Postimees* (1860, 1865, 1870) and *Eesti Postimees* (1865, 1870).

I sampled three major nationwide general newspapers from 1875 onwards for each selected year. The analysed newspapers are *Perno Postimees* (1875-1885), *Eesti Postimees* (1875-1905), *Ristirahwa pühhapäwa leht* (1875), *Sakala* (1880), *Olewik* (1885-1905), *Postimees* (1890-1940), *Päewaleht* (1910-1940), *Tallinna Teataja* (1910-1915), *Waba Maa* (1920-1935), *Uus Eesti* (1940).⁵

All Estonian newspapers in the 19th century were weeklies, except *Postimees*, which appeared three times a week in 1890, and became the first Estonian daily in 1891. In 1905, the other analysed newspapers appeared twice a week, and since 1910, all the analysed newspapers were dailies.

For each selected year, I sampled a reconstructed month of the weeklies, balanced across seasons, and a reconstructed week of the dailies, balanced across months and weekdays.

I have content analysed all typographic elements in a total of 189 newspaper issues. The average volume of the newspaper issue is calculated on the basis of all newspaper issues from sample years.

Many different elements define the form of a newspaper. I have analysed the most important elements, which were used for a long period, which changed significantly during the analysed period and which are linked to the volume of the newspaper.

The analysed elements are: the volume of the newspaper issue (i.e., space of one newspaper issue – m² – excluding the margins); the size of the page (i.e., printed area of one newspaper page – cm²); the number of columns per page; the method of headlining; the use of multi-level headline; the number of sub-divisions per issue; the location of advertising.

I have excluded elements that are linked to aesthetic characteristics (e.g., typefaces), and elements that changed only slightly during the studied period (e.g., infographics) or became widely used only at the end of the explored period (e.g., visuals and colour).

Volume-jumps and the Reasons for them in Estonian Newspapers. The Changes in Visual Form after Volume-jumps

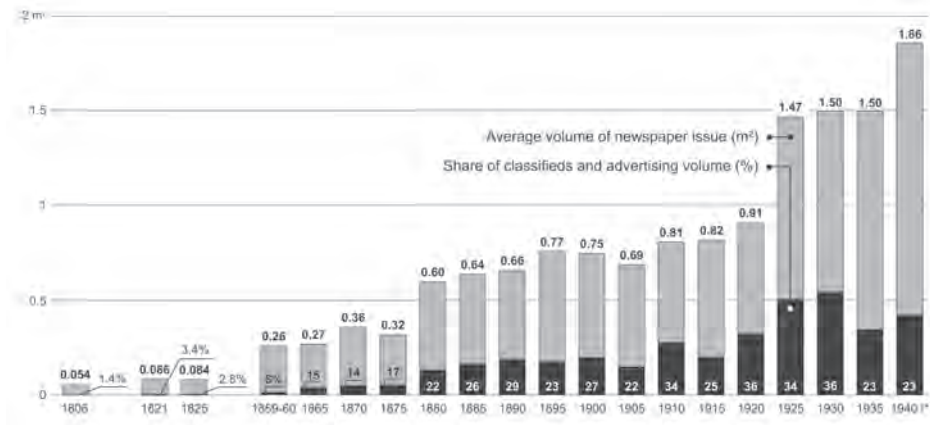
The volume of Estonian newspapers permanently increased from 1806 to 1940 (Figure 1). There were, however, three thresholds when the volume increased rapidly:

- In 1860, the volume increased by a factor of 3.2 compared to the volume in 1825;
- In 1880, the volume increased by a factor of 1.9 compared to 1875;
- In 1925, the volume increased by a factor of 1.6 compared to 1920.

I compared the form of newspapers in the sample years immediately preceding and succeeding these three occasions in order to monitor the connections between the volume and form; i.e., 1825 and 1865, 1875 and 1885, 1920 and 1930. Explanations of every volume-jump are divided into three:

- background factors – factors that caused and enabled the increase in volume of newspapers;
- visual changes;
- foreground factors – factors that triggered visual changes.

Figure 1. *Average Volume and Share of Advertising in Estonian Major Newspapers (1806-1940)*



Data of three newspapers of the sample year (1806-1825 – one newspaper, 1859-1870 – two newspapers). The average volume of newspaper issue is calculated on the basis of the aggregate volume of 8653 newspapers. The share of advertising is calculated on the measurements of 542 newspaper issues in total. Data from 1940 represent only the first half of the year (until the Soviet annexation).

The First Volume-jump in 1860

Reasons for the volume-jump. In 1860, the average volume of the newspaper issue had increased by a factor of 3.2 compared to the volume in 1825. The most important reason for the volume-jump was the increased independence and freedom of choice of Estonian peasants (the target group of these newspapers) in the early 19th century. The first Estonian newspapers were created mostly for the serfs, but in 1860 already for the free peasants.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the majority of Estonians were peasant-serfs who worked for the manorial Lords, most of whom were Baltic Germans. Serfdom was abolished in North Estonia in 1816 and in South Estonia in 1819. Up to that time, the manors had organized the everyday life of peasants, but now they were free to organize their lives through their local governments. The land was still owned by landlords, and the peasants now had to rent it. The Peasant Regulations of 1849 and 1856 ratified peasants’ right to pay their rent with money instead of their labour, and peasants were allowed for the first time to buy land. All these changes made peasants more self-reliant and more interested in their surroundings⁶.

The second reason was that a network of schools formed after the abolition of serfdom. The literacy rate among adult Estonian peasants was more than 50% by the end of the 18th century. The schools increased the adult literacy rate by the middle of the 19th century to 77% in northern Estonia⁷ (Zetterberg 2007: 401-402).

The third reason was the beginning and escalation of the Estonian national movement (National Awakening) in the 1850s and 1860s. This movement brought about an explosion of intellectual activity and increased peasants’ interest in themselves and the outside world (see Jansen 2007; Laar 2006; Zetterberg 2007: 412ff). Newspapers were the essential organizers of the national movement.

The conclusion is that social changes caused the demand for publishing much more material in newspapers.

During this time span, the printing equipment also improved. Until the 1840s, wooden hand presses were used, and printing workshops were similar to Gutenbergian workshops. In the 1840s and 1850s, the larger print shops acquired the first König and Bauer iron flatbed cylinder presses, the first one in 1846 (Miller *et al.* 1978: 144). These presses enabled printing on folio pages. Still these presses were hand-driven, as they were purchased without operating engines.

Visual changes. The first newspapers at the beginning of the 19th century had the page size of books (octavo-format⁸, i.e., smaller than A5; see Illustration 1) and a single column per page. In 1857, the pages were twice the size of the octavo (quarto-format, i.e., smaller than A4; see Illustration 2) and contained two columns.

The structure of the first Estonian newspapers was quite haphazard. Some issues contained only a single story or only brief news items. The sequence of stories in an issue was just as random.

A more stable structure developed at the beginning of the 1860s. The newspaper was divided into titled sub-divisions. Initially an issue was started with the news sub-division, but in 1865 a longer story (an admonishing-instructive or popular scientific text) began to appear before the news. The news sub-division was followed by other longer stories (e.g., popular science, farming tips) and another news sub-division entitled “Various news” or “Appendix”. Merchandise prices, answers to the letters, tabulated material and classified advertisements closed the issue.

Only longer non-news stories had single-column headlines. Subdivided news-stories did not have headlines, but keywords at the beginning of stories that now became more eye-catching. Previously, the beginning of the new story was marked with spaced-out keywords, which now changed to bold keywords (see Illustrations 1-2).

The standard volume of a newspaper issue was eight pages. During the 1860s, a newspaper was divided into physically separate parts because of technical restrictions. The printing presses were able to print one side of the sheet at a single pass (i.e., up to four quarto pages), then the other side, after which the sheet was folded twice. When the editor wanted to publish a bulkier newspaper issue, he used a two-page additional sheet with its own small masthead *Lissa-kirri* or *Lisaleht* (Supplement), which was printed separately. Usually it contained only classified ads.

Stimulus for change. Despite the first newspaper-specific features (titled sub-divisions, keywords at the beginning of news-stories), newspapers maintained the visual form of a book or magazine. Why did the volume-jump fail to cause a new visual form? There was neither a reason nor a possibility to differentiate a newspaper from a book.

First, when a new type of periodical is introduced, it is better for it to be visually similar to existing periodicals of the region. This visual similarity allows readers to more easily adopt it. Afterwards, the new periodical will develop its own characteristic visual form.

Therefore, at the beginning of the 19th century, Estonian newspapers looked like contemporary periodicals (Estonian calendars and magazines, Baltic German newspapers), and in the middle of the 19th century, newly introduced Estonian newspapers looked like contemporary periodicals (Estonian magazines, Baltic German newspapers).

Technically it was possible for some Estonian newspapers to be more similar to contemporary newspapers abroad. For example, Laakmann’s print shop had acquired the first König and Bauer press in 1846, which meant that Laakmann could publish

iggaüks, olgo ta talupoja ehk kunniga sugugust, kutsupileid armastab süa. Sofia maal redda meel ennam, kui meie maal, peusitakse, ja ajavad seal temmalt jo ammusest wino. —

E a d u s e d.

Wõitliko mõisast, Põltsamaal sei ta nermal Otsobel. Meil ei olnud sel süggisel ummalaid: kolutati siis, et sel neid ollesse müa, neid mõisa toots, ning täuast leikast 7 rublad anda. Tuli siis üks omma malla mees ummalatega, ja ütles aidameppel: tehe agga õigust, kui kalute! sest kottiga on 30 naela ummalaid. Aidamees ütles: kü last õigust teeb, ja näitab paljus kui kupa on. Kalas siis ummalaid ütles, ja näis last 46 naela. Mees ei tahtnud uskuda, weid hakkas isgi kaluma; agga sai ikka 46 naela. Ütles siis: Et wana immet! — minemal naddolal käisin sellelamma kottiga Wõlbandis, ja pannin tedda nendafammast ummalaid rüis, kuida ta prago sin seisab, ja wiisin mauna sõbrale; se ei mõetnud temmalt ennam mälja, kui agga 30 naela. Kui ta sel kõwral minnoga nenda teinud, siis ta sedda ka ena negi muide ja teistele teinud.

Seisamma luggu oli, männi aastad teeb

Illustration 1.

Marahwa Näddala-Leht 1821, Dec 7, p 388 (scale 1:2). In the middle of the page, the sub-division “Announcements” begins with a story without a headline

Ammal olgo tännastud, ja on pärrast weel järe olnud: „Rüäd ei jooße ranam Kautasustes inimisele weeb. Täanno selle rest Maahomer Amistile, kes sedda üdu en mõtund.“ — Et se mees, kes mitte aastat ni maiaid inimele weel olist wallama, nüüd enast rõmuatub, kui sedda mitte ennam ei wallata, en muidegi igga inimiselele armas kuulda.

Sannumed wõerast maast.

Illealtse on wõerama aetjad sel naddolal, nago minnemal naddolal olist; polle weel paljo ebbast agga taggast läinud. Rägime siis lähidelt ni paljo, kui rõldia on.

Hispaniamaa. Warokko sõddra. Kuida juba eest otse olist ütelnud, sest hõast ei oita mitte mitte ni lahteste sannumid. Hoiatasse nago puini tees, et otsefai kogermatta mõnui sanna jälle mõlappurustab. Wõnna aastal lõppetmises on nad jälle teine teise peab kinni olnud. Nago ennegi, on Waurid ilka peale hakkjad, agga sawad weeriste pradege taggast sadetud. Wenda se kerd ko. 4000 Wauri tulnud sure kisa ja karjumisega Hispaniameede peale ja tahtnud neid purust ja sulbiks raiuda. On ka mehhe wiisi küi pihia annud, nenda et 600 Hispaniamest on mulda läinud. Agga kuida nende omma kiasse läinud? Parago wõerast küi. 1500 heitnud mõga tetta ehk pätsi küi al hinge ja teised on plaggama pannud. Hispania lõwaggi pramad selle äle bislama, nago wimaltsest. On Jummal parago weeristest pulmad! Seisannane wiimine lahging sõdawatse teige wallusam olnud, kui ta mitte meriste bulga polist. Hispania sõdamewad on kuida ästik ka pätsi seffa aitanud, ja neid pole Wauridel olemastse.

Inglismaa. Londoni lin. Inglasted on omma tännamuse Kalendri kisse Londoni linnaost fure pitta jutto ülesse pannud. Wina wõsua küi, et Londoni krigist maailma sündarist teige sarem ja perritam on. Prago peab seal 2,500,000 inimest 300,000 maia seeb ellama. Wõhårdune teine lin saab selle

waisto? 429 kirekut, 421 palmemoia ja nende jauts 830 õppetajat ja ilka tulled igga õppetaja kohta weel peale 3000 inimest. Omma riasaja tallajaks peab neil 6000 ohmoeti oilema. Kuima kurekude jauts 4000 kressi, tähja lõhtude jauts 2500 paggarad ja 1700 lühbonit, 1200 tehwiimaia, 1500 pimamhat, 2400 ureti ja ei neel ka iggal õhbel hinge jers ei mõi hoida, 500 haustamejat. Wee, kes seel ellamad, ei mõi ka allasti ellada, se pärrast on seal 3000 kingileppa, 2950 rätsepa ja 1560 naestterahma tanno pebi, ja omma laeste kaswatamises tarwis 1500 koi. — Ette sõhårdune linnate lähhä jubba korda?

Sweitsimaa. Wõnnetus tulle idab. Genni linnas waisto Prantsuse radda, olli õhhe rikka mehhe maldas hiljuti saur Walli piddu. Wusekantiid mängisid, rahwas tantissid, lust ja rõdm olli lahtis. Naestterahwal kolid laiad rided nago hebbemed selgas. Parrajalt tantso pool putud õhhe naestterahma lai sabba tulle külge ja waris kolid põllemas. Wõnne loom kargad hirmoga teiste seffa ja filmapiik põllemas 6 naestterahmast, nago talle koonlad. Rüäd olli hirm ja hädda kü. Keif karjunud ja kiskendamad. Wõhhet lõmad aknad eest mahda ja kistwad neid, kes weel ei põlend, atnast wõlja, kardinat ja põrmandarided hakkawad ka jubba põluma, kist karjunud ja ütse ei tea ennam, kus ta pea on. Wimalts sai küi tulli kuskutud, agga pool põltenud naestterahwas olist pea allasti dues maas ja äggasid. Üks surri hirmsa wallo kätte waris ärra, teised äggamad alls tõnwewotib. Kes neist ellama jämed, pramad ello oia harmid kandma. Di, oi, rullaga peab inime wõgga ettemaatma!

Sannumed pagganatsest ja mis-sioni tõdse.

Kuuda Hindud siit mailmast lahtuwad.

Wenda kui wõerast pagganatse ello, on ka nende jum pimme ja õnneto, ilma lõuslerta ja inneto. Eestis ja walle on nende uff ellades, kõlreto ja hirmus nende lahtuminne

Illustration 2.

Perno Postimees 1860, Jan 13, p 12 (scale 1:2). The subdivisions “News from foreign land” (with three stories without headline) and “News about pagans and mission work” (with a headlined story)

newspapers in folio format. But his newspapers *Tallorahwa postimees* (1857-1859) and *Eesti Postimees* (since 1864) were in quarto-format like other Estonian newspapers. Only in 1869 *Eesti Postimees* did change to folio-format.

Second, to middle-19th century editors and printers, the newspapers were no more than novel sidelines. Editors viewed the newspaper as a 'newsy book'. Estonian newspapers were mostly enlightening and instructive, the news being of secondary importance.⁹ The benefit that newspapers provided for the printers was an income that matched the regularity of the issues. Nevertheless, the early newspapers were printed on presses designed for printing books.

The Second Volume-jump in 1880

Reasons for the volume-jump. In 1880, the average volume of the newspaper issue had increased by a factor of 1.9 compared to 1875. The key reasons for this volume-jump lie in the well-developed network of schools, the National Awakening and the embryonic professionalization of the editors.

In 1881, 95% of Estonian conscripts could read (Zetterberg 2007: 402), which means that the number of potential newspaper readers had increased.

In the 1870s, the importance of the newspaper as an information provider grew significantly (Lauk 1996a: 770) and was strongly connected to the National Awakening and the broadening national awareness in the 1860s and 1870s. The newspapers, in turn, boosted this awareness, effectively mobilizing the peasantry for active national participation (see Jansen 2007; Laar 2006; Zetterberg 2007: 412ff). Furthermore, Estonian society developed during this period both culturally and economically. The National Awakening, energetic societal activity, the rapid growth of the economy – all provided material for the newspapers and strengthened their position in society. Technological innovations in transport and communication (steam-ferries, the railway, the telegraph) raised the speed of information dissemination and consequently the interest in information about everyday life and news. The introduction of the telegraph (1855) also led to a significant increase in the volume of news material available for publication in newspapers.

At the end of the 1870s, the newspaper market began to form and for the first time competition between newspapers emerged. In 1878, there were 4 Estonian newspapers, ten years later 13 newspapers (Lauk 1996a: 772).

Concomitant with Estonian society's increasing demand for information, the editing of newspapers gradually transformed to a full-time job. Editors began to hire associates (Peegel *et al.* 1994: 333) to assist in the production of the supply to meet the demand.

Visual changes. In the 1870s, the newspapers began to enlarge their page size to folio format (A3 and bigger). The use of a larger page size meant that the bulk of the newspaper issue decreased to four pages and an additional sheet was dropped. The number of columns per page increased from two to four or five. All the stories were still one column wide and ran linearly from column to column. A new story started where the previous one ended, and the stories continued in the next column or page without any visual link.

The first device for structuring the page, the *feuilleton* (see Illustration 3), was introduced during this period: in *Eesti Postimees* (1870), *Perno Postimees* (1884) and *Postimees* (1888). The horizontal line divided the page into two parts. Editorial items and news were published above the line, 'lighter' stories (serials, book reviews, etc.)

below the line. The feuilleton was not only a formal segmentation device, but also significant in relation to content.¹⁰

After 1880, use of sub-divisions increased to manage the increased volume of content. Sub-divisions like “Language and literature” and “School” began to appear. The quantity of news content required several news sub-divisions. For example in *Eesti Postimees* in 1885, the previous news sub-division “From the Homeland” was split into “From the Fatherland” (i.e., Estonia), “From Latvia” and “From Russia”.

The layout was still linear. Rare visual elements were positioned according to the text. A table was usually situated exactly after the sentence that introduced it. Tables wider than one column were turned on their side. Occasionally a table of data did not fit into a single column even when turned on its side, and it became a multi-column table at the edge of the page (e.g., *Postimees* 1895, March 24).

Multi-column elements were rarely used and only on extraordinary occasions. The page-wide headlines and columns were used for Imperial births, deaths and marriages. Local events were very rarely deemed sufficiently important to overgrow column boundaries, e.g. “The first local handicraft exhibition in Pärnu” (*Perno Postimees* 1885, July 26).

The distinguishing feature of this period is that the changes in visual form of different papers were heterogeneous and occurred during different years.

Johann Voldemar Jannsen, the publisher of *Eesti Postimees*, was the first to change the visual form of his newspaper. The volume of issue had increased by a factor of 1.7 from 1865 to 1870. The visual form of the newspaper changed significantly during the same five years: the page size more than doubled, three columns replaced the two, the feuilleton was introduced, and sub-divisions were added (6 per issue in 1865 and 9 in 1870). During the same period, *Eesti Postimees* was the most popular Estonian newspaper, and it even produced a profit.

The volume of an issue of *Perno Postimees* did not increase between 1860 and 1875 because the publisher did not increase investments in the newspaper. Although the volume and the page size increased in 1880, the other changes were absent. For example, two columns per page were used as previously, the number of sub-divisions per issue decreased from 7 in 1865 to 5 in 1875, and finally to 4 in 1885. The newspaper lost its readers and ceased publication in 1885.

Ado Grenzstein, the publisher of *Olewik*, used the page size decrease strategy. The newspaper was introduced in 1881 in folio size with five columns per page and a four-page issue. In 1889, the visual form became magazine-like. The page size was reduced to smaller than A4, with 3 columns per page, and an average 21 pages per issue. The number of sub-divisions almost doubled within five years: from 10 per issue in 1885 to 19 in 1890. This magazine-like visual form was a carefully planned decision of Grenzstein, who wanted to emphasize the educational nature and permanent value of his paper. *Olewik* retained this volume and visual form until closing down in 1906.

In conclusion: the Estonian newspaper still sought its own ‘face’ and tried different options. Despite the variety of changes, there is a clearly visible correlation between the sequence of changes: from social changes to volume changes and then to visual changes.

Stimulus for change. The social change that created the conditions for the second volume-jump occurred within the publishing and printing arena. Until the 1880s, Baltic-German owners dominated the printing business, and for them printing periodicals had

been a sideline to books. During the 1870s and 1880s, the Estonian newspaper gained an inseparable and more stable position in society, and its characteristic content (informative, enlightening-educational, entertaining) took shape. In the 1880s, the first Estonian-owned printing shops were established: Grenzstein in 1882, Järv in 1883, Hermann in 1886 (Miller *et al.* 1978: 133-134; Puksoo 1973: 192-193).¹¹ These printers were also newspaper owners and editors. Newspaper publishing was their means to make a living. Competing with each other, they created the Estonian newspaper with its characteristic content, genres and visual form, which were clearly different from books and other periodicals.

The Third Volume-jump in 1925

Reasons for the volume-jump. In 1925, the average volume of the newspaper issue had increased by a factor of 1.6 compared to 1920.

The changes that preceded the third volume-jump were great. The rise of general social-political and cultural activity at the beginning of the 20th century, following the Russian Revolution in 1905, had energized the Estonian press. The six war years (WWI 1914-1918 and the Independence War 1918-1920 against Soviet Russia) restricted the growth of the newspaper industry. On February 2, 1920, the peace treaty was signed and Estonia was an independent state until the annexation by the Soviet Union in 1940. The rapidly changing Estonian society, the increasing number of intellectuals and the enervated cultural life of the 1920s brought with them a vast amount of new content (see Karjahärm & Sirk 2001; Zetterberg 2007: 515ff).

One key change for the Estonian press occurred in April 1920; this was the abolition of censorship, under which the industry had always operated. Consequently, in the first half of the 1920s, the press had most favourable conditions for freedom of activity and development (Lauk 1996a: 773-774; Aru 2002: 116-119).

Until 1901, *Postimees* was the only daily newspaper, but with the introduction of other dailies, the editorial staffs began to increase around 1910 (e.g., 5 journalists worked for *Postimees* in 1900, but 12 journalists in 1909), which enabled papers to increase their volume and vice versa.

After establishment of the first press publishing companies in the 1910s, much more modern printing technology was acquired.

The introduction of typesetting machines sped up the working process (the first typesetter was bought in 1908 for *Päewaleht* – Puksoo 1973: 197). Rotary presses were introduced and their efficiency allowed quicker printing of bulkier newspapers, because these printed on both sides of the roll-paper and were able to print increasing numbers of pages at a single pass.

For example, in 1906, *Päewaleht* bought a rotary press, which printed 4 pages, and, in 1918, a new one, which printed 8 pages, and then 24 pages in 1922. The technical resources of *Postimees* were more limited. In 1909, the newspaper bought a rotary press, which printed 4 pages, and used it until 1929. In 1925, the newspaper's average volume per issue was already 6.4 pages. This means that the single issue was often printed in two or even four parts in order to publish 8- to 16-page issues to accommodate enough content. The anniversary issue, which contained 56 pages (1928, December 22), was also printed with the same 4-page press (*Postimees* 1931, December 12). A 16-page rotary press (introduced in 1929) was capable of printing much bulkier newspaper issues, but the volume per issue increased by only one page for every five years: in 1930 – 7.4 pages, 1935 – 8.1 pages, 1940 – 9.5 pages.

Visual changes. Many significant changes in the visual form of Estonian newspapers occurred between 1920 and 1930.

Until 1920, the standard volume of issue was four pages and the volume of additional inserted sheets was one, two or four pages (in different sizes). The additional sheet was published when there were too many advertisements to be contained within a four-page issue. If the additional sheet contained editorial content, its structure repeated that of the main paper. For example, in 1910 on August 18, the issue of *Postimees* was structured like three separate issues (four + two + two pages) and seven sub-divisions were used twice (e.g., “From Finland” on pages 3 and 7, classifieds and advertising on pages 4, 6 and 8). Such double and triple-structured issues disappeared with the introduction of rotary presses.

Changes in the sequence of the newspaper sub-divisions had already begun during WWI. The war brought the news back to the front page and the editorial moved to the second page. The tradition of putting latest news at the end of the editorial content began to change. For example, in 1915 *Päewaleht* and *Tallinna Teataja* put the war news at the beginning of the issue and did not use a separate sub-division for the latest news.

During the period of linear layout, the most convenient way to work was to typeset and layout the texts in the same order as they were arranged in the newspaper issue. The insertion of any material ‘pushed’ all subsequent materials backwards. The assumption is that the news was now considered the most important part of newspaper, and newspapermen were ready to change the layout, to insert the later material at the beginning of the earlier prepared material.¹²

Visual changes in newspaper structure began during the first half of the 1920s.

Now the newspaper was organized hierarchically: the most important news items were gathered at the beginning of the issue (typically pages 1 and 3, later pages 4-5, as well) under the title “News of the day”. The news was no longer divided into sub-divisions; Estonian and foreign news were published side-by-side on the same pages. “Telegrams” and “Last notes” were abandoned.

Sub-divisions as an organizing device became secondary and were used only to gather local news at the end of editorial content (e.g., “Tallinn notes”, “Accidents and crimes”) and for certain topics (e.g., Theatre and music, Sports). In 1915, there were on average 16 sub-divisions per newspaper issue, in 1925 – 10 sub-divisions (at the same time as the average volume of issue increased 1.8 times).

The changes in advertising allocation had already begun at the end of the 19th century, but accumulated during the volume-jump. Initially all advertisements and classified ads had been gathered at the end of the newspaper. Before the turn of the century, single advertisements began to appear also on the front page. The number and size of the front-page advertisements continuously increased. During WWI, single advertisements began to appear on other pages as well. Since 1925, it was common for the front page of the weekend issue to be sold entirely for advertising, and single advertisements appeared on almost every page. Twenty-one percent of pages contained both editorial content and advertising in 1905, 34% in 1915 and 73% in 1925. During these years, the importance of advertising revenue also increased considerably (Harro 1994).

During the 1920s, the first weekly thematic compartments were started, initially in *Päewaleht*. Humour, chess, art and literature, fashion, film, technology, and women’s compartments began to appear one-by-one on fixed weekdays. Gradually, the competition made newspapers more entertaining, as other papers began to use such compartments during the 1930s.

In 1925, a new structure of newspaper issue had taken shape. The front page contained the advertising and the most important news. Page 2 contained the editorial and serial novel (in the *feuilleton*). Page 3 (sometimes 4 and 5, too) contained the news. Then the articles, culture reviews, popular science, thematic compartments and sub-divisions of local news followed. The department of advertising and classified ads closed the issue.

In the 1920s, the linear layout was replaced by block layout¹³ with linear fillings. Already at the beginning of the century, the multi-column elements had become more common. Around 1910, multi-column sub-division titles, headlines and text-blocks were used occasionally. Such elements presented major news stories and the lengthy reviews of Congresses and exhibitions; e.g., 3-column title “Revolution in Portugal” (*Tallinna Teataja* 1910, Sept 25, 27-30, Oct 1), the 5-column headline “Exhibition of Estonian art society in Tallinn” (*Postimees* 1910, Sept 18).

The principal breakthrough took place at the beginning of the 1920s when multi-column elements were used on a daily basis. Usually such text-blocks were positioned at the edges or in the middle of the page, the rest of the page being filled with briefs in the linear way, as previously (see Illustration 4). The number of multi-column blocks increased steadily, but until 1940 it was usual for ‘gaps’ between blocks to be filled with single-column briefs.

The introduction of block layout changed the central idea of organizing the newspaper issue and page. The page developed into an integral body. The stories did not ‘run’ from page to page (which was the last bookish feature in the newspaper structure).

Already around 1905 headlines were introduced to news stories, i.e., the previous emphasized keywords (in the same type size as the text) were set in a separate paragraph and centred. During the 1910s, some headlines grew bigger and wider. This means that journalists began to use the visual form of headlines to show the importance of stories. After 1920, the 2-3-column headline became a daily feature in newspapers.

The multi-column headline had a different form and content from the previous single-column headline. Usually it was concise and filled the space from one edge of the column to the other. The headline was not a simple thematic keyword phrase, but was specially reworded as a headline to bring out some important facts about the event; e.g., “Radio broadcasting into Estonia”¹⁴ (*Päewaleht* 1925, Aug 23). Another significant change was the introduction of multi-level headlines at the beginning of the 1920s. Four percent of headlines had sub-heading(s) in 1920, 26% in 1925, and 40% in 1930.

Stimuli for change. There were several environmental changes during this period that released the built-up pressure and forced newspapers to reorganize their visual form. The key stimuli were stiffened economic competition and the central role of news. The first war correspondents began to work during the Independence War. These men were the first Estonian news-reporters, and this was an important step in journalistic professionalization.

At the beginning of the 1910s, the economic competition between newspapers hardened, but during WWI, the newspapers competed mostly in the immediacy of war news. After the wars, competition extended to the whole content of the newspaper, because 1922, for example, there were seven or eight daily newspapers (Aru 2002: 117) for 0.97 million Estonian language speakers. *Waba Maa* was the first Estonian newspaper to promote the visual form of newspaper as a tool of competition (A. T. 1920: 4; Laaman 1920).

Until WWI, the majority of newspaper issues were distributed by subscriptions, thereafter single copy sales increased. For example from 1926 to 1929, 76% of the is-

sues of *Päewaleht* were sold as single copies, whereas the proportion before WWI had been the opposite (Harro 1994: 80). There were several causes for this change: during the wars people got used to the immediacy of single copy sale, the postal service prices increased at the beginning of the 1920s, and urbanization of the population increased (Aru 2002: 112).

During WWI, the news became and remained central in the newspapers. In an environment of intense competition, the news was used to sell the newspaper issue to readers on a daily basis. The new visual form made the newspaper content hierarchical, the aim being to make it more eye-catching and quicker to read. The volume of content had increased, and people needed visual guidance to discern the more important news from the less important.

Discussion

Above, I explained three volume-jumps of Estonian newspapers that in two cases caused profound visual changes.

The first volume-jump in 1860 occurred after a 32-year publishing pause. This brought about the use of larger page size (quarto format), two columns instead of the single one, and more segmenting devices. Still, the newspaper had not yet acquired its own characteristic visual form, but resembled the book.

The second volume-jump in 1880 did result in new changes. The page size increased to folio format, the number of columns increased to 4 or 5, the number of sub-divisions increased, and the *feuilleton* was introduced. Those changes distinguished the newspaper from other periodicals and books.

The third volume-jump in 1925 was connected to many changes in visual form: the sub-division system lost its central role, both the newspaper issue and the pages were organized hierarchically, a block layout was used as a central organizing tool instead of the linear one, multi-column and multi-level headlines were used for important stories, and weekly thematic compartments were introduced. These changes totally transformed the newspaper's visual form.

In consequence, the history of the visual form of Estonian newspapers between 1806 and 1940 can be divided into three periods:

- the Period of the Book: 1806 – the 1870s;
- the Period of Linear Layout: the 1880s – the first half of the 1920s¹⁵;
- the Hybrid Period (block + linear layout): the first half of the 1920s – 1940¹⁶.

What caused the volume-jumps of the average newspaper issue? These were social changes that demanded the publishing of more content. In brief, these changes were the emergence of Estonian nationalism and the cultural public sphere in the 1860s-1870s, and the further development of Estonian society at the beginning of the 20th century and after the creation of the Republic of Estonia in the 1920s.

What enabled the increase in the newspapers' volume? These were technological innovations together with suitable economic conditions. In the 1870s and 1880s, journalism had gained a sufficiently stable position in Estonian society and publishers could invest in printing presses, which enabled them to increase the volume of newspapers. Since the 1910s, the freshly established press publishing companies could afford to

acquire more modern rotary presses, which enabled them to increase the volume of newspapers after 1920 when the wars had ended.

Did volume-jumps bring with them visual changes in the newspapers? First of all, like Finnish newspapers, Estonian newspapers affirm the notion that visual changes are correlated with the volume of the newspaper *issue* (not weekly volume or something else). For example, *Postimees* was the only Estonian daily for ten years (1891-1901), but its visual form was similar to that of other newspapers that were weeklies and bi-weeklies.

It is also significant that the essential visual changes in Estonian newspapers have occurred directly after the rapid growth of volume of issue, neither before this growth nor much later.

According to Mervola, the new era of visual form in Finnish newspapers begins when the volume per newspaper issue has approximately tripled from the time of the onset of the current era (1995: 416ff). This formula does not allow us to define the start of a new period in Estonian newspaper form using such an exact coefficient. The period of the Linear Layout began when the average volume of the newspaper issue had increased almost 11-fold from the beginning of the previous period (in 1806). The Hybrid period began when the volume had increased 2.5 times.

If we exclude the first two newspapers (which appeared for only 5 years within a 50-year period) as pre-history, and locate the start of the model in 1857 when the regular Estonian press started, then we can calculate that the period of Linear Layout started when the volume of newspapers had increased 2.3 times.

But for Estonian newspapers, it is more appropriate to define the start of the new period using volume-jumps. For Estonian newspapers, the new period of visual form starts when the average volume of newspaper issue has increased at least 1.5 times within five years. This definition solves the problem of the first two short-term newspapers, because they are separated from later newspapers by a 32-year time gap.

What triggered the essential visual changes? Basically, these were social stimuli: the embryonic professionalization of journalism and emergence of the newspaper market in the 1870s and 1880s; the recently gained central role of the news in newspapers, and the emergence of a new occupation – news-reporters – in the 1910s and 1920s.

Previous discussion shows that technologies did not cause these changes. For instance, the introduction of the telegraph allowed publishing of wire-news, but they became a part of newspapers almost 15 years later. Technical possibilities enabled the enlargement of pages, but did not cause it. The introduction of bigger, multicolumn and multilevel headlines, and the cessation of the sub-division system were not connected with the technical innovations of this period.

At the same time, all these changes were correlated with two factors: changes in newspaper volume and journalistic professionalization.

- A bigger newspaper volume forced the newspaper issue and pages to develop new structures (e.g., at first to use more segmentation devices, later to use a hierarchical structure), and simultaneously allowed these changes (e.g., more capacious newspaper issues allowed the use of bigger headlines).
- Journalistic professionalization allowed the visual changes to be carried out (e.g., the skills to write declarative pointed headlines instead of previous thematic keywords).

Therefore, improved technical possibilities did not force newspapers to change their visual form, but were instrumental in changes only when social factors demanded change. On the contrary, desired changes were sometimes made *despite* the technical restrictions. A good example is *Postimees*, which during the 1920s increased its volume without the suitable printing machinery.

The present analysis shows that it was the socially caused volume-jump *together* with the competitive situation and journalistic professionalization that stimulated the visual changes. In 1860, the volume of the newspaper had rapidly grown, but there was no competition between papers, and visual form did not change essentially. Competition emerged in the 1870s and 1880s. Together with the volume-jump and the first professional newspaper editors, this brought about the new visual form. In the 1910s, the competition stiffened, and the first news-reporters began to work, but the volume of the newspaper issue did not increase. The competition continued and visual changes followed after the volume-jump at the beginning of the 1920s.

Notes

1. Mervola uses the Finnish terms 'ulkoasu' and 'ulkoasukierre' and in English 'an (outward) appearance of newspaper' and 'an appearance spiral model'. I use in the same sense term '(visual) form of newspaper'. I do not use the pointed terms 'design' or 'layout' because these hint at conscious and professional activity.
2. 'Estonian' newspapers means 'Estonian language' newspapers here. German and Russian language newspapers were also published in Estonia during this period (see Peegel *et al.* 1994). On the history of the Estonian press see Peegel *et al.* 1994; Lauk 1996a, 1996b, 2000; Aru 2002.
3. These are the years from the first Estonian newspaper to the Soviet occupation. This is the period when Finnish and Estonian social development was parallel, at first in the Russian Empire, then after WWI as independent states.
4. The data for *Tallorahwa postimees* (published in 1857–1859) 1859 are calculated into one set, together with the data for *Perno Postimees* 1860.
5. All the sampled newspapers – except *Tarto maa rahwa Näddali=leht* (1806) – are accessible via the Internet <http://dea.nlib.ee/>.
6. On Estonian history see Raun 1991; Zetterberg 2007.
7. Data about South Estonia are missing, but presumably these were higher because the majority of the schools were located in the south.
8. Octavo, quarto and folio format are certainly rather imprecise terms, because in the 19th century there were no standardized page sizes.
9. That seems to be an ontogenetic character of primal 'plebeian' newspapers (e.g., the first Finnish language newspapers and the German regional newspapers; see Tommila 1988: 87; Welke 1986: III). By contrast, for newspapers that were meant for the elite social class, the news was central to their emergence (e.g., the Baltic German and the Russian official newspapers; see Kiselev 1990).
10. In the 19th century, the feuilleton was widely used by German and Russian newspapers (see Kiselev 1990; Kauffmann & Schütz 2000), which directly influenced Estonian newspapers.
11. It must be remembered that Estonia was in the backyard of Europe. Its print shops were small and poor, and therefore printers bought used old-fashioned presses from Germany. For example, in 1895, almost 50 years after the invention of the rotary press, the editor of *Olewik* admiringly wrote in his newspaper: "Perhaps the single rotary press could do all the Baltic [apparently Estonian and Latvian] printing works." (*Olewik* 1895, Aug 8). The first rotary press in Estonia was purchased in 1906 and at first it was considered an unnecessary luxury (*Päewaleht* 1925, Dec 29). Another example: in 1904 the printing press of the only Estonian daily *Postimees* was still manually powered, somewhat later by a gas engine, then by a petroleum engine, and from 1909 onwards by an electric engine.

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12. An interesting note is that in Baltic German newspapers, news sub-divisions already launched newspaper issues during the 1810s. The sub-division "Neueste Nachrichten" (The newest news) was put at the very beginning of a newspaper from its introduction during the 1860s. Hence the visual form of newspaper shows that for Baltic Germans the news was a central part of newspaper already at the beginning of the 19th century, for Estonians it only happened a hundred years later.
13. Block layout means layout with rectangular text-blocks (also called 'modular layout').
14. *will be introduced* was left out of the headline.
15. Mervola (1995) calls this period the Era of the Corset. The corset emphasizes that column rules limited the use of multi-column elements. The linear layout emphasizes that all the elements in a newspaper followed each other linearly despite their width.
16. Mervola (1995) calls this period the Era of Parading Pages. For Estonian newspapers this term is unsuitable because the Parading pages were used only on stately occasions.

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Westlund, Oscar. / *Studying news media's multi channel strategies in the age of mobile media*. Göteborgs universitet, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, 2007. 19 s.

Group 3. Mediatization of Religion and Culture

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Broddason, Þorbjörn. / *Journalism: a probationary sacred occupation sliding downhill?* Reykjavík: University of Iceland, Department of Sociology, 2007. 11 s.

Brunninge, Olof. / *Identity Dynamics in a Christian Newspaper: The Case of Dagen*. Högskolan i Jönköping, 2008. 16 s.

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Lundby, Knut. / *The sacred as meaning and belonging in Digital Storytelling*. Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon, 2007. 16 s.

Lövheim, Mia. / *Rethinking Cyberreligion? Teens, religion and the media in Sweden*. Uppsala universitet, Teologiska fakulteten, 2007. 22 s.

Nybro Petersen, Line. / *Are you Lost?: religious discourse and participatory fan-culture in Lost (2004)*. Københavns Universitet, Afdeling for Film- og Medievidenskab, 2007. 23 s.

Salokangas, Raimo. / *Blasphemy: a court case in 1880's Finland as an indicator of change in the*

public sphere. University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication, 2007. 10 s.

Sumiala-Seppänen, Johanna; Pantti, Mervi. / *Till death do us join: national tragedies, mediatized mourning rituals and the sacred centre of the society*. University of Helsinki, Department of Communication, 2007. 28 s.

Group 4. Media History

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Bastiansen, Henrik G. / *The Mobile Phone in Norway: From Idea to Common Property*. Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon, 2007. 10 s.

Brügger, Niels. / *The archived website as historical document: principles, rules and recommendations*. Aarhus Universitet, Institut for Informations- og Medievidenskab, 2007. 24 s.

Djerf-Pierre, Monika. / *Ledarskap i framgångsrika tidningsföretag: förutsättningar för en kulturhistorisk analys av tidningsledare och tidningsledarskap i svensk landsortspress under 1900-talet* [Media management in successful newspaper companies: a cultural historical analysis of newspaper managers and newspaper management in Swedish local/non-metropolitan press during the 1900s]. Göteborgs universitet, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, 2007. 22 s.

Ekstrand, Eva. / *Trettioalets antifascistiska bildjournalistik – några exempel*. [The anti fascist picture and photo journalism in the thirties – some examples]. Högskolan i Gävle, Medier, kommunikation och film, 2007. 19 s.

Elfving, Sari. / *Intimate friends and startling comets: television stardom in Finnish media history*. University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 2007. 7 s.

Ellefson, Merja. / *"For whom is the table prepared?" – Representing order and otherness in the 1930's Swedish Press*. Stockholms universitet, Institutionen för journalistik, medier och kommunikation, 2007. 10 s.

Hyvönen, Mats. / *Bilder av det "goda" arbetet* [Pictures of the "good" work]. Högskolan i Gävle, Medier, kommunikation och film, 2007. 16 s.

Ijäs, Arne Johansen. / *Samisk pressehistorie: Noen hovedtrekk i perioden 1870-1990* [Sámi press history: Developments in the period 1870-1990]. Guovdageaidnu: Samisk høgskole, 2007. 14 s.

Kreepipuu, Tiit / *The history of Estonian printed press during the years of Soviet occupation: Soviet Estonian newspapers as a part of Soviet media system: overview and theoretical and methodological*

approaches of research. University of Tartu, 2007. 13 p.

Kurvits, Roosmari. / *The changing appearance of Estonian newspapers 1806-1940 and the appearance spiral model*. University of Tartu, 2007. 23 s.

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Vesterlund, Per. / *Svensk bostad i rörlig bild: Nedslag i HSB:s filmproduktion* [Swedish flats in moving pictures: Examples from HSB's film production]. Högskolan i Gävle, Medier, kommunikation och film, 2007. 18 s.

Werenskjöld, Rolf. / *Det globale 1968-opprøret i de dominerende norske avismediene* [The global 1968-revolt seen through the dominant Norwegian newsmedia]. Høgskulen i Volda, Avdeling for mediefag, 2007. 33 s.

Örnebring, Henrik. / *The technologisation of journalism: historical perspectives on news, technology and labour*. London: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2007. 16 s.

Group 5. Film History

Chairman: Erik Hedling

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Bengtsson, Bengt. / *Uppsala Studenters Filmstudio – arena för konstfilmsinstitution och filmdebatt* [Uppsala Student's Film Studio – arena for art film institution and film debates]. Högskolan i Gävle, Medier, kommunikation och film, 2007. 9 s.

Diesen, Jan Anders. / *Amundsen og Elsworths flyveekspediasjon 1925* [The film of Amundsen and Elsworth's airplane expedition in 1925]. Høgskolen i Lillehammer, Avdeling for TV-utdanning og filmvitenskap, 2007. 15 s.

Hedling, Erik. / *"Flicka i regnrock": Ingmar Bergman och Vietnam-rörelsen* ["Flicka i regnrock": Ingmar Bergman and the Vietnam movement]. Lunds universitet, Filmvetenskap, 2007. 27 s.

Helseth, Tore. / *Estetikk og synergi i norske filmslagere 1930-1960* [Aesthetics and synergy in Norwegian film 1930-1960]. Høgskolen i Lillehammer, Avdeling for TV-utdanning og filmvitenskap, 2007. 12 s.

Iversen, Gunnar. / *Tiden leger ingen sår: Om filmen Reprise og den nye norske kunstfilmen* [Time itself heals no wounds: About the film *Reprise* and the new Norwegian art film]. Trondheim: Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / NTNU, Institutt for kunst- og medievitenskap, 2007. 20 s.

Jönsson, Mats; Snickars, Pelle. / *Medier & politik: om arbetarrörelsens mediestrategier* [Media strategies of the Swedish Labour Movement during the 20th century]. Örebro universitet, Filmvetenskap / Statens ljud- och bildarkiv, 2007. 19 s.

Larsen, Leif Ove. / *Film in national history writing*. Universitetet i Bergen, Institutt for Informasjons- og medievitenskap, 2007. 11 s.

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Pedersen, Mona. / *"... virkelig en opplevelse": om kinoen som opplevelseskontekst* [About the cinema as a context of human experience]. Rena: Høgskolen i Hedmark, Avdeling for økonomi, samfunnsfag og informatikk, 2007. 15 s.

Solum, Ove. / *"Norsk films gullalder er nå!": Politikk og estetikk i nyere norsk film* [Politics and aesthetics in new Norwegian film]. Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon, 2007. 15 s.

Strøm, Gunnar. / *Komparative betraktninger om tidlig animasjon i Skandinavia og Japan* [Comparative views in early Scandinavian and Japanese animation]. Høgskulen i Volda, Avdeling for mediefag, 2007. 14 s.

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Jensen, Pia Majbritt. / *Impacts of tv format adaptation on Danish and Australian primetime*. Aarhus Universitet, Institut for Informations- og Medievidenskab, 2007. 28 s.

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Moe, Hallvard; Syvertsen, Trine. / *Researching Public Service Broadcasting: Policy, Institutions, Democracy and Post-modern Approaches*. Universitetet i Bergen, Institutt for Informasjons- og medievitenskap / Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon, 2007. 36 s.

Pedersen, Dan. / *Public service-udvalg?: en sammenligning af to salgsafdelinger under meget forskellige omstændigheder* [Public service-sale?: a comparison of two sales departments under very different circumstances]. Københavns Universitet, Afdeling for Film- og Medievidenskab, 2007. 32 s.

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Stiernstedt, Fredrik. / *Musikradio i Norden och Baltikum: deltagande, flermedialitet och publikproduktion* [Music radio in the Nordic countries and the Baltic States: participation, multimedia and audience production]. Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, Institutionen för kultur och kommunikation, 2007. 18 s.

Storsul, Tanja. / *Maktperspektiv på digital tv: om bakkenettet og mediepolitikken* [Power perspectives on digital TV: digital distribution and media policy]. Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon, 2007. 26 s.

Sundet, Vilde Schanke. / *Eksperimentet "Rubenmann": Plattformekspansjon, innovasjon og publikumsdeltakelse i NRK* [The experiment "Rubenmann": Platform expansion, innovations and audience participation in NRK]. Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon, 2007. 25 s.

Vaagan, Robert; Wang, Yu. / *Towards National Policies on Digital Television in China and Norway*. Høgskolen i Oslo, 2007. 16 s.

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Ytre-Arne, Brita; Halse, Kjetil Jarl. / *Allmennkringkasting og samfunnsoppdrag: En analyse av aktualitetsjournalistikk i radio* [Public Service Broadcasting's service to the public: An analysis of current affairs journalism in radio]. Universitetet i Bergen, Institutt for Informasjons- og medievitenskap / Høgskulen i Volda, Avdeling for mediefag, 2007. 29 s.

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Christensen, Christian. / *Uploading war and peace: YouTube and military propaganda*. Karlstads universitet, Medie- og kommunikationsvetenskap, 2007. 21 s.

Ekström, Mats; Bérczes, Judit. / *Avbrott i politiska mediesamtal: en studie av en statsministerkandidaten Persson och Reinfeldt i den svenska valrörelsen*

2006 [Interruptions in political media conversation: a study of the prime minister candidates Persson and Reinfeldt in the Swedish election campaign 2006]. Örebro universitet, Medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap, 2007. 20 s.

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Johansson, Bengt. / *I skuggan av riksdagsvalet: lokala medievalrörelser och andra rangens val* [In the shadow of the parliamentary election: local media election proceedings and second-class elections]. Göteborgs universitet, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, 2007. 26 s.

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Aalberg, Toril; Jamtøy, Ann Iren. / *Friends, connections and enemies: The relationship between political journalists and members of parliament in Norway*. Trondheim: Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / NTNU, Institutt for sosiologi og statsvitenskap, 2007. 23 s.

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Chairman: *Barbara Gentikow*

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Bengtsson, Stina. / *Moral dimensions of media use in everyday life*. Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, Institutionen för kultur och kommunikation, 2007. 18 s.

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Laursen, Ditte. / *Dialoger på tværs af sms- og samtalemediet via mobiltelefonen* [Dialogues across the media of sms and conversation via the mobile telephone]. Århus: Statsbiblioteket, Nordicom/Danmark, 2007. 11 s.

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Westlund, Oscar. / *A mobile media world – without users?* Göteborgs universitet, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, 2007. 16 s.

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Chairman: Sirkku Kotilainen

Eriksen, Trond. / *Film som pedagogisk tekst: Dialogiske relasjoner mellom elev og filmens karakterer* [Pedagogy and film: Relations of dialog between student and characters]. Tønsberg: Høgskolen i Vestfold, 2007. 11 s.

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Group 11. Media, ICT and Learning

Chairman: Lasse Högberg

Björger, Anne Mette. / *Elevers utvikling av digital kompetanse i spenningsfeltet mellom skole og fritid* [On the development of digital literacy in and outside of school]. Høgskolen i Lillehammer, 2007. 20 s.

Erstad, Ola; Gilje, Øystein. / *Categories of students and digital production: reporting from a survey on media education in Norway*. Universitetet i Oslo, Pedagogisk forskningsinstitutt, 2007. 18 s.

Forsling, Karin; Högberg, Lasse. / *Estetiske lærprosesser och mediepedagogik inom lärarutbildningen* [Aesthetic learning processes and media pedagogy in the media education]. Karlstads universitet, Medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap, 2007. 18 s.

Frølund, Lisbeth; Gilje, Øystein; Lindstrand, Fredrik; Öhman-Gullberg, Lisa. / *Multimodal perspectives on moving image production by young people: four Nordic studies of transformative processes in the work with film*. København: Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitet, Learning Lab Denmark / Universitetet i Oslo, Pedagogisk forskningsinstitutt, 2007. 15 s.

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Kupiainen, Reijo. / *Media literacy as a focal practice*. Tampere: University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 2007. 12 s.

Lehtonen, Pauliina. / *Social media vs. social action: the role of ICT in citizen participation*. University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 2007. 14 s.

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Thestrup, Klaus. / *I det blå rum: børns medieleg med bluescreen-teknologi* [In the blue room: children's mediaplaying with bluescreen-technology]. Aarhus Universitet, Institut for Informations- og Medievidenskab, 2007. 15 s.

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Engelstad, Audun. / *Tv-serier og formidling av politikk: Eksposisjon, dramaturgi og politikkenes virkelighet i primetime tv-drama* [TV-series and the reality of politics]. Høgskolen i Lillehammer, Avdeling for TV-utdanning og filmvitenskap, 2007. 18 s.

Gjelsvik, Anne. / *Home is where the father is*. Trondheim: Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / NTNU, Institutt for kunst- og medievitenskap, 2007. 13 s.

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Chairman: *Jesper Falkheimer*

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Heide, Mats; Johansson, Catrin. / *Speaking of change: a review of new communication approaches to the study of organizational change*. Lunds universitet, Institutionen för kommunikationsstudier / Sundsvall: Mittuniversitetet, Institutionen för informationsteknologi och medier, 2007. 36 s.

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Tække, Jesper. / *Krisekommunikation: en sociologisk perspektivering* [Crisis communication: a sociological way of putting into perspective]. Aarhus Universitet, Institut for Informations- og Medievidenskab, 2007. 20 s.

Vos, Marita. / *Communication as a management perspective*. University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication, 2007. 10 s.

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