

Foreword

The media and communication research associations of the Nordic countries in co-operation with Nordicom have held conferences every second year since 1973. The 21th conference in the series was held in Oslo, Norway, 8th-10th August 2013. Host for the conference was the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Oslo and Akershus University College.

The *NordMedia* conference 2013 in Oslo marked and celebrated the 40 years that have passed since that very first Nordic media conference. These Nordic conferences have without doubt contributed greatly to the development of media and communication research in the Nordic countries.

About 350 scholars from Denmark (59), Finland (48), Iceland (3), Norway (58) and Sweden (70) gathered to discuss current research and findings. In addition, some participants came from further afield, from Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Indonesia, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Tanzania, the USA, etc.

The conference proceedings included plenary sessions with keynote speakers and thematic seminars in different divisions and working groups. Participants also enjoyed a number of social gatherings and cultural events.

The theme of the plenary sessions this year was *Defending Democracy. Nordic and Global Diversities in Media and Journalism*. This special issue of *Nordicom Review* and *Nordicom-Information* contains the speeches held in plenary sessions regarding this theme.

As usual, the main business of the conference took place in the sessions of the different divisions. More than 270 research papers were presented in 12 divisions: Environment, Science and Risk Communication; Journalism Studies; Media and Communication History; Media, Culture and Society; Media, Globalization and Social Change; Media Literacy and Media Education; Media Management, Policy and Economy; Media, Technology and Aesthetics; Film Studies; Organization, Communication and Society; Political Communication; and Theory, Philosophy and Ethics of Communication. All papers are listed in this report.

A number of the conference papers presented at the conference have been revised and edited to become articles submitted for review for publication in English in this issue of *Nordicom Review*. Together, the articles presented will 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. A Local Planning Committee at Oslo and Akershus University College was responsible for the arrangements and details of the conference.

Members of the Committee that planned *NordMedia 2013* were Thomas Bjørner and Stine Liv Johansen, SMID (Denmark); Juha Koivisto, TOY (Finland); Kjartan Ólafsson (Iceland); Hilde Arntsen & Ragnhild Mølster, NML (Norway); Margareta Melin, FSMK (Sweden); and Ulla Carlsson (Nordicom); and from the Norwegian host: Steen Steensen, Anne-Hege Simonsen, Harald Hornmoen and Anders Gjesvik.

Associate professor Steen Steensen acted as Chairmen of the Organizing Committee-

The next NordMedia Conference is to be held in Copenhagen, 13-15 August 2015, and the theme is *Media Presence – Mobile Modernities*.

Let me conclude by, on behalf of Nordicom, thanking the editors Kristin Skare Orgeret and Harald Hornmoen, professors at the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Oslo and Akershus University College, and all the contributors, who have made this publication possible.

Göteborg in August 2014

Ulla Carlsson

Director

Nordicom

40 Years of Nordic Media Research

Introduction

Harald Hornmoen & Kristin Skare Orgeret

1973. The world is affected by the Yom Kippur War in the Middle East and the global oil crisis. Denmark, Britain and Ireland join the EEC. In the US, the Watergate hearings begin and World Trade Center becomes the tallest building in the world. A ceasefire is signed in the Vietnam War. There is a military coup in Chile, and Pinochet takes over. In South Africa, activist Steve Biko is banned by the apartheid government. In the field of popular culture, *The Godfather* wins the Academy Award for Best Picture. Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* is released, and David Bowie ends his Ziggy Stardust tour in London. In the world of information technology, IBM presents the revolutionary Mag Card II Typewriter, with an electronic memory that can hold up to 8,000 characters. In Norway, NORSAR (Norwegian Seismic Array), as the first institution outside the US, connects to the ARPANET, the precursor to what in 1983 will be named the Internet, although most people will not hear about it until the 1990s. The media scene in the Nordic countries is characterized by the recent introduction of colour television, and 'mass communication' is a fairly new concept.

And – for a few bright midsummer days in June, the very first Nordic media research conference is organized in Voksenåsen in Oslo.

NordMedia 2013 in Oslo marked and celebrated the 40 years that have passed since that very first Nordic media conference. Much has changed in these 40 years. For the journalistic media, for instance, the digital revolution has had a profound impact on their development: digitalization of all kinds of media, multiple platforms, a growing number of formats and new media practices, which have facilitated new cultural conditions and altered the possibilities for the direct participation of audiences. Furthermore, the changed conditions of the media, transformed by globalization, increased commercialization and owner concentration, are dramatically changing journalistic work. These changes of course influence what we study, and how we carry out media research.

Also within the field of media research as such, essential changes have taken place since 1973, in terms of a much larger theoretical and methodological plurality now than then. There is much greater acceptance of, yes even a requirement for, multidisciplinary perspectives than there was 40 years ago. The ever growing list of topics that media researchers focus on is reflected in the wide range of thematic divisions at the Nordic conferences.

Nevertheless, there is also a line of continuity between the two Oslo conferences and a permanence can be noted in some of the overall questions and core challenges in

current Nordic media research. At the very first conference communication and social responsibility were the main topics, followed by communication and democracy. Forty years later, the conference was hosted by the oldest journalism education programme in Norway, now a part of Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences. The organizing committee at the Department of Journalism and Media Studies decided on the conference title “Defending Democracy. Nordic and Global Diversities in Media and Journalism”.

At a 40-year anniversary, it made sense to have a conference theme that dealt with a large, important and timeless topic. The conference title points to the central role the media play in democracies and processes of democratization. We live in an era in which the media occupy an increasingly important part of both fundamental societal structures and everyday socialization. Few will argue against the potentially democratic role of journalism; however, media and journalism do not automatically promote democracy. Traditional media institutions, and with them professional journalism, are no longer by default the main stewards of freedom of expression and hence democratic principles in a modern society. The ambiguous relationship between journalism and democracy is – in our digital age – further blurred by the proliferation of non-edited and personal media, such as private blogs, Twitter and other social media with their allegedly democratic potential.

Nordic societies and hence the Nordic media are becoming increasingly globalized. The Nordic countries today represent a diversity of different cultures, social groups and ethnicities, and characterized by increased migration and transnational interaction and cooperation. The political economy of the media field and the increasing diversity of the various media practices and media cultures are also more and more influenced by global trends. This makes it essential to view the relation of media and journalism to democracy and free speech from a transnational perspective, which includes not only the Nordic countries but also other parts of the world.

However, this celebratory occasion also reminds us that the context for the NordMedia conferences is still the Nordic countries. These conferences will continue to be important for regional collaboration in the future. In Oslo, three media researchers emphasized the significance of Nordicom and the NordMedia conference for Nordic media and communication research. All three of them – Kristin Frandsen from Denmark, Kaarle Nordenstreng from Finland, and Rune Ottosen from Norway – point out the importance of Nordicom in providing the region’s researchers, politicians and the public with documentation on and knowledge of Nordic media. Their festive tributes make up the introductory section of this conference issue.

The NordMedia 2013 conference focused on the relationship between journalism and other media practices and democracy from a Nordic and global perspective, by asking questions such as:

- What roles do media and journalism play in democratization processes and what role should they play?
- What is the relationship between media practices, journalism and democracy?
- How does the increasingly complex and omnipresent media field affect conditions for freedom of speech?

- How can journalistic institutions and other media institutions best ensure that the media's role as carriers of free speech and democratic ideals is maintained and strengthened?

Such questions are particularly addressed in the three keynote speeches presented in this issue.

In her keynote speech, "Defending Whose Democracy? Media Freedom and Media Power", Natalie Fenton critically discusses neo-liberal notions of an inevitable sequential relationship between "free" media and more news on the one hand and a healthy democracy in our societies on the other. Focusing on the case of the UK, she does see a relationship between news and democracy. However, it is a largely dysfunctional relationship whose breaking points pivot on issues relating to commercialism and the marketization of news, as well as a concentration of ownership and deregulation. Fenton questions the libertarian notion that truth will necessarily emerge in the marketplace of ideas. She argues that journalism can be de-democratizing in a political-economic system that claims that less state interference in the form of regulation stimulates democracy and productivity. In this system, productivity in the market and hence news as commodity takes precedence over the social and political concerns of news as mechanisms of democratic process.

Fenton concludes that it is necessary for media scholars to consider who has power and how power is used if they are to fully interrogate the relationship of media to democracy. By embracing the social dimensions of mediated life and the political consequences of our actions and those of others, we are encouraged to take account of those who hold power and those who seek to claim it, and to critique how each is accountable to the other.

In his keynote speech, "Radical Media Ethics: Responding to a Revolution", Stephen Ward claims that journalism should have an ethical impulse to advance social justice and promote human flourishing and democratic structures worldwide. However, with North American media as his point of departure, he considers media ethics to presently be in turmoil. This is largely due to two macro-trends: 1. the emergence of a mixed media with many types of practitioners, technology and content, and 2. the globalization of media. Ward identifies new forms of journalism developing, such as "brand journalism" and "agenda-driven journalism", forms that seem to threaten the notion of independent journalism in the public interest. However, he considers traditional media ethics, which stresses objectivity and impartiality, to be weak on specifying guidelines and protocols for the different forms of media that are emerging.

According to Ward, we need to re-invent media ethics. It should be unified by an allegiance to general principles of truth and independence. But it will also have to develop an ethics of difference that allows various forms of journalism to follow different protocols and norms, whether these are forms such as satirical journalism, opinion journalism, editorial cartoons or advocacy reporting. In a constructive manner, Ward imagines a media ethics of the future, consisting of, amongst other aspects, an ethics of new media ecologies and an ethics of global, democratic journalism.

With regard to the last aspect, journalists might get valuable inspiration from current practices in the documentary film genre. In his keynote speech, "Cosmopolitan Narratives. Documentary and the Global 'Other'", Ib Bondebjerg points out that although

news, especially on 24-hour news channels, is important in updating us on global issues and themes on a daily basis, documentaries are in one sense more influential in the forming of global narratives and cosmopolitan imaginaries. Documentaries can tell stories that bring us closer to the reality of distant others, and create identification and empathy by displaying human dimensions that are universal, despite cultural differences. Whereas news from conflict societies such as Afghanistan tends to represent realities from a military and political perspective in informational stories rather than broader narratives, documentary filmmakers have at their disposal a wider spectrum of modes in their representation of reality and themes.

Bondebjerg illustrates this by discussing how different Afghanistan documentaries have an anthropological approach to reality and may focus intensely on the worlds and minds of the others, for example by letting them shoot parts of the film. Other large-scale, multiplatform documentary projects try to establish a global dialogue around global issues. In the case of the project *Why Democracy*, ten filmmakers around the world made different films about democracy and what it meant to them. For Bondebjerg, such projects represent a new form of a mediated, global public sphere.

In this special issue of *Nordicom Review*, the first group of articles developed from papers presented at the Oslo conference, offers different perspectives on journalism in Nordic countries.

In “Credibility and the Media as a Political Institution” Mark Blach-Ørsten and Rasmus Burkal argue that the credibility of journalism as an institution in Danish society is found in the daily practices of producing news by following the rules of the news regime. They define credibility on the one hand as the accuracy and reliability of news stories in leading Danish news media, and on the other as journalists’ knowledge and understanding of the Danish code of press ethics. A major finding in their survey of news sources that participated in different news media (national print and online newspapers, local newspapers and television) is that these sources find relatively few errors in the news. On a general level, however, many sources display mistrust in the media as they suspect them of being politically biased. Blach-Ørsten and Burkal consequently express a need for more transparent practices in the newsroom, something that would make it possible for sceptical sources to test their scepticism against the work of the journalist.

A different perspective on newsroom practices is provided by Gitte Gravengaard and Lene Rimestad in “Socializing Journalist Trainees in the Newsroom”. Rather than focusing on the products of newsroom socialization, as is common in this research area, the authors study how the socialization process actually takes place in the newsroom. In empirical studies of 12 Danish journalist trainees during their internship, they analyse interactions between the trainees and their editors concerning ideas for news stories. Their analyses capture intangible parts of the socialization process and of the construction of craft ethos and professional vision. The authors argue that their socialization analyses may offer an opportunity to transform parts of the editors’ tacit expert knowledge into expressed knowledge, so that editors can reflect upon and discuss their routinized practice.

Arne Krumsvik contributes through an updated analysis of the rationale for online publishing in the Norwegian newspaper industry. His article, “Stability in Times of Change: Trends in Newspaper Executives’ Attitudes towards Digital Media”, presents surveys of Norwegian print newspaper executives’ attitudes towards digital media. The

surveys, conducted biennially from 2005 to 2013, suggest a high degree of stability in their attitudes, as they still do not approve of their organizations' online activities. Nevertheless, Krumsvik finds that the rationale for online publishing is changing. Marketing of the print edition has become less important and new sources of revenue more important. There is an increased focus on user payment for online activities, and the rationale for this approach has shifted: whereas it was driven by perceived threats from 2005 to 2011, opportunities for the industry are the strongest predictor in 2013.

The second group of research articles, entitled "Media Influence and Influencing the Media", consists of work that in different ways sheds light on aspects of the complex relations between media, politics and public relations – and the actions of social groups and institutions as well as corporations and industry groups.

In media studies, the concept of mediatization has blossomed in recent years. In "Strong and Weak Forms of Mediatization Theory: A Critical Review", Marko Ampuja, Juha Koivisto and Esa Väliverronen critically discuss the advocacy of mediatization as a key concept in media research. The authors distinguish between a "strong" and "weak" form of mediatization theory. The strong version argues that contemporary societies are permeated by the media: social and cultural institutions and actors increasingly need to accommodate a "media logic". The weak version criticizes the notion of a uniform media logic, but emphasizes the role of the media in social change. Its advocates try to de-centre the media and see mediatization in relation to other major social and cultural processes. Although the weak version seems to avoid overly simplistic assumptions of the power of media in contemporary societies, Ampuja et al. argue that its advocates have not provided theoretically coherent analyses and explanations of social change.

The authors believe that the fascination with the mediatization concept will continue in media studies, but argue that the media centrism of both forms of mediatization theory prevents their advocates from clarifying the role of media as agents vis-à-vis other powerful social, political and economic institutions.

The article "Talking Green in the Public Sphere" gives an overview of common topics and tactics that large Swedish corporations use in their environmentally themed press releases. The authors, Alon Lischinsky and Annika Egan Sjölander, show that corporate voices make substantial use of environmental and ecological arguments in their strategic communication with journalists and newsrooms. However, the corporations do not provide much useful information about their environmental impact and do not foster forms of dialogic stakeholder engagement. These findings feed democratic concerns, not least regarding the general public's limited possibilities to stay well informed about business activities and their environmental impact on the commons.

In their article, "Migration between Politics, Journalism and PR – new conditions for power citizenship and democracy?", Göran Palm and Håkan Sandström argue that to fully understand contemporary politics one needs to comprehend the migrating trend and convergence between elite politicians, elite political reporters and elite communication /PR officers. Through empirical findings, the authors show how the three fields of power holders form the realm of politics and communication, and constitute a strategic communication elite. This communication elite, the authors argue, sets the parameters for the public discourse on politics, at large affecting how ordinary citizens will perceive "the political", but also draws limits for their ability to take action.

In his contribution, “Norwegian Media and the Cold War 1945-1991”, Henrik G. Bastiansen discusses how the historical Cold War period influenced the media – but also how the media influenced the Cold War. The main point is that if we want to understand the development of the mass media during these years, we also need to investigate the relations between the media and the Cold War. As a consequence, Bastiansen stresses that it is impossible to understand the Glasnost phenomenon without the media dimension. The influence was not only from events to media, but also the other way around: from media coverage to news events. The article argues that the Norwegian news reporting of these years must have also been deeply influenced by the changes in Soviet media and how they discussed social problems in new ways. It concludes that the Glasnost era in the Soviet media also changed the foreign news journalism in Norwegian media – and thus the public image of the Soviet Union in Norway at the end of the 1980s.

Anne Jerslev’s article, “Celebrification, Authenticity, Gossip – the Celebrity Humanitarian”, approaches the topic of mediated influence from yet another perspective, through a discussion of the celebrity humanitarian as a media construction. The article shows how celebrities can call immediate attention to important global causes, that they can act as intermediaries between publics and political movements, and that they may be able to translate and communicate complex, global political and economic structures into understandable terms. Simultaneously, through the very same activity, celebrities market themselves as “humanitarian celebrities”, creating a sellable brand identity, and may thereby improve their general value in the entertainment business. Jerslev shows how authenticity is a relational and discursive endeavour and therefore that authenticity will always be negotiated in specific contexts. An empirical example of a photograph of Angelina Jolie in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2013 illustrates how the mediation of celebrity humanitarianism is framed by and structured within a “celebrity logic”. Through its discussion, the article illuminates what challenges such a celebrity logic as a media practice poses to the activist or goodwill function.

The final section consists of research articles presenting diverse perspectives on media communities and formats. Contributions discuss issues such as the collaborative production of articles in Wikipedia, player experience in digital games, and media memory practices of our time.

Maria Mattus’ article, “The Anyone-Can-Edit Syndrome, Intercreation Stories of Three Featured Articles in Wikipedia”, as the title indicates, is based on a study of three featured articles from the Swedish version of Wikipedia. Being the world’s largest and most popular general reference work, Wikipedia might give the impression that user-generated articles are mostly collaboratively shaped products. Using the slogan “the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit” Wikipedia invites everyone to contribute, but the article hypothesizes that the contributors do not necessarily represent all kinds of individuals or interests. Consequently, the imbalance among the participants might affect the content as well as the perspective conveyed. The three featured articles under scrutiny belong to the *culture* subject field, and the analysis follows their development from their very first versions in 2003/2004 to edits made at the end of 2012. By doing so, it demonstrates what the creation (or intercreation) processes of the Wikipedia articles look like, and how the collaborative production of such articles can be understood.

In “A Quest for *Communitas*: Rethinking Mediated Memory Existentially”, Amanda Lagerkvist compares two current memory regimes: the 9/11 anniversary commemoration on Swedish television, and web communities dedicated to lost love ones. There are important differences between these two media memory practices. Televisual commemoration sanctions particular official memories of certain events and certain deaths, whereas digital memories are non-official and spring from individual and collective needs to memorialize, grieve, connect, support and be supported. Lagerkvist argues, however, that both televisual commemorations of anniversaries of trauma and our new multiple media memories compel us to conceive of our hyper-contingent, late-modern digital age as a search for meaning, transcendence and cohesiveness – for existential security. These cultural memory practices echo a basic quest for *communitas*.

Rikke Toft Nørgård’s “Talking Tacitly: Activities and Experiences in Highly Interactive Media” merges new methods of researching digital games and game players with new ways of writing and thinking about media. She presents a three-year study of a group of game players’ activities and experiences across different digital games and media platforms. Nørgård argues that if one is to grasp the uniqueness of their activities and experiences, it is not sufficient to re-use adapted media theories, concepts, methods and ways of writing. She uses alternative methods, theories and styles of writing in order to allow for the emergence of new formations of studying, thinking and talking about activities and experiences in highly interactive media. The presented findings emerged through the application of a multi-methodology combining a grounded theory approach with phenomenography, remix methods and interpretative ethnography, as well as visual methods.

Claus Toft-Nielsen explores the close connection between fantasy and computer games in “Worlds at Play. Space and Player Experience in Fantasy Computer Games”. He argues that the main function of the fantasy genre is world-building. Successful fantasy lies in the creation of a world where laws are established and followed throughout the fiction. On the basis on empirical data from interviews with players of *World of Warcraft*, the most popular Western online role-playing game of all time, the author develops the concepts of “worldness” and the *fantasy genre matrix*. He argues that these concepts can help us frame some of the different experiences players have when engaging with vast online game worlds, and how these intersect with other worlds in a wide array of media.

Finally, Svein Høier’s article, “Surrounded by Ear Candy? – The use of surround sound in Oscar-nominated movies 2000-2012”, discusses sound in contemporary cinema. Taking ten Oscar-nominated movies in the categories “sound editing” and “sound mixing” as its empirical starting point, the article analyses their soundtracks and compares the different formats of these movies: the stereo version and the surround version. In doing so, the article discusses practices of sound design and approaches a “best practice” of surround sound today. Central questions include “What kinds of strategies are prominent when sound designers shape voices, music, atmospheric sounds and sound effects in today’s surround systems?” and “How do sound designers take advantage of the possibilities that such systems presents, and how do they overcome limitations?” The article clearly illustrates how the use of “directional” listening modes to study how the different channels and speakers are used when presenting sonic elements like voices, music, atmospheres and sound effects may help in analysing and describing the acoustic arrangements in today’s surround sound.

This conference issue ends with Elisabeth Eide's "Fortysome Worries", a new take on Bob Dylan's *A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall* as it was sung by the NordMedia organizing committee during the conference dinner at Langøyene in the Oslo Fjord, 10 August 2013.

But before we are introduced to the fortysome worries, Ulla Carlsson herself, Director of Nordicom and a key person in the Nordic media research collaboration, strikes an optimistic note with regard to the prospects for the NordMedia conferences. In her view, in the future the conferences may assume decisive importance, both in the development of media studies in the Nordic countries and in our success in the international arena. We believe that the span and content of the articles presented in this issue of *Nordicom Review* nurture such future prospects. We want to express our gratitude to Ulla Carlsson for her tireless efforts for the Nordic media and communication research community during the past 40 years, and for making this special conference issue possible.

Kaarle Nordenstreng

Noen gjennomlyste forsommerdager i slutten av juni møttes mediaforskere fra hele Norden til konferanse på Voksenåsen ved Oslo.

(For a few bright, early summer days at the end of June, media researchers from the whole of Scandinavia gathered for a conference at Voksenåsen in Oslo.)

So begins Svennik Høyer's foreword to the report entitled *Mediaforskning: Kommunikasjon og samfunnsansvar* (Eng: Media research: Communication and social responsibility). Published by Institutt for presseforskning, Universitetet i Oslo (Eng: Institute for Mass Communication Research, University of Oslo), the 150-page "Stensil nr. 29" of the Institute's series (1973) presents the proceedings of the conference's three days, including overviews of media research in the Nordic countries, a state of the art for influence research, and accounts of whom the mass media are to serve.

In his foreword, Høyer acknowledges the self-appointed organizing committee, comprised of Stig Hadenius and Dan Lundberg from Sweden, Kaarle Nordenstreng from Finland, Niels Thomsen from Denmark and Anita Werner from Norway. Together with Høyer, these contributors stood for the conference programme. Høyer also reminds the reader that the idea for this conference had been born two years earlier at a regular meeting in Oslo of journalism teachers in the Nordic countries, also attended by several researchers (including myself). Accordingly, the roots of our 40-year conference tradition lead to journalism education.

The conference had 82 participants – less than a fourth of us here today. From Denmark there were 15 participants, including names such as Robin Cheesman, Frands Mortensen and Karen Siune; from Finland 11, including Pertti Hemánus, Veikko Pietilä and Tapio Varis; from Sweden 33, including Lars Furhoff, Olga Linné and Lennart Weibull; from Norway 23, including Maarit Bakke, Jon Dørsjø and Helge Østbye. Anybody other than Svennik, Helge and me here today who was there 40 years ago?¹

But let us move from that first conference to the big story behind it. Modern mass communication research began spreading in the Nordic countries in the sixties. For example, the Institute for Mass Communication Research at the University of Oslo was established in 1963 – with a part-time position held by a young political scientist, Per Torsvik, who later moved to Bergen and became one of Nordicom's founding fathers. So the roots of the field are in the legendary decade of the sixties, but the real growth was in the fantastic decade of the seventies – along with the tradition of our Nordic conferences and their international umbrella the IAMCR, which most of us attended every second year. And the field has grown rapidly, both here in the Nordic countries and elsewhere in the world – so rapidly that it has now surpassed sociology, as measured

by publications documented by *Web of Science*².

Lesson one is that Nordmedia conferences are a reflection and indication of how the field has grown, in the number of researchers, students and publications. Surely the growth has taken on different paces and routes in different countries – for example, I used to classify Nordic countries in the seventies into two categories: series A being Denmark and Finland with their dynamic and intellectually innovative approaches, while Sweden and Norway were in series B, with Sweden having an enormous volume but normal science and Norway remaining very small in numbers. By now this division is long extinct, and there is a good deal of everything in each Nordic country, including the smallest one, Iceland.

Lesson two is Nordicom – itself a manifestation of the field's growth. Nordicom served as an infrastructure for maintaining the conference tradition as well as many other functions. We did not need to establish a Nordic association like most other academic fields have done for maintaining and promoting networks, conferences and publications. Nordicom did this for us, in good cooperation with the national research associations, which were established in each country along with the field's growth.

Nordicom also provided documentation service for the Nordic region, and served as a model case for a worldwide network of regional documentation centres which UNESCO began to build in the seventies, covering all regions from Latin America to Asia. This COMNET has unfortunately not materialized, with UNESCO in the eighties having turned its back on communication research and becoming an instrument of corporate-driven policies. The otherwise sad story of COMNET makes Nordicom rise in the historical arena as a shining success story – an exemplary case of supporting research in a regional context.

Nordicom does not need further elaboration and praise for this audience – we all know it, and a good deal of it is packed in the *Festschrift*³ to Ulla Carlsson, whom we shall hear in the last plenary on Saturday. Let me just say that Nordicom, like the Nordmedia conferences, provides us with a historical story which we can not only appreciate but also be truly proud of.

Finally, lesson three is the fact that both Nordicom and the Nordic conferences were born pretty much on their own through a bottom-up process, without much guidance or management from above. They both took shape in the course of the field's growth across the Nordic region, and their emergence was remarkably spontaneous and free from the political conflict that so often surrounds the establishment of international institutions. It has been a spectacular history, to which we pay tribute today.

Notes

1. On the following day Hans Fredrik Dahl came to the conference – the fourth veteran attending the 40th conference.
2. See e.g. my article "Lost in Abundance? Reflections on Disciplinarity", in Barbie Zelizer (ed.), *Making the University Matter*, New York: Routledge, 2011, 194-205.
2. *NORDEN OCH VÄRLDEN. Perspektiv från forskningen om medier och kommunikation. En bok tillägnad Ulla Carlsson. Director, Nordicom.* (THE NORDIC COUNTRIES AND THE WORLD. Perspectives from Research on Media and Communication. A Book for Ulla Carlsson. Director, Nordicom.) Göteborgs universitet, 2010 (edited by Porbjörn Broddason, Ullamaija Kivikuru, Birgitte Tufte, Lennart Weibull & Helge Østbye).

Kirsten Frandsen

In the 2012 annual Nordicom yearbook (*Nordicom Årsrapport 2012*) the management outlines some of the future challenges for the organization. In particular, they mention that the organization is facing a generational handover and that the securement of the organization's rooting on national levels is pivotal.

The management's considerations in this publication surely concern the handover of specific competences and knowledge by those running the organization and its services on a daily basis; and they certainly reflect substantial issues relating to our national governments' varying contributions to the financing of the organization. Nevertheless, I will argue that a generational and national perspective on the organization is both unavoidable and eye-opening when addressing its significance, as seen from an individual researcher's 'user perspective'.

My personal perspective on Nordicom and NordMedia is in many ways biased by the fact that, on the one hand, I belong to what might be termed the 'third generation' of Nordic media researchers. This means that I belong to those who have *not* been personally involved in the formation and establishment of Nordicom and the Nordic conferences. But as I've gotten a substantial part of my educational training and motivation for becoming a media scholar from professors from the formative first and supportive second generations, Nordicom and NordMedia have been almost natural elements in my academic life from day one. This also implies that I've been privileged to have senior colleagues who for historical reasons were quite engaged in and knowledgeable about the aims, activities and organizational challenges of Nordicom. As a research community, we might be facing our own generational handover of the engagement in Nordicom and our Nordic network.

On the other hand, I have to stress that my perspective is also biased by the fact that I'm rooted in a Danish research environment, where many of us have our origins in the Humanities (literature, Nordic literature and language). I'm also rooted in a national context where the financial and institutional engagement in Nordicom, for several reasons, has been more modest than in the other Nordic countries.

Altogether, this brings in a whole series of both biases and blind spots that influence my opinion on the significance of Nordicom and NordMedia.

The Crown Jewels of Nordicom

I still remember when I was introduced to – at that time quite strange and abstract – terms like: "circulation", "penetration", "subscription", "distribution" and "admission".

For me, these were names that belonged to a remote province in Sweden; a province where the valid currency seemed to be numbers, charts and tables that were not easily

exchanged with narratives, metaphors and genres, which were the dominant currency where I came from.

What I did not know at that time – but have later come to acknowledge and appreciate – is that these strange terms are the names of gems in what must today be considered important elements among the crown jewels in the work of Nordicom.

Since the establishment of Nordicom in 1972, one of the cornerstones in its activities has been the documentation of both the developments of media and the research that takes place in the Nordic countries. In this way, early on Nordicom assumed an important role in the formation of media studies as a field of research.

On the one hand, the documentation supports researchers in building up knowledge within our field – and on the other hand it provides our politicians with knowledge about media. Thus, this part of Nordicom's work has supported the general awareness of media and communication studies as an autonomous field of research. And the ideal of providing independent and reliable data on aspects such as subscription, penetration, etc., for the use and benefit of not only our media businesses but also politicians and researchers is part of the legacy from the founding fathers and mothers of our Nordic network – but is nevertheless still viable.

Crown jewels are defined as “[featuring] some combination of precious materials, artistic merit and symbolic and historical value” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regalia>).

In many ways one can say that simply providing comparative statistical descriptive data on media developments in the form of data on ownership, distribution, consumption and economy across nations is a demonstration in itself of great artistic merit, as Nordicom sometimes collates and compares data that are not always directly comparable – for good or for bad. This exercise also has wider historical and symbolic value. One could say that by providing this type of knowledge, Nordicom has acted as a conveyor of central ideas about both the role and the content of research.

This part of Nordicom's activities has been and still is among the most vital –particularly from a Danish perspective, as we here have benefitted from a strong tradition of using quantitative approaches to media within the Swedish research community.

Crown jewels are accumulations of treasures collected over many years of tradition. As such, a collection of crown jewels also reveals shifting trends and developments. Seen in this light, the work of documentation also reveals historical qualitative changes in the role of Nordicom – perhaps towards a more prominent and active role?

First, in the mid-1990s Nordicom started servicing the research community with a new type of data. It was at this time they started to collate data from different national sources, thus creating the very useful comparative statistics on media developments in the Nordic region. The journal *Nordic Media Trends* – as well as publications and the comparative statistics on the website – are key outcomes of this work.

In the same period Nordicom undertook a significant and active role in the securement of providing both more and better knowledge on media and children on a global scale. This happened through the organization's active involvement in the establishment of *The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children Youth and Media*.

The second type of change can be traced to the launch of the regular newsletters *Nordic Media Policy*, *European Media Policy* and the latest *On the International Agenda*. These initiatives reflect important changes in our field of research, and are therefore also evidence of how Nordicom has acted as a highly responsive organization – and

has continuously been willing and able to adjust its role, simply by using some of the new options offered by digital media that allow for more frequent monitoring services. These newsletters document ongoing political processes – and are as such a new way of offering documentation. This is a service that supports an increasing demand for an international dimension in our research – in an extremely dynamic field.

Both in my research and as a teacher I've found statistics provided by Nordicom and the exchanges at our Nordic conferences to be extremely useful. The comparative statistics are good tools for establishing a more sensitive approach to our field. They expose a set of shared characteristics with regard to both media structure and media use, but they also reveal a whole set of internal differences among our countries. Thus, they provide an interesting double perspective on media that brings about a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of media developments in our region.

Meanwhile, the data on Nordic developments do not stand alone but are often placed in an international context. For me, personally, this has been extremely useful as it has given me a better understanding of how our Nordic region in many respects comprises a specific case on the global scene. In this way, I do believe that the work of Nordicom contributes to strengthening our presence and contribution in our international research community.

Meeting Diversity and Sensitivity

My first participation in a Nordic conference was in 1991. This was a true eye-opener. Firstly, because it was my first meeting with what was actually a joint academic community with both important professional and social dimensions; but it was also the first time I faced the diversity of research traditions in our Nordic research community.

It is my impression that at that time the differences were more marked than what we see today. So, as a third generation, I'm convinced that the Nordic conferences have influenced my generation's approach to research. Today, I recognize the value of approaches in research that are different from my own key competencies, and this insight has undoubtedly been shaped in our Nordic context.

In 1991, most of the key notes and paper presentations at the conference were in Scandinavian languages. Meanwhile, our field has been subject to a strong internationalization that could lead one to conclude that our Nordic conferences are no longer necessary for us. But for me they have become more useful than ever, as they provide me with different and in some respects more sensitive feedback on my work than what is mostly offered by colleagues from the rest of the globe. Having both a Nordic and a wider international perspective in our research is more necessary now than ever.

Rune Ottosen

I wish to express my thanks for the opportunity to address this panel. It is a great honor for our institution to host this Nordmedia conference. As the oldest journalism program in Norway, preparing for our 50th anniversary in 2015, Nordic cooperation has been a cornerstone in our activity from the very beginning.

There is a great deal of talk about internationalization these days, and today our department has a global and international profile. But in the early period of our educational history, “internationalization” in all practical terms meant Nordic cooperation. The first rector of our school, Jon Dørsjø, was a huge fan of the grand old man of Swedish journalism education, Lars Furhoff. I remember from my own days as a student in the journalism program from 1971-73 how Dørsjø referred to Furhoff’s methods for journalism training and his research (Furhoff 1986). I also remember how we visited the journalism school in Århus for inspiration. It made a lasting impression on us visiting Norwegians when one of the lecturers in the class we attended had a bottle of Tuborg beer on his table. The cultural differences were apparent, and we were fascinated about exploring these differences as they appeared in media culture and social life.

Another sign of an early Nordic spirit from my student days was the quota the program had of one student from Iceland each year, because Iceland didn’t have a journalism education of its own at the time. In my class, Sigrun Steffansdottir was the Icelandic representative; she later became a key figure in Iceland’s radio and television news as well as the Director of the Nordic Journalist Centre in Århus. There you have another successful Nordic arena. Throughout the years, hundreds of journalists from all of the Nordic countries have attended courses at the Nordic Journalist Centre, exchanging experiences and ideas in the true Nordic spirit. Unfortunately, the Nordic Council has threatened to stop the funding the Centre after 2013.

The early days of journalism education in Oslo were oriented toward practical work. When we needed input on research methods, we visited the Institute for Press research at University of Oslo (one of the predecessors of the Department of Media and Communication (IMK)), where Svennik Høyer gave us a basic introduction to using statistical methods in press research. Svennik is participating at this conference, and he was one of the key persons both in creating Nordicom as a body and as one of the organizers of the first Nordic conference we are celebrating today. It should, of course, also be mentioned that Kaarle Nordenstreng, on this panel, was one of the founding fathers of the conference. These veterans are still going strong and they and the other participants at Voksenåsen in 1973 deserve a big thanks for starting the wonderful journey of Nordic cooperation in media research.

The Nordic conferences have always been a great inspiration for me, ever since I began attending them regularly in the 1980s. Another great resource for Nordic inspiration has been the biannual meeting for Nordic teachers in the journalism programs.

The Significance of Nordicom

Nordicom is the glue of Nordic cooperation. Nordicom is both a knowledge center with an impressive database, and a collector of Nordic media statistics that are available for the research community and a broader public. To understand Nordicom and the Nordic cooperation, you also have to understand Nordicom as a link to the global media researcher community. Here, Ulla Carlsson has been a key person in her role as head of Nordicom. Ulla has been essential as a publisher, academic and a globalist in the true sense of the word. Among many of the activities she has been responsible for creating and coordinating is the “The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media”. When Ulla turned 60, a book was published to honor her and her achievements. I had the privilege, together with Stig A. Nohrstedt, of writing about her contributions to the research field of international news flow and the north-south gap, including the struggle within UNESCO for a new information order (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2012). Working on behalf of Nordicom, Ulla Carlsson has been active in other UNESCO efforts related to freedom of expression, both through conferences and publications.

Not only Ulla but the entire competent staff at Nordicom continuously produce quality publications. The *Nordicom Review* and *Nordicom Information* and book series are vital channels for scientific publications. The Nordic audience is obvious, but many are perhaps not aware of the fact that *Nordicom Review* has 2200 subscribers just for the printed version, and that is many more than many international journals have. The distribution is global, with 1500 subscribers outside the Nordic region (Nordicom 2013). I know from my own experience as a Nordicom author that when your article is published in a Nordicom publication, it will reach a global audience. Reading Nordicom’s publications gives a solid impression of the broad scope of scientific topics dealt with in a Nordic and global perspective. The topics include mediatization of political scandals, climate and the media, religion and the media, public service broadcasting, media and football fan culture, media innovation – just to give a few examples. And I am proud to see many of my colleagues here at Oslo and Akershus University College as both editors and contributors.

I have been challenged to use examples from my own work and Nordicom publications and to address critically the question of whether a Nordic perspective is really of value. My most obvious example is my cooperation with Stig A. Nohrstedt on the issue of war and the media. Through three books and a fourth that is forthcoming, we have compared the coverage in wars like the Gulf War, the war in former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya using cooperative research perspectives from the Nordic countries as well as other countries around the globe (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2001, 2004, 2005, 2014 (forthcoming)). The findings from these studies suggest a close correlation between the security policy orientations of the different Nordic countries and the war reporting in the mainstream media. To take one example: During the Gulf War in 1991, the media in the formally neutral Sweden had a more distanced and critical coverage of the US-led warfare than did the NATO-allied Norway. Since then, Sweden has tied close bonds to

the US and NATO in the so-called global war on terror, with troops in Afghanistan and support functions in the bombing of Libya in 2011. We see a tendency in which these changes are resulting in a more common framing in the Swedish and Norwegian media, although some national differences still remain (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2012).

I will also mention the Nordic surveys among journalism students, organized by Jan Fredrik Hovden at the University of Bergen through a project launched at the Nordic conference for journalism teachers in Hovdabrekka on Iceland in 2004. The original survey was among journalism students in Oslo and Volda, organized by Hovden, Gunn Bjørnsen and myself (Bjørnsen, Hovden and Ottosen 2007). Later this was expanded to surveys of students in the major Nordic journalism programs in 2005, 2008 and 2012 – the 2012 survey also including Iceland, which did not take part in the first two series (Hovden et al. 2009). The surveys offer a huge amount of data that reveal common Nordic values among journalism students, but also significant national differences, documented in several articles in *Nordicom Information* and *Nordicom Review*. Some of the most recent data from the latest survey will be presented here at the conference in a paper by Jan Fredrik Hovden and myself (Hovden and Ottosen 2013).

I finally wish to draw attention to the Nordic cooperation on the issue of press history. In this field, we also find a rich history in Nordic cooperation. As president of the Norwegian Association of Press History, I had the pleasure of organizing a Nordic conference on the rise and fall of the party press in a Nordic comparative perspective, together with my Swedish counterpart Lars-Åke Engblom and the director of the Danish Press Museum, Ervin Nielsen, in Odense in November 2012. Again, we find an interesting pattern with a common basic development in the relation between the political parties and the press, but with many fascinating national variations. The summary of the conference is presented in an excellent essay in *Nordicom Information* by one of the authorities in Nordic media research: Lennart Weibull (Weibull 2013).

Nordic media research, with Nordicom as its common ground, has existed for 40 years. It is still thriving, and this great audience is a living example of it.

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Defending Whose Democracy?

Media Freedom and Media Power

Natalie Fenton

Rarely has the relationship between media and democracy been so centre-stage. Whether regarding regulatory reform brought about by phone hacking in the UK, concentration of media ownership in Italy, Hungary, Australia to mention but a few; or in relation to social media and the internet as a supposed means to increased access to information and citizen production and circulation of non-mainstream content leading to greater so called media freedom. The debate on whether or not and in what form the media are related to the nature and practice of democracy is raging; and rightly so.

Yet too often this debate, usually cast in populist terms, belies complexity. We are frequently told that one leads to the other. In one formulation, ‘free’ media are seen as a pre-requisite for democracy to flourish. Here we see an ill used interpretation of the concept of ‘freedom of the press’ used to defy explanation and justify most anything – who can be against freedom, particularly press freedom when the press have such a crucial relationship with a healthy democracy? Such a knee-jerk response is frequently no more than a cheap disguise for the promotion of free-market capitalism which is then seen as a direct path to enhanced democratisation on the gravy train of commercial media.

Alternatively, it is proposed that ‘freedom’, as a free floating concept more generally connected in this instance to democracy (or more accurately, usually Western forms of capitalist democracy) will inevitably lead to a free media. But once more, dig a little deeper and this free media is largely construed as a media free at the point of profit. Both approaches present varying degrees of media determinism that forge a type of logic that then lends support to arguments for the inherent liberating and democratising impact of new media forms, such as the internet, regardless of actual content or the broader context of which they are a part. Media Freedom in other words finds itself morphed from a complex concept into a simplistic notion that has assumed a level of normativity and developed a common-sense relationship to liberal democracy. To have one *must* be to have the other thereby denying a more critical analytical interpretation of its contemporary neo-liberal translation.

What such approaches all too often fail to point out is that the relationship between media and democracy also depends on the *existing* state of the media and of the market and indeed on the state of *actually existing* democracy in each individual context – where context is likely to be state-led because of the prevailing dominance of state legislatures but not state-bound due to globalisation. Thus, this relationship also depends on politi-

cal culture and media policy; the nature of the economy and the market; media and communication technologies and formats as well as social and cultural issues such as literacy, poverty, religious differences and daily rituals (Curran, Fenton and Freedman 2012). This combination of factors all impinge, sometimes directly, on the relationship between media and democracy as each of these factors have an effect on media circulation and on media consumption and influence how and to what extent democracies can function effectively – yet are all too frequently side stepped leaving us analytically moribund and politically stagnant.

In these sets of complex relations, news media are given a particular relevance with regards to citizen participation in political life. News provides, or should provide, the vital resources for processes of information gathering, deliberation and analysis that enables democracy to function. In an ideal world, unfettered by commercial pressures of failed business models, new technology and plummeting sales and circulation figures, this would mean that news media would survey the socio-political environment, hold the Government and other officials to account, provide a platform for intelligible and illuminating debate, and encourage dialogue across a range of views. This is an ideal relationship, however, and it's hinged on a conception of independent journalism in the public interest linked to notions of knowledge, political participation and democratic renewal. But news media have been beset with many challenges over the last decade that have introduced considerable stress-lines to these ideals. A huge growth in the number of news outlets including the advent of and rapid increase in free papers, the emergence of 24 hour television news and the popularization of online and mobile platforms, has meant that more news must be produced and distributed at a faster rate than ever before. In a corporate news world it is now difficult to maintain profit margins and shareholder returns unless you employ fewer journalists (Fenton 2010). But fewer journalists with more space to fill means doing more work in less time often leading to a greater use of unattributed rewrites of press agency or public relations material and the cut and paste practice now known as churnalism (Davies 2008; Lee-Wright, Phillips and Witschge 2011).

If you combine the faster and shallower corporate journalism of the digital age with the need to pull in readers for commercial rather than journalistic reasons it is not difficult to see how the traditional values of professional journalism are quickly cast aside in order to indulge in sensationalism and deal in gratuitous spectacles and dubious emotionalism. Set this alongside the fact that in many places, such as the UK, there are an ever-smaller number of global media institutions dominating the media landscape; then, the simple notion that more media means better democracy starts to look rather tenuous (Media Reform Coalition 2011).

The larger and more concentrated media empires become, the more concerned politicians are to maintain good relations with owners and senior executives and editors (Davis 2002). Political Parties, the police and other institutions are reluctant to investigate wrong-doing in the news media, hinder the expansion of large media conglomerates or introduce new regulation of news organizations and journalistic practice. Such patterns and relations have resulted in certain public policy areas being avoided for fear of either hostile reporting or media owner conflict. And, for the same reasons, politicians are more likely to discuss populist policies. As such, a media system that may have many platforms and points of distribution but is dominated by a few, powerful voices and a

news media increasingly run to secure financial reward or political influence is unlikely to foster greater participation in political culture.

Theories of democratic political participation have long since recognized the roles the media play in activating political citizenship and participation. Media coverage plays a significant role in creating awareness and engagement. News matters at a fundamental level to society. But a simple abundance of news, one that just assumes that the more news we have the more democratic our societies are, speaks to a naïve pluralism that has been shown to be blatantly false. More news does not necessarily help democracy, even if consumption is high, if the nature of news content serves the interests of the news industry over and above the public's information needs. In such cases contemporary coverage can actually lead to a mood of anti-politics, thwart political participation in the public sphere and diminish democracy (Coleman 2012).

Partly because the relationship between democracy and media is so complex and contingent it is also never fixed and constantly open to contestation – although the terms and extent of that contestation may be constrained under particular circumstances. The media, as democracies, are not homogenous, static entities. Both are ever changing, both contain power and shape the space where power is competed for, albeit in different ways. As a consequence, both also contain difference and division as well as being subject to social forces and indeed social movements that may challenge established and vested interests (Freedman and Fenton 2013). When this happens and it most often happens at the point of crisis – whether due to the failings of democratic systems or the dismal behaviour of some parts of the media – it is then that the opportunity arises to rethink the relationship between media and democracy. We are at this point now in the UK and it is a battle that is being hard fought but one that is severely unbalanced in relation to media power. The tabloid press in particular, have thrown their might, money and megaphone behind a campaign designed to claim freedom as their right to publish whatever they like in the pursuit of profit; a response that equates markets to freedom and increased regulation to creeping authoritarianism.¹ The discursive binary of freedom or authoritarianism is of course, a fake dichotomy that quickly falls apart once the notion of power is injected into the debate. Most people may be able to speak in this public sphere but we can not all speak at the same volume or be heard in the same way. So-called freedom is never unfettered or unstructured. It is always worth asking who or what in this unregulated nirvana has power? Certainly not your average person in the street or even your average journalist, but rather those corporate entities that ever more dominate the media landscape. Once power is taken into consideration then a critique of freedom takes on a rather different mantle from the crude assumption that we all begin from a level playing field and everyone approaches access to freedom from the same vantage point. These issues are exemplified in the recent hacking scandal in the UK.

The Case of the UK: Marketisation and Deregulation of the Press

In the summer of 2012 the *News Of the World*, owned by Rupert Murdoch, stood accused of illegal, unethical behaviour through the systematic phone hacking of politicians, members of the royal family, celebrities and murder victims and their families. Murdoch subsequently closed down the *News of the World* and several ex-editors and journalists found themselves under criminal investigation. The Prime Minister, David

Cameron, publicly embarrassed by his employment of Andy Coulson (a former Editor of *News of the World*: 2003-2007), as his Director of Communications, who was arrested by the Metropolitan Police Service in July 2011 for allegations of corruption and phone hacking, then called for an inquiry chaired by Lord Justice Leveson to investigate the issue.

Hackgate, as it became known, reveals the mechanisms of a system based on the corruption of power. It is not a distortion of a functional system, it is part and parcel of a system that is fully integrated into neo-liberalism. Phone hacking did not happen just because those who did it knew they could get away with it and editors thought on balance it was a business risk worth taking (in other words, that any subsequent payouts to victims would be easily offset against increases in sales). Indeed, many editors denied that they had any knowledge of illegal practice occurring. The problem is much broader and deeper than any slippage in ethical practice would seem to suggest and rests not with the individual journalists but with the system of news production they were part of. The reasons phone hacking took place are complex and involve the increasing entanglement of political and media elites as news coverage has taken on an ever more important role in policy making and elections (Davis 2002); the failure of the Press Complaints Commission (the newspaper industry watchdog) to uphold ethical standards and enable adequate self-regulation of journalists (CCMR 2011; Couldry, Phillips and Freedman 2010); alongside the broken business model of newspapers with plummeting circulation and readership figures and the migration of classified advertising to online sites such as Craigslist in the US and Gumtree and eBay in the UK (Fenton 2010; Levy and Nielsen 2010). But one thing is clear – the illegal practice of phone hacking did not have the primary motive of the press as fourth estate holding truth to power. Rather, in a thoroughly marketised and deregulated newspaper industry the mission was to gain competitive advantage and increase newspaper sales.

The practice of phone hacking has been widely condemned. However, a common response from the news industry itself has been to direct responsibility for phone hacking towards the law and inadequate policing, claiming that it was not the concern of the media industry but rather a result of failures in criminal investigations and prosecutions. The solution must lie therefore with the police and the enactment of the law and not through further regulation of the profession or industry which should remain ‘free’ to do effectively, as it pleases. ‘Freedom’ in this sense becomes a narrative device to sidestep the deeper, systemic problems of the newspaper industry of which these ethical misdemeanours are but one symptom. Freedom of the press stands in for *all* activities of the press regardless of whether they have democratic intent or not.

As soon as the value of news to society is invoked, the contribution of news to the public sphere and consequently its relationship to a healthy democracy follows suit. In this manner, the relationship between journalism and democracy is understood as causal. Once we accept this inevitable sequential relationship it is easy to slip into commonsense assumptions: the more news we have the more democratic our societies are; the less news we have the less democratic we are. Abundance comes to stand in for pluralism and for freedom in the same breath. Of course, democracy is far more than the quantity of news and many so-called developed democracies have a plethora of news media but a public sphere that is severely impoverished (Aalberg, Aelst and Curran 2010). But this kind of short-cut libertarian defence that in fact aligns freedom with established

and vested power interests' ability to do whatever they like within the law means that any form of regulation that may encourage news organizations to behave in particular ways, is assumed to be detrimental to democracy and involvement of the state in any form whatsoever in relation to the press becomes nothing more than state censorship.²

Such arguments, that we see echoed in the proposition that the internet because of its potential for information pluralism, must, by its very nature, deliver more democracy, reveal a particular ideological premise. This was made explicit in the comments by David Price QC, an expert on the law of defamation and privacy:

There is something Orwellian about describing this as the 'Media Freedom and Regulatory Standards Bill', as if they compliment each other, when they are direct opposites....It makes the mistake of assuming more regulation will help us get to the truth more easily. We get to the truth by having ideas tested in the marketplace, not by further regulation or by the great and good deciding what is true or ethical. (David Price QC quoted in *The Times*, 7.1.13)³

So, the marketplace, dominated by publishers who promote a very particular definition of public problems will deliver this thing called a free press that will enable a healthier democracy. Price goes on to say that he is also concerned by the reference to the regulator needing to ensure the dignity of the individual:

We have a proud tradition of ridicule and satire that has protected against abuse of power. A free press will inevitably be undignified but it is far safer than a sanitised one [.....] The point remains [...] that a free press and freedom of expression are indivisible rights that belong to all or none at all. Defending that principle does not mean endorsing everything or anything that the press does. But it does mean accepting the freedom of others to publish what you don't want to read, whether your personal tastes deem it 'ethical' or not. Freedom is always a messy business. Nobody has to pass a test set by Lord Justice Leveson or Hacked Off to qualify for the right to free speech. (Ibid)

It is true that if we look to both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights they do proclaim a universal right to *freedom of expression*. The latter is more detailed and it is helpful to look more closely at it. In Article 10.i It states that

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises. (ECHR 1950:11)

However, article 10.ii – far less often read or cited – qualifies Article 10.i by stating that:

The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information

received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.(ECHR 1950:11)

As Baroness Onora O’Neil (2012) argues, the much quoted Article 10 when seen in its entirety, does *not* assume that freedom of expression is an unconditional right, or that it may not be restricted or subject to regulations. The Declaration proclaims a *qualified* right to freedom of expression, but leaves it to legislatures and to courts to determine which qualifications and restrictions are and are not needed and acceptable at a given time and place. Baroness O’Neill goes on to argue that an individuals’ right to freedom of expression cannot be transferred directly to the speech of powerful organizations stating that, “it is simply a mistake to see the speech of the powerful as self expression” (O’Neill 2012: 9).

This mythology of naïve pluralism assumes that journalists already operate with full independence and in the interests of democracy; that news organisations have democratic intent at their core. But much (although by no means all) tabloid journalism runs counter to the public interest and has little democratic intent. As Trevor Kavanagh, Associate Editor of the *Sun* noted in his own evidence to Leveson:

...news is as saleable a commodity as any other. Newspapers are commercial, competitive businesses, not a public service. (6 October 2011): <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/oct/06/trevor-kavanagh-leveson-inquiry-speech>.

News in these formulations is primarily for profit – this is a marketplace that operates on market principles. But of course, news is no ordinary commodity – it offers the possibility of directing the public conversation and hence is of relevance to politicians keen to convince voters of the benefits of their particular policy formulations. This puts news proprietors in a particular position of power. The owner of the *London Evening Standard* and the *Independent*, Russian billionaire Evgeny Lebedev tweeted after his appearance at Leveson: “Forgot to tell #Leveson that it’s unreasonable to expect individuals to spend £millions on newspapers and not have access to politicians”.

In the UK it would seem, there is a relationship of sorts between news and democracy but a largely dysfunctional one whose breaking points pivot on issues relating to the commercialism and marketisation of news as well as concentration of ownership and deregulation. The notion that somehow truth will emerge victorious in this so-called marketplace of ideas is clearly misconstrued and we would do well to remember that just as journalism can be democratising, so it can also be de-democratising (Fenton 2012).

Hackgate reveals the mechanisms of a system based on the corruption of power and one that displays many of the hallmarks of neo-liberal practice. Rupert Murdoch and the news culture he helped to promote was part of this process in the UK that began with the defeat of the print unions at Wapping and continued with the lobby for extensive liberalisation of media ownership regulation to enable an unprecedented global media empire to emerge. And where did we end up? Hackgate enabled the naming and shaming of what many had believed to be the case for years: systematic invasions of privacy that wrecked lives on a daily basis (Cathcart 2012); lies and deceit of senior newspaper figures; the wily entanglement and extensive associations of media and political elites (Coleman 2012) (during the Leveson inquiry it was revealed that a member of the Cabinet had met executives from Rupert Murdoch’s empire once every three days on average since the Coalition was formed);⁴ and a highly politicised and corrupt police force

(Rebekah Brookes, Chief Executive Officer of News International 2009-2011 and former Editor of *News of the World* and *The Sun*, admitted to paying police for information in a House of Commons Select Committee in 2003 but denied it in 2011 (BBC News UK, 15 April 2011) and over a quarter of the police public affairs department were found to be previous employers of the News of the World (Warrell 2011)). This was certainly a media freedom of sorts but certainly not one that was defending democracy even in its most populist formulations.

Freedom of the press has always been associated with the ability of news journalists to do their job free from interference from government (Muhlmann 2010). Clearly this is crucial for independent news production and a healthy public sphere. Self-regulation has become the sacred mantra associated with the freedom of the press – the only means to ensure governments can't interfere in, dictate the terms and thwart the practice of journalism. But this denies the influence and power of a corporate culture that wreaks its own havoc and sets its own agenda often far more blatantly than any democratic government would ever dare. If you are relatively powerless (say a journalist in relation to an editor) then self-regulation can be meaningless, particularly when the person in power does not share your views. Most recently, with the threat of compulsory redundancies at the Independent newspaper, Michelle Stanistreet, General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists has commented that a workforce that is paid "bargain basement salaries [...] is fearful and compliant" (Press Gazette, 2 August 2013).

But it is not only journalists whose freedom is circumscribed by corporate compliance. Our ability to exercise our own democratic freedom as ordinary members of the public is premised on the basic fact that governments are not distorted by private interest of multi-media conglomerates. When governments as well as journalists are beholden to corporate power then freedom is hard to come by for all but the most powerful.

Understanding the role of the news as an industry and news organizations as corporate entities in these relations is crucial to our understanding of how 'freedom' can be more easily claimed by some to the detriment of others. 'Freedom of the press' as an ethical practice does not somehow magically transcend the market it is part of. Far from it, rather, it has become embroiled in a particular political-economic system. This is a system that tells us that productivity is increased and innovation unleashed if the state stays out of the picture and lets businesses get on with it. Productivity in the market and hence news as a commodity takes precedence over the social and political concerns of news as a mechanism of democratic process. In other words, the less 'interference' in the form of regulation, the more liberalised the market, the better the outcome (Jessop 2002). In neo-liberal democracies the power of the market is just as significant as the power of government. In the UK, there is certainly no rush to regulate for a healthy relationship between news media and democracy, yet there is plenty of urgency about the need to deregulate media for the benefit of the market.

The industry response to the hacking scandal in the UK largely conformed to this neo-liberal premise. Freedom of the press expressed purely as the need to get the state to butt out and give commercial practice free reign is about nothing more than enabling market dominance to take priority over all other concerns. Freedom of the press expressed in this way is not a precondition or even a consequence of democracy so much as a substitute for it. Freedom requires accountability otherwise those with the most power will be free to do as they please while the powerless are ignored or worse. The

journalistic ethics on offer in this rhetoric is not the coming together of journalists for the general promotion of journalism in the public good and for the public interest – as one may find in such organisations as Reporters Without Borders⁵. Rather, it is a post-state capitalist logic (Boltanski 2011) that has become normative.

In the context of the hacking debate the phrase ‘freedom of the press’, has become a term that has been emptied of its real meaning by becoming one of what Hardt and Negri (2009, p.120) call “false universals that characterise dominant modern rationality”. But the process of assigning meaning can never be total and will always reveal contradictions. As such, the relationship between capitalism and democracy (or capitalism and political freedom) should not be taken for granted. One of the areas of media that has been invested with the power to expose these contradictions is the internet – and it is to these debates that we now turn.

Free at Last: Deliverance via the Internet?

Just as individuals cannot claim the right to freedom of expression in the same manner as media conglomerates, neither can the so-called freedom of individuals online fulfill the emancipatory claims made of them. Most recently the notion of media freedom has been applied to information pluralism on the internet and claimed as a democratic gain. In this debate access to the internet (both as a producer and a user) is fore-grounded as the means to communicative and democratic freedom. The Internet, we are told, not only delivers communicative abundance but also brings power to the individual enabling them in Castells’ terms to engage in self mass-communication. This liberation of the self comes via a form of creative autonomy (Castells 2009: 136) unleashed online. Castells argues that a new form of communication has emerged “where self-generated messages created by individuals can reach global audiences” (pp. 58-71) giving rise to unprecedented levels of autonomy imbued with emancipatory possibilities.

Similarly, in Benkler’s (2006) analysis, the Internet has the potential to change the practice of democracy radically because of its participatory and interactive attributes. He argues that it allows all citizens to alter their relationship to the public sphere, become creators and primary subjects engaged in social production. In this sense the Internet is ascribed the powers of democratisation. This may be the result of the networked individual (in other words the individuals expanded relations to others), but it is primarily the liberation of the individual over that of the group that is emphasized.

So, in these formulations, autonomy and freedom unsurprisingly sit side by side and they also sit at the heart of the networked politics of new social movements. It is in these networked forms of radical politics that genuine emancipation and true political freedom is said to reside. It is worthwhile therefore, pausing to consider how freedom and autonomy are often construed in the most recent of new social movements such as Occupy. The conceptualization and enactment of autonomy in the networked sociality of contemporary radical politics has been forged through a connection to anarchism and autonomous Marxism. These approaches imagine the network as an ever-open space of politics. From this perspective, the network is not simply the expression of networked-individuals, but the manifestation of self-constituted, un-hierarchical, and affinity based relationships. Much post-marxist theorizing has claimed that this heralds the emergence of a new (networked) subject of history that is non-hierarchical, with open communica-

tion and self-generating information and identities that function via networks of activism and activists. Such networks are often staunchly anti-bureaucratic and anti-centralist, suspicious of large organized, formal and institutional politics. This is a form of politics that cannot be identified by a party name or definitive ideology and is often liable to rapid change in form, approach and mission. It is a politics that makes a virtue out of a solidarity built on the value of difference that goes beyond a simple respect for otherness and involves an inclusive politics of voice. Marchart (2007) has called this a type of 'post-foundational politics', while others have claimed that the space of new media enables a broader range of voices and types of material to be communicated to a wider audience without the constraints of needing to comply with or follow a particular political creed or direction other than the expression of an affinity with a particular cause.

The rejection of meta-narratives of political ideas in favour of autonomous political subjects and values is seen as being directly conducive to the pluralism of online mediated spaces. The principle that no-one speaks for the collective, that each takes control of their own political activism as being allied to every individual's ability to produce online. Thus, the Internet and the newly creative and autonomous political subjects it inspires is taken as evidence that radical politics can arise horizontally and take the form of networks, rather than hierarchical hegemonies as in a traditional politics of the Left.

There are of course, different ways of conceiving of autonomy. The type of autonomy expressed by post-Marxist discourse theorists that operates within a hegemonic frame (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) needs to be clearly distinguished from the post-hegemony autonomist theorists (Day 2005; Holloway 2002). The former stresses articulation and contingency and recognises that, although the singularity of multiple voices in pluralism must be recognised and respected, ultimately it is neither feasible nor necessarily desirable that each of these singularities occupies a permanently unified space, politics or language. In other words, while the singular authenticity of plural voices is constitutive of the whole and must be recognised as such, it is necessary, to transcend the particularity of the singular to form a collective identity and ultimately, a counter hegemony.

Post-hegemony autonomist approaches, on the other hand, all too frequently overlook the critical contextual factors of state boundaries, prevalent political infrastructures and ever dominant economic constraints that raise critical questions regarding the political efficacy of new social movements and many contemporary forms of radical politics. Frequently, such approaches either disregard the impact of the politics of new social movements on a state polity or base the success of such movements on their ability to function external to a state polity and, as a consequence, they are not well placed to assess the nature and consequence of the political act in a broader context of political structures, leaving wide open the critical question: how open to contest and revision is politics today?

Inequalities of power found in regimes of (mis)representation are both replicated and found in different manifestations online to lay challenge to the apparent limitless plurality on offer via the Internet. Research on the digital divide notes that internet users are younger, more highly educated and richer than non-users, more likely to be men than women and more likely to live in cities (Norris 2001; Warschauer 2003; Shradie 2011). These concerns do not just refer to access to the Internet and the huge gaps prevalent between the global North and South; they also refer to online activity within developed nations and to traditional divides between the well educated middle class who dominate public discourse and those on the peripheries or excluded altogether (Hindman 2008).

Plurality, or at least the ability to take advantage of plurality, it would seem, is reserved for the privileged.

Castells does contend that, with the expansion of the Web 2.0 project, the creative autonomy of subjects is constantly threatened by multimedia businesses, who seek to re-commodify autonomous communication. But nonetheless, he continues to maintain that "...the construction of communicative autonomy is directly related to the development of social and political autonomy, a key factor in fostering social change" (p. 414). One will lead to the other. Castells (2009:300) argues that social movements that engage in oppositional politics – "the process aiming at political change (institutional change) in discontinuity with the logic embedded in political institutions" – now have the chance to enter the public space from multiple sources and bring about change. In his argument the multiple prospects for intervention and manipulation coming from a myriad of social nodes combine to create a new symbolic counter-force that can shift dominant forms of representation. The counter political response swells to such a size online that it simply cannot be ignored offline and is in turn, taken up by the mass media. By using both horizontal communication networks and mainstream media to convey their images and messages, they increase their chances of enacting social and political change – "even if they start from a subordinate position in institutional power, financial resources, or symbolic legitimacy" (Castells 2009: 302).

Such accounts depend on an implicit assumption about the consequential relations between pluralism, networked communication and political demand. So the argument goes, technological ease of communication leads to abundance of information which is automatically a political gain. The Internet we are told, delivers beautiful and bountiful information and political pluralism bringing forth the means to communicative and ultimately democratic freedom.

But the sheer abundance of information available to us has also been argued to breed misinformation and lack of understanding (Patterson 2010) because the daily habits and rituals of news seeking have changed. People are no longer required to sit in front of the television for a set period of time each day or to read the newspaper over breakfast. Instead we do news snacking. But there are so many other more tempting treats on offer that 'healthy' news snacking is rapidly replaced by the more immediately gratifying tasty tit-bits of entertainment. Even more worryingly Patterson identifies a pattern whereby in a high choice media environment the less-well informed are more inclined to opt for entertainment while the better informed include the news junkies leading to increasing inequality of knowledge between the more informed and the less informed. Patterson (2010:20) also argues that speed "increases sensation but decreases learning" noting that about 60 per cent of those who regularly read a daily newspaper spend at least half an hour doing so compared to only 40 per cent of those who read an online daily newspaper.

The likes of Castells and Benkler's argument actually has little basis in an account of people's actual *usage* of the new media landscape. Understanding the daily habits and rituals associated with media use is crucial to analysing how the abstract possibilities of all technologies develop into everyday political culture. And if these accounts offer no analysis of actual media use, then they must also fail also to address the question of *context*. The experience of living in mediated worlds involves being part of the wider framings of social and political life, wider myths of social 'order' (Wrong 1994) specifically in relation to the particular types of framing of politics (and what lies beyond

politics) at particular historical moments. Once this is taken into account we can begin to surmise how neoliberal discourse maybe a powerful and largely successful attempt to reshape the framing of the political for a whole generation and remains powerfully in force in the individualistic values that saturate much life and action online. Bennett and Segerbergs (2013) work on social media and social movements is instructive here as it reveals how this heavily personalized means of communicating protest leads to connective rather than collective responses; a more individualized means of political agency.

Once we have taken account of the depth and breadth of contextual factors and situated them in a broader understanding of prevalent framings of meaning, then we must ask ourselves – has the networked communication of the internet integrated people better into public politics, made public politics administer against inequality and made centres of economic power politically accountable. I would argue, precisely the reverse in many countries with two or three decades of neoliberal politics and neoliberal culture which, arguably have eroded the integration of trust networks, increased inequality and increased the autonomy of corporations through deregulation and liberalization in a digital age where media usage is ever more surveilled, monitored and monetized.

Conclusion: The Problem of Politics and the Importance of Power

To thoroughly interrogate the relationship of media to democracy requires a consideration of power – who has it and how is it used? To engage with a full consideration of power requires media scholars to embrace fully the social dimensions of mediated life and the political consequences of our actions and those of others. If we inject an analysis of power into the relationship between media and democracy then we are encouraged to take account of those who hold it and those who seek to claim it and then to critique how each is accountable to the other. The political cannot be understood outside of relations of power or without the social. It also requires us to avoid the assumptions and pitfalls of neo-liberal formulations of democratic life – discussed here in relation to particular interpretations of media freedom.

In seeking to understand media and democracy in the digital age, we must also be prepared to take stock of this thing called democracy. Democratisation, whichever way you choose to see it, requires the real and material participation of the oppressed and excluded, of the victims of the political system. Democracy conceived of as access to communication and information can only ever take us to first base. It may well offer possible changes in the dynamics of action. It may even enable an expansion of the realm of the contestable and in this sense extend the public sphere. But acknowledging this should not give way to a fetishization of notions of plurality, autonomy and communicative or media freedom. Political participation is not just about access or voice, although both are crucially important. Ultimately, participation is about limiting the control of a few privileged people or dominant corporations who rule. If participation is about sharing power, is it possible to share power at the level of the nation state, to reach a level of sovereignty by and for the people? In other words, we need to ask how do political systems work where representative democracy has gone askew? And then to question the role of the media therein and interrogate how the dynamics of political life and action are changing.

One simple yet terrifyingly complex goal would be to reconnect democracy with equality (social, economic, political, cultural and technological). This would serve the

critical purpose of immediately flushing out differential power relations and enabling a deeper understanding of what it means to give more control to more people. Reconnecting democracy with equality premises the discussion on the sort of conditions that might be needed for us to come together as collectives to shape common action and to live together better and that includes the conditions of mediated practice. To consider who amongst us can lay claim to being a political actor and why and in what circumstances would we want to? It is these sorts of questions that address the organization of life by capital, and seek to re-establish the value of publics such that we can re-imagine democracy and its relationship to the media in a more substantive and radically progressive way, that should be at the heart of our analyses as critical media scholars.

Notes

1. The dominant section of the Press Industry campaigning against independent self-regulation put forward by Lord Justice Leveson after a year long public inquiry, sponsored the establishment of the *Freedom of Speech Network* that unsurprisingly, subsequently received handsome coverage in the mainstream press despite very little coverage of the hacking scandal itself throughout the length of the Leveson proceedings (Bennett and Townend, 2012). The familiar retort of this press lobby is to compare those calling for improved self-regulation of the press overseen by a recognition body that will review the practices of press self regulation every 2-3 years in a manner recommended by Lord Justice Leveson to authoritarian states such as Zimbabwe.
2. Interestingly however, the UK newspaper industry has never once referred to the notable state subsidies to the press in the form of VAT exemption that total some £750m per year as state interference or censorship.
3. This Bill was proposed by Leveson as a means of offering statutory underpinning to a voluntary self-regulatory framework. Because of the concerns over Press Freedom the Bill was then replaced with a Royal Charter. Royal Charters are archaic instruments of the Privy Council overseen by the Queen and ironically are far less democratic in nature than any legislative mechanism allows for.
4. 20 Cabinet ministers met senior Murdoch executives 130 times in the first 14 months of office. See the full list on Number 10's website: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/transparency/who-ministers-are-meeting/>
5. Reporters Without Borders claims to be "the largest press freedom organization in the world, with over 120 correspondents across the globe." (<http://en.rsf.org/rsf-usa-23-11-2009,35024.html>). It works to expose limits on press freedom and support journalists who are being persecuted.

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Radical Media Ethics

Responding to a Revolution

Stephen J.A. Ward

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Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end. Henry David Thoreau

When we do journalism, media ethics is the responsible use of the freedom to publish. When we reflect on our work, media ethics is normative interpretation of practice. Normative interpretation starts with a social practice such as law or journalism, and around which there is usually some agreement on who is a practitioner and on clear examples of the practice. Interpretation articulates the purpose of the practice by considering it “in its best light.”¹ Given this purpose, it says what the practice requires in terms of standards.

For example, I evaluate journalism according to two tiers of criteria. The first tier identifies “base conditions” for the building of a robust press. The base conditions include freedom of expression, independence of newsrooms, and sufficient economic stability. These conditions must be realized to some extent before we can dream of other things. The second tier consists of “democratic” criteria. It says that once the freedom to publish is established, media should promote egalitarian, participatory democracy. I stress citizen participation in all aspects of media, but I also favor certain types of participation. I look for media spaces that allow reasoned dialogue across differences – what I call dialogic journalism. And I want news media to be globally minded. Journalism should have an ethical impulse to promote human flourishing and democratic structures worldwide, reduce conflict, build cultural bridges, and advance social justice. The philosophical basis of this view is my ethical cosmopolitanism.

But what happens when we have a practice where there is no consensus about norms and no agency to enforce standards to protect the public? This is media ethics today. Our media revolution creates multiple interpretations with competing norms and, sometimes, a remarkable ambivalence about the need for any ethical rules.

Media ethics, like media, is in turmoil.

Trends

Most of the turmoil is generated by two macro-trends. One is the emergence of a “mixed news media.” News media is “mixed” because many types of practitioners use many types

of technology to create many types of content. The other macro-trend is a media with global impact and reach. Mixed media puts pressure on a mainstream ethics designed for a different era. Globalization challenges parochial notions of journalism's duties.

In mainstream North American media, one reality is *angst* about layoffs of thousands of journalists, as ad revenue migrates to Google and other online giants. The once proud legacy media, their future value now uncertain, are sold for bargain prices. Magazines go digital only, while papers reduce print publishing and erect pay walls online. Beat reporters are laid off, or reassigned. Recently, the *Chicago Sun-Times* laid off its 28 photojournalists. Images will now come from reporters and citizens. Examples of this new media ecology were on display recently as Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, bought the *Washington Post*. The *NY Times* unloaded the *Boston Globe* to Red Sox owner John Henry for 4% of what the *Times* paid for it over a decade ago. And IBT, a digital-only media company, bought *Newsweek*, and paid the once dominant magazine the faint compliment of still having "some cachet". 'Journalism is dying' is a common phrase.

Alongside this angst, there is a less noticed revolution going on inside these smaller mainstream newsrooms. Editors combine old and new media to re-connect with dwindling audiences with their smart phones and a thousand sources of information. The idea is to change a news organization from a "fortress" to a community convenor. The mantras are: Digital first. Innovate or die. Connect or be disconnected. Share or be ignored. One editor put it this way: "content – curation – community". It is now cool to experiment. Creative thinkers, who run incubators and accelerators, are hired to help the legacy folks understand the new media universe – the way a teenager clues in her parents about a new device. Conferences on the future of journalism, where workshops explain how to use Facebook as a reporting tool, invite the heads of Yahoo or Gawker to headline the event, not the editor of the Cleveland newspaper. Meanwhile, the *Washington Post* starts an internet TV site and creates its own programs; the *Wall Street Journal* creates a video site where citizens learn about issues such as 'Obamacare' in edgy, interactive ways.² Crowdsourcing melds work by the professional and the citizen. For example, the *New York Times* creates a site where human rights groups and other people can post video from fighting in Syria.³

The glut of information encourages new aggregators and new gatekeepers, only they are called "filters" of content. In Silicon Valley, a new start up called Ozy media promises to identify the best online stories for what it calls the "change generation."⁴ Listen to the promo for the site: "It's OZY Time... Almost! Hungering for the newest, neatest, next-est? ... Worldly but not wordy, deep but not dull, OZY is the field manual for people who want to do more and be more." Or, listen to this description of a new project, written by the Nieman Journalism Lab: "The French business daily, *Les Echos*, is about to release an aggregation tool that allows editors to identify the best business articles by surveying the what is topical on their journalists' Twitter accounts. The article says, pompously, that the daily is "betting on an algorithms + human aggregation strategy both for its readers and as a B2B play." No one in news media talked this lingo a few years ago!

Partnerships are now all but necessary. Some organizations like the Guardian newspaper see an opportunity for a new "open journalism" where citizens and professionals collaborate. Oregon Public Broadcasting is sharing stories with dozens of local newspapers around Oregon to construct an online wire service for editors.

Ethical Issues

I am sure you sense a host of ethical questions hovering around these trends. Does working quickly eliminate verification and tolerate inaccuracy? With whom should you partner? How do we validate citizen content? In the search for interactivity, do we lose sight of the slow, lonely work of investigative journalism? Are these new kids on the block really journalists?

Not even the US Senate Judicial Committee can define ‘journalist’. In that august forum, politicians are struggling to devise a federal law to shield journalists from revealing sources. But first we need to define a journalist. The bill defines a journalist as a person who has a “primary intent to investigate events and procure material” in order to inform the public “by regularly gathering information through interviews and observations.” But some politicians fear this would include citizen journalists and those who work for WikiLeaks to reveal government secrets. So, the debate on who is a journalist continues.

To their credit, a large number of mainstream associations, from the BBC to the Canadian Association of Journalists, are articulating new ethics for the integrated newsroom. For example, guidelines are being produced on how to use social media when reporting a breaking story. The same reflection on “best practices” is occurring among responsible online publishers.⁵ This new ethics is a work in progress. It seeks to integrate traditional ideas of verification and unbiased journalism with online values of sharing and opining. Sometimes, however, it seems the mainstream is trying to square the circle. Editors encourage journalists to “brand” themselves with personal comments on their own online sites yet warn them not to undermine their impartiality. In this context, what is acceptable commentary is a vague and wavering line, and crossing the line can get you fired.

Trends are also causing worries about independent journalism. The proliferation of publishers raises thorny issues. Some people react positively to the saying, “today, anyone with a laptop can be a publisher.” There is joy in Mudtown, USA, as people share and tweet, skirt the former gate-keepers, and watch media corporations lose power. Yet this enthusiasm ignores ethical downsides – the harm that can come from publishing. It ignores who is doing the publishing, whether it is a cyber-bulling teenager or a Holocaust denier.

Do we, as citizens online, have “digital responsibilities”? Some people appear to think not. They seem to think that there is something about online publishing that argues against a restraining ethics which, however, is needed for mainstream journalism. When the web site Reddit, Twitter, and then re-tweeting mainstream journalists misidentified a Brown University student, Sunil Tripathi, as a suspect in the Boston Marathon bombings, the potentially harmful links among social media and the mainstream, both working to be first with news, became evident. A *New York Times Magazine* article noted rightly that, not long ago, such a rumor would have taken time to reach the public – hopefully, enough time to debunk it before publishing. But not now. Interestingly, some people interviewed responded to criticism with a passive attitude: This is the world we live in. We can’t do anything about it. Another reply was that Reddit and similar sites are “contained spaces of speculation.” The nature of their platforms means that no one is responsible to verify what is shared or ‘voted up’ on a site. Another view was that retweeting doesn’t mean you say it’s true. These defences only cause me to worry more.

Another implication of ‘everyone is a publisher’ is that powerful corporations and advertisers can easily do journalism to attract customers to their web sites and Twitter

feeds. This is called “brand journalism”. Rather than the hard sell of advertising, which lacks credibility, corporations use journalists and their story-telling to brand products, and trade on their credibility. For instance, Cisco Systems of California, which sells computer networking equipment, employs journalists to write stories on the technology sector on its web site, *The Network*.⁶ The site for Red Bull energy drink features stories on ‘extreme’ sports.⁷ In many cases, these journalists agree to never criticize their brand, or highlight the competition.

However, brand journalism is often engaging. Public distrust of mainstream media means that many people don’t care (or don’t know?) who produces the journalism, Red Bull or News Corporation. So what’s the big deal? The deal is this: Either, the idea of editorial independence is being compromised; or, independence is being redefined. Pick your favorite interpretation.

Similar questions arise for new forms of “agenda-driven” journalism. Take, for example, the decision by right-wing political groups in the United States to train journalists to write about politics from their point of view. Libertarian groups such as the Franklin Center for Government and Public Integrity have funded websites in dozens of states to cover legislatures. Like the corporate branders, these web sites, such as www.wisconsinreporter.org, recruit professional journalists. The reporting reflects a political ideology such as lower taxes, less government, and individual liberty. These reporters claim they are non-partisan journalists who report the facts like other journalists. They say they follow the tenets of impartial reporting as found in the code of the Society of Professional Journalists.

So, from our perch amid the media revolution, how do we evaluate politically driven journalism or corporate brand journalism? Aren’t these developments new forms of journalism that diversify the public sphere? Even if the sites are partial, what is wrong with that? After all, don’t we know that there is no such thing as objective journalism, and that mainstream media pursue their own agendas? Does it matter who produces the journalism? Or, do we feel uncomfortable because such arguments seem to prove too much. They seem to undermine the notion of independent journalism in the public interest.

Traditional notions from media ethics are not very useful in clarifying these issues. For example, traditional news objectivity implied that all forms of opinion journalism were equal – all were subjective expressions of opinion. But today, in a world of opining, we need notions that help us distinguish between better and worse analysis. In a world of advocational journalism, we need a basis for distinguishing advocacy from propaganda. Once we leave the island of objective ‘straight’ reporting, we find ourselves on a roiling sea of multiple forms of journalism, multiple publishers, and multiple funding models. Our once clear and simple distinctions blur and collapse, and we are not sure what to say.

What to Do?

Given these trends, what should we do? One area where change can come, on an institutional level, is public policy on media. This is not one of my areas of expertise, but I will say this. I favor agencies that reduce media concentration. I favour strong support for public broadcasting, and incentives to create alternate media such as hyper-local web sites, low-power FM stations and other start ups that serve communities inadequately

covered by large media. Also, in this interactive world, there is potential for new forms of accountability. For example, we can set up citizen-based, online media councils that monitor complaints but also advance media education.

Perhaps however, despite what I have said, you still feel that we “do gooders” are out-numbered and out-resourced by irresponsible media users. The latter are shaping negatively the evolution of media. Rather than despair, we can respond in several ways.

First, we can extend our criticism beyond the mainstream to include popular and powerful online operations such as Reddit and Twitter. We should hold to ethical account everyone who publishes. No one has a “get out of ethics” card because they operate a trendy media venture. I was dismayed when I read the responses of some of the writers who caused the misidentification of Tripathi. The responses struck me as smug, unreflective, or incredibly insensitive to the potential harm of publishing on the fly, especially where everyone becomes a breaking news reporter. Therefore, I believe the ethical ‘heat’ has to be turned up on online mis-practices. We need to question the often glib, hypocritical and self-serving justifications offered as rationales for unethical practice. Maybe it is time for a sixth estate – a coalition for ethical practice that will challenge the current online fifth estate. Just as the latter monitor the ethical lapses of the mainstream, we should do the same to them.

Most importantly, we need to question the philosophy behind the rationales. The philosophy, more often than not, is an over-enthusiastic gospel about the democratic virtues of unrestrained and unfiltered online voices. We need to counter with a better theory of democratic media. We need to argue, strenuously, that democratic media is more than a free media online, unrestrained by “old fashioned” mainstream talk of responsibilities. We need to advance a concept of dialogic, democratic media that shows that unrestrained free expression, by itself, is not enough for healthy pluralistic democracies. Democracy in a plural society is more than a clash of voices, more than communication unmediated by mainstream media. It is more than media participation. Democracy is civic participation in defining the common good through a communication exchange where participants listen and learn. Participants engaged in reasoned and informed debate. In their media practices, they are ever mindful of the impact of publishing on others. Citizen journalism is not only the right to self-express oneself and to clash verbally with others. It is also the right and duty to communicate as a responsible citizen willing to challenge my own assumptions, not simply to point out the presumptions of my interlocutors.

Fortunately, new technology gives us another option, something beyond criticism. We can create new and counter-balancing media structures committed to ethical ideals. One such structure is the development on nonprofit journalism. Across the United States, centers for nonprofit investigative journalism have sprung up, financed by foundations and individual donors. Jon Sawyer left mainstream media to create the award-winning nonprofit *Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting* in Washington, D.C. He wanted to fill the need for independent foreign reporting. At the same time, journalism schools increasing do the real-world journalism in the public interest that is lacking among commercial media. Other forms of nonprofit work, such as NGOs, are leading the creative use of media for advocational journalism and social engagement. For example, the non-profit women’s media outlet, *World Pulse*, which has 18,000 members, aims “to harness the power of women to accelerate women’s impact for change.” Earlier this year it completed its “Girls Transform the World” campaign to draw attention to the education of girls

around the world. The site, started by a young female journalist in Portland, Oregon, used crowdsourcing to get girls and women to identify and share stories on barriers, while seeking solutions. The result was a compilation of 350 stories from hundreds of people in over 60 countries, which formed the basis of a communique sent to the G20 leaders.

These new media entities have potential as stand-alone initiatives. But they can have additional impact if they unite with others. There are powerful web sites where global bloggers, professional reporters and others track human rights abuses. There are global networks of nonprofit journalism centers. And professionals can help citizens around the world. For instance, Fred Ritchin, a Pulitzer Prize winning photojournalist, has created the PixelPress website, which helps humanitarian groups develop digital media projects. There are many centers, such as my Turnbull Center, that are anxious to find partners and projects that will have positive impact on the leading edges of journalism. We can develop counter-balancing global networks of citizens and journalists gathered under the umbrella of media ethics and global democratic journalism. New media, legacy media and education units can join to shape the media universe.

For most of my life, media criticism consisted of studies that noted the sins of mainstream journalism from scholars and former journalists sitting on the sidelines. Today, the critics can join the players on the field. They can do what I call “media ethics activism” which is summed up in the phrase: “If you don’t like the media you’re getting, create your own media.”

In these ways, and in other ways, we can preserve, at the heart of our media systems, a significant core of responsible communicators. Negative macro trends can only be balanced by positive macro-sized resistance.

Finally, there is an important educational aspect to reform. If it is media ethics for everyone, and if publishers are proliferating, we need to introduce media ethics, and media literacy, early in our education system. Universities need to teach media ethics across the curriculum, not confine it to journalism schools.

Hopefully it is clear from what I have said that, within the field of media ethics, we need a radical approach. Radical in philosophy and conceptualization. “Radical” means from the root. Farmers talk of a radical root on plants that seek water. We need to re-invent media ethics from the ground up. Piecemeal improvements are not sufficient. A conservative strategy of defending existing norms at all costs is foolhardy. Three areas need this foundational approach: (1) meta-ethics – a new view of ethics as interpretive, social, naturally emergent and contested; a form of activism. (2) Applied: Applying this understanding to new issues and areas of journalistic work, plus guidelines on using social media and so on. (3) Transposing parochial notions of journalism into global forms. The greatest task of moral theory is to transform itself into an explicit and well-developed global ethics that challenges dominant forms of parochial ethics, from ethnocentricity to narrow forms of nationalism and political realism. In media ethics, we need to radically transform a nation-based approach to the norms of media into a global, interactive media ethics. In short, we should be radical in the ways of moral invention, envisaging a global ethics and a global media ethics for our interconnected world.⁸

For applied ethics, we need to provide guidelines that recognize differences among multiple media formats. Also, we need to focus on types of journalism that are not discussed or are underplayed by traditional media ethics. Earlier I said traditional ethics leaves us wondering what to say. A new mixed ethics would give us something to say

about the quandaries and complexities of today's news media. But, why isn't traditional media ethics enough, conceptually? Let me explain. Traditional media ethics is strong on abstract principles that cover all forms of journalism – such as acting independently and seeking the truth. But it is weak on specifying guidelines and protocols for different forms of media. Traditional codes of ethics stress objectivity and impartiality but say little about how such ideals apply to satirical journalism, opinion journalism, editorial cartoons, and advocacy reporting. Now add to this list social media, blogging, mobilizing media and so on. Ethicists are confronted with the age-old philosophical problem of unity and difference. A future media ethics should be unified by allegiance to general principles of truth and independence but it will have to develop an ethics of difference that allow forms of journalism to follow different protocols and norms. For example, I want the online editor and the investigative journalist to seek truth and to be free, but it seems ludicrous to demand that they work in the same way. So we face a huge conceptual problem: How do we allow new media writers to work in their own fashion yet not give up the ghost of ethics? Creating a consistent, ecumenical ethics is not going to be easy. This is the huge problem of integrated ethics. Next to the construction of a global ethic, it is one of the two great media ethics problems of our time.

So, imagine a media ethics of the future. What would it be like? It should consist of this:

Ethics of new media ecologies: Future media ethics will guide journalism according to alternate economic models, from nonprofit journalism to brand journalism.

Ethics of how to use new media: Future media ethics will say more useful things on the responsible use of new media, including what journalists should (or should not) say on their own web sites and when newsrooms should use material from citizens and the Internet.

Ethics of interpretation and opinion: The era of news objectivity as “just the facts” is dead and gone. Interpretive journalism grows. Ethicists need to fill this gap giving meaning to “informed commentary,” “insightful analysis,” and “good interpretation.”

Ethics of activism: Activist journalism will proliferate. But, when are journalists ‘agenda-driven activists’ and when are they ‘investigative journalists with a valid cause’? Rather than dismiss activist journalism, how can we think more subtly about opinion and advocational journalism?

Ethics of global democratic journalism: As I have said elsewhere, new thinking in ethics will need to reconstruct the role of journalism in global terms.

We need an ethics that responds to the evolution of media, yet insists that we use our freedom to publish in responsible ways that serve democracy.

If we do all of this, we will be truly radical.

Notes

1. Ronald Dworkin discusses normative interpretation in law, ethics, and art in *Law's Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986) and in his more recent, *Justice for Hedgehogs* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). The phrase “in the best light” is taken from these writings.
2. For interactive video experiments, see <http://graphicsweb.wsj.com/documents/prescribed/>
3. <http://projects.nytimes.com/watching-syrias-war>
4. See: <http://tech.fortune.cnn.com/2013/07/25/laurene-powell-jobs-backs-ambitious-media-site>.
5. For discussion of “best practices” for using Twitter and social media, e.g. the idea of “tweeting with integrity”, see www.journalismaccelerator.com

6. <http://newsroom.cisco.com>,
7. <http://www.redbull.com/us/en>
8. I explored the ethics of a global journalism in *Global Journalism Ethics* (Montreal, Que.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010) and *Global Media Ethics: Problems and Perspectives* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

Cosmopolitan Narratives

Documentary and the Global 'Other'

Ib Bondebjerg

Globalization is a phenomenon much discussed in contemporary society, and rightly so. But it is by no means just a dimension linked to modern societies and cultures. In fact, globalization as such is as old as civilization. Globalization is a complex phenomenon, both now and in a historical perspective. Therefore, a simple and descriptive definition is a good starting point:

Globalization can be defined as the movement of objects, signs and people across regions and intercontinental space (...) Globalization can be located on a continuum with the local, national and regional. At the one end of the continuum lie social and economic relations and networks which are organized on a local and/or national basis; at the other end lie social and economic relations and networks which crystallize on the wider scale of regional and global interactions. Globalization can be taken to refer to those spatio-temporal processes of change which underpin a transformation in the organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents. (Held et al. 1999: 15).

Defined in this way and removed from more normative and political discussions focusing on the consequences of different forms of globalization, it seems obvious that all societies and cultures are dependent on globalization. No society or culture can exist in splendid isolation from other near or distant parts of the world. Societies need to find ways to communicate and exchange ideas and goods in order to be open, creative and dynamic. If we were to close borders and ways of interacting, we would also narrow down our mental and cultural space. Globalization is a fundamental and necessary dimension of our societies and cultures, and it has been ever since we started leaving the East African savannah thousands of years ago.

Globalization has always been with us, but what has changed historically is the form and intensity of global processes. Globalization used to be dependent on very slow processes of communication and very physical and material forms of transportation. Furthermore huge divides, even bigger than today, existed between developed and developing countries. Today, a vast part of our communication takes place through fast, digital networks that cover larger areas of the globe than before (Held et al. 1999: 327ff, Castells 2001: 207ff & 248ff). The world is not completely wired yet, and many parts of the globe are still inhabited by people who live in an everyday life culture with very little access

to the basic needs, not to mention advanced communication and media. Pictures of the globe indicating electricity and communication lines show a very strong concentration in certain parts of the world, and much less in other parts. There is still a long way to go to the global village Marshall McLuhan talked about in the 1960s (McLuhan 1964).

A Cosmopolitan Imaginary Community and Reality

But even though this is a fact, even though global media industries are dominated by concentration of power in the hands of the multinationals, and even though globalization is also very much about exploitation of resources and humans – globalization is also about a growing need for a cosmopolitan mentality and imaginary. We have become part of a mediatized reality that stretches beyond the nation state, and we are entering, in different ways, into a communicative space of a more global nature than ever before in history. Although we cannot in any way talk about a global public sphere, the new digital media culture and the many new media platforms clearly make transnational communication easier. We are part of the new global imaginary Arjun Appadurai writes about (Appadurai 1996) when he points to the global mediatization of cultures, the development of a new global mediascape through which audiences globally are increasingly linked together. Despite asymmetric power structures in the global media industry, this global mediascape nonetheless offers new dynamic methods of cultural exchange and images of what previously were distant others.

Both documentary and fictional film and television have always played an important role in shaping our understanding of reality. This reality is increasingly present in our everyday life and politics as a global reality. Whether we accept it or not, the nation state is no longer an undisputed frame of reference for our social, political and cultural life. The present financial and ecological crisis clearly demonstrates that we are in it together and that no nation can solve problems isolated from other parts of the worlds. Appadurai therefore talks about the consequences of our more transnational world and the role of media in a more cosmopolitan and diasporic culture and public sphere. Where Benedict Anderson (1983) talked about the role of media in the creation of an imagined community of nations, Appadurai speaks about the necessity of a transnational, cosmopolitan imagined community:

Benedict Anderson did us a service in identifying the way in which certain forms of mass mediation (...) played a key role in imagining the nation (...). My general argument is that there is a similar link to be found between the work of imagination and the emergence of a post-national political world (...). But as media increasingly link producers and audiences across national boundaries, and these audiences themselves start new conversations between those who move and those who stay, we find a number of diasporic public spheres (...) The transformation of everyday subjectivities through mediation and the work of the imagination is not only a cultural fact (...). The diasporic public spheres (...) are no longer small, marginal or exceptional. They are part of the cultural dynamics of urban life in most countries and continents. (Appadurai 1996: 21-22)

Sociological thinkers like Gerard Delanty, *The Cosmopolitan Imagination* (2009), and Ulrich Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision* (2006), have also clearly defined the social,

cultural and political challenges following the more and more intensified processes of globalization. For Delanty they include, among other things, the need for a new global, political vision and for other images of our different global others:

The global public impinges upon political communication and other kinds of public discourse creating as a result new visions of social order. To speak of cosmopolitanism as real (...) is thus to refer to these situations, which we may term the cosmopolitan imagination, where the constitution of the social world is articulated through cultural models in which codifications of both Self and Other undergo transformation. (Delanty 2009: 37).

For Ulrich Beck the main point is that cosmopolitanism can no longer be seen as some kind of abstract ideology for a global elite. Globalization is entering all dimensions of our societies and everyday life in such a way that cosmopolitan answers are clearly needed. Ulrich Beck's analysis of the modern forms of globalization points to a strong need for global crisis management, a need to deal with the fact that modern societies are becoming increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, a need to deal with a transnational and increasingly borderless world with people, power and money flowing freely, and with strong conflicts in the traditional nation states following this development. Beck is not predicting the death of nation states, but rather a fundamental change in the conditions of the existence of nation states. In his discussion of cosmopolitanism, he actually states that "cosmopolitanism without provincialism is empty, provincialism without cosmopolitanism is blind" (Beck 2006: 7). We cannot live in the whole world, we have to have some forms of belonging of a more regional, local and national nature. But we need cosmopolitan narratives to experience and imagine this new reality and the connection between us and the global others.

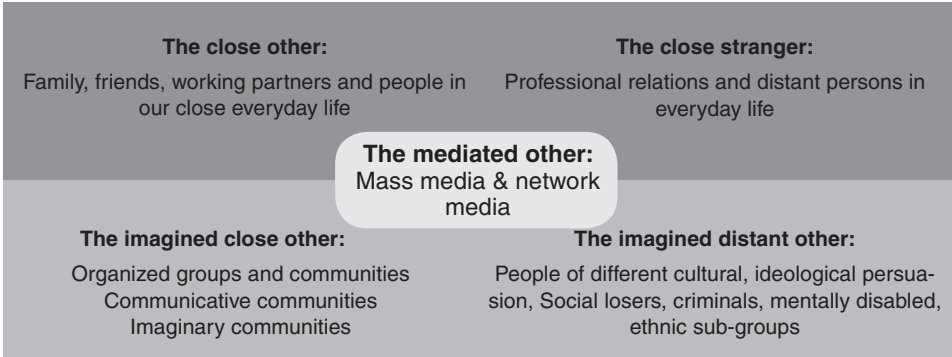
Documentary Narratives and our Global Other

Documentary film and television deal with reality in a more direct way than fictional narratives. Even though fictional narratives can very easily develop cosmopolitan themes, documentary forms bring reality to us with greater authenticity. A strong fiction film with a cosmopolitan narrative is Susanne Bier's Oscar winner *In a Better World* (2010). Here the story of a Danish doctor working in an African refugee camp is mixed with a dramatic, local Danish story about the friendship of two boys tested by the life of their families torn being torn apart and by conflicts in the local community linked to the family narrative. In this story the local and the global are thematically mixed, and through parallels between life in the refugee camp and life in a seemingly provincial Danish idyll, a cosmopolitan dimension of 'us and them' is developed into a more universal narrative of good and evil that deals with empathy and understanding of others.

The film clearly deals with the different dimensions of our mental frameworks and typologies concerning the close and distant other and stranger. As indicated in Fig. 1, we can define our social and cultural others in categories that are based on distance, both cognitively and geographically, but also on our actual contact and experience with others. Before the arrival of the modern forms of media and communication, our ability to connect with others over long distances was much more limited. Today both social media and other forms of media have expanded our images and knowledge about oth-

ers, at least in mediated forms. News is important in this connection, especially the 24 hour news channels that update us on global issues and themes on a daily basis. But documentaries are in one sense more important for forming global narratives and cosmopolitan imaginaries. Documentaries can tell stories about reality that bring us much closer to the everyday reality of distant and strange others. They can create identification and empathy by showing us that people who may seem to be very different from us have universal, human dimensions, despite cultural and other differences. The phrase ‘we are all humans’ may seem banal, but it points to a fundamental truth, supported by cognitive sociology (Fiske and Taylor 1991)

Figure 1. *Typology of Social Types Schemata of Others. Inspired by Alfred Schutz (1932) and Fiske and Taylor (1991)*



Let us consider the images we have been receiving over the past ten years or more, where the war in Afghanistan has been on our news media agenda, and has been the theme in a growing number of fiction films and documentaries. Few of us living in modern Western societies have first hand, personal experience of who the Afghans really are or of their everyday lives and ways of thinking. They belong to the category of imagined distant others, and even though we may feel empathy for their situation and the terrible consequences of living in a constant war zone, we cannot really imagine the full reality of such a life. To this we could add a potential feeling of danger in relation to some groups in Afghanistan identified as Islamic fundamentalists and potential terrorists. Many stories presented in our daily news would feed into this uneasy image of a somewhat deviant and frightening social and cultural other. Mixed with this, however, one would most certainly also find some forms of empathy, especially when confronted with images of civilian casualties and dead children. News seen in a war perspective is not without a human dimension and perspective on the other, but such news items tend to see things from a military and political perspective. News is mainly authoritative, informational stories, not broader narratives.

But documentaries come in many forms, and the freedom to combine them is also fairly great. Documentary filmmakers have a wider spectrum of modes in their representation of reality and the themes and dimensions they can take up. In Fig. 2 I have listed four very basic modes, which capture most forms of documentaries and define four rather different approaches to reality. These different approaches also position the spectator differently in relation to the reality presented and the cinematic form of

the film. These modes combine the observations and concepts put forward by other researchers dealing with the basic documentary genres or modes (most importantly Bill Nichols 2001 and Carl Plantinga 1997). Documentary as a cinematic form can be a very authoritative approach to reality, where documentation, explanation and analysis through experts and witnesses are the most important. But documentary can also speak with a much more open voice, giving us a kind of ethnographic, anthropological position from which we can observe reality and life, and where authoritative explanations are not given directly. Documentary can finally take dramatized or poetic approaches to reality, in which subjectivity and objectivity, the more symbolic and imaginary, the fictional and the factual meet or even clash.

Figure 2. *Basic Modes of Documentaries (Ib Bondebjerg 2014)*

Authoritative	Observational	Dramatized	Poetic-reflexive
Epistemic authority	Epistemic openness	Epistemic-hypothetical	Epistemic-aesthetic
Explanation-analysis	Observation-identification	Dramatization of factual reality	Reality seen through aesthetic form
Linearity, causality, rhetorical structure	Episodic, mosaic structure, everyday life	Reconstruction, narration, staging (dramadoc, doc-drama, mockumentary)	Symbolic montage, meta-levels, expressive, subjective form
Q & A, interview, witnesses, experts, Authoritative VO	Actor driven, human-institutional life world	Testing borders between reality and fiction	Form driven reality experience, the poetics of reality, framing reality
Information, critique, propaganda	Documentation of lived reality, social ethnology	Narrative drive, reality driven narrative. Media-reflexivity	Challenging reality concepts and traditional doc-forms

Afghanistan Seen from Different Perspectives

Danish, British, American and other soldiers are fighting in Afghanistan, and they do so as part of a UN supported mission to free Afghanistan of a fundamentalist, authoritarian regime that does not recognize basic human rights. So one aim is to secure democracy and a better way of life. But can Western forces, even backed by the UN, really impose profound changes in a country like Afghanistan? That is the basic question recent documentaries have raised, and they have sometimes done so by taking a more authoritative, critical look behind the politics of the war, like in Alex Gibney's Oscar winner *Taxi to the Dark Side* (2008). This is a highly critical, investigative documentary that delves into the dark sides of US warfare in Afghanistan, but also the whole political dimension behind the war. The cinematic form of the film follows all the classical rules of investigative journalism with witnesses, expert interviews, documents, film footage, etc., as well as a very strong authoritative and interpretative voice over. Gibney's film follows one cinematic strategy for documentary, but other documentaries have delved deeply into the Afghan reality by bringing us inside everyday life in the Afghan war zone and

behind doors that are normally closed to Western media. They have taken a closer look at what the military and war are really about and have portrayed culture, family life and culture in a country in turmoil and under huge stress.

In Janus Metz' Danish documentary *Armadillo* (2010), we follow a group of Danish soldiers before, during and after they are sent to Camp Armadillo in the Afghan Helmand province. The film brings us very close to army life, both the dull camp moments and the dangerous actions. But the film also shows the precarious relations between the soldiers and the civilians, the fact that no trust is achieved and the feeling that what the soldiers are doing doesn't really matter to the civilians. War is portrayed like a kind of surreal Sisyphean job, where things keep rolling back. The group of soldiers are portrayed with special focus on two prototypes: the daring warrior and the intellectual sceptic. Metz has described the intention of the film in the following way:

I felt it was important to make a film that provided a really detailed picture of the reality of war, and of its consequences for the soldiers, and for the civilians for whose sake we allegedly are involved in the fighting in the first place. However, what I was really interested in was raising some big existential questions about our civilization and our way of being human in the context of contemporary global realities (...) it's also a mental journey, on a national level, through our self-conceptions as a democratic nation. It's a film about what might be problematic about our new militant 'humanitarianism,' about the idea of a tough kind of tit for tat in a global game. Metz in Hjort, Bondebjerg and Redvall (2014).

Thus Metz's film is clearly about creating a cosmopolitan, narrative film that reflects on the relation between the others and us. It is a film that questions aspects of military power in a global context where we obviously are not able to understand or act in the cultural and social context, which is Afghanistan. Other documentary filmmakers have approached this problem of a mental lack of global imaginaries by focusing more intensely on the world and mind of the other, and not so much the relation between them and us. In Eva Mulvad's *Enemies of Happiness* (2006), we follow the first elected female politician in Afghanistan, Malalai Joya, as she first enters the constitutional session for a new parliament and later goes through the first election after the constitution has been approved. Like Metz's film this is clearly an observational documentary, where we follow Malalai Joya around in the province where she lives; we see her act as an advisor in all sorts of conflicts, and we see her election campaign and contact with local voters. We also get an intense feeling of how dangerous it is to be a woman and a politician in Afghanistan. Malalai Joya has survived four attacks; she has bodyguards around her all the time, and she constantly has to change places. So the film is about the fragile and unstable Afghan democracy, but also about human courage and the beauty of the Afghan landscape and towns outside the combat zone.

Mulvad's intention in making this film was clearly to change our image of Afghanistan by bringing us close to humans and human stories. A large part of the film deals with how Malalai Joya acts as a consultant on conflicts in her local community, in marriages and other forms of conflict. Through observation and documentation of her everyday life and activities we are given an opportunity to come very close to different types of people and human stories in Afghanistan. The film presents a possibility for identification with the other through a narrative based on reality, so to speak:

Documentary films can be seen by a lot of people without a lot of prior knowledge or understanding. They allow you to bring some fairly complicated discussions about, for example, war in Afghanistan into people's homes. With *Enemies of Happiness* I was looking for very human stories in the midst of war. What do the streets look like in Afghanistan? What's it like to go to school and to go to work in the middle of a war? Who are the local heroes? So that it's not always about us, us, and us again, that is, about the Western world and our soldiers. I'm actually not especially interested in politics, but I am interested in the human stories that are caught up in the political discussions. I'm interested in stories that an audience can relate to emotionally and not only intellectually, even though they deal with serious current affairs issues. Mulvad in Hjort, Bondebjerg and Redvall (2014).

It is no coincidence that Metz and Mulvad both work with a basic, observational form in their films. They have an anthropological and ethnographic approach to reality, and even though they use many narrative and visual techniques, they do not offer an authoritative message. Instead they want to give us a deeper experience and understanding of the distant, imagined other, they want us to question our own stereotypes. Still another version of this can be found in films where people themselves shoot part of the film, and where the filmmaker therefore uses a kind of collaborative, observational form – ethnography through cultural interaction. This is the case in the Danish-Afghan director Nagieb Khaja's *My Afghanistan – Life in the Forbidden Zone* (2012) and the American HBO production *Baghdad High* (2008), made by Ivan O'Mahoney and Laura Winter. Giving the global other a visual voice takes away the director's dominance, although he/she still has the role of editor and can combine his/her voice with that of those doing the filming.

Khaja's film was made to give voice to those more remote provinces, which we only very rarely see in Western media. He has expressed his concern that we never get to see this reality:

My conviction, based on experience, is that the reality of the Afghans, particularly that in the villages, has been ignored by the generally superficial foreign press, which has only focused on life in the larger Afghan towns, home only to a small proportion of the population. The alternative has been the embedded tours on which the military presence often terrifies the locals and makes it impossible for them to express their true views to directors and the press." (Director's statement of film, can be found on <http://www.dfi.dk/faktaomfilm/film/en/76460.aspx>).

Most of the film footage by the Afghans is shot on mobile phones, as cameras would be much too revealing and dangerous. Those doing the filming represent completely ordinary people, also women, with no prior film or journalistic experience. By letting them film what they find interesting we get quite another perspective on Afghanistan, a perspective that also shows the hardships of war and everyday life, as well as the universal dimensions of life. What we see are images of distant others who are in fact very much like us, although living under different social and cultural conditions.

This is also the case in the HBO film *Baghdad High* in which we follow four high school boys in Baghdad, Iraq. They represent different cultural and religious groups and even though this is another country, it is the same type of film sending the same message. The film is shot during a whole year and has a clear video diary style and

aesthetics, where we follow the boys around and they speak in close up to the camera. Ivan O'Mahoney, who directed and produced the film with Laura Winter, has said about the film:

The daily news about Iraq was so relentlessly depressing for so many years. It was therefore fantastic to realize while making this film that there is normality amidst all the violence, and that people do lead normal lives, despite the mayhem around them. It gave me a lot of hope to see kids be kids. (quoted from HBO 2009).

The film is based on 300 hours of footage shot by the four teens, and the four boys (Hayder, Anmar, Ali and Mohammed) present a life much like that lived by most normal young people all over the world. They dream of careers as singers or football players, they think about girls, but at the same time they are stuck in a nightmare of violence and suicide bombings in a seemingly never-ending war situation. We see them in family situations, in school situations, we follow their interest in rock and pop, dance, television and film, but we also see them performing specific religious rituals and relating to or reacting to the local political situation, the media and the situation in the country. Bringing Iraqi everyday life, the situation for normal human beings like you and me, home to an American audience was clearly a deliberate strategy taken on by alternative directors and cable channels like PBS and HBO. Given that the average American probably has an image of Iraqis as being hateful terrorists and fundamentalists, this kind of documentary representation of the 'normality' of Iraqi youth and their life and dreams is part of changing the global image of and discourse on us and them.

What we experience through films like this is in fact how many things we humans have in common, how many things are universal to us. We may have differences in the way we live and think, different cultural traditions, different religions, but beneath our cultural group affiliations, we focus on some of the same things, and have the same dreams and expectations. High school boys in Baghdad salute another flag and sing another national anthem, and religion plays a stronger role there, but most of the time they are thinking about girls, music, films and sports – and they want to have fun, even though bombs sometimes rattle the neighborhood.

It is the same impression one gets when watching American Director Havana Marking's film *Afghan Star* (2008, HBO). *Afghan star* is the Afghan version of the global TV-format *Pop Idol*, where people compete to win the prize as best singer and get a record contract. In Afghanistan this program became the most popular TV show ever, gathering millions from all over Afghanistan. The program follows some of the contestants, both male and female, their performance and the audience in different parts of Afghanistan. The program reveals unity in an otherwise divided country, but also the deep divides between religious and secular Afghanistan, between those who believe in freedom and democracy, also for women, and those who feel it is a mortal sin when women perform in public. The film crew was given exceptional access to the families of the four contestants, also the women, and therefore the film offers us a unique insight into Afghan culture and everyday life. By using a Western pop culture phenomenon as the focus point, the film shows both the universal and culture-specific dimensions of culture. It is the same, but there is also global variation.

Creating Cosmopolitan Dialogue and Platforms

The documentary films mentioned so far are the result of the work of individual directors, commissioned by TV stations or made independently with production companies. They are also all made by Western filmmakers, although some of the filmmakers have a double identity and a background in the regions they deal with. In some cases the filmmakers work together with local journalists, co-directors or photographers. Basically the films are global documentaries in the sense that they deal with global themes, but also in the sense that they want to create a cosmopolitan dialogue. They deal with global problems in order to raise questions about our global engagement or lack of it, and they want to challenge and change our global imaginary, our way of thinking about and looking at distant others. But we also find more collaborative projects, projects that go even further than *My Afghanistan* and *Baghdad High*, in which those being portrayed also filmed themselves.

With the large-scale documentary projects *Why Democracy* (2007) and *Why Poverty* (2012), we get a global multiplatform project that tried to establish a global public sphere and dialogue around important global issues. The two projects were initiated by Danish public service broadcaster DR's Mette Hoffman-Meyer and the BBC's Nick Fraser, in collaboration with the NGO organization Steps. In the first project, they asked 10 filmmakers around the world to make a film about democracy and what it meant to them. The ten one-hour films were made by independent filmmakers from China, India, Japan, Liberia, the US, Bolivia, Denmark, Egypt, Pakistan and Russia and covered very different issues of democracy: from the US focus on use of torture to the Danish Muhammed cartoon crisis and experiments with school democracy in China. The films were shown simultaneously in more than 180 countries; they were made available on the project website and shown in places around the world where media were not present. The project also teamed up newspapers around the world, and in this way a global poll and discussion on democracy were established.

In many ways the project is an advanced example of a cosmopolitan dialogue; it is an example or a prototype of a global public sphere trying to establish a form of global citizenship. As Nick Stevenson (2003: 35) says:

The associated processes of the decentering of society, the rise of network capitalism, globalization, risk, reflexivity, and consumer culture have all served to reshape and to question the operation of citizenship (...) the historical tie between nation, culture and citizenship is becoming increasingly decoupled (...). Cultural citizenship is related to these changes and is more generally the struggle for a communicative society.

Naturally, establishing such a global citizenship cannot be fully accomplished by an initiative like this, but as an example of what collaborative documentary projects can do, the project is interesting.

In the second part of the project, *Why Poverty?*, BBC, DR and Step basically followed the same strategies, this time with nine films. The films in the project dealt very critically with the reasons for poverty in the world and the global power structures. Again the films were very different, both in form and content. In American director Alex Gibney's film *Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream*, the focus is on the incredibly rich and powerful people who live on Park Avenue in New York and who seem to rule politics

and finances, not just in the US, but globally. The film is a classic, journalistic documentary, an authoritative, revealing analysis of the stuff power and corruption are made of. We also find very dramatized kinds of documentaries, like Ben Lewis' ironic, satirical history lesson *Poor Us*, in which he describes the basic patterns and forms of social and financial exploitation that have been at play since the Neolithic Ages and up until today. In contrast, Mona Eldaif and Jehane Noujaim's film *Solar Mamas* follows Arab and African women in remote, poor parts of the world; it deals with a project that is trying to educate women to become solar engineers, taking them out of poverty and the male dominance they suffer from. The film takes the form of documentation of a kind of social experiment, which clearly exposes some of the reasons for poverty in this particular part of the world.

Conclusion

Projects like *Why Democracy?* and *Why Poverty?* are examples of the power of documentaries to raise global issues and to establish a cosmopolitan dialogue between parts of the world that are normally less connected. They represent a new form of mediated, global public sphere. But documentaries in general and new mobile media and technologies as such have started developing more global narratives and have transformed our imagination of global others. More often than in the past, outside perspectives are now combined with various inside views into everyday life. If world news has a tendency to focus on big news and the negative and catastrophic, documentaries also try to tell another story: stories of different cultures, but also the universal human dimensions behind the differences. The documentary festival system, the presence of online documentary sites and the fact that some of the strong public service channels (BBC, Channel 4, DR 2, PBS) are actually trying to give voice to independent documentaries and to collaborative projects are all encouraging. Documentaries may help open our minds to more cosmopolitan dimensions, and we do see tendencies towards broadcast documentary films that have a broader global representation.

Digital platforms for independent documentaries – for instance Top Documentary, Free Documentaries or Vimeo – do exist and represent at least a small step towards a more open, global documentary public sphere. But we cannot deny that technologies and platforms cannot do the job alone. Technologies create possibilities, and digital technologies certainly create a number of new exciting possibilities – as many of the documentary films and projects mentioned above demonstrate. But technologies in themselves cannot make the change, only people can. Only continued work with creating cosmopolitan narratives and collaborative structures and projects can make a difference. Such work must be done on a much more global scale. Documentary filmmakers must work within their own distinctive context and on the basis of their specific background, but they must also continue telling stories that link them and us and that move into the lives of distant others.

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Credibility and the Media as a Political Institution

Mark Blach-Ørsten & Rasmus Burkal

Abstract

Credibility is frequently represented as both an ideal goal for journalism as a profession and as an integral part of the news industry's survival strategy. Yet there is no widely accepted operationalization of the concept of credibility. In the current article, we present the results of a study of credibility in Danish news media. Credibility is defined at an institutional level by two dimensions: A) the accuracy and reliability of the news stories featured in leading Danish news media, and B) journalists' knowledge and understanding of the Danish code of press ethics. The results show that sources only find objective errors in 14.1% of the news stories, which is a lower figure than most other studies report. The results also show that Danish journalists find bad press ethics to be an increasing problem and attribute this problem to increased pressure in the newsroom.

Keywords: credibility, new institutionalism, Denmark, press ethics, accuracy, news media

Introduction

For the first time in 23 years, the Danish code of press ethics, known as 'the general guidelines for press ethics', were updated and revised in May 2013. This revision followed an almost three-year-long debate on press ethics in Denmark. The debate on ethics was ignited by a couple of highly debated journalistic scandals that hit the Danish media from 2010 and onwards (Blach-Ørsten 2013a). Most spectacular was the case of Jan Lindholt Mikkelsen who, on January 4, 2010, found himself named and pictured on the front page of a leading Danish tabloid in association with the horrible murder of a young girl. He was later cleared of all charges. By putting Lindholt Mikkelsen on the front page, the tabloid was not in direct violation of the Danish code of press ethics, because his lawyer had not demanded that his case be handled behind closed doors as is the usual custom in high-profile criminal proceedings in Denmark. However, other news media outlets and many politicians felt that the tabloid had gone too far. The episode ignited a sharp debate between media, politicians and the public, where both the politicians and the public expressed a deep concern that, in light of increased competition, ethics in Danish news media was slipping. But other than a few spectacular cases, neither the public nor politicians could come up with proof to back up the statement that press ethics in Denmark was generally slipping.

The study presented here tries to answer the question of the status of journalistic ethics in Danish media by looking at the concept of media credibility from a new angle.

The article proceeds in several steps. We will start with an introduction to the Danish media system and a review of the literature on credibility. Then, by linking the debate on credibility to the theory of the news media as a political institution, we will suggest a new way to define and operationalize the concept of credibility. The result of the Danish study will then be presented, and finally it will be argued that the question of credibility needs to be addressed just as vigorously as the question of media economics has been, and that credibility needs to be at the forefront of any new business model suggested for the news media.

The Danish Media System – A Brief Introduction

Blach-Ørsten (2013b) gives the following overview of the Danish media system based on Daniel C. Hallin's and Paolo Mancini's (2004) comparative analysis of Western media systems. Denmark is placed in the "Democratic Corporatist" model as one of the European countries characterized by early development of a large newspaper industry, active state involvement in the media sector, and an early focus on press freedom. Danish newspapers have historically been strongly linked to the political parties that grew out of the shift from absolutism to parliamentary democracy in the late nineteenth century. Today, the three most important nationally distributed broadsheet newspapers are all principally committed to impartial news coverage, but also retain their distinct ideological editorial profiles. Since the 1990s, print circulation, readership and advertising revenues have all dropped dramatically as the traditional paid broadsheet and tabloid newspapers faced challenges from newly launched free dailies and with the rise of digital media (Lund, Willig and Blach-Ørsten 2009; Esmark and Ørsten 2008; Willig 2011). Thus far, the turbulence of recent years has led to a relatively minor reduction in the size of the newsrooms of the major Danish newspapers as well as a shift in focus from print to online, where all legacy titles continue to reach large audiences.

In terms of broadcast media, 1959 saw the creation of Denmark's Radio (DR) as a national integrated public service provider funded by a license fee levied on all receivers. In the early 1980s, TV 2 was launched as a competing, advertising-funded, state-owned public service broadcaster. With the development of satellite and cable television and the further liberalization of broadcast regulation, several more commercial radio and television stations have entered the Danish market, but they do not play a significant role in terms of news provision. Like the major newspapers, the two main broadcasters strive for impartial news coverage, and though the possibility that their journalism may be biased in one direction or another is a recurrent theme in the public debate, empirical research has repeatedly found that political journalism remains by and large politically neutral (Albæk et al. 2010; Esmark and Ørsten 2008). Still the Danish media system, like the other systems in Hallin's and Mancini's model, is facing changes on many fronts, among which the most relevant for the present purposes are (Blach-Ørsten 2013b):

- Economic factors, including commercial news organizations engaged in an evermore intense competition for attention and advertising
- Public service providers who need large audiences to justify their existence change the demands of news production.

- Technological factors, including technological convergence on digital platforms meaning that previously separate media like newspapers, broadcasters, and new stand-alone websites now compete head-to-head and can monitor each other's news output in real-time.

Indeed, the debate on credibility in Denmark frequently cited changes in news media economics and the introduction of new technology as the major reason for credibility taking a backseat to competition in today's journalism.

An Overview of the Study of Credibility

The concept of credibility is frequently represented as both an ideal goal for journalism as a profession (Vultree 2010) and as an integral part of the news industry's survival strategy (Meyer 2004). Yet there is no widely accepted operationalization of the concept. According to Reich (2011) and Elliot (1997), modern credibility studies began in the 1940s in communication studies. Credibility in the context of journalism is less well studied (Reich 2011), but at least three principal debates on journalism and credibility can be outlined from a literature review (Reich 2011; Kiouisis 2009; Vultree 2010): The question of source credibility, the question of medium credibility and the more general question of the relationship between credibility and press ethics.

Source credibility has focused on how different communications characteristics can influence the perception of a message. This may be studied from an audience perspective or from a journalistic perspective. Medium credibility, on the other hand, focuses on the credibility of the channel through which the message is delivered, rather than the sources of the message (Kiouisis 2009). Both types of credibility studies have, however, been criticized for methodological problems in the design of factor analyses intended to measure credibility and for not being clear in the operationalization of the concept of credibility (Kiouisis 2011). For instance, a common operationalization of credibility includes the following dimensions (Thorson, Vraga and Ekdale 2010: 292): "trustworthiness and expertise, fairness, bias, incompleteness, concern of community, separation of opinion and fact, and accuracy", but fails to specify, or further operationalize, each of these equally elusive concepts.

To a lesser degree the concept of credibility has also been debated in studies on journalism ethics (Elliot 1997; Vultree 2010). In these studies, a journalistic code of ethics is sometimes seen as being necessary in order to secure the credibility of the medium. At other times, credibility is just more or less assumed to be part of the journalistic craft and moral framework of journalism, and can as such not be written down as part of a journalistic code of ethics (Vultree 2010). In Scandinavia, common ethical guidelines for journalists are linked both to journalism as a profession and to the institutionalization of the news media as a political institution (Allern 2001). As outlined in the above section on the corporatist democratic model, news media in this media system are seen as especially important to democracy, and with this privileged role comes certain obligations that are to be met by journalists and news organization. These obligations are outlined in ethical guidelines for journalists.

In Scandinavia, the debate on media credibility was at its height in the 1970s (Elliot 1997). Göran Hermerén (1978) and Peter Arvidson (1977) both argued for a concept of

credibility that would be more precise than a factor analysis of what the public perceived as credible information. Hermerén argued for more objective criteria for measuring credibility, in line with Westerståhl's (1974) research on criteria for objectivity, and both argued that credibility concerns the way news media present reality in news stories, and how this reality is perceived. This is the line of research that will be explored and expanded in the next section.

Institutional Credibility

As shown above, the study of credibility was born out of research in communications and has yet to be linked to more contemporary theory on the study of journalism's role in society. In the study of journalistic ethics, credibility is sometimes seen as an integral part this system of ethics and sometimes not. To develop a more contemporary and theoretically based concept of credibility, we suggest that the concept of credibility be linked to the general debate and research on the media as a political institution. Today many scholars view the news media as a political institution in its own right (Cook 1998; Sparrow 1999; Allern and Blach-Ørsten 2011). Although the news media do not constitute a formal political institution like the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches of government, the metaphor of the "fourth estate" suggests how they can be seen as an intermediary political institution akin to political parties and interest groups, a phenomenon that needs to be understood both as a disparate collection of individual organizations and as sharing certain social logics. Cook (1998, p. 64) states the following about the institutionalist perspective on news media:

Despite different technologies, deadlines and audiences are structured similarly in [news organizations'] internal organization, the way they interact with sources, the formats they use, and in the content they provide (...). This transorganizational agreement on news process and content suggest that we should think of the news media not as a set of diverse organizations, or even a batch of individual institutions, but collectively as a single social institution.

In Scandinavia as well the media are often viewed from this perspective. Allern and Blach-Ørsten (2011) argue that news organizations may be characterized as custodians or patrons of journalism and news as a societal institution. As others scholars, like Sparrow (1999), have pointed out, this is not their only role. In many cases the news media are also market-driven organizations and linked to the economic institutions of society. But what distinguishes news media from other media, and news enterprises from other enterprises, is their role as representatives of journalism and news as an institution (Allern 2001). The ideals that see journalism as having a societal mission of vital importance to democracy are especially strong in the democratic corporatist model. Thus the role of journalism in this media system is to provide information about public affairs, to scrutinize the wielders of power, and to raise public debate (Allern 2001, Blach-Ørsten and Allern 2011). By virtue of these historical ideas and ideological myths, media companies have legitimized themselves as institutions essential to the function of democratic societies. Politicians in the democratic corporatist model have supported this line of thought via both direct and indirect media subsidies (Allern 2001). Another characteristic of journalism as an institution is "the news paradigm" or 'news regime' (Ryfe 2006): A common understanding of

certain basic news rules concerning genre, news values, tacit procedures and conventions regarding what journalism must observe, report and how it should be presented.

However, a central point in institutional studies of the news media is that even though the media can be seen as a political institution, they are a more volatile political institution than the formal political institutions in a society. Indeed Cook (1998) points out that the news media have more in common with two other political institutions – the political parties and the interest group system – than with the constitutional branches of the legislature, executive and judiciary. A central reason for the news media's more volatile institutional status is linked to the fact that journalism is a weak profession. As Kaplan writes (2006: 177):

No specialized technical knowledge, no formal credentialed training, no esoteric occupational language, nor the creation of a self-evidently, socially useful product – none of these shield journalism from external criticism.

Skovsgaard and Bro (2011: 322) argue along the same lines when they write:

The consequence of this absence of an abstract knowledge and strong structures for inclusion and exclusion is that the journalistic profession becomes more vulnerable and its legitimacy less stable compared to other professions.

Even Schudson (1978) remarked that journalism is an uninsulated profession, and paraphrasing that we argue that the news media constitute an uninsulated political institution. Journalism's, and thus the news media's, protection from criticism, and claim of autonomy, comes largely from the institutional myth of the fourth estate and lofty ideals concerning journalism and democracy, as pointed out by Allern (2001) and Allern and Blach-Ørsten (2011). But myth and ideals are no longer strong enough to alone support the media's credibility as an institution. Besides the volatile state of journalism as a profession other changes in society are affecting the contextual conditions of journalism. As mentioned earlier in the present article, changes in the news media's economy are one change, but Skovsgaard and Bro (2011) cite two other major changes and challenges. The first change is fueled by technological innovation, and could be described as the rise of amateurism. News media and social media are changing in such a way that private citizens can now produce and publish their own news or share news with others via social networks, perhaps constantly reducing the role journalism plays in people's lives. Another change is the professionalization of communication in political parties, authorities, companies and organizations, all of which are now able to produce, publish and distribute their own news made by their own journalists and to reach audiences by themselves. Thus, just as the political parties and the interest group organizations have been affected by changes in society and have lost some of their former status and stability, so has journalism become a more blurred, criticized and fragile institution due to changes in economics, technology, politics and media use.

Though it does point out that the news media's status as a political institution is fragile, institutional theory on the news media does not concern itself directly with the question of credibility, but instead with the legitimacy of the news media, and yet again the question of professionalism, or lack thereof, becomes central. Cook (1998: 77) writes that journalism is not much of a profession compared to the 'old' professions such as law and medicine, and indeed:

Journalism professionalism is not inherent in the formal structures or in particular individual attitudes but is instead performed as part of daily work. Indeed such performances may become ever more central, precisely because the journalistic profession is so poorly demarcated.

Skovsgaard and Bro (2011) also focus on daily practices when they write that journalists, to a much greater degree than doctors and lawyers, have to negotiate and reinforce their legitimacy through their daily work. And Sjøvaag (2011) simply states that journalism is only as legitimate as its daily work practices are. This was also the case in the journalistic scandals that led to a new code of press ethics in Denmark. In each scandal, it was the work practices behind the story that were criticized. Building on this point of view, we argue that the media as an institution in the Danish society enjoy some level of credibility (as do other institutions), but that this credibility to an increasing degree is linked, not to institutional myth or democratic ideals, but to the daily work practices within the media, making these daily work practices central to the concept of institutional credibility.

The daily practice of news making can be described, using institutional theory, as a news regime defined as a common understanding and relatively stable set of rules, procedures and resources for the production of news (Ryfe 2006, Blach-Ørsten 2013b). Thus, the credibility of journalism as an institution is located in the daily practices of producing the news by following the rules laid out in the news regime. Ryfe (2006) defines the current news regime as the modern and professional news regime, as opposed to the 'partisan news regime' of the party press, and describes the routines of the modern news regime as talking to credible sources, gathering facts and writing balanced stories. A code of press ethics may be seen as the legal underpinning of such a news regime and indeed the Danish code of ethics, among other things, states that the information presented in a news story should strive to be accurate and balanced. With this in mind, we can return to the problem of developing a new way of operationalizing the concept of credibility at an institutional level.

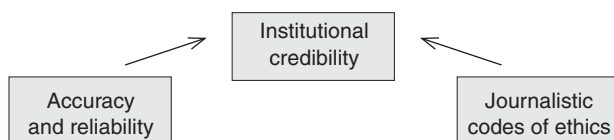
As should be clear from the above discussion, daily journalistic practice is at the center of an institutional concept of credibility. In some ways, this returns the focus to the Scandinavian credibility debate of the 1970s, which shared a similar focus on media content. However, in the present article, media content is defined as the result of the journalistic practices of producing news, gathering facts, talking to credible sources and producing balanced stories that adhere to a code of press ethics. Instead of focusing on the relationship between news content and the audience, as both older and newer studies of credibility have done, the present study suggests a new focus on news sources and journalists themselves. From an institutional perspective, the interaction between sources and journalists are central because most sources in the news are elite sources, and as elites they represent the other powerful institutions in society, such as political and financial institutions. Thus, the elite sources' perceptions of news and their interaction with journalists can also be seen as a mirror of the interaction between the media as an institution and other institutions in society. Meyer (2004) argues along the same lines in his attempt to put the accuracy of news reports at the center of the debate on credibility. Building on Lazarfeld's theory of the Two-Step Flow, Meyer (2004: 96-97) argues that elite sources are a much more important measure of credibility than audience

perception: “Newspapers with a high density of errors have the least trusting sources, and their skepticism filters down to the population. If this seems strange, remember that sources tend to be the elites.”

In the present study, credibility is defined by two dimensions: a) the daily practice of gathering facts by talking to news sources and b) the daily practice of producing news stories in Danish newsrooms under the guidance of a code of press ethics. While point a) switches focus from the general audience to the elite news sources, point b) adds a new focus on the journalists themselves and their perception of their daily practices. In Denmark, the existence of a general code of press ethics, as well as the existence of an independent press council that may demand that news media rectify an error in a story, is seen as an institutional arrangement (Andersen 2006), i.e. the code of press ethics addresses the media’s role as an institution, and not as individual private business enterprises, and because of this institutional role the media, like other institutions, should have a set of guidelines for how this institutional role should be performed.

The concept of credibility used here can thus be described by the figure below.

Figure 1. Model of Institutional Credibility



To examine the daily practice of talking to news sources, we were inspired by the accuracy and reliability studies conducted by Maier (2007) and Proleza et al. (2012). We therefore used a source-survey method and sent a questionnaire to news sources asking them, among other things, to identify errors, if any, in news reports. To examine journalists’ relation to the Danish code of press ethics, we sent a survey to 350 journalists working in the same media that we sampled our sources from, and asked them about their daily practices and the Danish code of press ethics.

The Study

The study is based on two surveys. The source survey was sent to sources who had participated in news articles and news reports in week 46 2011 in national broadsheet newspapers and online newspapers (*Berlingske*, *Jyllands-Posten* and *Politiken*), local newspapers (*Folketidende* and *Nordvestnyt*) and national television (DR and TV 2). The questionnaire was distributed to 906 sources in the period 13th-21st February 2012. When the collection of responses was completed 13th March 2012, 596 sources had responded, of whom 95 percent had answered all the questions in the questionnaire. Altogether, this gives a response rate of 66 percent. 547 sources confirmed that they had been interviewed by a journalist from the media, in which the article or feature was published.

Our analysis is based on the responses of these 547 sources. The 547 sources break down as follows: 57% from national newspapers, 19% from regional newspapers, 17% from national TV and 7% from the national newspaper’s online papers. At the same

time we sent a survey to 350 journalists working in the same media that we sampled our sources from, and asked them about the Danish code of press ethics. Seventy percent of the journalists responded to the questionnaire on press ethics. Most responses came from journalists working at the national newspapers and national television stations, as only a few of the journalists working in local media responded to our survey.

Findings

Daily News Performance

The first rule in the Danish code of press ethics underlines that the information presented in a news story should be factually correct. Table 1 shows that 14.1% of the sources find some kind of factual errors in the news story. However, there are differences across media platforms. More sources in television than in newspapers find factual errors, while the fewest errors are found online. But our sample of sources in online media is also the smallest (n= 50), so this result should at this point be considered exploratory.

Table 1. Factual Errors

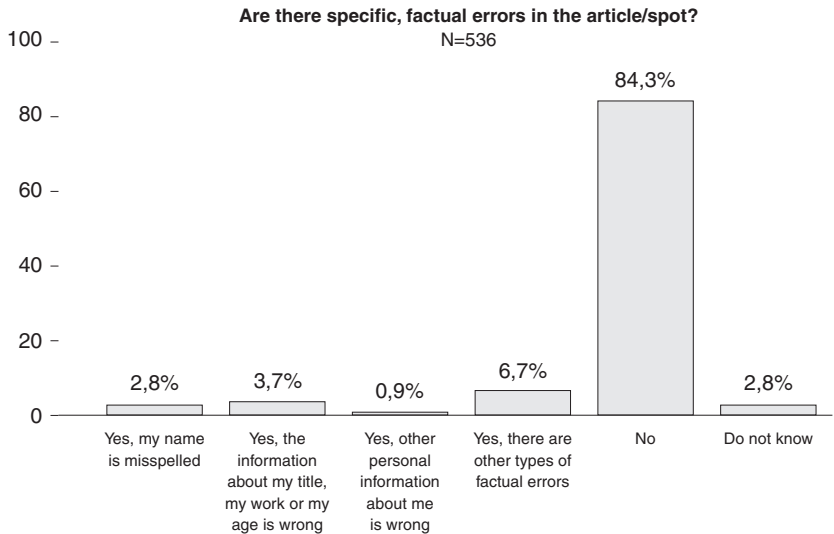
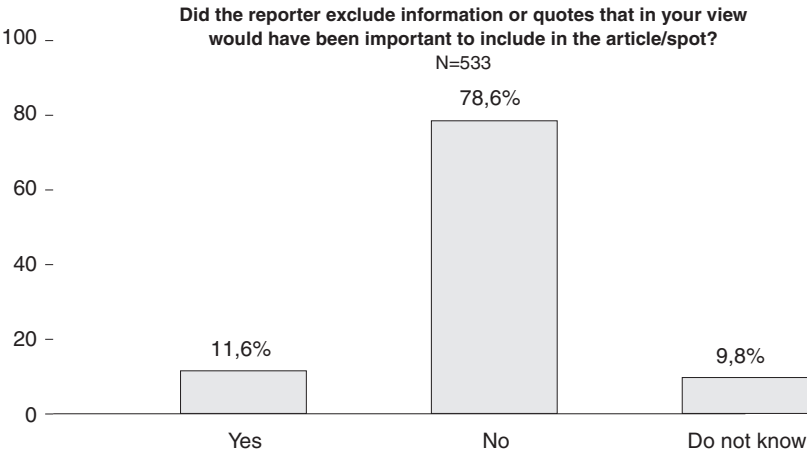


Table 2 shows the subjective errors and again only a small proportion of sources, 11.6 %, reported finding subjective errors, and again sources in television found more errors than sources in newspapers both online and offline (table not shown).

We also asked sources to evaluate the news item in which they appeared as sources on a general level. Here more than 60% of all sources across all platforms answered that they fully or partially agreed that the news item in its entirety was ‘good journalism’ (table not shown).

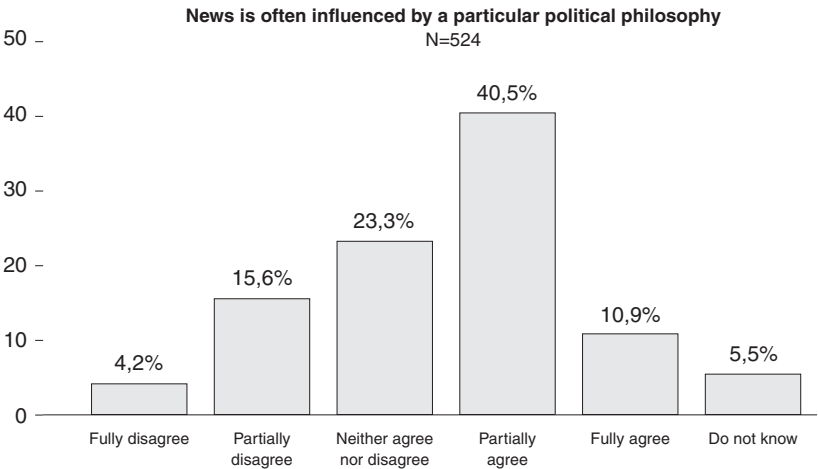
Based on the answers mentioned above, one might think that sources have almost nothing negative to say about the media in Denmark. But even though sources only found a relative small percentage of errors, either objective or subjective, and in general agreed that the news item in which they appeared was ‘good journalism’, when asked about the media’s performance on a general level they still expressed a rather high degree of

Table 2. *Subjective Errors*



skepticism toward the media. When asked the general question about the reliability of Danish news media, 50.2 % partially agreed that the news media was in general reliable. Only 7.6 % fully agreed (table not included). As shown in Table 3, it is the question of possible political bias in the media that concerns the news sources. Historically, Danish newspapers were party papers, but the party press died out by the 1970s, and television in Denmark is public service and thus bound by law to be impartial and balanced. Still more than 50% of sources agree or partially agree that the news media are politically biased.

Table 3. *Bias in the News*



Daily Practice of Press Ethics

A code of press ethics may be seen as a rule book on how to do ‘good journalism’ within a specific news regime. In Denmark, we have had general guiding rules since the 1950s. These rules were revised in 1991 and again in May 2013. These questions concern the code of ethics that was in effect until May 2013.

Table 4 shows that most journalists are well aware of the code of ethics, but that journalists working in local newspapers are somewhat less aware of it. But this may also be due to the fact that fewer journalists from the local papers answered the survey, so, again, this result should only be viewed as exploratory. And due to the small n, the same applies to answers from journalists working online.

Table 4. *Familiarity with Press Ethics*

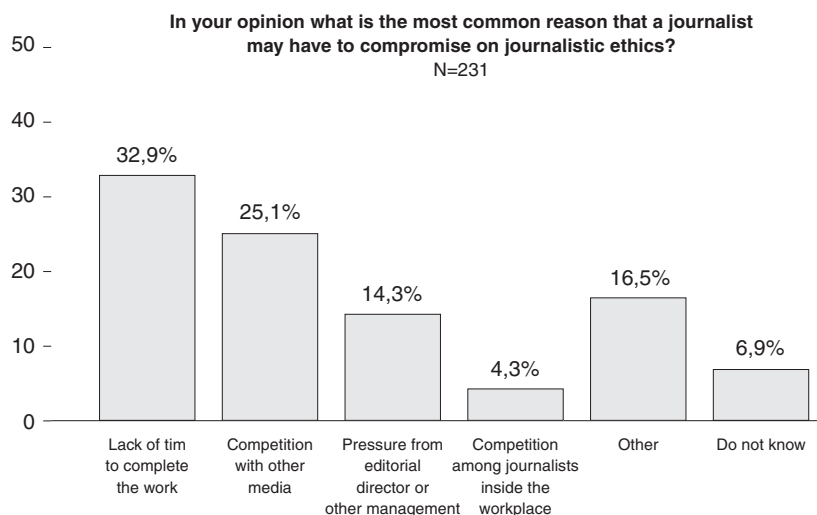
Are you familiar with the guiding rules for the ethics of journalism?					
	Broadsheet newspapers	Local newspapers	Online newspapers	Public service television	Mean
Yes	94.2%	81.8%	91.3%	90.9%	90.5%
No	2.9%	13.6%	4.3%	3.0%	3.6%
Do not know	2.9%	4.5%	4.3%	6.1%	5.9%
N=	126	22	23	60	231

Table 5 displays the results based on our questions to journalists about how often they found examples of the code of press ethics being broken at the media establishments where they work. There are some differences across media, but in general journalists found that the code of ethics was broken both on a weekly and on a monthly basis.

Table 5. *Examples of Bad Journalistic Ethics*

At my work, I find examples of bad journalistic ethics...					
	Broadsheet newspapers	Local newspapers	Online newspapers	Public service television	Mean
Daily	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.7%
Weekly	15.4%	13.6%	8.7%	12.1%	12.5%
Monthly	27.9%	31.8%	26.1%	37.9%	31.1%
Semiannually	31.7%	22.7%	26.1%	28.8%	28.6%
Annually	8.7%	13.6%	26.1%	16.7%	14.3%
Never	5.8%	4.5%	4.3%	0.0%	3.9%
Do not know	9.6%	13.6%	8.7%	3.0%	8.9%
N=	126	22	23	60	231

Finally, see Table 6 below, we also asked journalists to list the reasons that might cause a journalist in the newsroom to pay less regard to the general code of press ethics. The results show that work pressure, competition with other media and pressure from editors were some of the main reasons given to explain why journalists might ignore ethics in their work. The answers were the same across all platforms.

Table 6. Reasons to Compromise on Ethics

Discussion

To sum up, the present study shows that, when it comes to the daily and most basic of journalistic practices, i.e., talking to sources and producing stories, the sources find relatively few errors, whether objective and subjective. We use the term “relatively” because other studies using the source-survey method have reported a much higher percentage of objective errors. Porlezza, Maier and Russ-Mohl (2012) found factual inaccuracy in 60% of Swiss newspapers and 48% of US papers. However, Porlezza, Maier and Russ-Mohl also mention an Irish study that found objective errors in only 3.4% of the news items investigated and a study of news agencies that found only 10% inaccuracy. Thus, an error rate of 14.1% would seem to be on the lower end of the scale. Why Danish media differ from US media is difficult to determine, but in Denmark many reporters send quotes to their sources to get them cleared for any factual mistakes, such as mistakes in names, titles and use of figures. And indeed, in the study by Porlezza, Maier and Russ-Mohl (2012), it is factual mistakes such as incorrect names, or dates, that make up the bulk of the objective errors.

But though the sources found relatively few objective errors, they still, on a general level, displayed mistrust in the media in the sense that many of them found the media to be politically biased. From inside the newsroom, journalists themselves found some reason to worry about the state of press ethics, and many cited work pressure in the newsroom as a possible reason for compromising on ethics. Thus while both sources and journalists found only some reason for concern, what most clearly stands out from the study is the fact the sources on a general level suspected the media of being politically biased. There may be historical reasons for this, as the Danish party press, compared to the American party press, only died out recently, and political parallelism is a defining feature of the democratic and corporate media system. But Danish television is obliged by law to produce news that is impartial and unbiased and has never been affiliated with any political party.

But skepticism and mistrust regarding sources, which according to Meyer (2004) trickles down to the general audience, may also have to do with the fact that journalistic

practices largely remain hidden from outside scrutiny. Therefore, it is possible for the sources in our survey to judge the news stories – where they themselves appear as sources, and thus have been at least partly involved in producing – as being examples of good journalism, while at the same time, on a general level, remain skeptical of (all) other news stories. As Kovach and Rosenstiel wrote in *The Elements of Journalism* on good journalism practices:

The willingness of the journalist to be transparent about what he or she has done is at the heart of establishing that the journalist is concerned with the truth.... Too much journalism fails to say anything about methods, motives, and sources.

Returning to the question of institutional credibility, the study has shown that the daily practice of journalism in Denmark can be described by the sources that appear in the news as good journalism. Journalists are generally aware of the code of ethics and sources generally find few objective and subjective errors. Nevertheless, journalists fear that increasing work pressure in the newsroom jeopardizes ethical journalism, and sources in general are concerned about media manipulation.

Conclusion

We can conclude that the status of the news media's credibility at an institutional level is sound, but threatened by a general distrust on the part of sources and a general worry among journalists. All this leads back to Cook's quote about the daily performance of journalism and how "*such performances may become ever more central.*" If practices in the newsroom became more transparent, sources and other users of the news would be able to decide for themselves, on much more substantial grounds, whether or not a news item should be considered good journalism. This would make it possible for skeptical sources to test their skepticism against the work of the journalist. At the same time, a more transparent newsroom might make it more difficult to increase the pressure on journalists to produce more instead of better stories, because stories produced with too few sources, or stories based solely on media subsidies would be very hard for editors to justify to an audience, especially an audience whose 'willingness-to-pay' is more and more central to the survival of the news media. Further research should focus on ways to open up the newsroom and thus make the daily performance of good journalism more transparent to a larger audience.

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Socializing Journalist Trainees in the Newsroom

On How to Capture the Intangible Parts of the Process¹

Gitte Gravengaard & Lene Rimestad

Abstract

In the present article, we investigate socialization practices in the newsroom. The analyses demonstrate how journalist trainees are socialized into this particular professional culture and community of practice. Theoretically, we combine traditional news ethnography with linguistic anthropology, conversation analysis, and theories of profession in order to investigate and interpret social and cultural (re)production in the routinized practice in the newsroom. The units of analysis are interactions between journalist trainees and their editors concerning ideas for news stories. These interactions play a key role in the socialization process as important loci for learning about the craft because of the constant reinforcement of competent practice which takes place here. Thus, these interactions are important sites for cultural production and reproduction that support the building of professional vision.

Keywords: newsroom ethnography, socialization, journalism practice, journalist trainees, linguistic anthropology, ideation format

Introduction

Within journalism education, we often see the *apprentice model* in which journalist trainees, during their education, experience two fundamentally different ways of learning the trade: First, the university's lectures about journalism along with a range of assignments as the students learn *about* practice. And second, internship in a newsroom during which the intern learns to be a competent practitioner *through* practice. In Denmark, the period of internship is rather long compared to other countries. The journalism students work for one or one and a half year as trainees. This internship is preceded by at least one and a half years at the educational institution and followed by yet another year at the educational institution. The period of apprenticeship is with salary, approximately \$2700 a month, and the interns' tasks in the newsroom are almost identical to those of the trained journalists. They are not just "helpers", they are *novice journalists*.

The focus of the present article is on internship, during which the journalist trainee finds himself, in the middle of praxis, attempting to put into practice what he has learned at journalism school. The professional socialization begins at the educational institution. However, the beginning of the internship is where the actual newsroom socialization process starts (cf. Cotter 2010), and this is our focus.

The research question for this study is: How do socialization processes take place in the routinized practice in the newsroom? In the present article, we initially describe socialization in general and how this has been studied within journalism studies. Then we set out our interdisciplinary theoretical framework, present our research design, and describe and discuss important findings showing how socialization takes place in the newsroom, focusing in particular on conversations and interactions between interns and editors.

Novices in a Community of Practice

In general terms, Baquedano-López (2001:345) defines socialization as “the process of becoming a competent member of society, of internalizing the norms, role expectations, and values of the community; in sum, of becoming culturally competent”. When it comes to socialization into the news culture, the trainee needs to learn to become a competent member through acquisition of a range of *practice-related skills*, how to construct an idea for “a good news story”, how to present an idea, how to write a good news story, how to conduct an interview etc., as well as through acquisition of the complex *set of values* underlying these skills, that is: assimilating a professional identity of being a journalist (Cotter 2010).

The socialization process is embedded in a specific *community of practice* (Wenger 1998) in which the professional veterans have common goals and share a repertoire of resources, for instance: attitudes, values, knowledge, assumptions, reference systems and experiences. In the newsroom, the interns, via *situated learning* (Lave and Wenger 1991), learn about this community of practice – for instance what does and does not constitute “a good news story” – by participating in the actual practice and monitoring acceptance and elimination of ideas (Donsbach 2004; O’Neill and Harcup 2009; Gravengaard and Rimestad 2011). The newcomers learn in practice and from practice – from what is said and what is not said by their superiors, thus becoming an even more competent member of the social group. This situated learning takes place because of the newcomers’ *legitimate peripheral participation* (Lave and Wenger 1991), in which they are slowly introduced to the tasks of this community of practice. This involves the professional veterans and “interactions that cojoin less and more experienced persons in the structuring of knowledge, emotion, and social action” (Ochs 2001:227). Cotter (2010) emphasizes how the newsroom in this way provides a constant reinforcement of competent practice for the novice building a *craft ethos*.

The professional veterans, i.e. the trained journalists and editors, are perceived by theories of profession as *intuitive experts* (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986) with a large degree of tacit expert knowledge, based on their repertoire of experience from the routinized practice, cognitively structured as intuition (Polanyi 1958, 1983; Wackerhausen and Wackerhausen 2000; Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986). Large parts of this tacit, professional knowledge about a particular community of practice and its professional norms are passed on to newcomers in tacit ways (Gravengaard and Rimestad 2011). As Carr (2010) underlines, expertise is transmitted through verbal interaction between master and apprentice, but also through observation, internalization and imitation of patterned behaviours. Hence, novices are socialized through discourse and interaction. In order to become a competent member of a given group, it is not enough to receive

explicit instructions only. The novice also needs to *be in the task* (Lave and Wenger 1991; Duranti 1997).

Through this process of socialization, the journalist trainees acquire the knowledge that enables them to participate effectively and appropriately in this particular community of practice (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986; Garrett and Baquedano-Lopez 2002; Goodwin 2003), and they internalize the values and norms of the news organization. Aldridge and Evetts (2003) describe this acquired professionalism as one way in which news organizations create a control mechanism that works from a distance. As a consequence, the news organizations can minimize their direct control of work in favour of a more covert control of the autonomy of the journalists (Sigelman 1973; Berkowitz and Limor 2003; Preston 2009).

Socialization within Journalism Studies

As demonstrated in Figure 1, below, the concept of socialization into the profession of journalism has been conceptualized and studied in different ways. A major part of this research has studied socialization by focusing on the *products* of the socialization process: on the journalist trainees. By conducting surveys, researchers have been able to study how, for instance, attitudes, values and norms change during the period of internship (Bjørnsen et al. 2007; Hanna and Sanders 2012; Elmelund-Præstekær et al. 2008, 2009; Hovden et al. 2009).

As these surveys focus on the results and products of socialization, they are able to point out changes in attitudes, opinions, values, etc. However, they are not able to describe *how* this change is brought about and how the socialization process actually takes place in the newsroom. The socialization process itself still remains a *black box*.

A smaller part of this previous research focuses on socialization as a *process* and aims at describing what it takes to become a professional. In general, these scholars describe socialization processes through which newcomers in a newsroom learn both craft skills of the profession and internalize other tacit forms of knowledge that are difficult to trace (Sigelman 1973), diffuse and extremely informal (Preston 2009). Breed (1955) describes the socialization process as learning *by osmosis* and points to the covert ways in which editors can influence journalists and news content. In general, the policy of the news organization and the cultural and professional norms are tacit knowledge, seldom stated explicitly in the routinized practice in the newsroom (Furhoff 1986).

This previous research emphasizes the great importance of the socialization process. However, journalism research has not yet provided detailed empirical analyses of *how* this socialization actually takes place in the routinized everyday work practice in the newsroom. Machin and Niblock (2006: 177) refer to this as: “a significant gap in scholarly understanding of the socialization of young journalists”. The present study is an attempt at filling in this gap.

Figure 1. Research on Socialization within Journalism Studies

	Theoretical focus	Empirical focus
The professional practitioner as a PRODUCT of sozialisation		
The professional practitioner “in the making”. Sozialisation as a PROCESS		Our current research project



Studying Socialization

Kulick and Schieffelin (2005) emphasize that language is the “most central and crucial dimension of the socialising process” as the novice becomes a competent member of a particular community of practice. Furthermore, Schiffelin and Ochs both underline that “all interactions are potentially socializing contexts” (Ochs 1988: 6; Schiffelin 1990: 19), and that ordinary conversational discourse is a powerful socializing medium (Schiffelin and Ochs 1986: 172). Therefore, in order to study the socialization process, we have to perform microanalytical studies of the social interaction in the newsroom involving both novices and experts, analysing language use and its social entailments in this particular community of practice (Cotter 2010).

The study presented here is interdisciplinary, as we bring together insights from linguistics, sociology, anthropology, theories of profession, and journalism studies in order to explore the socialization process. This is part of a recent shift in research focus towards combining 1) the traditional *newsroom ethnography* carried out by sociologists in the 1970s and 1980s focusing on routines with 2) *linguistic micro-analysis* inspired by linguistic anthropology focusing on “communicative practices as constitutive of the culture of everyday life” (Duranti 1997:xv) and 3) *conversation analysis* focusing on talk-in-interaction and how institutional practice is “talked into being” (Arminen 2005). The overall aim is to combine a detailed analyses of the micro-level of discourse and interaction with analyses of social structure, institutional roles and identities, and cultural practice (Coupland and Jaworski 2001) in what Catenaccio et al. (2010) call an “ethnographic, field-based, interaction-oriented news production research” investigating routinized practice in the newsroom. For other examples of this research trend, see for instance: Catenaccio et al. (2010); Cotter (2001, 2010); Perrin (2011, 2013); Van Hout and Jacobs (2008); Van Hout and Van Praet (2011); Gravengaard and Rimestad (2011); Gravengaard (2010, 2012).

Professional Expertise Acquired through Language

When building up professional expertise, both institutions and professions create boundaries between ways of knowing the same object (Abbott 1988; Goodwin 1994; Carr 2010) as they cultivate, authorize, and organize certain knowledge practices. The ability *to see*

a *meaningful event* (Goodwin 1994) – for instance to construct an idea for what will be conceived of as “a good news story” by the editor – is a socially situated activity accomplished through the deployment of discursive practices in the newsroom. The result of these processes is what Goodwin terms *professional vision*, that is, “socially organised ways of seeing and understanding events that are answerable to the distinctive interests” of this particular social group (ibid.:606). The professional vision is accomplished through practice, and our study focuses on *how* this is actually performed in practice.

As professional expertise is inherently interactional and accomplished and enacted through linguistic practices (Goodwin 1994, 1996; Carr 2010), the interns in the newsroom learn, in their relationships with veterans, how to define and interpret objects in an expert way and to master a linguistic repertoire (Carr 2010; Cotter 2010; Van Hout and Van Praet 2011). Therefore, we must analyse practice and the talk-in-interaction in the actual routinized practice in the newsroom and study how objects of knowledge are socially constructed through systematic discursive procedures within this particular community of practice where news is talked into being (Ekström 2007).

Within linguistic anthropology, *language socialization* focuses on how specific culturally meaningful practices become acquired (or not) by combining ethnography and linguistics (Kulick and Schieffelin 2005). When paying close attention to the linguistic forms that are used to socialize novices into expected roles and behaviours, it becomes possible to offer a processual account on how individuals come to be particular kinds of culturally intelligible subjects. The close analysis of situated language use can provide “insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity” (Rampton et al. 2004:2). Boden (1994) defines the structures of practical action as “the observable, accountable, and irreducibly local instantiation of structure in action”. Therefore, studying interaction entails studying the organization as it is created interactionally in authentic practice through language and actions.

Conversation Analysis and Ethnographic Knowledge

As this research project aims at offering an insight into how socialization happens at the micro-level in routinized interaction in the newsroom, we draw upon *conversation analysis* (Sacks et al. 1974; Heritage 1984; Schegloff 1984, 1988, 1992) in order to perform micro-level analysis of actual everyday conversations. This gives us the opportunity to capture some of the intangible and blurred parts of the socialization process and to better understand the relation between social structure and the everyday practices of journalism.

Conversation analysis (CA) studies social interaction and focuses on practitioners’ talk-in-interaction. CA treats talk as the primary vehicle for the accomplishment of social actions, as it looks at how social action is brought about through the organization of talk-in-interaction. This is an observable part of doing social actions in a particular context, and CA focuses on the construction of social realities and practices in these interactional practices (Pomerantz and Fehr 1997; ten Have 1999; Arminen 2005).

Our study is what Antaki (2011) refers to as *institutional applied CA* aiming at illuminating routine institutional work. Thus far, CA has had a rather limited impact on journalism studies (Ekström 2007), and only recently have researchers used this theory to analyse everyday talk-in-interaction in the newsroom (Cotter 2010; Van Hout and

Van Praet 2011; Gravengaard and Rimestad 2011). CA is a beneficial way to scrutinize the socialization process, as it facilitates an understanding of *how* institutional interaction is organized and constituted through language, thus providing the researcher with a bridge between linguistic analysis and the sociological investigation of reality, as Drew (2001) puts it.

From linguistic anthropology (Duranti 1997), we know that one cannot, however, rely on analyses of conversation and interaction alone. In order to understand and interpret the different layers of meaning involved in the interaction and to understand the values, routines, roles, and relationships in the community of practice, it is important for the researcher to acquire detailed background knowledge about this community (Duranti 1997; Antaki 2001, 2011).

The Research Design

The present analyses of socialization processes are based on empirical studies of 12 Danish journalist trainees from the University of Southern Denmark during their one-year internship. The 12 trainees worked at two national daily newspapers, two national tabloid newspapers, and two national Danish TV stations. There were two trainees at each media. The research design consisted of:

1. Participant observations made over the period of a year and following all 12 trainees three days each
2. Semi-structured interviews with the journalist trainees before, during and after their internship
3. Three e-mail surveys among the interns during their internship period

This research design allowed us to be in the middle of everyday practice in the newsroom and to closely monitor and record all interactions and conversations during entire workdays. Moreover, we could talk to the interns during these days about their perception of this practice. The semi-structured interviews allowed us to spend 1-2 hours of undisturbed time with the interns, during which we could focus on their descriptions and thoughts about being an intern, on their feelings, problems, victories, wishes, and fears. The e-mail surveys were conducted three times during the internship period, and each time we asked very open questions about what was going on right now, and about how the intern was feeling. Also, we had 3-5 questions each time connected to a certain theme, for instance the relation between the intern and his or her editor.

The Relation between the Intern and the Editor

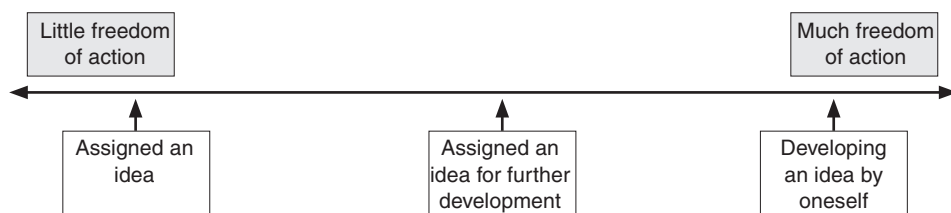
In the present article, we are particularly interested in analysing the relation between the intern and the editor. The editor is *the veteran* occupying the organizational role as “boss” and functioning as a gatekeeper for the intern trying to “sell” his idea (Gravengaard 2012). The intern is *the novice* about to learn and become a competent member of this professional culture. There is an obvious hierarchical difference between the editors and the interns as well as an asymmetrical distribution of cultural knowledge and influence and power in the organization among the two groups.

In general, journalism studies have not paid much attention to the important relationship between journalists and editors (Schudson 2000), and almost no focus has been put on the relationship between journalist trainees and their editors. Two Danish surveys show that Danish journalists feel a high degree of independence in relation to their editors; especially if they work in the newsrooms of daily papers (Gravengaard 2010; Skovsgaard 2010). At the same time, they also sometimes feel that their autonomy is constrained by the editors, especially when selecting and framing news stories (Skovsgaard 2010). Therefore, we consider the idea of development phase to be particularly relevant when studying socialization processes, as this is one of the key activities in news production (Gans 1980; Becker and Vlad 2009). We focus on this early process, and we will zoom in on what happens between the intern and the editor, when the intern is “getting an idea for a news story”.

“Getting an Idea for a News Story”

By studying conversations and interactions between interns and editors in the routinized practice in the newsroom, we found that “getting an idea for a news story” can happen in several different ways – all of which socialize the intern into the professional culture in different ways, creating different identities for the novice and the veteran, respectively. We have placed these ways of “getting an idea” on a continuum stretching from the intern being “assigned an idea” to the intern “developing an idea by himself”.

Figure 2. “Getting an idea”



In the following, we give examples of these different *ideation formats*, demonstrating how each of them affects the socialization process and creates different identities for the novice and the veteran. In the examples, the coding has been simplified to facilitate reading for scholars not familiar with conversation analysis.

Assigned an idea

In these cases, the intern is assigned an idea for a new news story by the editor. The editor describes the idea in detail and tells the intern how to move from idea to news story by issuing orders and directives about which angle to choose, people to interview, questions to ask, and how to build up the news story.

The following example is from a face-to-face conversation between an editor and an intern at a national daily paper. The intern is assigned an idea by the editor and has to write about a major Danish (and international) company that is about to choose a new chairman of the board of directors. The candidate for becoming this new chairman is

currently a professor at a Danish University. “I” is the intern, and “E” is the editor. They are sitting at the intern’s desk in the newsroom.

E: “I would be happy if you would look at: Who is he, this potential new chairman? Right now, it’s only the present chairman who points to him. It could be someone else in the end (...) He’s a professor in – I think – nuclear physics or something like that. At the University of XXXX (...) So this is what we’re going to do. First: We’re going to try to find out: Who is he?”

I: “Yes”

E: “Call somebody at the university in XXX. Call him. Does he see himself as the new chairman or only as a candidate? What does he have to contribute? Then we also have to write some kind of portrait of him – and try to come closer to: What kind of person is he? What is he capable of? What is his background? What are his qualifications for this job? Ahh... and what is his attitude towards: “How do you feel about ‘one of your type’ sitting in this chair? You are an expert within a totally different field?””

I: “Mmmm”

E: “What is the justification for you sitting there? Do you think this is a good solution? He will probably not say much. Perhaps he will not say anything to you”

I: “Yes”

E: “Let us try that. Try also to talk to some of his colleagues at the faculty. Will anybody say anything about him? What type of person is he? Then we have to talk to (...) some experts on this. I’ve sent you some phone numbers and stuff”

I: “Yes”

E: “How does this work? Do they know of experiences abroad where people from higher education institutions occupy these positions? Does it work well? Are they actually competent? Do they know of any data showing how these organizations perform compared to those with a more ‘classic’ chairman of the board of directors?”

I: “Yes”

The editor is dominating in the excerpt, as he is instructing the novice by issuing orders and directives. The editor defines angles, sources and questions for the interviews. The intern answers by saying “yes” and “mm”. These minimal affirmative responses (Heritage 1984) indicate both his attentiveness to and positive acknowledgement of the orders the editor is giving him. Not much is left for the intern to decide, and as a consequence not much freedom of action is given. This creates an identity for the editor as “the boss in charge” making the decisions, controlling the workflow and telling the newcomer exactly how and what to do, and it creates an identity for the intern as the newcomer following orders – and also as a novice lacking the expert knowledge that is required in order to complete this task. In these instances, the novice learns about what is “a good news story” by following the veteran’s orders.

Assigned an idea for further development

More freedom of action is given to the intern when he or she is involved in the development of the idea. In these cases, the intern is assigned an idea – typically a topic

(algae and dead fish) or a case (undeclared employment and new legislation) – by the editor combined with the question: “Could you look further into this?” The editor might, in such cases, suggest possible angles or possible interviewees, but the idea is not final as in the previous example. The intern has to finish the development of the idea himself.

The following example is from a face-to-face conversation between an editor and an intern at a TV station. The intern is assigned an idea about a topic – algae cause dead fish – by the editor. The editor thinks that this idea could be developed into a news story and asks the intern to look further into it. “I” is the intern, and “E” is the editor. They stand near the intern’s desk in the newsroom.

E: “Listen, XX (name) has just arrived at the newsroom saying – as he always does this time of year: “There are algae everywhere” At first, I don’t pay attention because he says this every year because his son is an angler”

I: “Yeah, I know that”

E: “In short, I couldn’t help listening because he kept on talking about these algae”

I: “I can imagine”

E “But I cannot say if there is a news story”

I: “We will have to find out”

E: “But I think The only thing I can say for certain is that we have nice weather and we have a helicopter in the air anyway. And if it is true that the fish stock (...) suffers from these algae..... It could be: the Little Belt, North Funen, East Jutland.... Should we try to get an overview as to whether there actually is a problem here – that does not exist every March? (...) Because if you are going to make a spring reportage, anglers, helicopter – and also, check if there really, factually speaking, is a news story here, then you have enough work to do. I can picture it. In this weather it would be nice”

I: “Yes, definitely”

E: “Then you can have all afternoon to fiddle with this and go outside. And if you need to interview someone in Copenhagen, then we will take care of that for you”

I: “Yes, yes”

E: “So you’ll make the reportage – if there is a story. Right?”

I: “I’ll find out. Yes”

In this example, the idea assigned to the intern is more open-ended than in the previous example, and the intern’s responses indicate the shared knowledge about and responsibility for the idea. The editor suggests that the finished news story should consist of “something about” algae, dead fish, beautiful pictures from the sunshine (taken from a helicopter) and perhaps an expert (the person from Copenhagen in the extract above). And within this framework, the intern has to develop the idea and create a news story. In other instances, the editor only decides the topic for the idea, and the intern has to develop an idea for a news story about this topic.

These examples create an identity for the editor as the one who decides the topic for the news story, but who relies on the intern to be capable of transforming this vague idea into a news story. Simultaneously, the identity constructed for the intern is: a novice who has so much expert knowledge about the routinized practice that he is capable of completing the task at hand. Or at least the intern is given the opportunity to try to solve it.

In these instances, the novice learns about what is “a good news story” by being given the opportunity to create one within a more or less specified framework of suggestions from the veteran or perhaps with only a topic given beforehand.

Developing an idea by oneself

Most freedom of action is given to the intern when he himself creates and develops ideas for new news stories. In these instances, he develops the idea and the angle, researches it, and considers or even plans his sources, cases, and questions. After that, the intern presents the idea to the editor.

As a result, the very first part of the ideation process is rather independent from the editor, and the intern is not obliged to follow a range of orders pertaining to a given idea. This does of course not mean that the intern can make up any idea he wishes. The idea must still comply with the editor’s conception of “a good news story”, and there is no guarantee that the editor will accept the idea when it is presented by the intern. However, compared to the previous examples this way of working grants the intern more freedom to develop an idea.

The interns’ own ideas can cover many things, from ideas about treasure troves or weapons disappearing from military barracks to ideas concerning juicers or parents’ GPS surveillance of children. An intern at a national daily paper explains about ideas he has developed himself:

Often it starts with something you have perhaps read somewhere. It is a very good idea to read XX (name of newspaper) if you write about matters concerning the church. Often they just know things first. However, the news story I did on the work environment in the national churches was because of a little theme on their own website. There it was not a critical story, but I developed the idea. My story about dealing with hash stems from a report. I think it was a PhD thesis. And the story I did on the trade union movement, that was just something I had been thinking about: Why is it that all the unions – or most of them anyway – almost ‘cling’ to the red block? (ed. the socialist wing in the Danish Parliament). Is it because they know that they might get more influence after an election – or what is it? And that was what we tried to find out

In these processes, the intern creates and develops the idea himself. He reads, sees or hears something that gives him an idea for a new news story. In these cases, the intern has a major influence on the idea development process.

This way of working and “getting ideas” creates an identity for the editor as a gate-keeper and a coach who expects the intern to be capable of finding, developing and presenting ideas that the editor will perceive as “a good news story”. And the identity constructed for the intern is that of a novice doing what the trained journalists do: constructing ideas for “good news stories”. When giving the intern this possibility, it is also implied that he has enough knowledge about the community of practice to be able to create such an idea and develop it into a news story. In these instances, the novice learns about “a good news story” by creating it himself in practice.

This is rather similar to the way in which professional veterans – the trained journalists – work themselves. And it displays expertise when an intern is capable of developing

and presenting an idea that the editor acknowledges as a “good news story”. This is a sign of integration into the community of practice, displaying craft ethos and professional vision. Therefore, this is what the trainees see as one of their main goals.

Freedom of action is desirable to most of the interns in our study. However, some of the interns also stress that it is often a less demanding task to “just” follow the editor’s orders compared to standing before this “abyss of freedom”, as one intern puts it. Working this way demands considerable expert knowledge and independence on the part of the novice. In many newsrooms, interns are expected to create their own ideas. As one intern explains:

Already the first day here, the editor asked: “Ok, what do you have for the front page today?” It was only for fun, and he smiled. However, every day we can sense these expectations from him

Some of the interns are very comfortable with these demands, other interns consider them strenuous. One intern describes:

It’s a little difficult to come up with ideas every morning. Every morning they ask you: “What are you going to do today?” And I don’t know (...) It’s hard for me not to be able to live up to these expectations

The intern feels uncomfortable not being able to produce ideas and thereby not being able to demonstrate professional competence. Another intern dreams of becoming better at “getting ideas”:

It’s difficult for me. I don’t get many ideas (...) And the others have a lot of ideas. Where do they find out about all that? (...) I wish I could be better at saying: “I want to do this” and get those ideas

Becoming a Competent Member

During the one-year period of apprenticeship, we saw progress in most of the trainees, as it became easier for them to create ideas for news stories. They became more and more competent members of the community of practice, learning how to create an idea and what constituted “a good news story” in that newsroom. And the longer they stayed in the newsroom, the more they were allowed to develop their own ideas.

In general, if the editors thought that the interns’ own ideas were “good ideas”, then the interns were more likely to be granted freedom to develop more ideas themselves. In the words of Schiffelin and Ochs (1986:166), the novices in the beginning carried out this particular task through *guided interactions*, and from that they developed skills in a zone of what Vygotsky would term *proximal development*, and in this way, moved forward from being guided to more independent ways of working. When the interns begin to participate in the routine of “getting an idea”, the routine’s predictable structure affords “an arena for practice and reinforcement” (Peters and Boggs 1986: 84) – in particular, a reinforcement of competent practice, of professional expertise and professional vision. However, when transferring from one news desk to another, as part of the intern program in the media organization, this pattern often repeated itself because it took some time to assimilate with a new editor and a new subject.

Conclusion: The Relevance of Studying Socialization

By combining an analysis of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction with ethnographic and contextual data, we have been able to explore the relationship between the micro-level of talk-in-interaction in the routinized practice and the wider social and institutional structures to which they contribute. In this way, we offer a behind-the-scenes look at important elements of the practice of socialization in the newsroom where news is talked into being. The interactional analyses made it possible to capture some of the intangible and blurred parts of this socialization process and the construction of craft ethos and professional vision, and how this is produced and reproduced through interaction. The findings complement previous research demonstrating how expertise is enacted in newsroom meetings (Cotter 2010; Van Hout and VanPreaet 2011, Gravengaard and Rimestad 2011). In the routinized practice in the newsroom, the different ways of “getting an idea” are not explicitly described, nor is the development towards more freedom of action and less interference and control. What we have described in this article is *done* in practice and *through* practice, but not explicitly voiced *in* practice. Hence, it becomes examples of how tacit expert knowledge is passed on in tacit ways in the routinized practice in the newsroom.

The increasing freedom of action experienced by the interns is interesting when discussing tacit socialization, because there might not actually be such a great difference between “little” and “much freedom of action”. As the interns become more competent members of the community of practice, they internalize values, norms and knowledge, making the overt and direct corrections of culturally undesirable behaviour from the editors more and more superfluous. In this way, the socialization process has done exactly what Aldridge and Evetts (2003) define as creating a control mechanism that works *from a distance*. We see, towards the end of the internship period, much less direct control, as the gatekeeper who at first was personified by the editor has now been internalized.

The knowledge produced in the present study is relevant to the profession and the professional veterans. “Getting an idea for a new news story” is one of the most important skills for a journalist. However, the socialization process and the ideation process are parts of the veterans’ routinized practice and expert knowledge seldom explicated, and hence seldom discussed. The analyses provide an opportunity to transform parts of the editors’ tacit expert knowledge into a voiced knowledge. This creates an opportunity for editors to gain a more nuanced insight into their actual practice, and furthermore allows them to discuss and reflect upon this practice: Is this the most fruitful way to develop the competency for “getting a good idea”? Is this the most fruitful way to learn how to be an independent and innovative journalist? In this way, the analyses of the interaction may concretize, broaden, detail and perhaps even correct the veterans’ professional stock of knowledge (Peräkylä and Vehviläinen 2003) and their understanding of their routinized practice and interaction in the newsroom with the interns (Perrin 2013; Zelizer 2013).

Furthermore, the study can also establish a general point in socialization research, demonstrating just *how* the socialization process takes place at a linguistic micro-level. By investigating, interpreting, and documenting social reproduction and analysing ways in which practice becomes acquired, we can also point out where and how it is acquired differently from what was intended, or not acquired at all (cf. Kulick and Schieffelin 2005).

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Stability in Times of Change

Trends in Newspaper Executives' Attitudes towards Digital Media

Arne H. Krumsvik

Abstract

Five biennial surveys from 2005 to 2013 reveal a high degree of stability in Norwegian newspaper executives' attitudes towards digital media, despite a high turnover in the executive ranks. Editors and managers do not approve fully of their own organizations' online activities, and they struggle to find a balanced focus between traditional and new activities. However, the rationale for online publishing has become less blurred through the period, and an important shift in the strategic development of user fees is revealed: While it was driven by perceived threats from 2005 to 2011, opportunities for the industry is the strongest predictor in 2013.

Keywords: newspaper, online newspaper, strategy, Internet, management

Introduction

The rationale for online publishing is the main topic of the present article, which explores Norwegian newspaper executives' perceptions of the strategic role of their online newspapers. I discuss the situation after two decades of online news publishing within the theoretical framework of strategic management, applying Miles and Snow's classic model for the analysis of the strategy, structure and processes of organizations².

These words concluded the analysis of the 2005 survey of Norwegian newspaper executives (Krumsvik 2006)¹:

The newspapers are in a pressed situation of circulation decline. This is partly a consequence of increased Internet usage, a development the papers themselves have helped push forward. Thus, they have influenced their environment in such a way as to challenge their own core activity, while at the same time being well positioned in new media. However, they have not succeeded in finding a balanced focus between traditional and new activities. It seems as though newspaper executives find it hard to respond efficiently to the insecurity created as a result of changes in the environment.

It is still not clear what may be the answer to the question: "What kind of strategic role do the online newspapers play?" Even though only 3 per cent answer that "exploring new opportunities in new media" is the primary function of the online newspaper, it nevertheless seems as though that description may best summarize the situation of many players after ten years. Fear, uncertainty and doubt are still part of the newspaper business.

Eight years later, the survey has been conducted five times biennially. Again, the question being asked is: What is the strategic role of online newspapers?

Theoretical Framework

Companies' adjustments to altered external conditions constitute complex and dynamic processes (Picard 2000, 2003; Kolo, C. and Vogt, P. 2004). In order to analyse such situations, Miles and Snow developed a model called "the adaptive cycle" (2003:21-28), an attempt to generalize the psychology at work in the behaviour of organizations. Three main problems of change are identified: (1) The entrepreneurial problem (domain definition), (2) The engineering problem (technology), and (3) The administrative problem (structure, process, and innovation).

A process of adaptation is likely to work sequentially throughout the three parts of the cycle, but processes of change may be triggered within all three. However, in the studies conducted by Miles and Snow, it appears that the fastest and most efficient adaptations occur when the right administrative changes are made.

By studying different industries, Miles and Snow identify four types. Each of these has its own strategy for responding to changes in the surroundings, and its typical configuration for technology, structure and process consistent with its strategy. They name three stable situations as "Defender", "Analyzer" and "Prospector", where the company is competitive over time if organized according to its strategic type. The last category is called "Reactor" and represents an unstable situation (Miles and Snow 2003:29):

1. Defenders are organizations that have narrow product-margin domains. Top managers in this type of organization are highly expert in their organization's limited area of operations, but do not tend to search outside their domain for new opportunities. As a result of this narrow focus, these organizations seldom make major adjustments in their technology, structure or methods of operation. Instead, they devote primary attention to improving the efficiency of their existing operations.
2. Prospectors are organizations that almost continually search for market opportunities, and they regularly experiment with potential responses to emerging environmental trends. Thus, these organizations often are the creators of change and uncertainty to which their competitors must respond. However, because of their strong concern for product and market innovation, these organizations are not completely efficient.
3. Analyzers are organizations that operate in two types of product-market domains, one relatively stable, the other changing. In their stable areas, these organizations operate routinely and efficiently through use of formalized structures and processes. In their more turbulent areas, top managers watch their competitors closely for new ideas, and then they rapidly adopt those ideas that appear to be most promising.
4. Reactors are organizations in which top managers frequently perceive change and uncertainty occurring in their organizational environments but are not able to respond effectively. Because this type of organization lacks a consistent strategy-structure relationship, it seldom makes adjustments of any sort until forced to do so by environmental pressures.

Miles and Snow (2003: 93) identify three main reasons why an organization acts as Reactor: (1) The top management may not have clearly articulated the organization's strategy; (2) The management does not fully shape the organization's structure and processes to fit a chosen strategy; and (3) There is a tendency for the management to maintain the organization's strategy-structure relationship despite overwhelming changes in environmental conditions.

The model developed by Miles and Snow was an important contribution to the development of strategic management as a field of study. It was founded, among other things, on the work of Alfred Chandler (1962). Chandler's analyses of large American enterprises documented how changes in strategy are followed by changes in structure. Miles and Snow's contribution has been vital in the formation/development of what is known as "the configurational view of strategy", which explains that there is not an infinite number of alternative routes towards the goal, but rather a handful of fundamental alternatives to choose between in order to achieve what one wants. Porter (1980) is among those who, following the typologies developed by Miles and Snow, has presented his set of generic strategies (cost leadership, differentiation and focus) (Hambrick 2003).

My chosen model of analysis is developed to understand companies within an industry, and it might therefore be problematic to use it in analysis of the newspaper industry at large. In order to deal with this problem, I will attempt to identify some typical traits in this industry and regard newspapers as players within the total media industry, that is, within a competitive market where different media compete for readers/users and advertisers.

The core activity of a newspaper company seems basically to correspond to the *defender* category. The focus is on publishing a newspaper, and the top executive is usually an expert on precisely that, besides having worked a long time in the business.

The executives do not actively seek opportunities outside of their domain or line of business, and the main focus remains on improving management of the core activity. The large investments that have been made to digitalize the production process seem mostly to be about producing the same thing in a more efficient way (Krumsvik et al. 2013).

However, the digitalization of production, storage and distribution of media content paves the way for a new understanding of the line of business within which one operates, and the competition one partakes in. In this situation, the papers have an advantage because of their rich content and well-established channels for marketing new products and services.

The establishment of online newspapers can be seen as a shift towards the category *analyzer*, with operations in one relatively stable part of the market and one rather unstable. In the traditional line of operations, the focus is on routine and efficiency, whereas in the new line of business one seeks to adopt good and promising ideas.

However, the analysis of the 2005 survey concluded that Norwegian newspapers were not *analyzers*, but rather had indications of being *reactors* due to lack of clarity in the strategic role of online newspapers (Krumsvik 2006). In a 2008 study of online news production at Cable News Network (CNN) and the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), both cases were found to be *defenders* (Krumsvik 2009) due to the focus on centralized news production and the distinct supporting role of the online platform in relation to the traditional broadcasting operations. A later study of two Scandinavian tabloids in 2013 classified the Swedish *Expressen* as *analyzer* and the Norwegian *Dag-*

bladet as reactor, based on variation in the strategic role of digital news production explained by differences in ownership and company culture (Sætren 2013).

The aim of the present article is to provide an updated analysis of the rationale for online publishing in the Norwegian newspaper industry (for the analysis of the 2005 survey, see Krumsvik 2006), and explore whether the newspapers have moved towards a stable strategic approach. As the newspapers are continuing to operate in two types of product-market domains, one relatively stable, the other changing, the expectation of *analyzer* as the chosen main strategy would still be valid as a reasonable supposition.

Methodology

The survey is designed to give a preliminary assessment of such a hypothesis. First of all, it is vital to find out (1) whether executives see use of the Internet mainly as an opportunity for their organization, and (2) what the functions of online priorities are in the company’s strategy.

Quantitative surveys of newspaper executives were conducted biennially from 2005 to 2013 in cooperation with the Norwegian Media Businesses’ Association (MBL) and the National Association of Local Newspapers (LLA). Top executives (editor-in-chief, managing directors and publishers) in Norwegian print papers responded to approximately 25 questions in an e-mail/web-based questionnaire.

The respondents were not sampled as all registered newspapers were included, and non-response can be interpreted as a kind of negative self-selection. There were no indications that the non-responses followed a pattern and created systematic biases in the material. The response rate after three rounds of e-mail reminders is presented in Table 1. The results are presented in the following section.

Table 1. The Surveys

Year	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Month	April	March	November	April	April
N	200	240	216	229	212
Response Rate	68%	70%	65%	59%	60%

The Results

When Norwegian newspaper executives are asked whether they perceive use of the Internet as a threat or an opportunity, they are more optimistic with regard to their own paper than when asked about the newspaper business in general.

Five variables are quite stable over the eight years covered by the five surveys: The perceived threats to and opportunities for both the newspaper industry in general and the respondents’ own newspaper in particular are only marginally changed (Figure 1, Table 2, 3, 4, and 5). The same is the case with general satisfaction with the newspaper’s online activities (Table 6). This image of stability might be surprising given the fact that about half the executives have been replaced during the time covered by this longitudinal study (Table 9), and the rhetoric of rapid change in the media businesses.

Table 2. *The Use of Internet Represents a Threat to the Newspaper Industry.*

Year	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Mean	3.01	2.87	3.01	3.13	2.94
STD	1.363	1.305	1.470	1.363	1.578
N	198	237	214	213	189

Note: 1 = totally disagree. 6 = totally agree. Mean difference between 2007 and 2011 is significant at the .05 level.

Table 3. *The Use of Internet Represents an Opportunity for the Newspaper Industry*

Year	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Mean	4.57	4.9	4.72	4.78	4.96
STD	1.205	1.038	1.255	1.062	1.068
N	198	238	215	212	191

Note: 1 = totally disagree. 6 = totally agree. Mean difference between 2005 and 2007, 2013 is significant at the .05 level.

Table 4. *The Use of Internet Represents a Threat to My Newspaper*

Year	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Mean	2.53	2.28	2.34	2.39	2.43
STD	1.347	1.219	1.242	1.251	1.506
N	189	233	212	212	191

Note: 1 = totally disagree. 6 = totally agree. Mean difference between 2005 and 2007 is significant at the .05 level.

Table 5. *The Use of Internet Represents an Opportunity for My Newspaper. Print Circulation*

Year	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Mean	4.84	5.11	4.91	4.88	5.14
STD	1.145	1.079	1.206	1.153	1.071
N	188	238	215	213	192

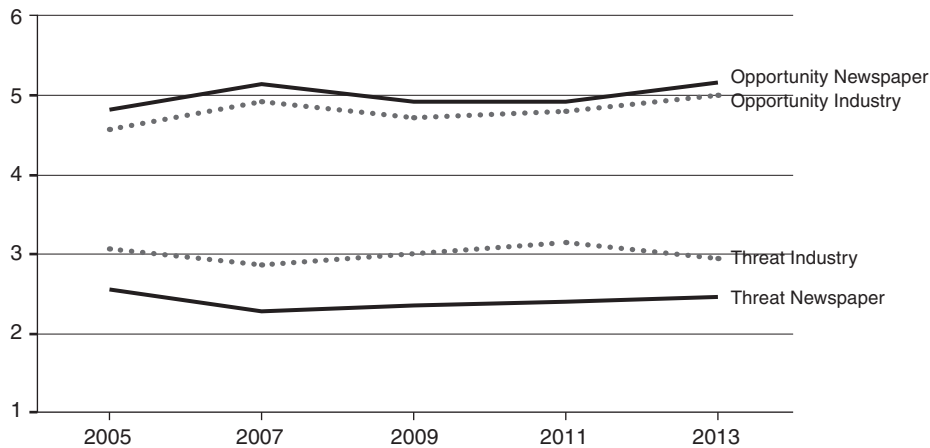
Note: 1 = totally disagree. 6 = totally agree. Mean difference is significant at the .05 level from 2005 to 2007, and from 2011 to 2013.

A stepwise linear regression of the 2013 dataset ($R^2=.539$; $p<.001$) indicates that the strongest predictors for the dependent variable “*The Use of Internet Represents an Opportunity for My Newspaper*” are “*The Use of Internet Represents an Opportunity for the Newspaper Industry*” ($Beta=.601$, $Sig=.000$) and the importance of existing advertisers as a target group ($Beta=.261$, $Sig=.000$).

There is a significant relationship between size (measured by print circulation) and level of satisfaction with the newspaper’s online activities (Table 6a and 6b). Executives of larger newspapers tend to be more content.

A stepwise linear regression of the 2013 dataset ($R^2=.155$; $p<.001$) indicates that the strongest predictors for the dependent variable “*All in all, how satisfied are you with the newspaper’s online activities today?*” are “*The Use of Internet Represents an*

Figure 1. Opportunities and Threats



Note: 1 = totally disagree. 6 = totally agree. Visualization of results presented in Table 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Opportunity for the Newspaper Industry” (Beta=.266, Sig=.001) and the importance of existing advertisers as a target group (Beta=.212, Sig=.005).

Table 6a. All in All, How Satisfied Are You with the Newspaper’s Online Activities Today? Print Circulation

Year	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Mean	3.41	3.51	3.61	3.64	3.58
Under 5,000	3.19	3.21	3.51	3.18	3.07
5-10,000	3.29	3.38	3.33	3.65	3.55
10-40,000	3.5	3.91	3.86	4.0	4.14
Over 40,000	4.46	4.06	4.38	4.0	4.5
STD	1.147	1.095	1.093	1.154	1.208
N	167	229	204	214	192

Note: 1 =not satisfied. 6 = very satisfied. The mean difference from 2005 to 2013 is not statistically significant. However, between newspapers of different size, measured by circulation of the paper edition, the difference is significant at the .05 level. See 2013 comparisons in Table 6c.

The rationale for online publishing is changing. Marketing of the print edition is less important, and new sources of revenue more important (Table 8). Hence, the focus on user payment for online news has increased (Table 7), and the rationale for this approach has matured: While it was driven by perceived threats from 2005 to 2011, opportunities for the industry are the strongest predictor in 2013 (Figure 2).

The dual leadership model of newspapers might lead to conflicts on strategic issues, however on the question of whether users should be charged, there was no significant difference between the management roles (Table 7).

While 47% identified the function as a source of new revenue streams in 2005, this increased to 61% in 2013. However, the single most important function is either to be “part of a multi-channel strategy” or to be “defending the market position”. These func-

Table 6b. Multiple Comparisons, Bonferroni, 2013

(I) Print Circulation:	(J) Print Circulation:	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Under 5,000	5,000-10,000	-.483	.200	.099	-1.02	.05
	10,000-40,000	-1.072 *	.200	.000	-1.60	-.54
	Over 40,000	-1.430 *	.417	.004	-2.54	-.32
5,000-10,000	Under 5,000	.483	.200	.099	-.05	1.02
	10,000-40,000	-.589 *	.211	.035	-1.15	-.03
	Over 40,000	-.946	.422	.157	-2.07	.18
10,000-40,000	Under 5,000	1.072 *	.200	.000	.54	1.60
	5,000-10,000	.589 *	.211	.035	.03	1.15
	Over 40,000	-.357	.422	1.000	-1.48	.77
Over 40,000	Under 5,000	1.430 *	.417	.004	.32	2.54
	5,000-10,000	.946	.422	.157	-.18	2.07
	10,000-40,000	.357	.422	1.000	-.77	1.48

Note: Dependent Variable: *All in all, how satisfied are you with the newspaper's online activities today?* 1 = not satisfied. 6 = very satisfied.

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 7. Online Newspapers Should Charge Their Users. Management Role

Year	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Mean	4.45	3.68	3.9	4.37	4.83
Editors	4.28	3.56	3.91	4.28	4.82
Managers	4.79	3.76	4.06	4.54	4.88
Publisher	-	3.96	3.87	4.27	5.07
STD	1.658	1.586	1.627	1.309	1.281
N	197	237	214	213	190

Note: 1 = totally disagree. 6 = totally agree. Mean difference is significant at the .05 level 2005-2007; 2007-2011; 2011-2013. Between groups of executives the mean differences are not significant at the .05 level.

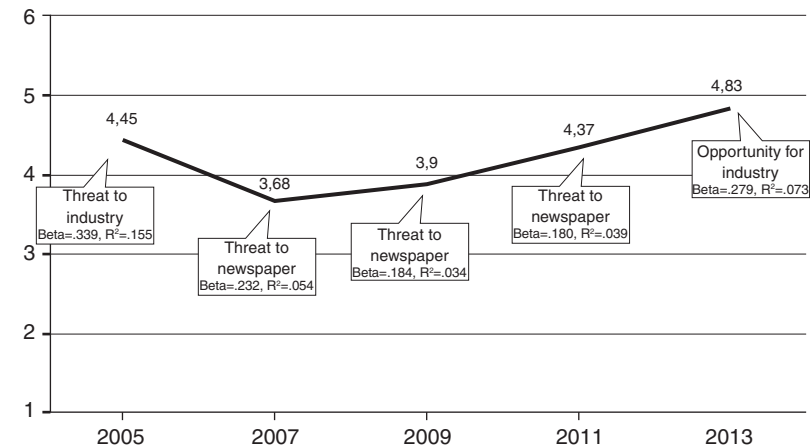
tions have been identified as the most important in all the five surveys, and they have increased in importance over time (Table 8).

Table 9 reveals a high turnover in the executive ranks. The mean differences based on number of years in current position and the questions presented in Table 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are not significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

The findings of this longitudinal approach indicate a high degree of stability in the perception of opportunities and threats (Figure 1, Table 2, 3, 4, and 5). The original survey revealed that Norwegian newspapers' executives did not approve fully of their own organizations' online activities. This has been a stable state of mind during these

Figure 2. Online Newspapers Should Charge Their Users. Linear regression. Stepwise



Note: 1 = totally disagree. 6 = totally agree.

Table 8. Functions of the Newspaper's Online Edition? ¹⁴ Valid Percent

	2005		2007		2009		2011		2013	
	**	*	**	*	**	*	**	*	**	*
Part of multi- channel strategy	79	34	81	34	81	32	77	36	75	39
Marketing print paper	71	14	68	16	61	10	51	7	42	8
Defending market position	69	28	70	25	77	29	71	36	67	34
Image of paper/company	60	10	59	6	56	10	43	4	41	3
Reusing content from paper	55	5	55	3	41	3	37	5	40	4
New revenue sources	47	5	59	12	55	10	55	10	61	9
Exploring opportunities	37	3	44	4	41	5	39	3	36	2

Note: **. What are the Functions of the Newspaper's Online Edition? Multiple answers permitted. *. Which Function Is the Most Important to the Online Edition? Single answer. The question was obligatory since 2007; hence valid per cent is used for comparison.

Table 9. Number of Years in Current Executive Position, 2013. Percent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 2 years	36	17.0	18.8	19.3
2-5 years	43	20.3	22.4	41.7
5-10 years	49	23.1	25.5	67.2
More than 10 years	63	29.7	32.8	100.0
Total	192	90.6	100.0	
Missing	20	9.4		
N	212	100.0		

Note: Question: How long have you had this position?

years (Table 6). It is not changed by the fact that about half the executives have been replaced since the first survey (Table 9).

Newspaper executives tend to be recruited from within the industry, and shared assumptions within the newspaper culture might be a factor at play. This indicates similarities with top managers in the *defender* type of organization, who are “highly expert in their organization’s limited area of operations, but do not tend to search outside their domain for new opportunities”, according to Miles and Snow (2003:29). “As a result of this narrow focus, these organizations seldom make major adjustments in their technology, structure or methods of operation. Instead, they devote primary attention to improving the efficiency of their existing operations” (ibid.).

The trend of new and old media integration might support such a hypothesis, as the main focus has been on benefits of the scale and scope of the joint news production. In the 2005 analysis, the finding that the top executives at the largest newspapers were more satisfied with their online ventures was linked to their structural moves to develop an *analyzer* approach at the larger organizations:

The [*analyzer*] approach was realized by establishing separate daughter or sister companies to run and develop new media activities. At the turn of the century, some of these new companies had ambitions to go in the direction of *prospectors*, but despite several attempts, it turned out to be the related online newspaper concept that received attention. In this sense, these companies also represent the mere partial establishment of an *analyzer* position for the activities of the media house (Krumsvik 2006).

However, the trend has turned in the opposite direction towards an integrated *defender* with a main focus on efficiency. Furthermore this has not affected general satisfaction with the online activities. The five stable variables do not have any significant means difference based on size of the newspaper or the role of executives.

The apparent detachment of key variables normally determining strategy and structural choices of newspapers (from traditional *defenders* to separated *analyzers* with ambitions of developing online *prospectors*, and returning to integrating *defenders*) might indicate the lack of a consistent strategy-structure relationship associated with the *reactor* type of strategy. These reactors “seldom makes adjustments of any sort until forced to do so by environmental pressures”, according to Miles and Snow (2003:29). Trendsetters like The New York Times, Aftonbladet, and Dagbladet, as well as dot com optimism and financial crises, seem to have influenced structural choices more than the general view on opportunities and threats.

There are, however, two important indications of newspapers developing a stable type of strategy, such as a *defender*, rather than an unstable type of *reactor*:

The first indication is more clarity in the rationale for online publishing (Table 8). Marketing of the print edition is less important, and new sources of revenue more important. This is linked to the second observation; the focus on user payment for online news has increased (Table 7), and the rationale for this approach has matured (Figure 2): While it was driven by perceived threats from 2005 to 2011, opportunities for the industry are the strongest predictor in 2013.

However, it might be alarming that key factors (i.e. opportunity for own newspaper, content with own newspapers, and user payment) in the regression analyses are all pre-

dicted by the variable “*The Use of Internet Represents an Opportunity for the Newspaper Industry*”. This indicates that management has not succeeded in finding a balanced focus between traditional and new activities based on the specific conditions of their own operation. It seems as though newspaper executives still find it hard to respond efficiently to the insecurity created by changes in the environment.

Another strong indication of newspapers not being typical *analyzers* is the embracement of the iPad platform (Krumsvik 2012a). They were not watching their competitors closely for new ideas, “and then they rapidly adopt those ideas that appear to be most promising”, as is expected of *analyzers* (Miles and Snow 2003). This resembles the premature launch of online newspapers without any idea of a viable business model. Two decades later, the online revenues are not able to fund the business model of legacy news operations (Krumsvik 2012c).

Business development in this industry is often done at the corporate level (Krumsvik et al. 2013) or by constructing local superstructures in the form of media houses where newspaper, local radio and local television are sister activities in a strategy to keep intruders off the dominant position that local newspapers have managed to establish in the advertising market. This is enhanced by advertising networks that enable them to compete on the national and regional market as well, and if necessary by establishing free newspapers to produce, reach or prevent new startups (Krumsvik 2006). In 2013, we also see the ability to serve existing advertisers as a strong predictor of strategy.

In summary, there seems to be no support for the newspaper industry in general performing as *analyzers*, but rather as *defenders* with indications of the *reactor* type of strategy. This might lead to a situation in which the role of digital media is to serve first and foremost as distribution platforms, enabling “all inclusive” approaches that offer users access on platforms of their choice. Further research is needed to determine the strategic configuration of specific organizations.

Conclusion

The rationale for online publishing is changing. Marketing of the print edition is less important than it used to be, and new sources of revenue are more important for the Norwegian newspaper executives. Hence, the focus on user payment for online news has increased, and the rationale for this approach has matured.

However, newspapers are still struggling in their efforts to find a balanced focus between traditional and new activities. It seems as though newspaper executives find it hard to respond efficiently to the insecurity created by changes in the environment.

The defender strategy might lead to a situation in which digital platforms will be used first and foremost to distribute the newspaper. This makes it possible to focus on the core activities in a traditional newspaper house, utilizing new technology in order to be more efficient. Stability rather than change reduces fear, uncertainty and doubt in the newspaper business.

Notes

1. This article is an update of Krumsvik (2006).
2. Raymond E. Miles and Charles C. Snow initially published the book *Organizational Strategy, Structure, and Process* in 1978 through McGraw-Hill, New York. Twenty-five years later, it was republished in the series "Stanford Business Classics" by Stanford University Press.
3. TNS Gallup "Mediebarometer" 2004.
4. *Dagens Næringsliv* 11. September 2004: "Nett vest".

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Strong and Weak Forms of Mediatization Theory

A Critical Review

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Abstract

During recent years, the concept of mediatization has made a strong impact on media and communication studies, and its advocates have attempted to turn it into a refined and central theoretical framework for media research. The present article distinguishes two forms of mediatization theory: a strong form based on the assumption that a ‘media logic’ increasingly determines the actions of different social institutions and groups, and a weak form that questions such a logic, though the latter form emphasizes the key role of the media in social change and singles out mediatization as a central ‘meta-process’ today. Exponents of the weak form have convincingly criticized the notion of media logic. However, the weaker version of mediatization is itself problematic, as its advocates have failed to produce a clear explanatory framework around the concept. We argue that, although the analytical status of mediatization is unclear, fascination with the concept will, in all probability, continue in the years to come, due to the promises of heightened disciplinary coherence and status that this notion has conveyed for media and communication studies.

Keywords: media logic, media studies, theory, critique, disciplinary identity, research funding

Introduction

‘Mediatization’ has become a distinctive problematic in media research during recent years, with numerous conferences, seminar groups, books, articles and case studies devoted to the subject. Although mediatization was used sporadically in different forms and contexts in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., Asp 1986; Thompson 1995; Somerville 1997; Mazzoleni and Schultz 1999), today it has been named a “key concept” (Lundby 2009) through which media researchers try to understand the importance of media to society and culture. According to Adolf (2011: 155), “the notion of mediatization has recently become part of a high-profile, international exchange”. The term has been particularly popular in the Nordic countries, Germany and Central Europe. In the English-speaking world, this somewhat “clumsy neologism” (Livingstone 2009: 6) has also aroused considerable interest, although there have been discussions on whether ‘mediation’ should be used instead of mediatization (e.g., Silverstone 2005). However, mediatization has come to be increasingly accepted. Couldry, who was originally skeptical of the concept and preferred “mediation” (Couldry 2008), now argues that “in an internationalizing field linguistic convenience must be considered at the global level” and

“there is a clear advantage in agreeing on a more distinctive term”, i.e., mediatization (Couldry 2012: 134).

The scope of mediatization has increased considerably over the years. At its inception, the concept targeted specific processes, especially the mediatization of politics. Indeed, mediatization is perhaps most commonly used to describe the transformation of politics and political communication: It is argued not only that the media have taken on a larger role in the opinion-building process, but also that the media have become the most important arena for politics.

At the end of the 1970s, Altheide and Snow argued that “political life is being recast to fit the demands of major media” (1979: 136) and is, thus, becoming “an extension of media production” (ibid.: 146). Swedish political scientist Kent Asp argued in the mid-1980s that “the political actors have, to a great extent, adapted to the requirements which the mass media place on their coverage of the political world. This tendency to adaptation is called ‘the medialisation of politics’” (Asp 1986: 380). Among the examples of this tendency Asp gave were the personification, simplification and polarization of conflicts. Politicians, in their willingness to adapt to the supposed needs of the mass media and their audiences, have become actors on the stage of politics. Asp did not develop his theory further, and he exaggerated the transformation of politics. Theatrical elements are not an innovation of the modern mass media; these elements have been part of politics for a very long time.

According to Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999: 250), “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”. Compared to the neutral term ‘mediation’, ‘mediatization’ thus implies that the mass media themselves are becoming *a* or perhaps *the* main political institution. However, the relations between politics and the media may be much more complex than this, as was already pointed out by Mazzoleni and Schultz (ibid.: 258-260). Whereas much of the discussion on mediatization and politics has focused on the increasing autonomy and institutional power of the media (e.g., Hjarvard 2008), Reunanen et al. (2010), for instance, have outlined a more nuanced approach of mediatization for empirical analysis, focusing on the interplay between media and politics at the microsocial level. They argue that the study of the mediatization of politics should take into account the particular political culture in which the interaction between decision-makers and the media takes place.

Observations concerning the entanglement of politics and media resonate with current discussions of mediatization. However, instead of focusing on the relationship between politics and media, many media researchers today use the concept to refer to a much more general process of social change. Mediatization has become an ambitious umbrella concept that targets the society and culture as a whole: “In general, the concept of mediatization tries to capture long-term processes of the interrelation between media change on the one hand and social and cultural change on the other” (Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby 2010: 223). Not all advocates of mediatization assume that the media constitute the dominant center of the social and cultural world (see e.g., Krotz 2007). But they agree that the media have become increasingly important or even decisive for all social and cultural spheres and institutions (e.g., Krotz 2009: 24; Hjarvard 2008: 105; Hepp 2009: 141). Indeed, some mediatization theorists argue that mediatization should be understood as a “meta-process” (Krotz 2007) “on par with other major societal change

processes such as modernization, individualization and globalization” (Strömbäck and Esser 2009: 208). In other words, advocates of mediatization challenge social scientists and theorists to acknowledge the centrality of media-based developments for analyzing social change. In some formulations, the concept even refers to a “new social condition” in which the “media increasingly transgress the whole culture and society” so that “everything gets mediated” (Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby 2010: 224).

At a descriptive level, it is tempting to subscribe to the idea of mediatization. Different means of communication have become more omnipresent in advanced industrial countries. The emergence of the Internet and various social media has made producing and circulating media content relatively easy. The technological possibilities offered by different media are more diverse than before. The media are more mobile than ever, an organic part of everyday life for more and more people, and may affect such highly specialized activities as communicating science and technology (Väliverronen 2001). However, beyond recognizing such ordinary features that give much *prima facie* credibility to the existence of a general mediatization process, the exact theoretical-analytical status of the notion remains unclear. The question of whether mediatization has already become a paradigm that offers its representatives a theoretical problematic or a set of presuppositions, questions and interpretations can be raised. Although mediatization has attracted considerable interest, there is no unified understanding of the concept even by its advocates.

Sensing such difficulties that threaten to undermine the usefulness of mediatization, several scholars have attempted to give it a more precise analytical status. First, although the advocates of mediatization understand it as a concept that offers a ‘key’ to making sense of social and cultural changes, researchers differ regarding how much importance and autonomy they give to the media as technologies and institutions that explain such changes. On one end are researchers who propose that the power of the media over other institutions has increased, to the extent that the latter have lost their ‘autonomy’ and succumbed to a ‘media logic’ (Hjarvard 2008). At the other end are those for whom the process of mediatization is itself strongly mediated by other processes (e.g., individualization, globalization and commercialization) and social and cultural contexts (Krotz 2007; 2009). Second, the advocates of mediatization have attempted to define different levels of mediatization, for example, by discussing its quantitative and qualitative aspects (Hepp 2009: 142-144) or by breaking down the process of mediatization into more specific analytical dimensions (Schultz 2004). All of these efforts have aimed at making the concept more operational, capable of informing empirical case studies of how mediatization takes place in different contexts. Thus, mediatization advocates are not merely using the concept as a loose descriptive category; they have also attempted to turn mediatization into a more fully developed theoretical program that helps different media researchers organize their work and report their results.

The present article takes a critical look at the advocacy of mediatization as a key concept in media research. What kind of problematic does mediatization offer, and why does it matter? The central question in our article is whether mediatization should be understood mainly as a descriptive term or as an analytical concept. Furthermore, if mediatization is understood as an analytical concept, does it have significance for media studies in terms of discipline status and identity? Does mediatization signify the emergence of a new paradigm and a sense of increasing independence for media studies

as a whole? We will discuss two forms of mediatization theory – strong and weak – by reviewing the work of what we believe are their main representatives. These different forms of mediatization theory suggest that the approach is far from coherent. As we will point out, strong forms of mediatization have been convincingly criticized by those who have argued for a weaker theory of mediatization. Yet the ways in which this weaker form is developed and substantiated raises major doubts concerning the claim that mediatization offers “a concept with which to grasp media and societal change” (Krotz 2009).

‘Media Logic’: The Strong Form

The starting point for a strong version of mediatization theory is the argument that contemporary societies have become “permeated by the media” (Hjarvard 2008: 105) and that the media have become “part of the very fabric of culture”, so much so that they can no longer be conceptualized as being “outside society exerting a specific influence or effect on culture and therefore of individuals” (Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby 2010: 223). This constitutes a “new social condition” (ibid.: 224) that Hjarvard (2008) has called “the mediatization of society”. The concept he uses to capture the centrality of the media in social and cultural terms is ‘media logic’. This concept is derived from the work of Altheide and Snow, according to whose “elusive” (Strömbäck and Dimitrova 2011: 33) definition

media logic consists of a form of communication; the process through which media present and transmit information. Elements of this form include the various media and the formats used by these media. Format consists, in part, of how material is organized, the style in which it is presented, the focus or emphasis on particular characteristics of behaviour, and the grammar of media communication. Format becomes a framework or a perspective that is used to present as well as interpret phenomena (Altheide and Snow 1979: 10).

Recently, Altheide (2013: 225) has noted that new information technologies have “expanded and complicated the emergence of new mediated forms”. Nonetheless, he argues that there is still “a basic underlying conceptual logic” regardless of this new variety, and thus, what is needed today are merely some “conceptual refinements to the comprehensive theory of media logic” (ibid.: 223, 225).

Whereas Altheide (2013: 226) focuses on formats (“drama”, “visualization”, “narrative forms”, etc.) that direct symbolic production, Hjarvard emphasizes “the institutional and technological modus operandi of the media” (Hjarvard 2008: 113) and how it exerts increasing pressure on other social and cultural institutions. Thus, those other social institutions, such as politics, “have become increasingly dependent on the media and have had to adapt to the logic of the media” (ibid.). The same argument is made by Schultz (2004: 89), who notes that politicians and political parties need to “accommodate” to “the ‘media logic’ of television, i.e., its production routines and presentation formats”. Strömbäck and Esser (2009: 206-207) point out that political debates have been changed “to suit the demands of the media”, e.g., according to what is considered “newsworthy” by the media, “rather than the demands of the contenders or the electorate”. People have started to experience politics through the media, so that people perceive “debates as the media shaped them”. The televised presidential debates between John F. Kennedy and

Richard Nixon in 1960 form an important historical reference point for this argument, which later found more support from the analysis of the behavior of leading Western politicians such as Silvio Berlusconi and Tony Blair. All in all, politics is no longer only mediated but “increasingly mediatized” (ibid.: 207). Politics is just one example among comparable trends in sports, religion, entertainment, science, identity construction, consumption, etc. (Schultz 2004: 89; Lundby 2009: 7).

In the strong mediatization theory, the process is strictly linear. Strömbäck and Esser (2009: 216) claim that media content is no longer dictated by “political logic” but by “media logic” that compels political actors from above, so to speak. Thus, we have witnessed, in advanced “post-industrial” countries at least, a tremendous increase in “media influence” (ibid.: 208). Schrott (2009: 47) supports this claim by arguing that “actors” (of whatever sort) “are under pressure to conform to media logic, because they causally attribute power to the mass media to define and interpret socially binding reality”. This argument then leads to a claim according to which the media have, over time, become more independent or autonomous in relation to other institutions, and more powerful at the same time. The media here refers not to specific formats or outlets but to an entire system of “production, broadcasting, circulation, and dissemination of symbols, signs, messages, meanings and values” (Strömbäck and Esser 2009: 209).

According to Hjarvard’s (2008) historical account, the development of media logic and media autonomy becomes evident when set against a sociological analysis of modernization. From the perspective of a fairly standard liberal-functionalist analysis, he writes about modernization as increasing differentiation, namely, the emergence of institutions that have separate functions in different social and cultural spheres. As for the functional differentiation of the media, in the early modern era, magazines and newspapers established the foundation for the political public sphere, while the entertainment media served cultural functions. However, “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*”, especially political parties (ibid.: 117). With the development of public broadcasting and mainstream newspapers, the situation started to change, and the media “became cultural institutions, appealing to all and offering something for everyone” (ibid.: 118). This was strengthened by the gradual professionalization of journalism, which translates into “an adversarial stance vis-à-vis political and commercial interests” (ibid.). For Hjarvard, later structural developments, such as the end of public service monopolies and the deregulation and commercialization of the media from the 1980s onward, are signs of a new autonomy and independence of the media, in the sense that the media started to focus more intensively to their “receivers”: “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” (ibid.: 119). Interestingly, however, according to Hjarvard, the increasing market orientation of the media is not a sign of decreasing media influence or ‘media logic’. He claims that “internalized” professionalism still guarantees that the media are independent of other institutions, and more so today. Thus, “In sum, the media interact with all other social institutions, but from a position of greater autonomy than a pure market orientation would dictate” (ibid.).

The argument (Hjarvard 2008: 120) that the increasing market orientation of the media goes hand in hand with increasing media autonomy and independency is precarious, to say the least. This problem is partly admitted by Hjarvard (*ibid.*: 126) when he writes that “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” (see also Altheide 2013: 225 for similar ad hoc caveats). At another point, Hjarvard (2008: 106) notes that 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”. Yet such contradictions do not seem to undermine confidence in the overall “mediatization of society”, which is about “the constitution of a shared experiential world, a world regulated by a media logic” (*ibid.*: 129). For Hjarvard (*ibid.*: 132), this is further strengthened via the observation that while classic sociologists (Weber, Marx, Durkheim and Simmel) disregarded, for historical reasons, the importance of (mass) media, recent generations of sociologists have become aware of it, and for good reason: “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” (*ibid.*: 133).

The confident claims of Hjarvard (together with Altheide and Snow, Schultz, Schrott, Strömbäck and Esser) regarding the dominance of ‘media logic’ have been questioned by other media scholars, who in other respects subscribe to mediatization. Krotz (2009: 26) considers the concept of media logic “misleading”, as there is no uniform media logic independent of different media technologies (e.g., the logic of television differs from the logic of mobile phones), and technological logics also depend on cultural and social contexts. Lundby (2009: 116) concurs by arguing that “to understand mediatization through a general media logic becomes impossible”, as “one has to take into account the specificities of digital media”. For Hepp, the problem with “media logic” is that it adopts a “linear view”; transformations of the media must be understood through more “complex approaches” that allow for investigating “the mediatization of certain cultural fields carefully in detail”, instead of assuming “a single linear media logic” (Hepp 2009: 140). Couldry offers similar critiques of ‘media logic’. Summarizing his thoughts, he writes that the problem with this version of the mediatization argument is that it assumes that societies are easy prey for the power and logic of the media that are supposed to be “working seamlessly across every part of the social space” (Couldry 2012: 136). The position is at odds with “a number of influential sociological approaches” that see “the social” not as unitary but as “differentiated into multiple fields of competition” where no single logic can be overriding (*ibid.*).

Mediatization as a ‘Meta-Process’: The Weak Form

If these are the problems associated with the strong version of the mediatization theory, what are the proposed solutions? In general, the critiques presented have resulted in more moderate formulations of mediatization that emphasize the contexts or ‘fields’ in which the process can be observed and analyzed. These formulations can be called the weak form of the mediatization theory, as its advocates try to de-center the media

or, indeed, any uniform ‘media logic’, and see mediatization in relation to other major social and cultural processes.

Hepp (2009: 143-144) begins his discussion of mediatization by outlining the notion of the “moulding-forces” of the media. These refer to different media technologies, each of which have different qualities that condition the way in which these media are used and what type of interaction they support. This view has obvious associations with medium theory (especially Marshall McLuhan’s and Joshua Meyrowitz’s work) and its idea of how each medium has different effects on the society and culture. Thus, for instance, according to Meyrowitz (1985: 308), the main effect of electronic media (radio, television) is that they have “combined previously distinct social settings” by bringing down the social walls that separate people, by blurring what is private and what is public. Although Hepp bases his argument on the same perspective, he (2009: 144) is quick to point out that such “specificities of different media are produced in human acting”, and “we have to look in detail how the ‘moulding forces’ of different media become concrete along [...] various dimensions and in different cultural fields”.

For Hepp, mediatization is not an overriding social and cultural process, but must be related to three other major social and cultural processes or dimensions, namely, individualization (the requirement placed on individuals to form their identity more reflexively, without the strong guidance of tradition, class or other collective attachments), deterritorialization (the decoupling of culture from its former physical or territorial settings) and the coming of intermediacy (a “culture of instantaneity” or of “telepresence”, due to new digital media such as mobile phones; see Tomlinson 2007, who himself uses the concept of ‘immediacy’ in this context instead of ‘intermediacy’). Whatever broad cultural and social effects the increasingly “ubiquitous” media have on whatever context field we are investigating (certain religious events, in the case of Hepp), these effects must be set against the three social, spatial and temporal processes that these media also influence in a dialectical fashion (Hepp 2009: 146-154). Thus, there are no “general assumptions”, only “media-related changes *across* various context fields” (ibid.: 154). The main theoretical point that can be derived from Hepp’s analysis is that “territorial mass media communication space” is no longer an adequate frame of reference. Instead, we have to understand media cultures as globally complex deterritorialized spaces. This argument offers a media research variant of Beck’s (2007) critique of “methodological nationalism” and, more broadly, shares the basic assumptions of cultural globalization theory (see Ampuja 2012: 260-290).

A similar multidimensional outline of mediatization is offered by Krotz (2007; 2009). According to him, mediatization is a meta-process, together with globalization, individualization and commercialization. These concepts, similar to enlightenment and industrialization, “influence democracy and society, culture, politics and other conditions of life over the longer term” (Krotz 2007: 257). Mediatization is not principally more important than the other processes, which have their own logics (ibid.: 259). However, it represents the increasing importance of media-related changes and the cumulative differentiation of “media environments” over time: “mediatization changes human communication by offering new possibilities of communication” (ibid.: 259) so that “media in the long run increasingly become relevant for the social construction of everyday life, society, and culture as a whole” (Krotz 2009: 24). Couldry (2012: 137) agrees with Krotz’s approach to mediatization and sees that though the media are “an irreducible

dimension of all social processes”, mediatization does not refer to “any single logic” and thus allows the analysis of how mediatization operates in different social fields, whose specificities and own logics must also be acknowledged.

The different representatives of the weak form of the mediatization theory share common elements. All representatives see mediatization as a concept that signals a historical transformation in how the media have become more important for the workings of different social and cultural spheres or fields. All conceptualize mediatization as an overarching process that is, however, just one historical “meta-process” among others of comparable status. All integrate ideas from medium theory (the “moulding forces” of media, in Hepp’s terms), but in a more or less qualified form. And all share the assumption that social and cultural change is a complex affair, manifesting tendencies and processes that have their own specificities and multiple logics. An eye-catching feature in this respect is also their common adherence to Bourdieu’s theory of fields, capitals and competition that lead to the treatment of media as “meta-capital” that is important in the struggles for power and prestige in different social and cultural fields (Couldry 2012: 139ff.; Hepp 2009: 149; Krotz 2009: 33-35).

On the face of it, the weak form of the mediatization theory seems to have avoided overly simplistic assumptions about the power and centrality of the media in contemporary societies; in this sense, the weak form seems stronger than the strong one. However, counterarguments may be raised against the former as well. We feel that although mediatization has appeared as an interesting new topic for media research, accompanied by promises to integrate media and social theory, it has been discussed mostly by its advocates and thus has not been subjected to proper critical treatment. The following points are meant to problematize further some of the key presuppositions behind current conceptions of mediatization.

First, how should ‘mediatization’ be understood as a historical phenomenon? Here the conceptions vary drastically. Sociologist John B. Thompson’s (1995) work concerning the importance of media for the rise of modernity was a precursor to more recent mediatization discussions where it has often been referenced. Thompson operated with the following concept of ‘mediatization’:

By virtue of a series of technical innovations associated with printing and, subsequently, with the electrical codification of information, symbolic forms were produced, reproduced, and circulated on a scale that was unprecedented. Patterns of communication and interaction began to change in profound and irreversible ways. These changes, which comprise what can loosely be called the ‘mediatization of culture’, had a clear institutional basis: namely, the development of media organizations, which first appeared in the second half of the fifteenth century and have expanded their activities ever since (Thompson 1995: 45).

Krotz widens the time scale even more. According to him (2009: 24-26), mediatization is a “long-term process” as it relates to “communication as the basic practice of how people construct the social and cultural world”, thus stretching far back in human history, though mediatization also registers a “process of differentiation” where “more and more media emerge and are institutionalized”. In the same way, for Bruhn Jensen (2013: 214), mediatization “can be conceptualized as a constitutive component and a necessary condition of social structuration throughout the history of human communication and

media technologies” including “face-to-face communication in [...] oral cultures”. At the other end of the time scale, Hjarvard (2008: 108) sides with those who are “using the concept to describe the media’s influence over areas like politics, consumer culture or science”, i.e., for him “mediatisation is no universal process that characterises 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*” (ibid.: 113).

Confronted with these utterly differing views, Couldry (2012: 137) has reacted in an understandable but hardly intellectually satisfying way: He does not find this question particularly important and wants to “leave to one side the debate about whether mediatization can be traced back to medieval times or before, or is best understood exclusively as a modern phenomenon”.

Second, for Couldry it is important that “through the concept of mediatization, we acknowledge media as an irreducible dimension of all social processes” (ibid.). This, of course, raises and actually seems to give an all-inclusive answer to the question he did not want to pose: To which societies is he referring with mediatization? Indeed, this question goes back to what is meant by ‘media’ in the mediatization discourses, in the first place, which is far from clear. It seems that in its current use, the concept of media functions as a ‘meta-concept’ or, to be more precise, a conceptual displacement for means of communication and the communicative relations that structure it. It thus allows ‘communication’ to return to its previous wider meaning, while it isolates and valorizes the particular instrumentalist sense that had been ascribed to communication in the form of a regulated system of transmission. In fact, there can be no communication without corresponding ‘media’ that constitute its ‘material or social form’, just as there can be no society or culture without communication. Thus, when investigated rigorously and coherently, ‘media’ turns out to be a concept historically just as broad as that of communication. Potentially, ‘media’ can include a range of practices and institutions not limited to the transmission of ‘information’, ‘meanings’ or ‘codes’; in other words, it can include such generalities as language (conceived of as a medium for creating human community), writing or even money (conceived of as the concrete medium for establishing a relationship of exchange of values). As in the case of an ‘instrumentalist’ or ‘technical’ – or ‘hermeneutic’ – concept of communication, the current widespread notions of ‘media’ or ‘mediatization’ usually end up obscuring precisely that which they should have clarified, namely, the reality of social practices and their articulations, which underlie the various institutional forms assumed in concrete historical conjunctures.

Third, how should the relationship between mediatization and other “meta-processes” (individualization, globalization, commercialization) be understood? Krotz (2007: 259) writes that “there are complex relations between these four metaprocesses” and “each metaprocess has its own logic of how it develops, but in a capitalistic world all such metaprocesses depend on the economic dimension”, so that “commercialization is the basic process providing the stimulus to all action”. These propositions are very vague and partly contradictory, and the problems associated with such theoretical formulations are not adequately discussed by advocates of mediatization. In general, they aim for a ‘multicausal’ explanation of social and cultural change, in order to avoid positions that are too reductionist. However, through such an eclectic synthesis of different processes

whose relation to each other is not discussed further, it is unclear how much explanatory power the concept of mediatization and its reference to media-related tendencies, whether institutional, technological or cultural, ultimately can have. How, for example, should the simultaneous tendencies toward mediatization and commercialization (or individualization and globalization) be theoretically understood? Are they merely “things spinning around other things”, as Billig (2013: 122) acerbically puts it? Mediatization is definitely an evocative concept, but due to the ways in which its relation to other ‘metaprocesses’ is discussed, its theoretical status remains nebulous. The challenge is that “*any* theory which has interesting and bold things to say about social structure and social change” needs to “identify central concepts to ‘pick out’ purported key mechanisms and forces within a complex whole” (McLennan 1996: 66-67). If the key theoretical concepts are in a loose relation to each other, as in the weak form of the mediatization theory, then one runs the risk of providing loose descriptions of social and cultural change, rather than theoretically coherent analyses or explanations.

Fourth, there is much wavering, in the weak form, concerning the question of what kind of explanatory standing mediatization is supposed to have. What, for example, does a ‘metaprocess’ in the end refer to, analytically speaking? Krotz (2007: 257) writes that metaprocesses are “constructs which describe and explain theoretically specific economic, social and cultural dimensions and levels of the actual change”. Hepp (2009: 140), for his part, considers mediatization loosely as “a frame for researching the relation between media and cultural change”.

The problem is that if mediatization is indeed meant to “explain [...] levels of actual change”, then the concept cannot be merely descriptive, as an explanatory concept would need to signify some causality of its own. However, this is precluded quite explicitly by Krotz and Hepp for whom mediatization itself is strongly conditioned by other social and cultural forces and contexts. In this respect, the way in which the concept is theorized in the weak mediatization argument is quite similar to academic discussions over the concept of globalization (see Rosenberg 2005: 11-15). That is, efforts to elevate the theoretical and analytical status of the concept of mediatization are so heavily qualified that it becomes doubtful whether a “clear argument could emerge at all” (ibid.: 2005: 14). Hepp (2009: 154) writes symptomatically at the end of his argument that “in the best case, mediatization is no more than a concept to link [...] different detailed studies to a more general analysis of media power within cultural change”. Thus, it seems that whatever forces have thus far been gathered to formulate a “mediatization theory” (ibid.: 140), no such theory actually exists. In other words, mediatization remains a descriptive concept identifying “the process of increasing spreading of technical communication media in different social and cultural spheres” (ibid.: 141). As such, of course, this process can be approached from various theoretical perspectives, which bear no necessary relation to the idea that the media have any independent power (technological or otherwise) to cause and explain that spreading. Consequently, Krotz (and to some extent Hepp) links the “mediatization approach” to various existing theories (e.g. provided by Jürgen Habermas, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias), so much so that it begins to lose whatever autonomy it is supposed to have as a *specific* approach in media theory and research.

Conclusion:

Significance of ‘Mediatization’ for the Disciplinary Identity

The analytical meaning and status of the often-evoked term ‘mediatization’ remain unclear. However, despite their considerable theoretical differences, the representatives of the strong and weak form of mediatization theory have formed an academically successful and growing venture in terms of publications and conferences. The discourse on mediatization invoked by them will, in all probability, continue to blossom in the coming years because the term seems to have strategic importance for media research. Typically, advocates of mediatization suggest that the media are at the core of social change. Such ideas, potentially at least, increase the importance of media research in the social sciences and social theory at large. In any case, the discourse on mediatization represents an effort that has few historic parallels in media and communication research, as broad social-theoretical concepts are usually developed, for example, by sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists.

Historically, media research has been combined with many other disciplines (e.g., political science, economics, literature, philosophy, social psychology, anthropology and sociology), to such an extent that it has lacked “any clearly defined disciplinary boundaries” and is thus often conceived of more loosely as a “field” (Koivisto and Thomas 2010: 28). Continuous attempts have been made to establish the ‘field’ as a ‘discipline’ with its own objects of research, methodology and protocols distinct from those of other social and human sciences. However, these have all run up against the real empirical variety and multiplicity of approaches and perspectives used in research projects. The past decades have witnessed a sharp growth in media research at universities, but this success has been accompanied by concerns that it still lacks clarity and a distinctive character (ibid.: 13-46). The “eventual emergence of ‘mediatization’ as an integrative concept in the late 2000s” (Couldry and Hepp 2013: 192) promises a new coherence for media studies and “may help us continue the development of our field into a discipline” (Hjarvard 2012: 33). Indeed, as Bruhn Jensen (2013: 218) notes, “it is remarkable how many researchers with distinct theoretical backgrounds and focal interests have converged on the notion of mediatization over the last decade”. This notion seems to offer a way of discussing different aspects of media change in the aggregate, thus offering a vehicle for unifying the different debates within the field. According to Krotz (2007: 256), “worldwide academic communication research needs a common conceptual framework within which to integrate and disseminate this knowledge”. For him, mediatization is the most important ingredient of such a framework. Likewise, for Couldry and Hepp (2013: 191), a “fully institutionalized field of communications research has a pressing need for common terms that can orientate researchers from many countries and geolinguistic regions toward shared problems and areas of inquiry”. Livingstone (2009) puts forward an even more expansionist idea in her discussion of the importance of the concepts of mediation and mediatization for the recent disciplinary development of the field, noting that “we appear to have ambitions in media and communication not only to defend our terrain but also to expand it into those traditionally held by other disciplines” (Livingstone 2009: 3).

Whereas the theoretical impact of ‘mediatization’, as well as its potential to evolve into a strong paradigm or research program, “remains uncertain”, this does not mean this “commonsensical characterization of contemporary society and culture” (Bruhn Jensen

2013: 218) would be an uninteresting or unimportant topic. For one thing, in the struggles over funding and resources ‘mediatization’, with its depoliticizing technological and media-centric overtones, can indeed be useful (similar to proven vehicles such as ‘information society’, ‘knowledge society’ or ‘network society’), though this distracts attention away from contested social relations and their articulations with technological developments that require more comprehensive and less discipline-oriented approaches. Second, research associated with mediatization has, when at its best, produced interesting observations about the ways in which different institutions and social groups increasingly perceive the media as crucial to their activities. For example, politicians and their aides are spending more time considering the ways in which they and their policies are presented in the media and how their media strategies could be improved. However, established political organizations still control political processes in many ways, although they have to adapt to the agendas, timings, formats and vocabularies developed by the media. If political organizations understand how the media operate, they can use this knowledge in their pursuit of political power. Furthermore, political power struggles are overdetermined not only by political institutions and the media but also other institutions and discourses.

A theory of ‘media logic’ or the enthusiastic promotion of ‘mediatization’ as a grand concept in the social sciences ends up in a much too simplistic and analytically unsatisfactory perspective. As Billig (2013: 114) points out, media researchers have invested a great deal in ‘mediatization’ “as a brand label for an approach” without giving due consideration to what the concept “cannot do”. The ultimate media-centrism of both the strong and weak forms of mediatization theory prevents their advocates from clarifying theoretically the role of media as agents vis-à-vis other powerful social, political and economic practices and institutions, the complex relations and articulations of which do not necessarily testify to the increasing power of the media in the current historical conjuncture.

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Talking Green in the Public Sphere

Press Releases, Corporate Voices and the Environment

Alon Lischinsky & Annika Egan Sjölander

Abstract

In a climate of growing public concern and monitoring of business's impact on the environment, corporations and industry groups have developed increasingly sophisticated strategies to manage their environmental reputation and to influence the outcome of environmental debates in the public sphere. In this article, we provide an exploratory overview of how the largest Swedish corporations selectively subsidise environmental news-making by supplying it with promotional materials disguised as journalistic copy. We analyse a year's worth of public relations output from the largest 15 companies traded in the Stockholm exchange or owned by the Swedish state, in order to shed light on the environmental themes they cover, the techniques they adopt to maximise the likelihood of media coverage and the evidence they provide to support their claims. Our analysis shows that corporate voices make substantial use of environmental and ecological arguments in their strategic communication, but they provide little useful information about the company's impact and do not usually foster forms of dialogic stakeholder engagement.

Keywords: corporate discourse, corporate social responsibility, environment, press releases, public relations, sustainability

Introduction

Over the last quarter of the 20th century, a number of anthropogenic environmental catastrophes have raised widespread public concern about the effects of business and industrial activities on the long-term balance of the natural environment (Cho and Roberts 2010). Driven by heightened public scrutiny and sustained opposition from environmental interest groups, companies have developed sophisticated strategies to provide information and assessment of their environmental performance (Lehtimäki, Kujala and Heikkinen 2011). Corporate reports increasingly complement their financial disclosures with sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility sections that report on social and environmental metrics.

However, both journalists and the public tend to regard these disclosures as self-serving and biased, and their impact on public perceptions of the company is seldom significant (Bell 1991: 58; DeLorme and Fedler 2003: 99). In order to successfully project an organisational identity committed to environmental preservation and sustainable development (Lischinsky 2011), companies resort to a variety of more indirect strategies, from environmentally-themed advertising to external certification and sponsorship of environmental causes (Hansen and Machin 2008; Cox 2006).

To lend them credibility and impact, environmental claims can be circulated through a seemingly independent source (Kolk 2008; Hansen 2010: 70). Business corporations and industry groups have the economic resources to fund public relations (PR) and news management initiatives that environmental pressure groups are not in a position to match (Hansen 2010: 73; 2011). Media organisations, faced with radical cuts of newsroom resources (Franklin 2008; Nygren 2008), are increasingly dependent on the ‘information subsidy’ that comes from PR sources in the form of press releases.

Companies influence the tone and focus of the news-making process by providing newsrooms with promotional copy disguised to resemble journalistic writing (Jacobs et al. 2008). Particularly in special interest beats such as environmental news, which seldom have a specialist reporter assigned, press releases are often simply republished as news (Erjavec 2004; Pander Maat 2007). We argue that, under these conditions, there is a great risk that public communication about the commons is harnessed to the strategic pursuit of private interests: environmental problems arising from the exploitation of natural resources affecting generations to come are subordinated to the short-term financial interests of business.

Earlier research on the communication strategies of sources and on source-journalist relationships has shown that successful claims-making is strongly linked to economic and organizational resources and political power. As ‘communicative ‘power’ in society is deeply unequally distributed’ (Hansen 2011: 20), studies in environmental communication need to take the ideological nature of public communication as their point of departure. In this paper, our purpose is to analyse how the largest Swedish corporations subsidise the news-making process via press releases in order to influence public understanding of their behaviour and environmental impact. We examine these corporations’ environmentally themed press releases over a period of a year, providing a systematic description of the environmental themes they cover, the techniques corporations adopt to maximise the likelihood of media coverage and the evidence they provide to support their claims.

The following section presents a brief overview of prior research, focusing on the expanding role of press releases and other PR techniques in the corporate management of debates in the public sphere. Section 3 describes the materials, methods and software applications employed in the analysis. In Section 4, we present the main results and discuss the different topics and tactics used by corporations in these press releases with the goal of influencing policy and public opinion. We conclude by discussing the implications of these strategies for genuine organisation-stakeholder engagement on environmental issues.

Prior Research

Environmental Issues and Corporate Discourse

Many scholars have noted the particular difficulties that environmental problems face in becoming part of public debates (Djerf-Pierre 1996; Anderson 1997; Hansen 2011). Climate change, resource depletion or biodiversity loss may have pervasive and long-lasting effects, but they lack the suddenness, unexpectedness and unambiguity that makes public attention coalesce around an issue. The development and dynamics of a social issue are shaped by the range and nature of the voices engaged in making claims about

it (Anderson 1997; Hansen 2010). Most research on the construction of environmental problems has focused on the strategies of environmental pressure groups. However, studies of media coverage show that it is public authorities, government representatives, independent scientists and business who are most frequently quoted in regard to these issues (Hansen 2010: 56-73).

The voice of business and industry has become increasingly prominent in environmental debates, although it remains under-researched. From actively confronting environmentalist organizations in the 1960s, the business world has shifted to broadly espousing environmental responsibility and publicly exhibiting its commitment to the sustainability cause (Ihlén 2009: 246). This particular view, often conceptualised as “ecological modernization” (Hajer 1995), argues that improved environmental performance by corporations leads to better reputation, increased profits and opportunities for long-term growth in a “win-win” situation (Gray and Milne 2002: 69). While initially environmental disclosures were mainly driven by the need to comply with increased regulatory requirements, the argument that explicit communication about environmental performance would provide the company with a competitive advantage led to a more proactive approach, and to the provision of a broader range of public information (Jose and Lee 2006: 308). At the same time, it led to a marked promotionalisation of corporate environmental communications.

The practice of cultivating a favourable environmental reputation without substantially addressing the underlying issues is often called “greenwashing” (Laufer 2003). Environmental claims in advertising, for example, often promote as a benefit what is no more than bare compliance with legal requirements (Peattie and Crane 2005: 363). Thus, audiences are invited to save the world by consuming “green” products, with little regard to the actual sustainability of such a consumption system (Rice *et al.* 2012; Hansen and Machin 2008). Such greenwashing strategies have met considerable criticism from activist organisations and pressure groups, and a range of campaigns seek to expose misleading environmental marketing and PR.

Environmental PR and the Media System

A way to bypass audiences’ distrust of corporate environmental claims is to attribute them to an independent source (Kolk 2008; Hansen 2010). Such methods have been employed in the climate change debate to dispute a current scientific consensus that challenges industry practices (McKie and Galloway 2007: 371; Greenberg *et al.* 2011).

Although journalists for long have been well aware of the promotional purpose of PR and organisational communication (Bell 1991: 58), and generally regard them as “unethical, manipulative, one-sided, and deceptive” (DeLorme and Fedler 2003: 99), the dynamics of news-gathering often makes them reliant on such materials. Turk (1986: 23–24) found that up to 84% of the stories disseminated by an organisation can find their way to the newspapers, and in special-interest topics press releases are often republished almost without change (Erjavec 2004; Pander Maat 2007). The environmental beat in particular seems highly permeable to such subsidies, tending to rely on low-cost, high-availability sources (Griffin and Dunwoody 1995).

The contemporary newsroom requires journalists to work across media platforms and operate on an online-first basis, increasing the range and complexity of the copy

that must be produced, and greatly reducing the time allotted for information gathering and fact-checking before publication (Franklin 2008: 635). As it would be too costly to fill this ever-widening “news hole” with original investigative journalism (Walters and Walters 1996: 167), sources that can offer media organisations an “information subsidy” in the form of publication-ready copy often get it republished as news with little alteration (Gandy Jr. 1980: 103). Promotional messages are thus passed off as objective reporting. Because of this, subsidising news-making is an important part of corporate strategies to influence the public sphere (Hansen 2010: 69).

Press releases – brief documents designed to follow the outward norms of journalistic prose and sent to the media for dissemination – are one of the main forms of this subsidy. Jacobs (1999a) showed how press releases adopt in advance the style and structure of news reporting to elicit minimal editing in the newsroom: they are written from a third-person perspective, frame future events as already past (Jacobs 1999b: 228), and follow the “inverted pyramid” informational pattern of hard news (Catenaccio 2008: 23).

Materials and Methods

This paper seeks to explore how the environmental news-making process is subsidised in the Swedish media system. Given the importance of media coverage in setting the tone and focus of public debates about the environment (Griffin and Dunwoody 1995; Hansen 1991), we examine the efforts of big business to shape the news through an analysis of the press releases issued by the 15 largest Swedish corporations in 2008–9. Our goal is to provide an exploratory overview of the kind of environmental issues and events that are presented as newsworthy by corporate public relations sources.

The corpus collected for this project comprises all press releases issued during a period of a year (from July 2008 to June 2009) by the 15 largest Swedish companies, defined as those traded in OMX, the Stockholm stock exchange, or owned by the Swedish state. Table 1 contains a complete list of the selected organisations. This sample represents a variety of industrial and retail sectors – including some of high environmental sensitivity, such as energy production (Vattenfall), paper manufacturing (SCA and StoraEnso) and the biomedical industries (AstraZeneca) – and comprises mostly companies operating in the global market.

All the organisations in the sample maintain an online archive of their official communications, including press releases. Automated queries were based to identify releases employing environmental or Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)-related terminology, including [hållbar] ‘sustainable’, ‘sustainability; [miljö] ‘environment’, ‘environmental’; [ekologi] ‘ecology’, ‘ecological’ and [klimat] ‘climate’. Matching documents were retrieved from the companies’ websites and digitally stored.

The texts were loaded into the text analysis tool Dedoose (Lieber and Weisner 2010), a web-based platform that supports document annotation, excerpt selection, structured coding and a variety of mixed-method tools for the analysis of patterns in codes and document attributes. Metadata, including source and date, were added to each document, and the two researchers independently conducted simultaneous coding.

We operationalised the topic of the press release as the newsworthy macroproposition announced in the headline and developed in the first two paragraphs of the text, which in the inverted pyramid style contain the information regarded as most important (cf. van Dijk

Table 1. *Companies and their PR Output*

Company	Press Releases	Words
ABB	25	15,705
AstraZeneca	8	5,605
Atlas Copco	10	3,785
ElectroLux	5	2,798
Ericsson	4	14,330
H&M	3	2,188
ICA	6	2,232
IKEA	12	3,934
Sandvik	1	3,193
SCA	7	3,608
Skanska	21	9,106
Stora Enso	7	5,824
Telia Sonera	5	3,506
Vattenfall	133	38,461
Volvo	28	10,940
Total	275	125,216

1985: 84). The list of codes was developed in a data-driven fashion, with new codes being added until saturation was reached. This method for text analysis has similarities with traditional techniques developed within quantitative content analysis (Berelson 1952), and was used in order to provide an overview of the kind of issues and events that corporate public relations sources regards as newsworthy. Cases of ambiguity were resolved by discussion between the researchers. The final codebook, presented in Table 2, contains 34 categories. Post-hoc comparisons with other text-analytic work shows remarkable similarities with the coding schemes discussed by Milne and Adler (1999: 240–2).

The 34 categories or codes were collapsed in six broad groups of newsworthy topics: environmental or social campaigns, economic growth, technical improvements to products and processes, certifications and awards, changes in organisational governance, and other issues such as environmental policy or regulatory change. Apart from coding the main topic of the press release, we looked at what kind of evidence was incorporated. The structure of the press releases was also annotated; codes were used to indicate the headline, the lead, and any verbatim quotes. Finally, the evidence provided to support the main topic of the press release -whether quantitative or qualitative – was tagged as well.

Results

During the period under investigation, the 15 corporations examined in this project issued a total of 1308 press releases. Filtering by keywords resulted in a corpus of 330 documents. After digital retrieval, each of these was scanned to identify false positives (i.e., texts in which the keyword was used only in a sense unrelated to the project, such as [miljö] to mean ‘milieu, setting’). 55 documents were excluded by this process, yielding a final sample of 275 documents, with a total of 125’216 word-tokens.

Table 2. Coded Groups of Newsworthy Topics

Economic growth	Organisational governance	Technical improvements	Certification/ awards	Environmental and social campaigns	Other issues
Acquisition	Appointment	Process upgrade	Certification to product/ process	Environmental campaign	Policy/regulation
Company product used	Partnership	Factory upgrade	Test passed	Information campaign	Legal case/ ruling
Financial market	Voting stock changes	Product launch	Inclusion in index	CSR report	Policy advice
New plant		Resource use	Award to company	Exhibition	Anniversary
Operations stop/ withdrawal				Financial report	
Product sale				Meeting/Visit to the company	
Service sale				Press conference	
				Response to criticism	
				Talk/conference	
				Prize from company	
				Research conducted/published	
				Social campaign	
				Charitable event	
				Education	
				Health initiative	

From these figures we can gain a rough indication of the prominence of environmental issues within the public relations output of the top 15 Swedish corporations: about one in five (21%) press releases issued in a year contains at least one reference to environmental topics. However, there is considerable variation within the sample. In terms of overall volume, the output observed ranges from one environmentally-themed release (Sandvik) to a total of 133 (Vattenfall) in a one-year period. In terms of the percentage of public relations output that touches upon environmental topics, figures range from the almost negligible (3.7%, 5 out of 134, TeliaSonera) to the overwhelming (85.7%, 12 out of 14, IKEA). (See Table 1 for a summary overview of the data.)

The Environment as Economic Argument

About two thirds of the press releases in our corpus include key environmental terms in their text, but do *not* make environmental and social performance or impact their main focus of attention. In 72 documents (28.3% of the total), the main newsworthy content is an issue of primarily *economic* significance, such as the acquisition of another organisation, the opening of new facilities or success in tendering a major project. Another 15.2% concerns *technical developments* in products, production processes or

infrastructure, including the launch of products with improved performance, upgrades to manufacturing plants and other facilities or the implementation of new technical processes. In 12.9% of the documents, the news value concerns changes in the *organisational governance* structure, such as the appointment of new Board members or the signature of a partnership agreement. A further 11.7% focus on *certification* or *awards*, like a third-party endorsement of the organisation's environmental and social credentials, such as its inclusion in a non-financial index, the certification of products or processes or awards granted to its performance and initiatives.

These cases represent texts in which environmentally oriented language ("green", "eco-", etc.) is present, but still only peripheral to the main newsworthy topic of interest. A clear indication of this marginal status is that environmental topics are frequently mentioned only once in the body text without being developed in subsequent paragraphs. 77.8% of the texts in the corpus show only one isolated mention of environmentally oriented terms. In many of these cases, especially when the focus of the press release is on technical or economic aspects, the exact nature and extent of the environmental impact of the news is left unspecified:

[U]nder Herr Dahlvigs ledarskap har IKEA placerat hållbarhet i hjärtat av sin produktutveckling och leveransstrategi. (IKEA 2009-4-21)

Under Mr Dahlvig's leadership, IKEA has placed sustainable development at the heart of its strategy for product development and logistics.

Skanskas ambition under byggtiden är att arbeta utifrån konceptet Grön arbetsplats där belysning, uppvärmning och annan energiförbrukning anpassas för att vara så låg som möjligt.. (Skanska 2009-6-16)

Skanska aims to handle this project as a Green Construction Workplace, in which lighting, heating and other energy-consuming activities are reduced to a minimum.

While the eco-friendliness of products, processes and companies is ostensibly touted in these texts, in the broader context it takes a back seat to economic aspects. Mentions of environmental topics in these press releases routinely subordinate their ecological dimensions to economic ones (Rice *et al.* 2012:140). It is hardly coincidental that the most frequently mentioned improvements in products and processes concerns energy efficiency, which has a clear financial incentive independent of its environmental aspects:

Med M4BP är ABB snabba med att erbjuda marknaden en motorserie som uppfyller de kommande kraven i Ekodesigndirektivet. Detta ger användarna möjlighet att redan nu agera miljömedvetet och samtidigt minska sina driftskostnader väsentligt. (ABB 2009-4-21)

With the release of the M4BP motor line, ABB has met the requirements of Ecodesign Directives before they come into force. We are giving our customers the opportunity to be environmentally conscious right now, while at the same time substantially reducing their costs.

Typical discussions of technical improvements highlight their potential for increasing productivity, without at any point mentioning the limits to productivity growth imposed by finite resources, or giving any indication of the expected environmental outcome.

Sometimes this neglect borders on the disingenuous, as when claims centre on the positive environmental effects of engineering improvements to oil refineries:

När våra kunder inom petrokemisektorn expanderar sin verksamhet för att möta den starka efterfrågan kan vi hjälpa dem att uppnå dessa mål samtidigt som vi ökar deras produktivitet och energieffektivitet. (ABB 2008-7-9)

We can help our customers in the petrochemical sector [Petrobras] expand their operations to meet strong demand, while at the same time improving their productivity and energy efficiency.

Nevertheless, even if environmental claims are conceptually peripheral to these texts, they seem to perform a strategic role within them. Environmentally oriented language is not evenly distributed across the text, but is substantially more frequent in specific functional slots. In titles, lead paragraphs, and especially quotes, terms relating to energy (e.g., *energieffektivitet* ‘energy efficiency’), climate (e.g., *klimatarbetet* ‘initiatives against climate change’) or environmental qualities more broadly (e.g., *förnyelsebar* ‘renewable’ or *ren* ‘pure, clean, non-polluted’) are up to 33 times more frequent than would be expected on the basis of their frequency in the overall text ($G^2=15.820$, 1 df, $p<0.0001$).

These segments are precisely the textual environments that are most likely to be conserved if the press release is picked up as news. Jacobs (1999a) has shown that verbatim quotes, along with other more indirect forms of discourse representation, are effective in mitigating journalists’ and audiences’ negative perceptions of PR texts. By ‘fronting’ at least part of the message through a third party, organisations can make press releases sound more lively (the so-called dramatic function) and more neutral (the so-called distancing function); both aspects increase the likelihood of journalists’ incorporating them in their own version. This is, of course, independent of whether the quote is an accurate representation of a third party’s words. In some cases, the same pseudo-quote is repeated by the corporation, changing only the customer’s name in several different documents:

Vi erbjuder Oncor en miljöförbättrande och robust FACTS-lösning med kort leveranstid. (ABB 2009-4-9)

We offer Oncor an environment-friendly and robust Flexible AC Transmission System, with a short delivery time.

The other segment of the texts in which an above-average concentration of environmental terms can be observed are the boilerplate self-descriptions that typically foot these documents. Such footers conspicuously flaunt the organisation’s green credentials without regard for the press release’s main topic, and in unequivocally promotional language:

Stora Enso är ett världsledande företag inom hållbar skogsindustri. Vi erbjuder våra kunder lösningar som är baserade på förnybara råmaterial. Våra produkter är ett klimatvänligt alternativ till många icke-förnybara material och de lämnar ett mindre kolavtryck. Stora Enso ingår i Global 100-listan över världens mest hållbara företag. Stora Enso är även inkluderat i Dow Jones Sustainability Index, FTSE4Good Index och Climate Disclosure Leadership Index. (Stora Enso 2009-5-6)

Stora Enso is a global leader in forest industry sustainability. We offer our customers solutions based on renewable raw materials. Our products provide a

climate-friendly alternative to many non-renewable materials, and have a smaller carbon footprint. Stora Enso is one of The Global 100 list of the world's most sustainable companies, and is also included in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, the FTSE4Good Index and the Climate Disclosure Leadership Index.

Communicating about Communication

Approximately one-third of the press releases (34.4%) focus primarily on social and environmental issues. These range from awards granted by the company to scientists, engineers and students working on technical solutions to environmental problems, to exhibits and conferences devoted to the promotion of environmentally-sustainable behaviours, to direct material and financial support for educational and health campaigns. Among these, only three texts (1.2% of the total) discuss programmes directly aimed at improving environmental conditions and mitigating impacts, and articulate their news value around this improvement. The small size of the sample makes any generalisation unreliable, but it seems noteworthy that the two programmes discussed (the Swedish National Initiative for Green Corridors joined by Volvo, and the Minimum Emissions Region programme in which ABB participates) are sponsored and coordinated by the public sector, and offer considerable economic and institutional incentives to participating companies.

Volvokoncernen inleder ett samarbete inom regeringens logistikforum och med myndigheterna för att förverkliga EU-kommissionens idé om miljöanpassade godstransporter i "Gröna korridorer". Målet är att minska påverkan på miljön och samtidigt öka effektiviteten och säkerheten på vägarna genom särskilt anpassade transportsträckor för tung trafik. (Volvo 2008-12-8)

The Volvo Group has launched a joint project with the government's Logistics Forum and other agencies to implement the EU Commission's vision for "Green Corridors" of environmentally sound transportation. Our goal is to reduce impacts on the environment, while at the same time improve road efficiency and safety, through the construction of dedicated routes for heavy traffic.

A further 12 press releases (4.7% of the total) announce awards given by the company to campaigns, innovations or discoveries with social and environmental impacts. Most of these come from two contributors. Volvo confers every year the *Miljöpris* 'Environment Prize' for basic research on environmental and sustainability studies, as well as the *Teknikpris* 'Technical Prize' for technological developments, including environmental mitigation, directly related to the company's business. The *Energispridarpris* 'Energy Spreader Prize' conferred by Vattenfall, on the other hand, focuses on community and social initiatives.

Volvos miljöpris –The Volvo Environment Prize– delas i år ut för 19:e gången och har under åren fått status som ett av världens mest prestigefyllda miljöpris. (Volvo 2008-11-3)

This is the 19th edition of the Volvo Environment Prize, which has become over time one of the world's most prestigious environmental awards.

Vattenfalls Energispridarpris delas ut till en person eller verksamhet som gör viktiga insatser för barn och ungdomar. (Vattenfall 2009-3-9)

Vattenfall awards the Energy Spreader Prize to people and institutions who make significant contributions to the welfare of children and youth.

A total of 15 texts (5.9% of the total) report directly on events and programmes with a social focus. Again, two contributors – IKEA and AstraZeneca – dominate the sample. The initiatives they present are primarily cases of cause-related marketing (transactional programs in which part of the profits from sales are given to charities, in exchange for the reputational benefit of associating with the cause), or philanthropic initiatives that contribute to social goals on a discretionary basis, rather than as an integrated element of the company's core business and mission. As a norm, such initiatives do not directly "improve the social and environmental impacts of a company's business activities" (Jenkins 2005:525).

IKEAs mjukdjurskampanj ger möjligheter för våra kunder och medarbetare att bli engagerade i arbetet för barns rättigheter i jultider. Vi hoppas sälja mer än 5 miljoner mjukdjur och tio kronor är tillräckligt för att köpa skolböcker och pennor till fem barn. (IKEA 2008-10-30)

IKEA's plush toy campaign gives our customers and employees an opportunity to help children's rights this Christmas. We hope to sell more than 5 million plush dolls, and ten Swedish crowns are enough to buy schoolbooks and pens for five children.

By far the largest group in this category is composed of texts that do announce or promote the provision of socially- or environmentally-oriented *information*, but without discussing the corporation's socially- or environmentally-oriented *action*. A total of 49 texts (19.1% of the total) fall into this category, representing outputs from 13 of the 15 companies in the sample (the remaining two contributed only 1 and 3 press releases to the corpus, respectively). The informational initiatives announced are of uneven scope, and a majority concern events and materials that are not intended for public consumption, such as the publication of non-financial reports (16 texts, 6.3% of the total), the scheduling of press conferences or the organisation of informative workshops for key, high-powered stakeholders such as government regulators (7 texts, 2.7%). In the corpus, 11 texts (4.3%) announce events that are open to the general public, such as exhibitions on company facilities, to awareness campaigns centred on helping users measure, understand and reduce their environmental footprint.

ABB deltog, som ett av flera svenska företag, i högtidliga sammanhang när Svensk-amerikanska handelskammaren höll miljöseminariet Green Summit i New York. (ABB 2008-9-30)

ABB was one of the Swedish companies formally invited to the environmental Green Summit organised by the Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce in New York.

Stora värmeljusjakten är tävlingen som ger Sveriges lärare och elever i klass 1–3 chansen att på ett kul sätt lära mer om återvinning och hur man kan spara energi. (IKEA 2008-9-2)

The Great Tealight Chase is a competition designed to give schoolchildren aged 7–9 and their teachers a fun-filled opportunity to learn about recycling and how to save energy.

Corporate communication initiatives of this sort that “reach out” and involve public participation can be of importance. The difficulties in fostering public engagement with environmental issues and in facilitating the behavioural changes that they require, at both the individual and social levels, can often be traced to deficiencies in the communication strategies used to articulate them in the public sphere (Ungar 1992: 484-485). Nevertheless, they do not give any direct indication of the sponsoring company’s environmental impact. The reputational benefit the company may confer is therefore independent of whether its environmental performance has actually improved. The high frequency of such topics – which give the companies the opportunity to *talk* about sustainability and rhetorically lead the way towards environmental solutions, without actually having to alter its business practices – lends weight to the argument of Milne et al. (2009: 1237) that “the ability of businesses to ‘do’ sustainability” occurs mainly “through the symbolism of reporting”. If the business case for sustainable development argues that competitive advantage can be gained by making customers aware of the company’s social and environmental responsibility, this scenario represents the case where communication about the good cause has become detached from the responsibility itself.

A minority of cases in the whole corpus provide supporting data to the claims made by the company, e.g., about ‘greening’ their business activities, whether quantitative (23.0 %) or qualitative (12.0%). The quantifiable evidence can in turn be grouped into three key topics: renewable energy production, reduced CO₂ emissions and energy savings obtained by the company or their business partners. All these actions relate to the problem of climate change, and can be understood as corporations responses to widespread societal concerns about the implications of global warming. These stood high upon both the political, media and public agenda a short time before this study, and certainly before the spread of the global financial crisis of 2007-2008.

Discussion

This overview of the common topics and tactics used in the environmentally themed press releases of large Swedish corporations shows that corporate voices make substantial use of environmental and ecological arguments in their strategic communication with journalists and newsrooms. One in five press releases includes such a reference, regularly intertwined with presentations of economical news about a company and its business activities. This “green” profile of Swedish businesses harmonizes with the otherwise widespread (self-)understanding of the nation as environmentally-friendly and an ecologic role model for others to follow (Egan Sjölander, Wolanik-Boström and Ögren 2010).

No tension at all between environmental and economical concerns is suggested in the corpus. Instead, these corporations present a “win-win” situation, and assume that improvements to environmental performance are in principle profitable as well. Such an ‘ecological modernization’ perspective – viewing economical development and environmental protection as susceptible of positive synergies (Hajer 1995) – is by no means exclusive to the Swedish business world. On the contrary, together with sustainable development, these viewpoints have underpinned environmental policy-making in most industrialized societies around the world for more than two decades (Berger, *et al.* 2001).

Still, the complete absence of tension between environmental and economical aspects in the studied corpus is somewhat surprising, partly because this relation, and the dominance of the latter, is elsewhere understood as a key conflict, not to say the main problem that needs to be resolved before a more sustainable future can be envisioned (Lélé 1991; Berger, *et al.* 2001). The constant demand for economic growth in societies, even if at the expense of natural resources and so on, is by many seen as the primary root to several of the environmental problems that we face today. Climate change and the intense use of fossil fuels that it implies is a clear and urgent example.

The common emphasis on the “green” angle in this corporate PR is *not* – contrary to what one could expect given the crucial role that business and industry actors in general, and the studied corporations in particular, play in the environmental context – backed up by any substantial information about its specificity or content. During the period of a year with an average of 3–4 press releases issued every day, less than a handful of the studied texts deal explicitly with the environmental impact of the business at stake. That corporations choose not to communicate more about these aspects can easily be interpreted as the result of strategic decision-making in order to secure profit. We claim that these findings feed democratic concerns, not only regarding politicians’ and journalists’ possibilities, but above all, the general public’s limited abilities to keep well informed about business activities and their environmental impact on the commons.

In terms of resources the public depend the most on other more powerful groups in society (Hansen 2011). As Lehtimäki *et al.* (2011: 433) point out when studying how corporate responsibility is articulated in press releases to respond to controversies, sometimes these means of communication are in fact the only way to disclose essential information about, as well as for, a company. This is one crucial reason for why it matters what these texts communicate.

That the corpus contains few examples of corporations addressing their specific environmental impact does not mean that environmental and social issues are marginal topics. A third of the studied press releases has a CSR-related theme as its main angle. Announcement and promotion of different sorts of information, e.g. publications of CSR or financial reports, meetings and prominent visits to the company and talks or conferences, is in turn the most frequent subject within this category. This communication about communication detached from the specific environmental actions performed by corporations has similar features to the corporate discourse on sustainable development that Milne *et al.* (2009) describe as “words, not actions”. Our results could also be interpreted as part of the problematic scenario that Morsing (2003) pictures where CSR work end up being run by PR professionals and corporate spin doctors and very loosely attached to social responsibility itself. Here the reason for the “good cause” is lost while the communication about it dominates corporate attention.

One could argue though that corporations inform, as well as communicate, with stakeholders, citizens or the public included, in a lot of varied ways apart from press releases and that they make use of other suitable forms of communication for this extended dialogue. However, the corpus studied here reveals few initiatives of such “out-reach” corporative work intended for the general public. We can conclude that there is no dialogic turn in sight, at least in the Swedish context (Philips 2011). In other words, communication activities intended to increase transparency and broaden public participation and knowledge making, as in this case regarding corporations environmental

impact etcetera, are largely missing. Despite the opportunities for dialogue generated by the digital revolution, corporate environmental communication over the new media still follows traditional models. Press releases continue to be a vital part of corporations' strategic communication (Hansen 2010: 62-69).

Of course there are limits to what one could expect to be communicated and covered in this particular genre of text tailored to suit the practices of journalists and newsrooms. To start with, the press release needs to have a clear angle or "hook" in order to be viewed as newsworthy (Jacobs 1999a; 1999b). The expected length of the text also put clear constraints to what is possible to cover. Furthermore, as multiple studies repeatedly shown, regardless of these features, the environmental beat struggle to get on the news agenda and this is due to the often abstract and complex nature of environmental issues (Hansen 2010).

The frequent use of environmental rhetoric and the preponderance of communication about communication that we have identified corroborate earlier studies of strategic corporate communication. Fredriksson's (2008) analysis of Swedish corporations annual and sustainability reports, for example, also shows that marketplace considerations, related to principles of business and economy, are the main theme in the rhetoric of responsibility that they employ. He further concludes that the information corporations provide is generally self-referential and lacks substantive content, which in turn supports the idea of corporations using rhetoric to disguise the need for substantial changes in their practice. The dominance of market issues and corporate economical interests has also been pointed out in Lehtimäki's *et al.*'s (2011) review of press releases issued by a Finnish multinational company operating abroad.

Further research should investigate the actual media exposure gained by these press releases. An analysis of news media content during the same period could reveal to what extent corporations' efforts to shape media discourse have been successful, and to what extent they can contribute to their goal of influencing policy and enhancing their reputation. A key question in this regard is how business and industry subsidies to the news-making process compare to those of other relevant sources. It also seems important to identify what features and parts of the press releases are taken up and re-used in the newsroom. Such analytical work would be an answer to Hansen's (2011: 20) appeal for more studies on communicative power and its unequal distribution in environmental communication since, as we also argue, it "significantly affects the ability to participate in and influence the nature of public 'mediated' communication about the environment". The on-going greening of corporate PR without addressing issues of environmental impact severely limits the public understanding of business activities and their impact on the environmental commons.

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Migration between Politics, Journalism and PR

New Conditions for Power, Citizenship and Democracy?

Göran Palm & Håkan Sandström

Abstract

In this article we present a preliminary theoretical background and some empirical findings concerning a migrating trend between the fields of politics, PR and journalism: one day a political reporter, the next a communication officer; one day a PR consultant, the next a state secretary. To understand contemporary politics one must, we argue, comprehend the convergence between three fields of power holders that together form the realm of politics and communication: elite politicians, elite political reporters and elite communication/PR officers. Together, they form a communication elite that sets the parameters for the public discourse on politics. When politics is produced and constructed in, and through, social networks formed by elite agents from politics, journalism and PR, what does this mean for how democracy is worked out and what does it mean for citizenship in general?

Keywords: communication elites, convergence, politics, public relations, journalism, democracy

Introduction

This text can be seen as a starting point for a research project – Post-politics in Mediocracy: the structural transformation of political communication – dealing with the fundamentals of contemporary Swedish politics and democracy. The basic outline of the project concerns social power, power agents and the production and construction of ‘the political’. In focus are the agents that form the realm of politics and political communication, that is, those agents that possess the resources to produce a dominant discourse – a basic knowledge structure – of politics and democracy, but also how this agency is socially and culturally contextualized.

In this article we present a preliminary theoretical background for this research project and some empirical findings concerning three groups of communication power holders: elite politicians, elite political reporters and elite communication/PR officers – a body of persons we refer to as a *strategic communication elite*.

This communication elite sets the parameters for the public discourse on politics, largely affecting how citizens will perceive ‘the political’; but it also sets the limits for their right to take action.

The elites in question act and interact in specific *social fields*, conceptualized by Pierre Bourdieu as arenas of socialized action where relations are structured and where

agents compete for positions and power (Benson, R., & Neveu, E. 2005, Bourdieu, P. 1992 and Neveu, E. 2007). Social fields are structured systems governed by internal rules, and within any field there is social division; therefore, fields are arenas of competition. From the perspective of field theory we distinguish a political field, a journalistic field and a communication/PR field, each populated by professional actors whose actions are based on accumulated resources and forms of power.

An established social field is generally autonomous, albeit related to other fields, but we argue that the boundaries between the three fields in question are becoming more and more porous due to the processes of agents migrating from one field to another. Gradually the agents come to share a common body of professional knowledge as well as a set of common norms and rules; therefore, the distinctions between the fields are not as clear as could be expected.

There are, we argue, two common denominators distinguishing the fields of politics, journalism (political reporting) and political PR: *marketization* and *convergence*, constituting the structural conditions for agents in the fields. While we will return to the question of marketization later, we note now that convergence is a process that tends to blur distinctions between the fields in question. This makes it possible for agents to transcend the demarcations of one field and enter another, something we refer to as processes of migration.

To understand contemporary politics one must comprehend the convergence between the three fields mentioned above. 'The political' – and how it is perceived – is produced and constructed through constant interactions and negotiations among the elite agents populating the fields. This, we argue, necessitates an in-depth understanding of the communication elite: their genealogy, their composition and evolution, the habitus they possess, the strategies they practice, and the patterns of conflicts and collaborations between them.

A Migrating Trend Between the Fields

There are many indications of a migrating trend in and out of the three fields under study, pointing to a situation in which positions in politics, journalism and PR are more or less interchangeable. Below we present some examples of this migration – from political reporting to PR; from PR to politics; and from politics to PR – with individuals tending to quite 'undramatically' change places or positions, some of them more well-known than others (Sandström and Palm 2013).

Case 1: Journalist – Press Secretary, Government offices – PR consultant – Press Manager, the Social Democratic party – PR consultant (private firm) – Press Secretary, Swedish National Police Board.

Case 2: Journalist (the Swedish news agency TT) – Head of Press Office, Government offices – PR consultant – Head of Press Office (Mona Sahlin, former leader of the Social Democratic party) – PR consultant – Press Manager SEB (one of the largest banks in Sweden).

Case 3: Op-ed. Svenska Dagbladet (the second largest morning newspaper in Sweden) – Political Secretary, the Conservative party – Chairman of the youth organization, the

Conservative party – PR consultant – Communication Manager, the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise – Senior Fellow at Fores (a Swedish think tank) – Political Editor, Svenska Dagbladet.

Case 4: Expert, Government offices (former Prime Minister Göran Persson) – Head of Press Office, Government offices – State Secretary – Management Consultant – Director of Communications, Nordea (one of the largest Banks in Sweden) – Head of the Social Democratic party election campaign, 2014.

Case 5: Journalist, Dagens Eko (Swedish public service radio) – Press Secretary (Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt) – Expert (office for the Minister for Migration) – PR consultant – Communication Manager, Swedish Export Credit Corporation.

Case 6: PR consultant – Member of Parliament – Minister for Gender Equality – PR consultant.

This migrating trend is obvious also at a more structural level. For the period January 2000 to November 2012 we have found the following pattern of interchange between the three fields:

- From journalism to PR: 48
- From journalism to politics: 44
- From politics to PR: 57
- From PR to politics: 19

Four ministers in the present Swedish government (June 2013) have a background as PR consultants: the Minister for Culture and Sport (Lena Adelsohn Liljeroth, the Conservative party), the Minister for Information Technology and Energy (Anna-Karin Hatt, the Centre party), the Minister for Gender Equality (Maria Arnholm, the Liberal party) and the Minister for Social Security (Ulf Kristersson, the Conservative party).

Several former ministers are presently working as PR consultants. Among them: former Prime Minister (Göran Persson, the Social Democratic party), former Minister for Defence (Sten Tolgfors, the Conservative party), former Minister for Employment (Sven Otto Littorin, the Conservative party), former Minister for Education and Research (Lars Leijonborg, the Liberal party), former Minister for Gender Equality (Nyamko Sabuni, the Liberal party) and former Minister for Defence (Anders Björck, the Conservative party).

In addition, several former State Secretaries are to be found in the PR sector. For example: Per Schlingmann (the Conservative party); Ulrica Schenström (the Conservative party); Dan Ericsson (the Christian Democrats); Jöran Hägglund (the Centre party) and Krister Nilsson (the Social Democratic party)

A number of former Press Secretaries, both from the political parties and from the government offices, as well as former political reporters and chief editors, have taken on new roles as senior PR consultants. The Swedish journal Dagens Samhälle mapped the “The Political Public Relations elite” in 2013 (Sundling and Holmkvist 2013), resulting in a list of more than 300 persons, “the Swedish elite in political PR and public affairs”. Among them, 119 have a background in the Conservative party and 94 in the Social Democratic party.

The migrating trend, or convergence between the fields exemplified above, can be attributed to structural transformations in the fields of politics, political journalism and PR/communication.

The Political Field: Redefinition of Democracy

Basically, democracy has to do with the power of citizenship laid down in important institutions, the most important of which, we argue, concern the right to distribute knowledge (e.g. freedom of information) and the right to (independently) form and express opinions (e.g. freedom of speech). These institutions together form what in political theory has been called the public sphere (Habermas 1989). So, democracy should be regarded as a genuinely participatory process, operating at different levels: local, national, regional and global (de Sousa Santos 2005).

But today democracy tends to be redefined as something limited to a quite narrow sphere of party politics where a range of options, related more to identity (or lifestyle) than to citizenship, is offered in what tends to become a political marketplace (Zizek 1999). Citizens are transformed into voting blocs or target groups addressed like customers and consumers, and citizenship is transformed into an activity worked out every four years – the *marketization* of politics (Kiely 2007).

This redefinition of democracy determines the structure, content and distribution of the contemporary political ideas, and therefore also the features of political communication (Bourdieu 1992, van Zoonen 2005). In this text we argue that the political communication of the present era is of a very specific kind because it is grounded in two very distinct features of contemporary politics.

Firstly, the space of politics – what is communicated to citizens and how they are embedded in politics – is decided by elite networks comprised of agents from party politics, the PR industries and the newsrooms of the most influential and powerful news media.

Secondly, as we already have noted, positions or places in those networks are – on a personal level – interchangeable amongst the leading agents; that is, a person can migrate from one position to another.

These features produce a very specific set of political power, exercise of power, power structures and power struggles that shape the content of the political field. But we argue that there is not only a political field, but rather that this field is structured in two different but linked layers.

The first layer is the space and practices of *state apparatuses*, where policy is produced and implemented, politics ‘pure’, while the second layer is the space where *party politics* – or political competition – is worked out. So, politics takes place in different arenas, and politics that is public, aimed at the citizen, is quite restricted in the sense that fundamental policy questions and decisions are often left out of the public arena – that is, beyond citizen control.

This split of the political field we have discussed so far, where ‘pure’ politics actually becomes ‘limited’, makes it politically unthinkable to approach and understand politics any other way. To speak with Pierre Bourdieu (1992:172), this understanding of politics constitutes the *dominant political habitus*.

When Bourdieu discusses “entry into the field”, we see this not only as an entry in the sense of becoming a politician but also think of this “entry” as a way of understanding

what politics is; agents of the field reproduce this understanding, and this – the separation between the two forms of politics – becomes the way politics is understood from citizens' point of view.

Eric Louw (2010: 20-21) argues that contemporary politics is made up of three dimensions: “policy”, “process management” and “hypemaking” (all including different processes). The first dimension is the most basic and important, “substantial” politics – resource allocation. The political processes in this dimension are driven by “insiders” representing different elite interests, and these processes are generally not public and are quite seldom reported upon by media.

The processes in the second dimension – process management – form a kind of preparation for the third – elite interest (after negotiations) decides what issues will be made into voter issues. The processes are also kept away from the public eye, and most often also from news reporting.

The first two dimensions are really “insider politics” – sometimes elite reporters are included as drivers; the third dimension, though, is open politics: issues put in front of citizens as voters. This is the hype dimension, where different kinds of communication processes and communicators are involved and where media and news reporting are central and vital.

Louw looks upon the media not as a passive channel for information – hype – but as an active participant in mass politics geared to images and myths – politics to be consumed by voters. And sometimes reporters and editors can take part in substantial politics, becoming “insiders”.

So, political communication deals almost exclusively with issues that are presented and re-presented at this second layer of the political field. Actually, agents from party politics, media and communication/PR produce and construct what becomes politics in the minds of citizens. This is the form of politics – and political issues – that becomes a shared, natural and self-explanatory common political habitus.

The Journalistic Field: Downsizing and Stratification

In the past two decades the journalistic field in Sweden has undergone dramatic and fundamental changes. *Firstly*, it has transformed from a relatively distinct field to a more complex and less transparent one. Basically, this transformation has to do with the parallel transformation of the production sphere – or the economy – in general: a transformation from industry to service, from materiality to culture, from use value to symbolic value (Castells 2001, Harvey 1990).

This symbolic capitalism has generated a multitude of new professions (or semi-professions), people who deal with a variety of symbolic forms: brands, CSR, ads, spin, PR (which in itself includes many forms), and of which news is just one – and very often not the dominant – form. All this has blurred the distinction between traditional journalism and other forms of creative writing. Mark Deuze (2005), Susanne Fengler (2010) and Kent Asp (2007) argue that the conceptualization of journalism as a professional ideology – claiming an exclusive role and status in society – can no longer be taken for granted.

Secondly, the transformation of the journalistic field has to do with the transformation of the media industries themselves. Today, the constant focus is on relating all activities,

even those in the newsrooms, to the *market principle*. This structural condition of news production can be seen as an ever-growing commoditization and commercialization of news, and as a *disciplining* factor for all kinds of work and work standards related to the practice of journalism.

News rooms have been downsized, and this is accompanied by increased pressure on individual journalists to produce more, resulting in a concentration on the most 'doable'. A study by the Swedish magazine *Medievärlden* (2013) addresses this downsizing of newsrooms: in 2012 376 journalists had to leave their jobs, almost 10 per cent of the total workforce in Swedish newsrooms.

A study from Södertörn University (Nygren 2010) focuses upon the members who left the Swedish Union of Journalists in 2007, as many as 800 members. Twenty-eight per cent of the members who left not only the Union but also the journalist trade started working with public relations and information.

Research from Gothenburg University (Jönsson 2005) indicates that more than 25 per cent of journalists in Sweden are planning to leave the trade for other fields. Among those aged 40-49 years, 35 per cent are planning to do so.

On the other hand, a survey study of communication officers in Sweden (Palm and Sandström 2013) shows that 25 per cent of the respondents have a background in journalism (have been employed in the trade) and that 40 per cent are open to leaving the communication business for a job in journalism.

Thirdly, the far-reaching rationalization of production in the media industries, resulting in a very tight labour market for journalists, also manifests itself as an ever-growing *stratification* of the trade itself. A three-tier social structure of the journalistic field is observable.

At the bottom, forming a kind of *periphery*, something like a journalistic proletariat can be found; replaceable, and with almost no autonomy, they perform routine tasks and are most often temporarily employed.¹ They seldom have professional skills, and very few have field-related education or training.

The majority of professional journalists are to be found in a middle layer, or the *semi-periphery* – these journalists produce the bulk of news on a day-to-day basis. The production process is heavily structured, but with a certain degree of autonomy. Their terms of employment are still relatively secure, although they tend to be becoming increasingly replaceable. They are expected to deal with multi-tasking, that is, managing different technical skills and also dealing with different subject areas (Wayne 2003, Nygren 2008, Wiik, 2010).

The top layer, the *centre*, is comprised of an elite group of journalists. This is a very small but powerful group often very close to the management level, and more often than not they take active part in decision-making processes (Tunstall 1996). They also often become important brands at their corporations, viewed as celebrities by audiences, and many cultivate their own trademarks. They have a high degree of autonomy; they interact with political, economic and cultural elite groups; they are integrated into important and powerful networks. It is in this group we find those who migrate to powerful positions in media-related communication businesses like PR agencies.

The practice of political news reporting has also been profoundly affected by the large-scale transformations described above. The traditional news formats, constructions and news frames are mixed with formats from popular culture. It becomes more and more problematic to separate the high from the low, the important from the less

important, hard news from soft, news from opinion, and sometimes even facts from fiction. *Politicotainment*, “/.../ the ways in which politics and political life are interpreted, negotiated, and represented by the entertainment industry/.../”, seems to be a reality in political news reporting as well (Riegert 2007:1). Perhaps this embodies what Douglas Kellner (2003) refers to when applying the concept of *spectacle* to contemporary politics and political news reporting.

The Public Relations Field: Expansion and Legitimacy

On a global level, public relations grew into a significant, and powerful, industry during the 20th and early 21st centuries and there is a clear tendency towards an oligopoly situation (Miller and Dinan 2008).

The PR industry is closely connected to the centres of political and economic power. Washington and Brussels, as two significant examples, house significant bodies of concentrated public relations and public affairs businesses.

So, public relations have no doubt come to occupy a strategic position in the public sphere, with political as well as cultural impact. Contemporary PR might be present in technological, economic, social, political and legal changes. It takes place in a variety of contexts: politics, science, health, sport, entertainment, leisure, and education.

The field of public relations has undergone significant changes in recent decades; one significant change is related to the question of the status and legitimacy of public relations in different organizational contexts. Apparently, strategic communication is regarded as an important factor in and for organizations. Communication strategists and experts are more frequently given access to the inner circles of powerful organizations, where they can influence decisions and function as a strategic management resource (Grunig, Grunig and Dozier 2006).

So, compared to the downsizing processes in the newsrooms, here we see the opposite trend: upsizing, arming already resourceful news sources with a plethora of ‘new’ communication competences.

Today the field of public relations encompasses a wide range of communication activities, both within organizations and in the consulting sector: internal communication, public affairs, lobbying, business intelligence, CSR, media relations, crisis communication, branding, impression management, social marketing – to mention some of the most common.

From a critical discourse perspective, all these communication activities can be regarded as a symbolic and constitutive system that structures knowledge and social practices. We argue, like Motion and Leitch (1996), that public relations professionals have a significant role in the maintenance and transformation of discourse. According to this, a main task for the communication experts is to make sure that certain ideas and practices are established and understood. If they succeed in this, their clients will gain the hegemonic advantage in the discursive struggle.

Therefore, there is good reason to examine and analyse the public relations field not only as a unique or separate field but as one interlaced with the political and journalistic fields.

Magda Pieczka (2006) elaborates on an identified circuit of power between media, PR and politics. This circuit of power is an illustration of the existence of elites work-

ing in the same terrain or domain, knowing each other and socializing with each other. Three distinct groups constitute this circuit of power, according to Pieczka: journalists, elected politicians and public relations experts.

The question is: who has the upper hand in this power circuit? From the above-mentioned survey on communication officers (Palm and Sandström 2013), we note that one in two communication officers regularly (on a day-to-day basis) interacts with reporters, with the initiative to contact between the two groups in most cases being in the hands of the communication officer. One in two also states that they are able to influence the reporting in “a positive way”, and 46 per cent state that they also interact with reporters outside working hours.

A great majority of the responding communication officers are very critical of contemporary news journalism; sensationalist, celebrity-oriented and trivial are but a few descriptions. At the same time, though, the communication officers regard all this as an opportunity to influence reporting. One of the informants declares: “Reporters are always in a rush and overloaded with work and therefore in need of easily digested factual information – I’m the provider.”

From the point of view of the communication/PR officers, they seem to have the upper hand in contact with reporters, something that is also attested to by reporters and communication officers inside the EU system (Palm 2002). Communication officers are not seen (and they do not see themselves) as news sources in general; they take part in the news production in a much more complex and comprehensive way. They not only provide information, but also act as *interpreters* (provide analysis), *sounding boards* (exchanging ideas) and *correctives* (interpretation of facts, confirmation).

Yet another survey of communication officers and journalists (Cision.se) confirms the picture of increased activities of communication officers directed at newsrooms and reporters. Sixty per cent of the reporter-respondents state that information, like press releases, from organized sources has increased in the past five years, and the same percentage of respondents state that working hours devoted to fact-controlling and news coverage have diminished. So, reporters have to deal with an increasing amount of information from organized sources, more often than not planned, compiled and packaged by public relation experts.

A Few Notes on Elites and Power

Above we have presented a small selection of perspectives and empirical findings addressing, as we see it, the convergence between the fields of politics, political journalism and PR. We now turn to an elaboration on our theoretical approaches: elites, power and strategic networks.

Studies and research on social power and power holders often use two terms interchangeably: elites and (ruling) classes. Furthermore, there is no consensus on how to apply those two terms: C. Wright Mills argued that the US was ruled by a small – mostly non-elected – group of actors, the power elite, while G. William Domhoff (2009) and others (Bottomore 1993, Carroll 2010, Sklair 2001) discuss these actors in terms of a class dominance theory.

Domhoff (2009) elaborates on the concept of a power elite when analysing three overlapping networks of people and institutions: the corporate community, the social

upper class and the policy-formation networks. The power elite is drawn from these networks and, Domhoff argues, focusing on this elite makes it possible to understand how power is organized. The power elite is a leadership group, a 'community' in itself, excluding other agents from the three networks described above.

The common ground for these studies and theoretical elaborations is the existence of an *inner circle* (be it a dominant class faction or an elite) controlling and dominating social, political and economic life. This inner circle is – more often than not – closely interconnected by different types of bonds, sometimes family bonds and sometimes those of a more 'professional' kind. They form networks in which members share aspirations, goals, norms and values. It is also important to note that elites are not restricted to the political sphere, but are rather a social phenomenon that transcends 'the political'. It is more accurate to talk about *social elites* that control different kinds of resources, or capital; resources that can be used to dominate the most important social fields.

Studies of national Swedish elites have taken a somewhat different approach than the studies mentioned above, with a focus instead on elite *positions*, elite *polarization* and elite *integration*. When studying positions one delimits a realm of formal positions, and 'owners' of such positions constitute a power elite. Polarization implies the existence of two or more, more or less separated, elites. Although they interact, they do not interconnect. Elite integration describes the degree of closure within a separate elite group.

Gergei Farkas (2012) has observed the existence of a polarized elite structure, two decoupled but interacting elite formations: the political and the economic. Although relations between the elites have sometimes been conflictual, the dominant impression is the high degree of consensus.

In a recent comprehensive study of the Swedish power elite positions (Göransson 2006), the 'classic' form of Swedish duality – the political and economic – is extended with a more in-depth and enlarged analysis of power holders, separating not only corporate elites and political elites but also administrative, organizational, scientific, cultural and media elites. This gives a better picture of the contemporary complex social differences and polarizations than does the 'old' model of dual elites.

The concrete, empirical, study of (different) elites tends to follow two broad approaches: positioning and networks. The network approach, linking different positions, individuals and groups trying to establish the quantity and quality of relations and interactions, is the method used by Domhoff (2009), for example, while social network analysis is used by Carroll (2010) and Farkas (2012).

In this paper we have presented some empirical findings on positions concerning politicians, political reporters and PR officers. The positions in these three groups are elite positions in more or less the same way as Bottomore (1993: 7) defines elites in his study *Elites and Society*, where he describes elites as ".../ groups which have high status (for whatever reason) in a society." And elites are those persons or sub-groups who ".../actually exercise power in a society at a given time."

This broad and extensive concept of the elite, applied by G. William Domhoff, Leslie Sklair and Tom Bottomore, fits our research interest very well as we argue that political elite reporters and elite PR officers, through the means of political communication, influence 'the political' in multiple ways. So, considering politics from the perspective of Tom Bottomore, 'the political' is produced and constructed by not only the 'pure' political agents but also agents from other elite fields.

Networks and Power

We also argue that the elite groups under consideration are interlinked and interconnected (although we do not present any empirical evidence of this statement in this text), and for this we have borrowed a term from Mark Duffield (2001): *complex strategic networks*. Duffield, who studies global developmental and security issues, argues that the aim behind Western aid to ‘poor’ countries and/or regions is not so much developmental as it is a question of Western security. Through aid, agents in the West try to encapsulate conflicts in the Global South to keep them from affecting Western interests. In order to accomplish this, the agents in the West construct complex strategic networks.

The networks are strategic in the sense that they unite agents around common goals and interests, even though these agents in contexts and situations outside the common interest may have diverging ambitions. We believe this approach can be translated into the field of politics and political communication; the relations between politicians, political reporters and communication/PR officers can be described in terms of complex strategic networks, although these relations can be quite conflictual as well.

In order to understand the formation and importance of contemporary political communication, elite agents – individuals and groups – and their interconnectedness and strategies must be analysed and understood. The concept of complex strategic networks can therefore be quite illuminating, but it requires taking into consideration at least the following processes: the origins and genesis of positions and networks; recruitment to positions and networks, and the bases for such recruitment; reproduction of positions and networks; circulation of agents within networks and exclusion of agents from them. Also, the analysis of strategic networks must be attributed to power: strategic networks are power networks.

Therefore, power is at the centre of our analysis, and since our interest is in elites and political communication the ability of these elites to produce, control and communicate knowledge and information is naturally of utmost importance and must be studied. The ability to select, present and circulate knowledge and information in ways that promote a certain interest or construct a certain frame of understanding is a power resource; to follow Thomas Mathiesen (1993), *information control*.

When such information control is systematically applied in order to produce and construct specific descriptions or views of reality – knowledge of a certain field, for example politics – we can talk of this world-view as a *discourse* (or discursive power). A discourse is a complex of formations and constructions – with specific rules – that makes up a certain area of knowledge in a way that encloses a specific meaning structure and excludes others (Jackson 2005, Lukes 2005).

The elite agents we deal with all possess such power resources that enable them to discursively control knowledge and information. They can construct an image of the political by defining the rules of the game; that is, they can define a certain *knowledge institution*. Klas Åmark (1998) labels this *meta-power*, a form of power that frames how one comes to understand and interpret one’s own interests, a form of power that defines and structures alternatives for action and points out conceivable strategies.

According to Sandra Braman (2002:94), a power resource of this kind enables agents to “.../ [dominate] the uses of all other forms of power and [change] how other forms of power come into being and are exercised”; that is, in Braman’s words, “*genetic power*”. With this term, Braman emphasizes the importance of control over informa-

tion and knowledge; and today, when information and knowledge are of vital social importance, this form of power tends to dominate alternate forms of power and how they are exercised.

We think of meta-power and genetic power as useful ways to understand the power resources – and how they are applied in different situations and contexts – of the three elite groups under consideration in this paper. Meta-power and genetic power enable the agents to define the political issues in the field as well as how the ‘political game’ should be understood – and also the patterns of political conflicts. This is what Richard Peet (2007:5) labels “a *policy regime*”; that is “/.../ a systematic approach to policy formation /.../ dealing with a definable, limited range of issues, which prevails, as the dominant interventionary framework, over a historical period /.../.”

Concluding Remarks

Above we have presented what we consider the most important aspects of modern politics, from a perspective of three spheres: politics, PR and journalism. Contemporary politics and democracy are conditioned by the convergence of the three spheres, blurring the lines between party politics, PR and journalism. What politics is in the eyes of us citizens is produced and constructed through negotiations and relations between those three actor categories. Citizens are, in different ways, embedded in the processes and structures of the political, sometimes as ‘cases’ or ‘examples’, sometimes as ‘statistics’, but tend to be less and less addressed and recognized as citizens proper.

The present condition of politics produces a very specific form of democracy and very specific forms of power relations; relations, we assert, must be studied and valued. The theoretical approaches and empirical findings presented in this article can hopefully be seen as a relevant starting point.

So, our interests emanate from the following very broad research questions:

Firstly, if – and there are many indications of this – positions in politics, journalism and PR are more or less interchangeable, what does this mean for political reporting and political communication? This ‘migration’ must be studied and elaborated on; what are the terms and conditions and what are the consequences for ‘the fourth estate’?

Secondly, if – and again, there are many indications of this – politics is produced and constructed in, and through, social networks formed by elite agents from politics, journalism and PR, what does this mean for how democracy is worked out and what does it mean for citizenship in general? These networks must be studied: how they are formed, how they are transformed (and how they fall apart), how they compete and conflict, the barriers to entrance, the ‘prize’ for upholding them, the way they are internationalized.

Note

1. We have borrowed the concepts *periphery*, *semi-periphery* and *center* from Johan Galtung (1969) and will use them to emphasize that no structure is a stable one. In our case it seems as if very few journalists are going upward from periphery and semi-periphery to center, but a quite distinct tendency can be noted: that from semi-periphery to periphery.

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Norwegian Media and the Cold War 1945-1991

Henrik G. Bastiansen

Abstract

The theme of this article is how the Cold War influenced the media – but also how the media influenced the Cold War. In order to study this, the article connects Norwegian media to the broader international Cold War history between 1945 and 1991. The aim is to show the relevance of the Cold War for media development and of the media for research on the Cold War. The goal is to construct a tentative fundament for further research on the role of the media during the Cold War.

Keywords: the Cold War, the East-West conflict, mass media in the Cold War, Norwegian media history

Introduction

The period from 1945 until 1991 was decisive for the development of international mass communications – the rise of television being the most important example. These years were also marked by the Cold War between the East and West – the conflict between two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. If we wish to understand the development of the mass media during this period, we also need to investigate the relations between the media and the Cold War. It seems obvious that the Cold War influenced media content for decades. However, perhaps a more interesting question is: To what degree did the media influence the Cold War?

Scholars have already related modern mass communications to earlier conflict periods of the 20th century, such as World War I, the years of mass society in the 1920s and 30s, and World War II. In fact, the period from the late 1800s until the late 1940s saw modern technology being utilized as mass communications as never before in world history: The press became a huge industry of news and opinions, Hollywood dominated film and cinema, while radio broadcasting quickly emerged as the third mass medium. All of them had the ability to reach millions of people and thus to influence public opinion. No one really understood the consequences of mass communications on such a huge scale.

If we continue this perspective into the postwar period, we quickly enter the era of the Cold War. It became *the* main international conflict dominating the world after 1945. Walter Lippmann introduced the term ‘Cold War’ in 1947 in reference to the dramatic East-West tensions that were escalating at the time between the United States and the Soviet Union in Europe. Later it has been used to refer to the entire East-West conflict, which, at varying levels of tensions, lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

During this period, the Cold War dominated international news and politics. It was a struggle between two superpowers and their ideologies – capitalism and communism – with many allies on both sides. Some of them were voluntary allies, others involuntary. The tension between them was sometimes extremely high – with consequences that affected the rest of the world. The most threatening possible consequence was a nuclear war, which could end the future of mankind.

Mass Communications and the Cold War: a Neglected Topic?

Let us start with a brief discussion of the general relation between the Cold War and the field of mass media research. A great many historians have specialized in Cold War research. Three historiographical schools have emerged: the traditionalists, the revisionists and the post-revisionists. The traditionalists blamed the Soviet Union for the origin of the conflict, while the revisionists took the opposite view and blamed the US. The post-revisionist school has not been interested in assigning blame, but more interested in explaining why the different actors acted as they did. The three different schools followed each other chronologically, but their viewpoints are present both in new literature and in historical television documentaries, etc. Even today, the debate continues in recent literature on the topic.¹

The first point of interest is whether Cold War scholars have included the mass media in their works. The main impression is that experts have generally neglected the importance of the media.² What they do is to analyze the superpowers and their actions – concentrating on events, motives, strategies, causes and effects. In doing so, they seem to have underestimated the importance of communications: how the Cold War influenced the media and how the media presented and interpreted Cold War events for their audiences. For decades the most important international news items were related to Cold War events, in Norway as elsewhere. Ordinary people were dependent on the media to keep informed about world events. That was the situation during the whole period, from the late 1940s until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. But very little has been written about this in the Cold War literature. Thus, we can conclude that Cold War historians are not media scholars. In their publications, they are normally not interested in the importance of mass communications: the media are absent from their books. Cold War historians have little to say about the impact of the press, film, radio or television during the Cold War.

But this fact does not mean that media scholars have neglected the Cold War. We find many studies about the media during the Cold War – especially in the United States. These studies show how the media treated the Cold War.³ The Cold War is also dealt with in textbooks by, for example, Briggs and Burke (2002), Chapman (2005) and Kovarik (2011). Media historians have generally been more interested in the Cold War than Cold War historians have been interested in the media.⁴

We need to delve a bit deeper into the field of mass communication research in order to get a better understand of the complex relations between the Cold War and this kind of research. When Paul Lazarsfeld and others developed mass communication research in postwar America, it was at the same time as tensions increased between the US and the Soviet Union and the Cold War developed. Thus, the new warlike atmosphere between East and West also came to influence communication research. During the 1950s, the

new field of mass communication research developed a deep interest in *propaganda* and public opinion through intensive studies of media effects.⁵ The motivation for many of these projects can only be understood in light of the Cold War confrontations that occurred between the two superpowers. *Project Revere* was one of them: In the early 1950s, scholars studied leaflets as a medium of last resort, looking at the degree to which leaflets could be used to reach the population of an enemy country (read: Eastern Europe), when all other possibilities were impossible. The US Air Force sponsored the project.⁶

Another example showing how the Cold War influenced the development of mass communication research is the 1956 book *Four Theories of the Press*, written by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm. The authors analyzed the media by dividing them into "authoritarian" and "liberal" systems. Another pair of concepts – "the social responsible" media theory and the "Soviet media theory" – developed the contrast between the media in West and the East even further: The Western media were characterized using sympathetic terms ("responsible"), while the Soviet media were characterized in a negative way, as totalitarian and controlled by the communist party and the state. There were many good reasons for these characterizations, but most important is how that book portrayed the East-West confrontation at the time. *Four Theories of the Press* became a classic cited text within the field of mass communication research on how we understand the role of the media in modern societies.⁷

Thus, there are many reasons to study the complicated relations between the Cold War and the media in a country. I have chosen the Norwegian media as an example in the following discussion. We begin with an overview of the media development in Norway at the time – as the first of three steps.

PART ONE: Norwegian Media History in the Cold War Era

From the standard text book on Norwegian media history, we can summarize the periods between 1945 and 1991 and their characterizations:

Table 1. *Periods from the Norwegian Media History in the Cold War Era 1945-1991*

Years	Name of period
1945-1950	The Age of the Mass Society The party press and cinema. Radio broadcasting develops NRK 1933. Use of advertising and propaganda during crises and war.
1950-1960	The Media Turn Visual The Post-War Age. Four big mass media: newspapers, weeklies, film and radio. Competition and popularization leading to market saturation. First experiments with television 1954-60.
1960-1980	The Norwegian Media System at its Peak The rise of television as dominant mass medium. Competition between five big mass media: all of them adapt to television. State regulations on broadcasting and cinema theaters, state subsidies to books and the press. Dissolution of the party press.
1980-1991	Transformation of the Media System End of the party press. Breakthrough for market economy: liberalization, deregulation, privatization and commercialization. End of the NRK monopoly. New radio and TV channels: TV3 (1987), TVNorge (1988) and TV2 (1991).

Note: Based on Bastiansen and Dahl 2008: 526-527.

This table provides an overview of the 47 years of Norwegian media history that coincide with the Cold War. In this table, the periods lack international aspects, especially the Cold War. To include it, we need a basic overview of the Cold War chronology.

PART TWO: The Cold War

Even today, there is no agreement among scholars on how to make a periodization of the Cold War. It was so complex that it can be categorized in many different ways. This makes the situation complicated, but it also makes it easier to develop a simple and elementary overview of the Cold War that is adapted to our needs. In a simplistic manner, we may summarize the conflict as follows:

Table 2. The Cold War Chronology 1945-1991

Years	Period
1945-1962	Origin and Early Years of the Cold War Tension between the US and the USSR. Atomic weapons create fear of a nuclear Armageddon, but also thaw periods. The tensions reach climax with the Cuban crisis in 1962.
1963-1979	The Era of Détente A long thaw period after the Cuban crisis. Negotiations for peace and disarmament: SALT I in Moscow 1972, the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and SALT II negotiations. Vietnam War. The Period ends with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the NATO Double Track Decision, December 1979.
1980-1985	New Confrontation between East and West New tension between the US and the Soviet Union. Western boycott of Olympic Games in Moscow 1980. President Reagan's "Evil Empire" speech in 1983. A new peace movement and a strong movement against new generations of nuclear missiles.
1985-1988	The Era of Glasnost Michail Gorbachev and his policy of Glasnost, Perestroika and New Thinking. Glasnost reaches its climax with Gorbachev's speech to the UN in 1988.
1989-1991	Revolts of the Masses and the Fall of Communism Eastern Europe moves from one-party communist regimes to multiparty democracies. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the unification of Germany in 1990 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 end the Cold War.

This table shows the Cold War as two main conflict periods characterized by a high level of tension (1945-1962 and 1980-1985) and separated by a period of Det  nte (1963-1979).

The years 1945-1962 contain the origin of the East-West conflict, even though the experts still discuss how and when it really started. Stalin ruled the Soviet Union while Truman was the US president. In 1946, Churchill, talked about the "Iron Curtain" divid-ing Europe. The so-called "long telegram" from George Kennan in 1946, defining for the first time the Soviet threat, led to the development of the US containment policy. The aim was to establish barriers for Soviet influence in Europe. In 1950, this US containment policy became global with the war in Korea (formulated in the so-called NSC-50 document).

The conflict escalated when both superpowers got the atomic bomb. It was also inten-sified by the Stalin blockade of Berlin and the Western airlift in 1948, the origin of NATO

in 1949, the war in Korea in 1950, the revolt in the DDR in 1953, Nikita Krustchev's way to power, the Hungarian crises in 1956, the Polish protests in 1956, the U2 crises in 1960 and the US Bay of Pigs invasion on Cuba in 1961. The conflict in Europe thus developed into a global conflict. However, Germany came to be of special importance. The allies divided Germany after WWII, including the capital Berlin. The Soviet zone became the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR), while the western zone became the Bundesrepublik Deutschland (BRD). In no other place was the Cold War more visible than on German soil, and especially in the divided Berlin – and even more so after the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.⁸ However, the most dangerous episode came with the Cuban Missile Crises in 1962. Then, the world truly feared a nuclear war.⁹

After the Cuban crisis, the East-West conflict changed character; the years 1963-1979 became an era of *détente*. The superpowers tried to reduce the direct tension. They established a hot line between the White House and the Kremlin, in order to prevent a nuclear war being started inadvertently. Despite events like the Tet offensive in Vietnam and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, both in 1968, the lower level of tension was combined with negotiations on arms reduction and other issues between the superpowers; the SALT I treaty was signed in Moscow in 1972, while the Helsinki negotiations were underway. American astronauts and Soviet cosmonauts met in space, illustrating the more friendly East-West relationship. Nevertheless, the Cold War was still there, but developed more indirectly by proxies, in Vietnam and in other third-world countries like Angola, Somalia and Ethiopia. In such countries, various political actors were supported either by the the US or by the Soviet Union. The *Détente* period reached its climax with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, but was weakened in the late 1970s and ended in 1979.¹⁰

The years 1980-1985 became a new era of confrontation between East and West. It started with the Soviet SS-20 nuclear missiles in the late 1970s. It escalated with the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, which was followed by a partly Western boycott of the Olympic Games in Moscow 1980. In addition, the Polish crises in 1980 and the Soviets shooting down a Korean Airliner (K007) in 1983 contributed to the general tension. President Reagan held his speech about the Soviet Union being an "evil empire" the same year. The NATO Double Track Decision of December 1979 linked deployment of new nuclear missiles in Western Europe to NATO negotiations on arms reduction with the Soviet Union. A new fear of nuclear weapons and nuclear war arose in Europe, motivating a large peace movement. The death of Leonid Brezhnev in 1982 was followed by the brief periods of Jurij Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko until 1985, without reductions in tension and confrontation.

Michail Gorbachev was appointed as new party leader in March 1985. The new Soviet leader soon started to change the signals sent to the West. Gorbachev and Reagan's East-West summit in Geneva the same year was a success. Gorbachev developed many new policies: The "Glasnost" program in 1986 and the "Perestroika" program in 1987, including the "New Thinking" about the role of the USSR in the world.¹¹ Gorbachev and Reagan had important talks on arms reductions the following years. Gorbachev declared, in an important speech to the UN on December 7th 1988, a one-sided significant Soviet reduction of armed forces in Europe. This speech became the climax of these years.¹²

The years 1989-1991 were dramatic. The period started with unrest in Eastern Europe that soon escalated to a popular revolt, which swept across the Eastern bloc. Demonstra-

tors demanded the end of one-party rule by the communist party and the establishment of democratic multiparty systems. The result was stunning: In country after country, the power of the ruling communist elite collapsed. This made the year 1989 as historical as the French revolution of 1789. The most famous single event was the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9th 1989.¹³ However, this was soon followed by other sensational events: the unification of the two German states in 1990 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. As a whole, these events implied the end of the Cold War.¹⁴

PART THREE: Norwegian Media and the Cold War

We have now presented some traits of the Norwegian media development *and* the Cold War chronology between 1945 and 1991, but thus far we have treated them separately. Now, let us try to connect them. In order to do this, we need to make some adaptations and re-formulate the labels of the media history periods, but the names of the Cold War periods are the same as in the former table.

Table 3 links the Norwegian media development *and* the Cold War chronology for the whole period 1945-1991, identifying five main periods.

The First Period: 1945-1962

At the same time as the world saw the origin of the Cold War as a fundamental geopolitical and ideological confrontation between the US and the USSR, the Norwegian newspapers re-established its role from the prewar years: as a party press. The press was divided into the Labour press, the Conservative press, the Liberal press, and the Agrarian press.¹⁵ In the years after 1945, big newspapers like *Aftenposten* and *Arbeiderbladet* started to establish their own network of foreign correspondents covering world events. Simultaneously, the public service broadcaster NRK re-established its role as the national radio broadcaster of both national and international news reports.

The Cold War made a huge impact on the cinema screens from the late 1940s and into the 1950s.¹⁶ The way Hollywood engaged in the East-West struggle soon became visible also in Norwegian cinema theaters. At the same time, a weekly newsreel was launched – *Filmavisen* (NorskFilmrevy). It presented current affairs in sound and picture to the movie audience. It was established in the first days after the liberation, in May 1945. It became so popular that the producers made it into a permanent attraction. In 1960, it met competition from the new NRK television. At the end of 1963, it was closed down because NRK television news had made it irrelevant. From then on, it became the task of the TV news broadcast “*Dagsrevyen*” to cover the world news with pictures.¹⁷

All of this had important consequences for how the media covered Cold War news: from the late 1940s, the East-West conflicts were presented only by the party press or by NRK radio. The communist coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948 frightened not only the Labour Government, but also the Labour press and the non-socialistic party press on the Center/Right. Thus, most of the party press supported the Norwegian NATO membership in 1949.¹⁸ The NRK also reflected the official policy, while *Filmavisen* had a very limited international coverage.¹⁹ The result was very limited scope for alternative views – in fact, these years have been called an “ice age” for freedom of expression on foreign policy in Norway.²⁰ Several important Cold War news events were undoubtedly presented in such

Table 3. *Norwegian Media and the Cold War 1945-1991*

Years	Norwegian Media:	Cold War Chronology:
1945-1962	The party press, newsreels and the golden age of the NRK radio monopoly. Early Television Reconstruction of the party press and the NRK radio after WWII. The newsreel Filmavisen 1945. All media turn visual because of competition. The NRK television 1960 marks the beginning of the Age of Television. Filmavisen ends 1963.	Origin and the Early years of the Cold War Tension between the USA and the USSR after WWII. The Churchill talk about the "Iron Curtain" in Europe 1946. The atomic bomb. Fear for nuclear war. The communist coup in Czechoslovakia 1948. Berlin blockade and western airlift 1948. The origin of NATO 1949: Norway became member. The revolt in DDR 1953. The Hungarian crises 1956. Some brief thaw periods. The U2 affair 1960. The Berlin Wall 1961. Tension reaches climax with the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.
1963-1979	The Norwegian Media System at its Peak The Golden age of the NRK monopoly. Television as the dominant mass medium: all other media adapt. State regulations create the 'Peak' of the Norwegian media model. Coverage of the Vietnam war and of the national debate on membership in EEC in 1972. The liberal press starts the dissolution of the party press. Also, debate about the NRK monopoly.	The Era of Détente Lower East-West tension after the Cuban crisis. A telephonic "hot line" between the White House and the Kremlin. Negotiations for peace and disarmament. SALT I in Moscow in 1972. The Helsinki Final Act of 1975. SALT II negotiations. Space race. US engagement in Vietnam escalates under Kennedy and Johnson and continues under Nixon, until the war ends in 1975. Conflicts in the third world show the East-West conflict indirectly. After the Soviet SS-20 nuclear missiles in Europe, the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and the NATO Dual Track Decision, the Era of Détente ends December 1979.
1980-1985	The Transformation of the Media Begins The end of the NRK monopoly 1981. Liberalization, privatization and commercialization of media. New radio and TV channels established. Video and satellite TV. The dissolution of the party press reaches the conservative and agrarian press.	New Confrontation between East and West New tension between the Soviet Union and the US. Soviet war in Afghanistan. Western boycott of Olympic Games in Moscow 1980. The Polish crisis in 1980 and the rise of Solidarity. The Soviets shooting down a Korean airliner 1983. President Reagan's "Evil Empire" speech. The death of Brezhnev in 1982. Andropov and Csernenko as Soviet leaders until 1985. Widespread fear of nuclear war. Peace demonstrations and a strong movement against nuclear weapons in Europe.
1985-1988	The Transformation Continues More newspapers declare independence from political parties. Orkla Media starts its expansion in the media sector. New TV Channels: TV3 (1987) and TVNorge (1988). Free market economy ideas transforms the media; investors and stockholders.	The Era of Glasnost Michail Gorbachev and his policy of glasnost (1986), perestroika and new thinking (1987). Four summit meetings between Gorbachev and Reagan. Climax of his policy in 1988 with his speech to the UN General Assembly 7 December 1988.
1989-1991	The Last Days of the Party Press and the Rise of Commercial Media Groups Shaping of big media groups: Schibsted and the A Press as an answer to Orkla Media. End of the party press. TV2 established 1991, starts broadcasts 1992.	Revolts of the Masses and the Fall of Communism Hungary opens the Iron Curtain. The Fall of the Berlin Wall 1989. Communist regimes fall in Eastern Europe. Change to multiparty democracies. Unification of East and West Germany in 1990. Collapse of Soviet Union in 1991. The end of the Cold War.

a context: the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948, the revolts in the DDR in 1953 and in Hungary in 1956, and the Berlin crisis in 1961. News reporting on such events was done by newspapers and broadcasting, with close connections to the political parties and the Labour Government of the time. The US war in Vietnam was supported by the conservative newspaper *Aftenposten*, while the liberal *Dagbladet* criticized it. The main Labour

newspaper, *Arbeiderbladet*, changed its view from support to critique.²¹ After establishment of NRK television in 1960, the Cold War news soon began to fill the television news reports. Studies have shown that NRK's TV coverage of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 was a breakthrough for TV coverage of international Cold War events.²²

The Second Period: 1963-1979

Table 3 shows a remarkable parallel between the Détente period of the Cold War and how the Norwegian media system was reaching its highest level of public regulation and state subsidies at exactly the same time. The era of Détente meant a lower level of tension in the East-West conflict, negotiations about SALT I and II and the signing of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. The US and the USSR were seeking to avoid direct confrontations, although there were several wars and conflicts by proxy in the third world, motivated by the same rivalry.²³

News about the Cold War events of this period was reported by Norwegian media at their peak as a national media system: the combination of the party press and the NRK radio and television monopoly *and* state subsidies for newspapers and film. Nevertheless, the party loyalty of the press was changing. The Liberal press soon disappeared after an intense debate and national referendum – concerning Norwegian membership in the EEC in 1972. It was the first group of the party press that disappeared. One of the main reasons was the competition from NRK television. In its coverage of party politics, the NRK had to be balanced and fair to both supporters and opponents of Norwegian EEC membership, while the party loyal newspapers were dominated by a partisan pro-EEC viewpoint. The Liberal press was being squeezed by both sides in the issue. Television expanded rapidly after 1960 and became the dominating mass medium, nationwide from 1967. In the late 1960s, the TV news made place names like Vietnam and Biafra known to everyone. Television also provided extensive coverage of the Tet offensive in Vietnam and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 – as well as the Apollo moon landing in July 1969.

All this meant that the NRK became even more important than before. In the 1960s it also started to establish its own foreign correspondent offices abroad; the first came in London (1964), then New York (1965), Paris (1966), Bonn (1967), Moscow (1968), Washington (1970), Hong Kong (1970) etc. This network of correspondents was established along the East-West axis of the Cold War.²⁴ In the 1970s, new correspondents in the Third World (Africa, Asia and Latin America) modified it.²⁵ Because the NRK covered the whole nation with radio and television every day – and did it from a privileged monopoly situation – its coverage of world events provided important common experiences for the whole population. The biggest newspapers – like *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet* and *Arbeiderbladet* – continued to use their own foreign correspondents in the coverage during these years.

This had important consequences: It meant that the news of the détente period between East and West was presented by media in quite a different position than in the late 1940s and early 1950s – the party press had begun to disappear, while the position of the NRK as a combined radio and television monopoly was stronger than ever. The NRK correspondents produced many important programs interpreting international events, wrote books and participated in public debates. Several of them became national

celebrities with high credibility.²⁶ The Norwegian media system, with a high degree of public regulations and state subsidies, was at its peak during the era of détente.

The Third Period: 1980-1985

The third period shows a striking co-existence between the new confrontation between East and West after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and NATO's Double Track Decision in December 1979 and the beginning of a major transformation of Norwegian media. At the same time as the Western boycott of the Olympic Games in Moscow 1980, the Polish crises and the rise of the Solidarity Movement, the Norwegian party press was riddled by conflicts caused by reduced loyalty to the political parties: They occurred within the Labour press, the Conservative press and the Agrarian press in the early 1980s. They all wanted to end partisan political journalism.

The Conservative Government ended the NRK monopoly in 1981. That decision was part of the Government's liberalization and privatization policy for radio and television, which paved the way for many new local and private radio and television stations and the new "media age" of the 1980s. At the same time, the media reported about the new confrontation between the superpowers. A new "Ice Age" in East-West relations followed the era of Détente in the early part of the 1980s. It was a paradox, because all the new media channels in Western countries like Norway meant more communication, more news and more media content, while the new confrontation between the two superpowers at exactly the same time also meant more tension, harder talk and less information available for the media.²⁷ The new confrontation also increased the fear of a nuclear Armageddon. Thus, the same mass media that covered the new East-West confrontation moved into a period marked by change: newspapers moved away from the party press tradition, while the NRK expanded into the new media age with a myriad of new local radio stations and new television channels like TV3 (1987) and TVNorge (1988).

The Fourth Period: 1985-1988

The transformation of Norwegian media continued into the second half of the 1980s, but now in quite a new era of East-West relations. Soon after the appointment of Gorbachev in 1985, the USSR sent new signals to the West through international news channels. This was part of the new Glasnost policy. The Russian word "glasnost" means "openness" – and was a keyword for the new Soviet leader. In 1986, the news showed a new kind of openness within the USSR: a new desire to discuss internal problems in public. In 1987, Gorbachev launched his "Perestroika" program.²⁸ These new signals soon changed the East-West relations and reduced some of the tensions of former years. It seemed as if a new era had begun.

For Norwegian media this happened while the party press tradition in the Labour press, the Conservative press and the Agrarian press was moving quickly to its end. The NRK also began to change, in order to meet the growing competition from videocassette recorders, satellite TV and the new television channels. The media were being liberalized, privatized and commercialized away from the "Norwegian system" of the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, media coverage of the Glasnost period coincided with a time of major structural changes within the Norwegian media sector. However, the Soviet media were also changing by allowing more open and critical discussions.²⁹ However important this

development was, there is very little Norwegian research on it. One exception is a study on reception of the television coverage of the summit between Reagan and Gorbachev in Moscow in 1988.³⁰

The Fifth Period: 1989-1991

The fifth period, 1989-1991, came, surprisingly, to mark the end of the Cold War. No one could have guessed, in advance, that mass demonstrations would manage to press the communist parties out of power in Eastern Europe. The myriad spectacular events taking place included the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the unification of East and West Germany in 1990 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It was sensational news and covered by the mass media globally.

In Norway, these events were covered by media heavily influenced by the transformations of the late 1980s. From 1987, the national economic crisis contributed to declining advertisement income for newspapers. On the other hand, most of the press had now declared its editorial independence from the political parties. The Labour press ended its formal loyalty to the Labour Party in 1991 – as the last party press to do so. Three new big media groups came out of this process: Orkla Media, Schibsted and the A-Press. In addition, from 1989 the NRK started competing in a more active and aggressive way. Now, the aim of NRK was to survive on the new media market.

A new private TV2 began its broadcasts in September 1992. It came too late to provide contemporary journalistic coverage of the fall of communism in the East and the events that followed until the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. In TV2, the Cold War was history right from the start. The only thing this new channel could do was to give retrospective coverage of selected Cold War events – and that it did.³¹

Although the coverage was massive, studies of how the media actually covered the last part of the Cold War and the fall of communism are still lacking.³²

Cold War reporting: Network or System?

This brief discussion shows that Norwegian media changed a great deal *during* the Cold War. The media that covered the Glasnost period and the fall of communism in the late 1980s were quite different from the media that covered the beginning of the conflict in the late 1940s. Any study of how the Norwegian media – the press, film or broadcasting – covered Cold War events must acknowledge these changes and incorporate them into the analysis. One important aspect is the importance of foreign news correspondents abroad.

Today, we have two models explaining the postwar growth of foreign correspondents covering world events during the Cold War. Maria Nakken developed the first one. She analyses the foreign correspondents of the NRK as a *network* of sites and persons reporting events back to Norway. How NRK did this was deeply influenced by the East-West axis during the Cold War: The correspondents were placed in New York and Washington, the capitals of Western Europe and in the Soviet capital, Moscow. Only later was this network modified with new sites in Africa, Asia and Latin America that reflected the North-South dimension and the third world.³³

Rolf Werenskjold developed the second model. He identified what he calls the Norwegian foreign news *system* – which includes the major national newspapers and the NRK.

He has identified the establishment of the Norwegian postwar system of international news coverage (1945-1964), how and why it expanded (1965-1974), when it was in its zenith with the highest number of foreign correspondents (1975-1994) as well as its later decline (1995-2011).³⁴ Interesting enough, he shows that the system was at its biggest in the later part of the Cold War, as measured by correspondent sites around the world, from 1975 until 1994. He especially identified *Aftenposten* as the leading Norwegian foreign news medium. In this last period, foreign news journalism in Norwegian media reached its climax of coverage, especially in the number of reports from Norwegian foreign correspondents

Conclusion: The relationship between Media and Events

In this article, we have studied the Norwegian media development between 1945 and 1991 (Table 1), the Cold War chronology (Table 2) and then we have connected the two (Table 3). The following discussion sums up, in a general way, how these two may be connected. This opens up a much broader discussion about what kind of influence there was between the Cold War and the media. The discussion has shown that during most of the Cold War history, the events themselves have been the non-dependent variables influencing media coverage. We can identify this influence in the world news, which created public interest and debate, but also in film and television. Without the Cold War, a huge range of topics would not have been in the media at all. Consequently, it is easy to conclude that the East-West conflict influenced the media content in a massive way – as many previous studies have shown. Future research will undoubtedly discover new examples of this from-events-to-the-media influence. Also for the Norwegian media, we need more content analyses in this area.

But is this the only form of influence between events and media? What about the *other* direction: Is there any possibility that the media could have influenced public opinions, policymakers and Cold War events? If such influences are found, they will increase the relevance of mass communication research in Cold War studies. So, what can media studies say about this?

Several Western radio stations penetrated the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the Cold War: Voice of America, BBC External Service, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, Deutsche Welle, Deutschlandfunk, Radio in the American Sector (RIAS Berlin), etc. We have many evaluations of how important they were for listeners living under communist rule. Impulses from Western radio programs reached listeners with news and comments – even if they lived under communist control behind the Iron Curtain. These radio stations undermined the authority of the Communist party and inspired dissidents, at least in some parts of the population.³⁵ Some of the radio stations even conducted research on their actual audience behind the Iron Curtain.³⁶

For me, the most interesting example of this is the Glasnost era that began in 1985. After the dramatic years of confrontation 1980-1985, a new period in the East-West relationship started with Michail Gorbachev as the new Soviet leader. His idea of “Glasnost” was in fact a kind of implementation of Western ideas of openness and public debate – but within a nuclear superpower with a one-party state ruled by the mighty communist party. That was unique. The summit meetings between Gorbachev and Reagan showed improved relations between the US and the USSR. This created hope for a better future in the rest of the world.

However, the main point here is this: Glasnost was in fact a *media experiment* in the Soviet Union. Glasnost included a more lively public debate and a freer form of Soviet journalism. The media could even be oppositional and critical of communist leaders in the Kremlin. That was a radical new situation for the Soviet media – with its history as state controlled enterprises established by Lenin and Stalin. The aim of the Soviet media had always been to support the policies of the Communist Party. In the Soviet media system, there was no place for independent media working outside the control of the party. Thus, the Glasnost policy of Gorbachev was really a new phenomenon in Soviet society. In short: Glasnost made the Soviet media much more interesting than before, also for Western foreign correspondents.³⁷

So when the Soviet media entered the Glasnost period, it also influenced the reports and images sent by foreign news correspondents based in Soviet. Their news reports changed the public image of the USSR in Western media. The Glasnost policy – together with Perestroika and “New Thinking” – explains why dissidents in Eastern Europe began to look at the Soviet Union with optimism and continued their work against the communist elite – leading to the events of 1989. In fact, it is impossible to understand 1989 without understanding the era of Glasnost. It is also impossible to understand the Glasnost phenomenon without the media dimension. Thus, in Soviet society during these years, the direction of influence undoubtedly also went from the media to the events. Or more precisely, Gorbachev’s policy of Glasnost gave the Soviet media a new and more offensive role in the news and public debate. Then, the Soviet mass media began to influence the whole situation in their own society, but also in Eastern Europe, stimulating the situation that led to 1989.

Understood in this perspective, the Soviet media in the Glasnost era must be regarded as one of the contributing forces that led to the fall of communism in 1989. Thus, influence was not only moving from events to media, but also from media coverage to new news events. This means that we have a complicated situation marked by bidirectional influence. The media were not only passive mirrors, but – at least in some parts of this history – they also influenced events.

But what about the Norwegian media in this situation? Any conclusion on this must be tentative, because we need more research. Of course, their news coverage did not change Soviet society or the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. But their reporting of these years must have been deeply influenced by changes in Soviet media and how they discussed social problems in new ways. Thus, we can say that the Glasnost era in the Soviet media also changed foreign news journalism in Norwegian media – and thus the public image of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s. Explaining how this happened is still open for upcoming research.

Notes

1. See for instance Gaddis 2005
2. LaFeber 1991, Gaddis 2005, Lundestad 2004, Lundestad 2010, Hahnimäki and Westad 2003, Leffler 2004, Tjelmeland 2006, Villaume and Westad (eds.) 2010, Loth 2010
3. Here are some examples: Aronson (1970/1990), MacDonald (1985), Short (1985); Nelson (1997), Barnard (1999), Cummings (2009) and (2010).
4. For German media see Bruner 1989, Hesse 1990, Hoff 1990 and Steinmetz 2004
5. See Klapper 1960
6. Lowery and DeFleur 1995: 213-237

7. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm 1956, Hallin and Mancini 2004
8. Taylor 2009
9. Dodds 2011, Mohn 1962
10. Thomas 2001, Knutsen 2012
11. See Gorbachev 1987, 1996 and 2013
12. See Gorbachev 2013: 490-501
13. Meyer 2009
14. Gaddis 2005, Lundestad 2010, Hahnimäki and Westad 2003 and Tjelmeland 2006
15. Bastiansen 2009
16. Evensmo 1955. Leab 1988
17. Totland 1992, see also Bastiansen 1996
18. Eriksen 1972
19. Dahl and Bastiansen 1999: 230ff, Jacobsen 1993, see also Meyer 2008, Skre 2010, Fonn 2011
20. Dahl and Bastiansen 2000: Chapter 7, p. 153-195
21. Melle 1973
22. Totland 1992: 75-77
23. For Norwegian television coverage of the Vietnam war, see Bastiansen 1997
24. Bastiansen 1996:240-245
25. Nakken 2007
26. See Johansen 1976 and 1977, and Steinfeld 1982, 1984 and 1986
27. Steinfeld 1982
28. Gorbachev 1987, Gorbachev 2013
29. See Steinfeld 1986, Røssum 1990
30. Østerud 1999
31. See Bastiansen 2011: 124-132
32. Røssum 1990, Steinfeld 1990, 1991
33. Nakken 2007
34. Werenskjöld 2011: 238ff
35. See Short 1986, Nelson 1997, Heil 2003
36. See Short 1986: 227ff
37. See Steinfeld 1986, 1990, 1991 and Røssum 1990

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Celebrification, Authenticity, Gossip

The Celebrity Humanitarian

Anne Jerslev

Abstract

The article discusses the celebrity humanitarian as media construction. Departing from a discussion of celebrification, the article argues that celebrities in public roles outside the field of entertainment are inevitably framed by and structured in accordance with celebrity logic. The article discusses how celebrity humanitarianism is a contested field, which, in order for a particular activity to support the celebrity persona, relies heavily on strategies of authentication. Finally, the article shows how information about a photograph of Angelina Jolie from her trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo in March 2013 is *transformed* and *translated into gossip* about the star's private life when discussed by users on a celebrity site.

Keywords: celebrification, celebrity humanitarianism, authenticity, gossip, Angelina Jolie

“[...] offering support for global charities has become both practically part of the contemporary celebrity job description and a hallmark of the established star” (Littler 2008: 238-39).

Introduction

To an ever-greater extent, humanitarian organizations and movements against injustices are allying themselves with celebrities. Thanks to celebrities' visibility, they can call immediate attention to important global causes and how to help troubled areas and peoples; they can act as intermediaries between publics and political movements; and they may be able to translate and communicate complex global political and economic structures into understandable terms. In their increasingly important and present roles as new global actors, they embody “a visibility/cultural power dynamic that can be transmuted into political currency” (Barron 2009: 215).¹ At the same time, through the very same activity, celebrities are marketing themselves as *humanitarian celebrities*, creating a sellable brand identity and possibly thereby improving their general value in the entertainment business (Turner 2004, Marshall 1997, Kapoor 2013).

Correspondingly, there is a growing body of scholarly literature discussing celebrity “do-gooding” (Littler 2008: 238, Kapoor 2013: 13, Richey and Ponte 2011: 34). Celebrities are studied as global celebrity humanitarians or celebrity philanthropists, doing celebrity charity (Littler 2008), or as aid celebrities doing celebrity activism (Richey and Ponte 2011) or celebrity diplomacy (Goodman & Barnes 2011, Cooper 2008, Wheeler 2011 and 2013, Littler 2011 – hence also the term ‘Bonoization’ of diplomacy (Cooper

2008)); studies deal with celebrity environmentalism (Brockington 2008), transnational celebrity activism (Tsaliki, Frangonikolopoulos and Huliaras 2011, Wheeler 2013), and celebrities making interventions in development causes (Brockington 2011) or embodying the “growing celebritisation of environment and development” (Goodman 2010). What is less discussed, however, is that in these roles celebrities not only address a politically aware public but also create or consolidate *fan communities*, which may not be interested in global politics at all but rather in following whatever a certain star is up to. Hence, whether represented as humanitarians in the news media or debated on a celebrity site, celebrities are formed and transformed through “processes of celebrification” (Gamson 1994, Couldry 2004; Driessens 2012, Rojek 2001).

There is no doubt that celebrities are able to draw the world society’s attention to global injustices. Nonetheless, how much change celebrities’ charity work actually instigates is a contested issue, and Thrall et al. (2008) demonstrate that remarkably little media attention is actually given to what they call celebrity advocacy.² Moreover, notwithstanding the funding and attention brought to important causes by celebrities at the top of the A-list, criticism of the celebrity in the role of humanitarian is conducted both loudly and noisily on the Internet. Different kinds of pre-existing knowledge about the celebrity in question are activated in order to assess the image of him or her as goodwill ambassador or fundraiser. On a celebrity site like *JustJared*, discussants seem to position themselves rather dichotomously. In the case of a prominent celebrity humanitarian like Angelina Jolie, they either praise her as authentically using her status to create awareness about injustices, for example raising awareness about rape against women in war zones; or, she is condemned as a self-promoting commodity whose acts of charity, goodwill and political awareness are dismissed as simply serving the star’s self-branding, with visits to war zones or refugee camps just providing another photo opportunity.

Celebrity humanitarianism is, hence, a contested issue. This article focuses on the celebrity humanitarian as media construction. In the last part of the paper I will use Angelina Jolie as my example and show how information about one of her humanitarian trips is *transformed* and *translated into gossip* when discussed by users on a celebrity site. The first part of the paper will also use Angelina Jolie as the case in point, but here I will discuss media constructions of celebrity and goodwill/charity/aid from a more theoretical point of view.

I start by discussing celebrities’ charity/goodwill work as *celebrification*. Next I discuss *authenticity* or *sincerity* – an important issue, not least when it comes to the mediation of celebrity charity. I discuss authenticity or sincerity in relation to the construction of the *celebrity persona*, and how this term fits in with celebrification.

Dan Brockington (2011) claims³ that authenticity is the single most contested issue in debates about celebrities as goodwill ambassadors, their relationships with NGOs, their intervention in development causes, etc. I address Brockington’s empirically based outline of the way media agencies verbalize the importance of authenticity; how, for the interaction between celebrities and NGOs to work, celebrities must be experienced as authentic. But I also discuss the term authenticity in relation to celebrity and the way it involves, as Paddy Scannell puts it, “a performative paradox” (1996: 58). I argue that authenticity is a relational and discursive endeavor and is therefore always negotiated in specific contexts. I finally turn to gossip communication, analyzing a debate on the celebrity site *JustJared* following the posting (on March 26, 2013) of a picture of Angelina Jolie from

the March 2013 trip she and British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs William Hague made to the Democratic Republic of Congo to raise awareness of war zone mass rape. As always on *JustJared*, the photo is accompanied by a short descriptive text. Hereby, I want to illuminate what challenges *celebrity logic* as a media practice poses to the activist or goodwill function. In other words, what I want to argue in this article is that the mediation of celebrity humanitarianism is always framed by and structured within celebrity logic.

Celebrification

Chris Rojek defines celebrity as “the attribution of glamorous or notorious status to an individual within the public sphere” (2001: 10). Graeme Turner puts it in a similar, albeit more categorical, way:

[w]e can map the precise moment a public figure becomes a celebrity. It occurs at the point at which media interest in their activities is transferred from reporting on their public role (such as their specific achievements in politics or sport) to investigating the details of their private life (2004: 8).

It goes without saying that a celebrity is not a blank page but rather a criss-cross of meaning, an intertextual network of past and present public appearances in primary, secondary and tertiary texts (Fiske 1987), which partake in celebrity discourse and participate in the construction of the celebrity as a popular cultural person; or, rather, a popular cultural *persona*.

The persona designates a “coherent subjectivity” (King 1991), an effort on the part of agents, PR people and the star to construct a distinct and recognizable image of a particular public person. It consists of a dynamic interaction between *the roles* (in films and television series), *the personality* (the star’s appearance as “himself” or “herself”, for example when offering glimpses into his or her private life on talk shows or in interviews), and the *image*. The image is the shared idea of the star as a recognizable individuality built up over a period of time. Hence, the term persona points at the constructedness inherent in celebrity and how agency in celebrity culture is distributed among a range of players. Moreover, we should understand celebrity as *at once a noun and an adjective*. Celebrity is at once a public *person(a)* in popular culture and, as emphasized by Marwick & boyd (2011), a particular continuous process or *practice* through which the meaning of celebrity is produced and negotiated.

Understood as a practice, celebrity is exactly *a doing* in and through the media in a continuous – public or more concealed – negotiation, even struggle, with PR people, the media, fans and the celebrity over the meaning of the persona – or the celebrity subjectivity. Hence, celebrity practice involves struggles over power. In order to conceptualize this practice or process in more depth, I use the term *celebrification*. Celebrification is a process that spreads across culture, and in so doing not only reproduces but also produces celebrity and may transform bloggers, YouTube-video performers and users on social networking sites into celebrities.

According to Couldry (2004) and before him Gamson (1994), celebrification is the process through which the ordinary (that which is outside the media), or that which does not belong to the realm of popular culture in the first place, acquires a media form.⁴

Driessens (2012) claims that two different concepts, *celebrification* and *celebritization*, are used interchangeably in celebrity studies. Consequently, in line with Gamson and Couldry he makes the case that the first term should label the particular process whereby ordinary people or public figures are transformed into celebrities; further, he clarifies that celebrification involves processes of privatization, personalization and commodification. Celebritization, on the other hand, should be reserved for what he, following Krotz (2007), designates as a “metaprocess”; that is, a more thorough and therefore also less demarcated and less linear cultural process influencing society on all levels and over a larger historical span. Accordingly, Driessens regards celebritization to be “on a par with globalization, individualization or mediatization” (2012: 3). Celebritization is thus a long-term process of “the societal and cultural changes implied by celebrity” (ibid.).

It seems to me that the very specific way celebrification is used by especially Couldry is too limiting.⁵ On the other hand, celebritization is too general to be able to underpin more concrete micro- and meso-level celebrity processes anchored in a specific media cultural context. Hence, in line with Driessens and also Rojek (2000), who understands celebrification exactly as ways celebrity culture molds culture and everyday life as a whole – the ways social encounters seem to be enveloped in what he calls “mediagenic filters”, I propose to use the term celebrification to pinpoint the particular dynamic functioning of celebrity culture. Moreover, I propose to understand celebrification processes as structured in accordance with what I would call *celebrity logic*. Inspired by Altheide and Snow’s classical (1979) term *media logic*, celebrity logic can be understood as the media process wherein the basic discursive parameters famously coined by Richard Dyer (1992 [1979], 2004 [1986]) – the ordinary and the extraordinary in the celebrity appearance and the private and the public part of the celebrity’s life – shape the form and content of celebrity culture. Or, put another way: celebrification processes unfold dynamically along the way of this *particular logic*. Celebrification embraces both quantitative and qualitative cultural transformations. Celebrification should be regarded broadly as covering the continuous cross-media processes whereby the meaning of celebrity is negotiated and maintained through interactions between the media, their users and the celebrity in question. As such, celebrification is unthinkable without the media.

Celebrity as Practice

The media are increasingly focusing on celebrities’ private lives. More and more, cultural journalism consists of printing or posting stories and images, which may feed the ubiquitous gossip culture – and vice versa. Therefore, increasingly, *doing celebrity is strategic work*. Practicing celebrity is performing a marketable persona, which has to be unique and irreplaceable. Practicing celebrity means the continuous strategic work in order to reproduce the celebrity value. Hence, the celebrity is the epitome of what sociologist Andrew Wernick (1991) called a “culture of universal promotion”. Celebrity is a media cultural practice whereby the celebrity is commodity, commodity producer and ad at one and the same time.

My point is therefore that *the celebrity, in his or her capacity as charity or goodwill ambassador/activist, cannot escape celebrification*. No matter the good work and despite the widespread acknowledgment of it, it is in itself rarely accepted as simply good work. Images of celebrities as goodwill ambassadors or spokespersons for different

good causes are framed within and contribute to what Sue Collins (2008) has called the *celebrity infrastructure*, the dynamic yet hierarchical system of distinction in which the very famous international star is ranked at the top of the list with regard to economic and symbolic capital and the national reality star at the bottom. Which players fill out the positions in the infrastructure is always up for negotiation, and a range of different strategies may be activated in order to maintain a position. From the point of view of celebrity as doing and celebrity logic, *charity and goodwill work may be understood as one such strategy*.

Hence, celebrities' *do-gooding* may be understood as a means for them to gain control of their image and the photographs being taken of them (Foreman 2009). Embodying symbolic and economic capital in celebrity culture is being in a position where one has power over *access*. The higher a celebrity is ranked in the infrastructure, the more limited the access to him or her and the more valuable the actual photographs being taken and stories told. And conversely, the harder it is for journalists and photographers to get access and information, the more extraordinary the celebrity. This logic may have changed with digitization and social networking sites (like Instagram and Twitter), where celebrity practice among some of the very famous has turned towards a seemingly more direct and undisclosed communication with fans and followers. The Twitter discourse, for example, attaches to the celebrity a sense of present-ness and access to private thoughts and life not usually available. Hence, both celebrities' activity on Twitter and celebrities' charity or goodwill work could be regarded as media strategies aiming at *impression management*, to use Goffman's (1990 [1959]) term, or efforts at exerting control over the image in a "vision regime" that, as pointed out by Sean Redmond, "leaves little if any space for them [celebrities] to be off-screen, out of print, switched off" (2006: 34).

This way of thinking is expressed by the director of Los Angeles-based Creative Artist Agency (CAA), Michelle Kydd Lee, in an interview (Foreman 2009) about agencies' work to find the right causes for the right celebrities. Faced with the ever-more aggressive ways the paparazzi operate, Kydd Lee ventured the following proposition:

If all this [the paparazzi stalking] is coming to you anyway, you might as well try to use it in a positive way to help someone. Princess Diana was brilliant at that – you know, 'you're following me anyway, so come with me to the [AIDS] hospice'.

As a particular celebrification process, celebrity *do-gooding* is basically one way of producing and reproducing celebrity, an instrument for distinction, a means of developing symbolic capital, a means of solidifying the fan base, a means for the continuous reproduction of a sellable, likeable persona. However, designating celebrity *do-gooding* as celebrification does not preclude understanding celebrities as engaged and respected humanitarians (Cooper 2008). My aim is not, like Kapoor's (2013), to argue that celebrity humanitarianism is advancing neoliberal capitalism. I am interested in how the term may help us understand how media operate in accordance with a certain logic (celebrity logic) and how it may open to consistent analyses of the workings of celebrity culture. Moreover, as pointed out by people in the entertainment business,⁶ celebrity goodwill and charity is in many ways risky business as it challenges one of the core parameters in the construction of the celebrity persona – authenticity. "Sincerity's vice is hypocrisy", Paddy Scannell claims (1996: 69). Accusations of hypocrisy always loom on the horizon whenever a celebrity is attached to a good cause.

Authenticity and do-gooding

According to Paddy Scannell (1996), who has talked most illuminatingly about authenticity and sincerity (which he discusses in two separate chapters in his book; however, in this article I do not distinguish between the two terms), sincerity is “a form of self-display without concealment [...] To be sincere is to be the genuine article, the real thing” (59). Of course, here Scannell – as he emphasizes himself – is inspired by Goffman’s (1990 [1959]) theory of social communication as performance. We are always audience and players for each other on shifting stages, and depend on each other for the recognition and acceptance of the impression of reality our performance is intended to project. Therefore, to Goffman, authenticity is a *question of acting authentic*.

Goffman’s point – as well as Scannell’s – is that authenticity is a social and relational endeavor; it is not something inherent in a person but rather an impression that is intercommunicatively negotiated. *Authenticity is what an audience accepts as authentic*. Conversely, authenticity can only be pulled off successfully if a person is able to perform as authentic, as Scannell puts it. Authenticity/sincerity is therefore a fragile act. Emotions become true only when they are made so by a performer and accepted to be so by an audience. Herein lies the performative paradox referred to at the beginning of this article. Authenticity is a performance, which is intersubjectively negotiated; however, “if a person’s behavior is perceived by others as a performance it will be judged as insincere, for sincerity presupposes, as its general condition, the absence of performance” (Scannell 1996: 58).

Not least when celebrities appear as new actors on the global charity scene, accusations of hypocrisy are lurking right under the surface. “There is nothing worse than someone who may be well-intentioned but is out of their element”, says the director of United Talent Agency’s (UTA) division of celebrity charity (Foreman 2009; see also Brockington 2011 for similar quotes). Therefore, what agencies and celebrity charity fan websites – for example the website *Look to the Stars. The World of Celebrity Giving* (<http://www.look-tothestars.org>) – are doing is trying to prevent such interpretations from spreading across the Internet. One such way is to be careful that the celebrity charity/goodwill activity is *in accordance with the persona*; that his or her particular way of do-gooding is contributing to the construction of the celebrity as *distinct subjectivity*. This is what is implied in agencies’ talk about *matching clients to causes*, which means either that the client/celebrity can relate personally to the cause (a cancer history, AIDS in the family, etc.) or because a cause fits in otherwise with the star persona: “It is their [the agencies’] job to match their clients – actors, directors, musicians and athletes – with suitable causes in almost the same way that the old studios arranged marriages for stars”, claims Foreman (2009).

Thus, Angelina Jolie’s recent work in dangerous areas, calling attention to horrible war atrocities and aiming to empower women contribute perfectly to her persona (cf. Littler 2008, Cooper 2008): Angelina Jolie’s starring roles have mostly been as the tough action heroine, as in *Tomb Raider* and *Salt* as well as other films, from *The Bone Collector* to *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*, but also as the powerful mother figure in historical (adventure) epics (*Alexander* and *Beowulf*) and the everyday heroine under difficult political circumstances (*A Mighty Heart*). She has a history as a person of radical and transgressive actions (Swibel 2006, Barron 2009) (corresponding with her role in *Girl, Interrupted*), but has later become the mother of six – three of whom are adopted – and to a certain extent combining the two strands of her personal life, the radical and the nurturing, in her much-publicized double mastectomy.

Either way, what is performed by different means whenever celebrities do humanitarian work is the *authentication* of being a famous celebrity, who motivated by personal feelings and experiences or simply moral feelings of right and wrong, supports charity, becomes the spokesperson for a good cause, or rises to be an important player on the global scene of development politics. *Witnessing* is a particularly important tool in processes of authentication. “Having been there” confers authenticity and authority on the celebrity, and entitles him or her to talk about what happened.

Dan Brockington’s approach to authenticity is based on an analysis of a large empirical body of interviews with journalists and actors in the NGO and celebrity business about celebrities working with NGOs. Brockington proposes four criteria or strategies for constructing celebrity humanitarians as authentic: *expert or experiential authority* (knowledge and experience), *affinity* (similarity with others), *empathy* (shared emotions with others as a result of similar experiences) and *sympathy* (emotions provoked by the other’s fate).

Expert authority is probably the strongest authentication strategy. Here experience is what authenticates, for example by *having witnessed* and, hence, by *being knowledgeable*.⁷ Repetition (having been there several times) enhances authenticity; for example, journalist Cathy Newman from Channel 4, who travelled with Angelina Jolie and William Hague to Congo, carefully constructs the star as expert and hence as trustworthy by emphasizing, “For more than a decade she’s been visiting refugee camps around the world. She’s done so in more than 40 countries” (Newman 2013).

Brockington’s second strategy, *affinity*, is also an often used strategy of authentication, despite the risk that it might backfire, turning the attention away from the cause and sentimentally back on the celebrity, for example authenticating caring for children in areas of natural catastrophe by referring to the celebrity as a mother. The risk here is that what Richey and Ponte call “confessions of caring” (2011: 26) may supersede the power of celebrities as “emotional sovereigns” (op. cit.: 20 et passim). Being constituted as basically ordinary like everyone else is another example of this strategy. Scannell underlines that sincerity is “one defining characteristic of any person appearing in the public realm who lays claim to ordinariness” (1996: 74). As discourses of ordinariness are crucial to the functioning of celebrity logic, connecting authenticity to ordinariness is an obvious strategy. An example is again taken from Cathy Newman’s article, where she assures the reader that Jolie receives no star treatment but will be “sharing the same accommodation and travel arrangements as the rest of us”. Finally, empathy and sympathy act as signifiers of caring when performed by celebrities as restrained emotionality. Here they show that they are affected; through the acting out of emotion and the disclosure of intimacy, they may moreover reveal the private person behind the celebrity appearance and be constructed as ordinary persons who become better, less self-centered individuals by doing charity work.⁸

Gossip as Celebrification

Celebrification processes are to an ever-greater extent driven by users’ active, and quickly instigated, molding of the celebrity persona. The media coverage of celebrities’ work for good causes may be received by users in ways that have nothing to do with these causes. The Internet is filled with a diversity of babbling, unfocused, aggressive, devoted or enthusiastic voices, and it is completely impossible for PR people to control

what spreads across it. The celebrity as humanitarian seems to work very well. However, this work also produces spillover effects.

In this last section I will discuss celebrity gossip as celebrification, using as my case the posting of comments to the Jolie photograph on *JustJared* under the heading “Angelina Jolie Visits Rescue Camp for Women”⁹. Here, users transpose a public issue of violation, war and geopolitics into gossip about the celebrity. Celebrity logic thus works both through transpositions of the public to the private and through negotiations of the ordinary and the extraordinary. Furthermore, the private, the personal and the emotional are negotiated through gossiping on the one hand, and through exchanges of opinions about the star’s sincerity on the other. Gossiping takes the form of a range of sophisticated testing of hypotheses about whether or not certain events have happened in Jolie’s private life. The discussion about sincerity and Jolie as a moral person echoes the dubious voices elsewhere in media culture about celebrities as brands and humanitarian work as “deeply invested in self-interest and promotion”, as Kapoor would have it (2013: 19).

The key photograph is a medium close-up of an ordinary looking Angelina Jolie. The photograph, the additional suite of pictures of Jolie and Hague and the short, descriptive note were followed by a debate consisting of 309 comments, the vast majority of which posted within six hours after the photographs were uploaded. Many of the writers frame their comment within an implicit fan community rhetoric: either you support Angelina Jolie or the Jolie-Pitt couple, or if you write negative comments, you are immediately nicknamed a “troll”, “hen” or “hag” by their supporters. It is also implied that the latter group is on the side of Brad Pitt’s ex-wife, Jennifer Aniston. So, obviously the debate is structured in accordance with celebrity logic.

Even though the text describes an official journey, and despite the fact that the photograph is unglamorous and rather neutral, it occasions a *gossip discourse*, which presupposes – in order for it to work – a shared and seemingly intimate knowledge of the celebrity’s private life. A comment on Brad Pitt’s latest movie, *World War Z* (# 77), suddenly popping up makes sense in this context if one knows of the relationship between the two stars, comments about children makes sense if one knows about the couple’s adopted children, and so on. Besides the gossip communication there are political comments, a few comments about random themes, and aggressive comments regarding other commenters’ likes or dislikes concerning the star and her work in Congo. Finally, some commenters have copy-pasted full-length articles about Jolie and her recent goodwill work from other media outlets. In the following I give examples of the ways authenticity is negotiated, and then follow the gossip thread.

The first two comments outline the antagonism fuelling many contributions: One position underlines the good work and the remarkable woman, while the other questions the actress’ motives:

#1) Frenchy @ 03/26/2013 at 2:11 pm

That’s my girl! Angelina staying committed in her role with the UN. She’s doing very important work. Keep going Angelina!

#2) Gun @ 03/26/2013 at 2:12 pm

Fake

TUE, 26 MARCH 2013  **Tweet** 37  **Synes godt om**

Angelina Jolie Visits Rescue Camp for Women



Angelina Jolie pays a visit to a rescue camp for women on Monday (March 25) in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The 37-year-old actress and UNHCR goodwill ambassador, who was joined at the site by the British Minister for Foreign Affairs **William Hague**, went to raise awareness for war zone rape in the area.

Sexual violence is used frequently as a weapon by rebel groups in the area.

The next day, **Angelina** and **William** payed their respects at the Gisozi genocide memorial during a wreath laying ceremony.

10+ pictures inside of **Angelina Jolie** visiting the Congo...

MORE HERE! »



visiting the Congo...

Like Just Jared on Facebook  **Synes godt om**

 **Follow @justjared** 566K followers



Variations on these two comments abound. The positive voices praise the actress and underline the importance and authenticity of her work by, for example, mentioning how many years she has made goodwill trips compared to other Hollywood stars (who are, on their side, only imitating Jolie):

#13) *teri* @ 03/26/2013 at 2:17 pm

Angelina has been doing her humanitarian work for many years, nothing fake about that.

Her braveness, endurance and toughness are emphasized; she is glorified as a role model for women, for example as stated by *UNHCRlovesAJ*:

#216) Beautiful in and out. I'm so proud to be a fan of a very caring person who uses her star power to bring attention to the plight of these oppressed women in war torn countries.

Another writer unites all the different aspects of the celebrity into one persona (#76):

hopeso @ 03/26/2013 at 7:00 pm

Glamorous

Mysterious

Celebrity

Humanitarian

Mother

Good will Ambassador

Gorgeous inside and outside.

The negative voices attribute branding motives to her activity, or condemn her for either not knowing enough about politics or supporting the wrong politics (by her mere presence she creates “the impression that Western powers are there to help” (#24)), or for speaking out against weapons at the same time as she has a room full of weapons at home, etc. *Liverwurst* (#243) claims:

It is so disgusting how this woman travels the world with her own personal photographer on the pretense of drawing attention to heart wrenching situations, only to fly back via private jet to one of her many multi-million dollar estates, filled with priceless art, maids, servants and nannies. UGH! How can she sleep at night?

Most pronounced, *Tamsin* recurrently voices his/her aggression, for example in #224:

Jolie's true talent is exploiting people's tragedies for self gain. That has been her main goal, advised by her PR team, as her career was on a downward spiral after the brother-kissing scandal, the drugs, the BBT drug vial-carrying and in-your-face relationship, the mental institution stint, and the cheating scandal and home-wrecking that she caused. She simply needed something to whitewash her sordid, shameful and disgraceful past. That's when she began her child collecting with her first legally-questionable adoption and created this fauxmanitarian character.

After the first two comments, which outline the poles in the debate about Jolie's authenticity, follows a different, rather incomprehensible third comment, which starts by assessing, “this is a shame ; nobody speaks about the secret wedding or of the

humanitarian mission". However, the fourth writer, *Madam*, makes (her own) sense of this mysterious note and proposes, "It's not a wedding ring. I'm fairly sure (having seen alternate photos on other news outlets)". Hereby, *Madam* initiates the single most coherent and persistent discussion on the comment site: *Why does Angelina Jolie not wear her engagement ring but a thin golden band – and does this mean that she has been secretly wed to Brad Pitt?* Moreover, many of the commenters involved in the discussion argue, like *Madam*, on the basis of a comprehensive knowledge of the star's habits, for example on which shoulder she usually carries her bag and the possible meaning of changing this habit:

Madam @ 03/26/2013 at 2:13 pm

#4) It's not a wedding ring. I'm fairly sure (having seen alternate photos on other news outlets) that it is a yellow gold band with a small diamond stone set in it and that she has tried to keep the stone facing inwards so that it looks just like a simple gold band. Also, if it was a simple wedding band, there would have been no need to remove it for her visit to the International Rescue Committee camp. She didn't remove her gold necklaces for this visit, so no need to remove a wedding ring. I am sure that she would have loved to have worn a proper pretend wedding ring in order to focus attention on her nuptials around the predicted time of Jennifer Aniston's wedding. However, I don't think she dared push Brad that far. She hasn't worn the 'promise for the future ring' on other UN trips, so there was no need to wear a smaller substitute ring for this trip. This is a deliberate ploy to generate press attention as to whether she is now married. Jolie usually carries her bags on her right shoulder or right arm. When she wanted to show off her 'promise for the future ring' to photographers in LA shortly after the museum reveal, she made sure to carry her bag on her left arm and hold her left hand up so the photogs could all get good shots. At the airport for this trip, she is carrying her bag on her left shoulder and makes sure to put up her left hand to hold onto the strap when the photographers are snapping, so they definitely get a shot of the 'is it or isn't it' ring and the speculation can begin.

So, even though the discussion of the gold band gives rise to the voicing of opinions about raw materials, the gold mining industry, global capitalism and how African nations are entitled to the money they can earn on mining, it mostly takes the form of *gossip* about the private life of Jolie and her fiancé and whether or not they have been secretly married. The fourth comment shows how commenters' detailed knowledge is activated to make valid claims about what has happened in her private life. It also shows how gossipers are meticulously scrutinizing the photographs for any information that might support their claims. The thin ring is, after all, only visible on two of the photographs, and information can only be gained by activating a kind of gossipers' "zoom gaze".

Madam's comment is aggressively dismissed in #14 by *Frenchy*: "Nobody cares about rings or necklaces dammit! Focus on the crisis on hand that's real. Educate yourselves!" But the gossip thread continues throughout the debate: #65, posted by *adilynn*, returns to the marriage issue and asserts:

The new ring is a big improvement over the big gaudy looking one she is wearing. Marriage won't keep Brad from taking up with another woman so good luck to her with that.

Tani in #83 tries to lead the discussion in a new direction. The commenter obviously knows a great deal about Jolie's way of dressing – and seems to be trying to initiate an even more sensational story:

The ring really distracted people from the real suspicious thing in here which is her loose clothes. She always tucks her blouse in her pants. Why doesn't she do that in recent outings.

Except for a late post in which the writer asserts that she or he helped at the wedding (a comment obviously not swallowed by the others), the marriage thread ends with the writer called *let's see* warranting the marriage thesis by inferring:

#270: This is not the first time Angie goes to humanitarian trip since engagement. In previous trips, She took engagement ring off. But this time she wears a gold band on her ring finger. Everything points to they have already been married.

The marriage thread's structure is a clear example of gossip communication according to Bergmann (2003). There is an extensive scholarly discussion around the meanings of gossip, and elsewhere I have provided an overview of the literature on gossip and gossip as mediated communication (Jerslev 2010). For my purpose here, I will briefly go through Bergmann's structural definition of gossip. First, gossip is *informal, private* communication between two or more parties (here: users on a celebrity site). Second, gossip is about an *absent third party* (Jolie, obviously). Third, the gossip content consists of *facts* or possible facts about the absent party's private affairs – often related to embarrassing or scandalous behavior (a possible sensation, not scandal, is the case in this discussion). Fourth, the absent party is an *acquaintance* of all participants (here: what Schickel (2000 [1985]) calls an *intimate stranger*, a *known unknown*, the gossiping parties only know from a mediated, para-social distance). Fifth, gossip is often – but not always – *a means to its own end* (gossip as entertainment); and, finally, gossip is *news*. So, gossip is at once a particular *content*, a particular *relational structure* and a certain *communicative process*.

Gossip is an activity that requires, as we have seen, hermeneutical expertise as well as prior knowledge about the person gossiped about. However, gossip is not just the production, dissemination and debate of information about a mutual acquaintance; it is the exchange of moral opinions about the content and veracity of this information. Gossip is a certain recognizable discourse; the mutual interpretation, evaluation and moral judging of a particular kind of knowledge. At one and the same time it is about and produces intimacy, emotionality and community. The fuel of gossip is narrative desire, the pleasure of filling in empty places and making meaning of the fragments of a plot that might turn into an exciting story. The point of departure is that someone heard or found out something interesting, sensational, possibly even morally dubious, about someone well known. The incentive for gossiping is that one does not know whether or not the new information is true; it might be, but under all circumstances is it a good story – or can be made into a good story with interesting moral implications by the gossiping parties.

When it comes to celebrity gossip, the necessary prior knowledge is collected through celebrity magazines and sites. The American gossip magazine *US Weekly* posted an article on their online edition about Jolie in Africa a few hours *after* the first comment on *JustJared* (the article was also copy-pasted onto the site (#210)).¹⁰

Angelina Jolie Wears Gold Band on Ring Finger, Visits Africa on Mission to Fight Rape: Picture

CELEBRITY NEWS MARCH 26, 2013 AT 5:30PM BY ALLISON TAKEDA



20



49



50



2



2



An image caption contained information about the trip, but the main story was framed as gossip about the ring and its meaning:

Did Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie manage to pull off *the impossible* -- a secret wedding in Hollywood? During a trip to a rescue camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo this week, Pitt's 37-year-old fiancée was *spotted* with some *mysterious* new bling on her ring finger: a simple gold band where her giant platinum engagement sparkler *used to be* (my emphases).

Again we find the recognizable gossip elements: the sensational news, the prior knowledge, the direct involvement of the reader by means of a question, the riddle – strategies that invite the reader to disseminate the article for further gossiping. One commenter notices that at least the article mentions Jolie's mission in the headline, and besides ruminating about the ring, it authenticates her humanitarian work through Brockington's *affinity* strategy, i.e. writing about her as a mother. For example, it refers to her saying, "I wake up in the morning as a mom, and I turn on the news like everybody else, and I see what's happening". The most remarkable gossip device, though, is *US Weekly's* zoom-in button, which invites the user to scan the celebrity's body in extreme close-up and, for example, focus on the ring for closer scrutiny. The zoom-in device thus func-

tions as a virtual gossipers' zoom gaze, hereby efficiently – and literally – immersing the user in the story and co-constructing her/him as gossipers.

Concluding Remarks

I have argued in this article that media constructions of celebrities in their public role as humanitarians are inevitably subsumed to celebrity logic and celebrification, the continuous process through which the meaning of celebrity is produced and reproduced. On the one hand, the very *extraordinariness* that made celebrities an asset to humanitarian organizations and politicians in the first place questions their authenticity when they appear as players outside the field of entertainment. Because of their contribution to a powerful Western media industry, their presence on the international stage of political discussions of inequality can hardly avoid being contested.

On the other hand, celebrity logic's conferring of ordinariness upon celebrities provides them with a moral integrity and authenticity. The celebrity persona always conveys certain values; however, their ordinariness and, by extension, the altruism inherent in the ordinary attaches to their humanitarian work an "ethical surplus" (Illouz and Wilf 2008), which adds strongly to their persona.

The questioning of authenticity on the one hand and the good work, the restrained emotional involvement and the simple, human motives apparently guiding their choice on the other provide celebrity humanitarians (to a greater or lesser degree) with a capacity to create strong emotions and, at best, political involvement on the part of their audience. Celebrities are able to call attention to global injustices, and there is no doubt celebrity humanitarianism is an efficient way of creating a strong brand. Even though Angelina Jolie seems to claim a position outside celebrity logic, my point is that this is impossible. Inevitably, celebrity logic molds the perception of her in whatever public role she appears. No matter the cause or content, gossip communities on the Internet enact celebrification through endless debates and judgments about authenticity and the private lives of stars. As shown by the debate on *JustJared*, where the Jolie-Pitt marriage gossip commences without being alluded to at all by the *JustJared* post and hours before it appears on *US Weekly*, one of the results of celebrification is that the cause may completely disappear in the diversified readings and uses of a photograph on the Internet.

Notes

1. For numbers supporting this view of celebrities engaged in celebrity advocacy, see Thrall (2008).
2. The quantitative study shows that a very high percentage of celebrities do charity work (the A-list more than the B-list); however, it also shows that only the activities of few very famous celebrities receive sustained media attention, and furthermore that even though celebrity advocacy has "become more visible in the mainstream news media, that growth has not made celebrity advocates a visible part of the overall news flow" (Thrall et al. 2008: 375).
3. The working paper "'Getting it'. Working with celebrity involvement in good causes overseas", <http://celebrityanddevelopment.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/getting-it-website-sept-ver-1.pdf>

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4. In his seminal work from 1994, Gamson talks about the process whereby celebrity logic expands from the entertainment world to the world of politics, a discussion later continued by, for example, Corner and Pels (2003) and Marsh, 't Hart and Tindall (2010).
5. Couldry's example is the celebrification of the *Big Brother* contestants the moment they exit the house and reenter the real world.
6. To be found on <http://celebrityanddevelopment.wordpress.com/writings/new-papers-from-this-fellowship/>
7. Along the same lines, Goodman (2010: 109) claims, "We, as the audience, need to be convinced to some degree they, as the celebrity, do indeed know what they are talking about in order to be taken somewhat seriously and, thus, the celebrization of development is not just simply about marketing-driven photo-shoots designed to 'up' the celebrity's exchange value."
8. For example, for an authenticity construction of actress Drew Barrymore see: <http://www.looktothestars.org/news/6879-drew-barrymore-makes-charity-trip-to-kenya>.
9. <http://www.justjared.com/2013/03/26/angelina-jolie-visits-rescue-camp-for-women/>
10. <http://www.usmagazine.com/celebrity-news/news/angelina-jolie-wears-gold-band-on-ring-finger-visits-africa-on-mission-to-fight-rape-picture-2013263#ixzz2OlhglNwV>.

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The Anyone-Can-Edit Syndrome

Intercreation Stories of Three Featured Articles on Wikipedia

Maria Mattus

Abstract

The user-generated wiki encyclopedia Wikipedia was launched in January 2001 by Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger. Wikipedia has become the world's largest wiki encyclopedia, and behind many of its entries are interesting stories of creation, or rather *intercreation*, since Wikipedia is produced by a large number of contributors. Using the slogan "the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit" (Wikipedia 2013), Wikipedia invites everyone to participate, but the participants do not necessarily represent all kinds of individuals or interests – there might be an imbalance affecting the content as well as the perspective conveyed. As a phenomenon Wikipedia is quite complex, and can be studied from many different angles, for instance through the articles' history and the edits to them.

This paper is based on a study of Featured Articles from the Swedish Wikipedia. Three articles, *Fri vilja* [Free will], *Fjäll* [Fell], and *Edgar Allan Poe*, are chosen from a list of *Featured Articles* that belongs to the subject field *culture*. The articles' development has been followed from their very first versions in 2003/2004 to edits made at the end of 2012.

The aim is to examine the creation, or *intercreation*, processes of the articles, and the collaborative production. The data come from non-article material such as revision history pages, article material, and some complementary statistics. Principally the study has a qualitative approach, but with some quantitative elements.

Keywords: Wikipedia, collaboration, intercreation, produser, experts, front figures

Introduction

In its second decade of existence Wikipedia is still a success story, and more than 40 million users have been involved in its production (Wikimedia 2013). Today, Wikipedia is used and quoted in many different contexts – even by news media and academics. Well established search engines often list hits on Wikipedia among the top ten. Some of Wikipedia's articles have reached a quite high level, even comparable to those in traditional encyclopedias (Giles 2005). These articles are usually given the status of *Featured Articles* [Utmärkt artikel], implying that they meet Wikipedia's highest criteria for content, format and readability. Over time, Wikipedia has developed guidelines and formalized the Featured Article process in which articles can be nominated, reviewed and approved – or rejected – by the Wikipedia community. In some aspects, the review process is comparable to the peer review of the academic world.

Production and Processes

In non-hierarchical, many-to-many media like Wikipedia, several complex processes of collaboration can be seen, and concepts like *cooperation* and *collaboration* seem insufficient for describing activities like these. Therefore several concepts have been proposed, for instance *intercreation* by the inventor of the World Wide Web, Berners-Lee (2000). Intercreativity is about making things together – about users sharing knowledge.

Every entry has its story – a story about creation, or rather *intercreation* – in which the contributors together construct the article. Shirky (2008) describes how digital social tools enable participants to work together at different levels: the simplest way is just *sharing*, like on the photo sharing website *Flickr*; then comes *cooperation*, whereby the participants' behavior has to be synchronized; and finally, *collaborative production*, which includes collective decisions to be made among the participants. Collaborative production is seen in the editing on Wikipedia.

Understanding Wikipedia requires insight into the conditions of its production. Shirky (2008) explains that an article should be seen as a process and not a product, since it will never be finished. This unfinishedness is one of Wikipedia's characteristics. Hoff-Clausen (2011) further explains that the process behind encyclopedic articles can be understood as a kind of *dialogue*, in which one user presents a statement related to a topic and then the statement can be kept or deleted, modified, adapted or developed by other users who are following the article. Consequently, individual actions are met with collective responses.

Traditional encyclopedias have recognizable producers, distributors and consumers. In wiki encyclopedias, the dividing line between producers and consumers is not as clear. Shirky (2008) explains that on a wiki – as a result of the mass amateurization – individuals have the flexibility to cross back and forth between the two roles of *writer* and *reader*. Bruns (2009) takes this one step further, introducing the concept *produser* as an amalgamation of *producer* and *user*. Produsers do not engage in traditional forms of content production; instead, they are involved in *produsage* – collaborative production whereby they build, extend and improve the content.

Concerning Wikipedia's quality as an encyclopedia, the assumption that new errors will appear less frequently than existing ones will be corrected has proven correct, and on average the articles get better over time (Shirky 2008).

Anyone Can Edit

“Not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute and that what they contribute will be appropriately valued”, as Jenkins (2009:6) puts it. According to Bruns (2008), Wikipedia, using the slogan “anyone can edit”, takes the editability so far that it becomes an anathema to the traditional processes of encyclopedic production. The editing process is turned upside-down, or as Shirky (2009) explains it, Wikipedia is moving from the “filter and then publish” model toward one of “publish and then filter”; in the past the filtering was done by publishers, while today it is done by “peers”, which means other contributors no matter their educational level. The high standard on Wikipedia is attained because of, among other things, the support of self-correcting mechanisms of collective revision (Benkler 2006).

Wikipedia has been criticized for being written by amateurs with inadequate knowledge, resulting in the articles being biased and unsupported. According to Keen (2008), the culture of amateurs is undermining the respect for experts' authority and knowledge. Individuals who previously functioned as cultural gatekeepers are now reduced in favor of the amateurs and their infinite number of personal truths. As a consequence, Wikipedia has become a vessel of superficial observations rather than deeper analyses. Hoff-Clausen (2011) accentuates that in a disembodied environment like Wikipedia, users cannot be identified as physical persons and therefore no one can be held accountable for what is said – there is no *source credibility* but rather only *open source credibility*.

Surowiecki (2005) considers the crowd to be an asset, looking upon Wikipedia as a product built on the “wisdom of the crowd”: large groups of diverse individuals are able to make better decisions than small groups of experts. But, to fulfill its potential the crowd has to be decentralized; there must be a way to summarize people's opinions into one shared conclusion, and the people in the crowd must be independent. Criticism of this approach, presented by Reagle (2010), accentuates that the “crowd” is not a colony of ants but rather a community built on a large group of dedicated individuals working together.

The distinction between amateurs and experts is not always clear. The first global Wikipedia survey (conducted by the Wikimedia Foundation and the United Nations University in October/November 2008, with 176,192 respondents from 231 countries categorized into “readers” and “contributors”) showed that many contributors identify themselves as “experts”, especially within technical and scientific fields – in the thematic fields *Mathematics & Logic* and *Technology & Applied Science*, as many as about 90% (Glott, Schmidt and Glosch 2010). The study also revealed that most contributors (almost 87%) are men, and that the average age of the contributors (male and female) is about 26 years – this low age might explain why 70% of the contributors hold, at most, an undergraduate degree as their highest educational level. Glott, Schmidt and Glosch (see also Glott and Glosch 2010) suggest that the small share of women attracted to Wikipedia have a set of preferences and motivations similar to that of male Wikipedians. The imbalance among contributors could restrict Wikipedia's development, and according to Spinellis and Louridas (2008) there are invisible subjective boundaries related to the contributors' interests that will limit its growth, so that Wikipedia comes to reflect its contributors' interests instead of representing some kind of contemporary knowledge.

Instead of looking at Wikipedia as one large community, it could be seen as several smaller ones. Bruns (2008) talks about the *voice of the collective*, referring to the voices of the many communities, or *hives*, around any one entry. In these hives, credible, authoritative voices can be distinguished from vague, uncertain ones coming from less developed projects.

Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) use the concept *communities of practice* to describe how self-selected individuals create, expand and exchange knowledge within a group with unclear boundaries. On Wikipedia, the “members” are held together by passion, commitment and identification with the group and its expertise. Jenkins (2009) has chosen the expression *participatory culture* to describe the community involvement, characterized by having low barriers of engagement, strong support for creation and sharing with others, and some kind of informal mentorship. Further, members should believe that their contributions matter, and should also feel some degree of social connec-

tion with one another. A quite similar expression used by Reagle (2010:47), *collaborative culture*, refers to a “set of assumptions, values, meanings, and actions pertaining to working together within a community”. In the global Wikipedia survey, Glott, Schmidt and Glosch (2010) found two outstanding motives for participating: the wish to share and contribute to knowledge, and the wish to fix the errors one notices.

Research on Article Progression and Featured Articles

Featured Articles are marked with a bronze star, and are supposed to be the very best articles on Wikipedia. Before an article becomes a Featured Article it has to be nominated by someone from Wikipedia’s community – basically anyone – and then read by some self-appointed reviewers who, based on the established criteria, support or oppose the nomination. Objections must include a motivation.

Myers (2010) has studied the history of two articles, *Manchester* and *7 World Trade Center*, in the English language version of Wikipedia; later, both these articles were chosen as Featured Articles. When Myers examined the articles’ first hundred edits (seen on the revision history pages and in different versions of the article) he noted that articles undergo different types of changes, described as *adding information*, *changing the information*, *formatting to fit Wikipedia conventions*, *proofreading*, *vandalism* and *reversion*.

Viégas, Wattenberg, and McKeon (2007) have examined the processes and principles behind the Featured Article procedure. They found that the process on Wikipedia differs from the usual enterprise workflow process: most of the roles in the Featured Article process are filled by self-identified individuals who determine what to do and where their work is needed in this non-hierarchical flow of information.

Gorgeon and Swanson (2011) have analyzed the development (5,970 edits made by 2,956 users) of a single article, the buzzword *Web 2.0*, in the English Wikipedia. Three different periods were identified to describe the lifecycle of the article on Wikipedia: the *germination period* (lasting around six months), in which a small number of registered and anonymous contributors struggled to define the term; followed by the *growth period* (lasting more than two years), in which the article grew in both volume and substance; and finally the *maturation period* in which its growth slowly decreased, as did the number of participants involved. Gorgeon and Swanson also categorized the types of edits performed in the *Web 2.0* article as *vandalism*, *spam* and *copy edit*, from Wikipedia’s own glossary, complemented with some more categories created for the study: *test*, *maintenance*, *restoration*, *challenge*, *challenged*, and *unchallenged*.

Viégas and Wattenberg (2010, also Viégas, Wattenberg and Kushal 2004) have created a visualization technique called *history flow visualization*. Instead of analyzing separate articles, they found an algorithm that could track the movements of large passages as well as changes on the word level, which made it possible to overview all article edits over time.

The Study

This study deals with three articles from the Swedish Wikipedia: *Free will* [Fri vilja], *Fell* [Fjäll], and *Edgar Allan Poe*. The aim is to examine what the creation processes of these articles look like, and how the production of articles can be understood. Further, the contributors’ roles and functions in the process will be approached.

The articles were chosen from a list of Featured Articles (Wikimedia 2011), where they all belong to the subject field *culture*; within this subject field, they have been selected because they deal with quite disparate issues related to the subjects of philosophy, geology and literature. The study will follow the articles' development from their very first versions to the end of 2012.

Material and Method

The main material comes from *non-article material*, like *revision history pages* and *user pages*, but also from *article material* retrieved from *sv.wikipedia.org* complemented with some statistics from *toolserver.org*. Principally the study has a qualitative approach, but there are some quantitative elements involved as well.

The *revision history page* offers information about the date and time of each edit, the user who executed it, whether the edit was considered minor, the article size in bytes, and sometimes a short description of the edit. To create the graphs in Figures 1, 2 and 3, the data concerning article size and date have been processed in the statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics version 21. A *user page* contains a registered user's personal presentation by which the user can introduce him-/herself. Here, some of the contributors' user pages are included in the material. Besides *registered users* with self-chosen user names, there are *anonymous/IP users*, identifiable by the computer's IP number, and *bots*. The latter are scripts programmed to perform automated, or semi-automated, tasks of a more routine nature, such as creating interlanguage links to corresponding articles in other language versions of Wikipedia.

The wikitext structure makes it possible to follow an article's development over time. All previous versions of the article are linked to the revision history page, and can easily be displayed. Since all these available versions would form a quite comprehensive body of material only some versions have been examined here, principally with the intention to search for critical events in the articles' development and to identify occurrences of vandalism.

Results

To begin with, some basic facts concerning the articles *Free will*, *Fell*, and *Edgar Allan Poe* will be presented in Table 1: the date of the first and last edits, the date and size in bytes at the last edit, and the total number of edits. Further, the table contains information about the number of users, the distribution of different types of users (*registered users*, *anonymous/IP users* and *bots*), the registered user who has made the most edits, the users who have made more than three edits, and finally, the number of interlanguage links.

Table 2 presents some information related to the articles' Featured Article status: The date of the award and the article's size at that time, the user who nominated it, the users supporting the nomination, and the length of time between nomination and award. Featured Articles are considered to be the best articles Wikipedia can offer, and should be well written, comprehensive, objective, illustrated, well researched, and based on reliable sources.

The facts from Tables 1 and 2 will be placed in context in the following stories of creation, or rather *intercreation*, for each article. These stories also include short pres-

Table 1. Basic Facts about the Articles

	<i>Free will</i> [Fri Vilja]	<i>Fell</i> [Fjäll]	<i>Edgar Allan Poe</i>
Date of the first edit	4 September 2004	29 September 2003	1 December 2003
Size and date for the last edit	73,450 bytes 19 December 2012	27,086 bytes 5 December 2012	59,754 bytes 21 December 2012
Number of edits	209	165	457
Number of users	95	86	227
Registered users	46 (48%)	56 (65%)	91 (41%)
Anonymous users	13 (14%)	22 (26%)	84 (37%)
Robots	36 (37%)	8 (9%)	52 (22%)
Most edits done by one registered user	24 edits done by <i>Popperipopp</i> (2007-2008)	31 edits done by <i>Svjo</i> (2008-2011)	55 edits done by <i>Nicke L</i> (2005-2008)
Number of registered users with more than three edits	4 users: <i>Popperipopp</i> , <i>TKU/Yvww</i> , <i>Huesos</i> and <i>Dnm</i> (0.9% of the registered users).	4 users: <i>Svjo</i> , <i>Lapplänning</i> , <i>Yvww</i> and <i>Ettrig</i> (0.7% of the registered users).	8 users: <i>Nicke L</i> , <i>Gegik</i> , <i>Aleph</i> , <i>B****n</i> , <i>Tournesol</i> , <i>Torvindus</i> , <i>Hedning</i> and <i>Auc</i> (0.9% of the registered users).
Interlanguage links	71	11	100

Table 2. Featured Article, Overview

	<i>Free will</i> [Fri Vilja]	<i>Fell</i> [Fjäll]	<i>Edgar Allan Poe</i>
Featured Article, date	15 May 2008 after 81 edits	15 May 2008 after 80 edits	17 January 2008 after 253 edits
Size of Featured Article	74,313 bytes	28,302 bytes	55,410 bytes
Nominated by	<i>Yvww</i>	<i>Yvww</i>	<i>Yvww</i>
Nomination supported by (at least 5 persons)	<i>D.O.G</i> , <i>Heimvinnar</i> , <i>Ronny</i> , <i>xenus</i> and <i>Ace90</i> .	<i>Jopparn</i> , <i>xenus</i> , <i>NatoX</i> , <i>Ronny</i> , <i>-nothingman-</i> , and <i>Mikael Lindmark</i> .	<i>Popperipopp</i> , <i>NatoX</i> , <i>Jaentz</i> , <i>Ace90</i> and <i>Huggorm</i> .
Time of nomination	3 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks

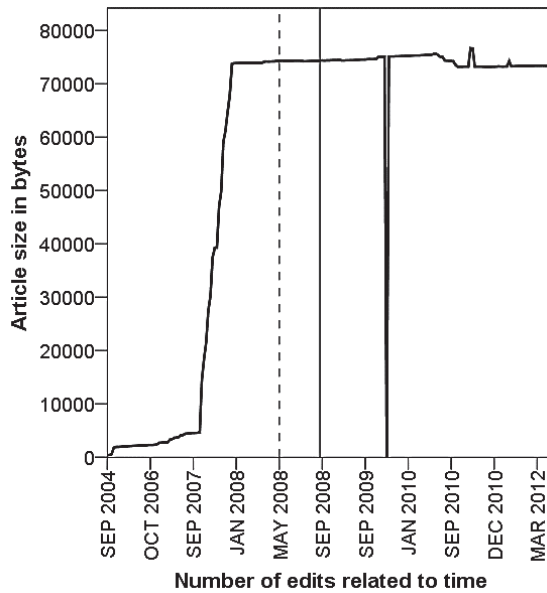
entations of some of their contributors – the descriptions in the indented text are based on the users’ own presentations.

1. *Fri vilja* [Free will]

The first article in this study is *Free will*. It was created on 4 September 2004, and was listed as a Featured Article on 15 May 2008 after being nominated for three weeks. As seen in Table 1, at the end of 2012 the article’s size was 73,450 bytes after having been edited 209 times. The edits were made by 46 registered users, 13 anonymous/IP users, and 36 bots. The article *Free will* has been provided with 71 interlanguage links.

The originator behind the article’s first draft was a user called *TKU* (later known as *Yvww*). The draft contained 56 words (among them five blue links to other entries). It then developed quite slowly, with edits mostly made by bots providing the article with interlanguage links. After two years, the initiator *TKU/Yvww* returned to add more text to the article. *Yvww* edited the article a total of nine times, and became one of its most active editors.

Figure 1. *Article Free will [Fri Vilja]*



Note: Total edits 208 from 29 September 2003, until 19 December 2012. Awarded as a Featured Article (after 81 edits, marked with a dashed line) on 15 May 2008. The first 100 edits are marked with a solid line.

On the user page *Ywv* mentions having been active on Wikipedia since 2004, and includes some opinions, ideas and projects of special concern in the presentation. *Ywv* expresses a wish for his/her contributions to remain public domain. Quotes from known and unknown people are also used as part of this personal presentation.

In April 2007, two-and-a-half years after the initial draft of the article, a user called *Huesos* appeared. This user contributed with five edits.

According to the user page *Huesos* is interested in philosophy and history, and does not want to come into conflict with others. There are icons showing several awards he/she has received, such as *best historian*, *best teacher in social studies*, and *most new written articles*.

In July 2007 another user, called *Popperipopp*, began to edit the article.

Popperipopp presents himself as a man. On his user page he tells about his studies in philosophy and history, and says he holds liberal socialistic values. In a diary he has notes on how he extends articles, does translations, searches for statistics, and categorizes and plans his work.

For a while both *Huesos* and *Popperipopp* simply added new facts to the article, but in January 2008 *Popperipopp* expanded it from 4,610 to 73,923 bytes by himself. This great enlargement is shown in Figure 1. *Popperipopp* dominated the scene and played a considerable part in the article's growth and development for ten months. His contributions improved the quality of the article, and in April 2008 *Ywv* nominated it for the Featured Article award. Three weeks later, when it became a Featured Article,

Popperipopp had already disappeared from the arena. At that point the article seems to have stabilized, and no more radical changes appeared until October 2009 when it was vandalized. A registered user called *Arene* replaced all its content with “JJJJJJjjj[...] jjj Reynolds”. This obvious sabotage was immediately addressed, and the article was restored by the user *Tegel*, who tells on the user page about having a special interest in cleaning up vandalism. The vandalism and the restoration that followed can be identified as a V-shape on the line in Figure 2.

After the vandalism, no major changes were made to the article. Mostly minor edits, such as linguistic corrections and references, were carried out; in many cases the edits involved links and interlanguage links created by bots. Of 46 registered users, four of them (*Popperipopp*, *TKU/Yvwv*, *Huesos* and *Dnm*) edited the article more than three times. *TKU/Yvwv* was active for the longest period of time, almost four years. The most active bots, *Luckas-bot* and *Xqbot*, contributed through minor edits on eight and seven occasions, respectively. *TXiKiBoT*, with six edits, edited the article over a period of more than three years.

2. Fjäll [Fell]

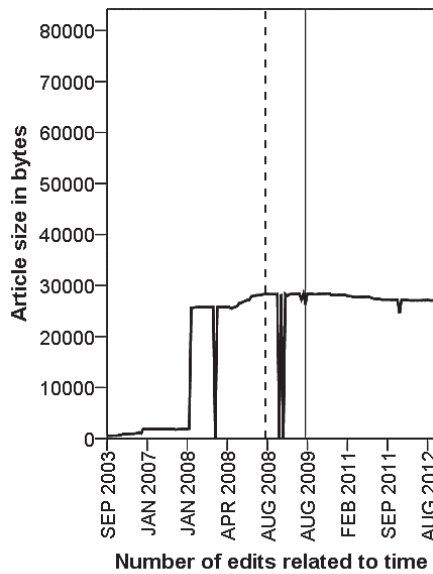
The second article chosen for this study is *Fell*, created on 29 September 2003. The article was listed as a Featured Article on 15 May 2008 after being nominated for two weeks.

On 5 December 2012 the article's size was 27,086 bytes, and by then it had been edited 165 times. As seen in Table 1 the edits were made by 56 registered users, 22 anonymous/IP users, and eight bots. The article was linked to 11 corresponding articles in other Wikipedia language versions (Aragonese, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Norwegian Bokmål and Nynorsk, Sami, and Spanish).

The first version of the article was based on a text from the Swedish encyclopedia Nordisk Familjebok. The initiator, the user *BL*, only made one contribution and has not been involved in the process since then. During its first three years, the article grew slowly. On average there was less than one edit per month, and most of these are considered minor edits. The first occurrence of vandalism was in October 2007, when an anonymous user inserted the text (in Swedish): “sausages with two kilograms of bread and ketchup”. The user *Tulpan* restored the article to its previous condition. In March 2007 the user *Lapplänning* entered the scene; first for a smaller edit, but then returning in January 2008 to contribute much more extensively.

In the presentation on the user page *Lapplänning*, earlier called *Helleborus*, talks about being a nature lover with a libertarian left political orientation; the contributions he/she made on Wikipedia often concern issues related to Northern Sweden.

Over a period of 14.5 months, *Lapplänning* expanded the article and made a total of 17 edits. Figure 2 illustrates the large increase in article size. Besides a great deal of new information, some new images and links were added. As references, *Lapplänning* has used sources like the (Swedish) National Encyclopedia [Nationalencyclopedia], the Swedish Tourist Association [Svenska turistföreningen], and an online article about biodiversity and climate change. Another user, *Swjo*, also edited the article during the same period, principally polishing the text and rearranging the images.

Figure 2. Article Fell [Fjäll]

Note: The graph shows edits and size over time. Total edits 165 from 29 September 2003 until 5 December 2012. Awarded as a Featured Article (after 80 edits, marked with a dashed line) on 15 May 2008. The first 100 edits are marked with a solid line.

On the user page, *Svjo* talks about having a background in technical physics and an interest in the history of science. Besides passing on simple facts, *Svjo* would like the Swedish Wikipedia to offer a good deal of education.

As seen in Figure 2, in April 2008 someone removed all the article's content. On the article's revision history page, an anonymous user explained that this edit was based on "facts from my daddy's work". After this incident the article was restored, so *Yvwv*, like in the article *Free will*, could nominate it for the status of Featured Article. After the nomination, principally only *Lapplänning* and *Yvwv* were engaged in improving the article, with *Yvwv* contributing some linguistic and content-related changes.

After receiving the award in May 2008, the article remained unmodified for three months. In August, however, an anonymous user inserted some random characters and obscene words into it. The vandalism was soon detected, but the same kind of vandalism occurred several times during the autumn. Obscene words and sentences were not simply inserted into the text; the whole content was removed from the article twice. In Figure 2 the V-shapes on the line indicate the removal of text and the restoration that followed. This particular kind of vandalism is called *blanking* on Wikipedia. Apart from the vandalism, the article had now stabilized.

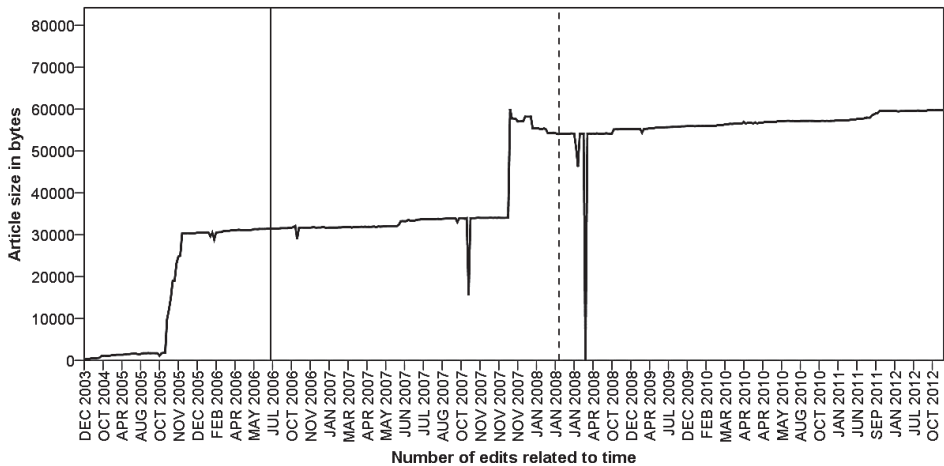
A total of 56 registered users contributed to this article, but only four of them (*Svjo*, *Lapplänning*, *Yvwv* and *Ettrig*) edited it more than three times.

3. Edgar Allan Poe

The third article in this study is about the American author *Edgar Allan Poe*. The article was created on 1 December 2007, and was listed as a Featured Article on 3 January 2008 after being nominated for two weeks.

At the end of 2012 the article’s size was 59,754 bytes, after being edited 457 times. As seen in Table 1 these edits were made by 91 registered users, 84 anonymous/IP users, and 52 bots. The article was provided with interlanguage links to corresponding articles in 100 other language versions of Wikipedia. Figure 3 shows how the article size has changed over time.

Figure 3. Article Edgar Allan Poe



Note: The graph shows edits and size over time. Total edits 457 from 1 December 2003 until 21 December 2012. Awarded as a Featured Article (after 253 edits, marked with a dashed line) on 17 January 2008. The first 100 edits are marked with a solid line.

The first version of the article was created by an anonymous user. It consisted of just six words in Swedish, here translated into English: “The father of Gothic horror romances, born in the US in 1809.” An hour later, the user *Max* expanded the text to 42 words, including nine blue links to other entries on Wikipedia. Then, three months passed before anyone else became engaged in the *stub*, and another three months until the next contributor appeared. After a year not much had been done; however, in July 2005 the activity grew more intense, especially when the user called *Nicke L* began editing this still quite rudimentary article. To expand the article *Nicke L* translated text from the corresponding English article, and two great enlargements to the article’s size are visible in Figure 3. On several occasions, *Nicke L* also detected vandalism and other kinds of undesired edits. In total, *Nicke L* made 55 edits during a period of three years and nine months.

Nicke L (also known as *NickeLilltroll*) presents himself on the user page: he has been active on Wikipedia since 2004, and often translates from other language versions. His user page contains information about the many awards he has received for his contributions (these awards, or *barnstars*, are part of the culture

on Wikipedia and allow users to show appreciation for one another, for instance for their efforts or for being generous to others).

In July 2007, the user *Aleph* turned up to make 15 edits. These edits mostly concerned reformulations and choice of words.

On his user page, *Aleph* talks about interests such as literature, science, history of science, movies, and history of entertainment. Further, there is information about *Aleph*, in August 2009, having been blocked from Wikipedia. A link to the attached *user talk page* offers more information about the blocking.

On 3 January 2008 the article *Edgar Allan Poe* was nominated, this time as well, by *Ywv* for the award of Featured Article. After two weeks of nomination, consensus among the nominator and the reviewers was reached and the article was given the status.

In March 2010 another user, *Gegik*, began to edit the article. This user made a total of 17 edits, for instance adding more facts about literary figures who had inspired Edgar Allan Poe as well as about authors who had been inspired by him.

Gegik does not reveal much on the user page; it simply deals with his/her language skills (Swedish as a native language and some skills in English and German).

After *Gegik*'s effort some minor edits were made, principally concerning choice of words.

This article was vandalized almost 50 times. The vandalism included, among other things, adding nonsense or obscene expressions to the article text, and replacing text with nonsense words. As shown in Figure 3, the line in the graph has V-shapes showing that texts have been removed from the article several times. Another time, all the content in the article was replaced with "I'm the best!". Further, there have been cases of misinformation, for instance when Poe's birth year was replaced with an incorrect year.

Eight registered users edited the article more than three times, the most active users being *Nicke L* with 55 edits, *Gegik* with 17 edits, and *Aleph* with 15 edits. The rest made a maximum of six edits each: *B****n*, *Tournesol*, *Torvindus*, *Hedning* and *Auc*. The bots that made the most edits were *RobotQuistnix* and *SieBot*, with eleven and nine minor edits, respectively. Among the anonymous users the most active made eight edits, all of which can be classed as vandalism.

The Development of Articles

When looking at the first hundred edits (marked with a solid line in Figures 1, 2 and 3) to each of the three articles, there are changes similar to what Myers (2010) found in his study: after a tentative start, someone increases the article's size considerably by adding a great deal of information; then comes a period of some contributors mainly trying to format it to fit Wikipedia's conventions, but also correcting facts and linguistic errors – at this point the article size has not changed much. However, in the article *Fell*, three serious situations of vandalism occurred and were followed by reversions to the article.

The periods suggested by Gorgeon and Swanson (2011) can be seen in these articles as well. However, the proposed periods of time, based on a single article, do not make sense here. The *germination period* is much longer, between two and four-and-a-half years. The *growth period*, on the other hand, is remarkably short, just a few days in the

articles *Free will* and *Fell*. *Edgar Allan Poe*'s growth period is about two years, during which the article was significantly increased twice (see Figure 3). In all three cases the enlargements were done by a few single contributors. If the *maturation period* ends when an article attains the status of Featured Article, this period is quite short – just between one and four-and-a-half months. The articles on Wikipedia are supposed to never be finished; consequently, contributors can continue to edit, for instance by working with the content, wording and shaping an article even after it has been appointed a Featured Article. Over time, the article size might decrease as the language becomes more logical and to the point. Changes do not always result in qualitative improvements – an article might even deteriorate to the point that it no longer meets the criteria of Featured Article status.

Gorgeon and Swanson have categorized the various types of edits that made up the article content. Their category *vandalism* can be seen in all three articles in this study. The article *Edgar Allan Poe*, in particular, reveals the existence of conflicting interests and the collision of different agendas: some serious contributors want to create a high quality article, while some less serious characters repeatedly and disrespectfully vandalize their work by inserting nonsense words, obscene expressions, bad language and misinformation, or by simply removing text. When Wattenberg and Viégas (2010), in their *history flow visualization*, first noticed that most of an article was missing, they thought they had a bug in their code, but later discovered that this had been caused by a user who had erased the text. Here, this phenomenon can be seen in the graphs in Figures 1, 2 and 3 when the article size drops dramatically. On Wikipedia there are some individuals, for instance the user *Tegel*, who express on the user page a special concern for cleaning up vandalism.

Experts and Front Figures

The first global Wikipedia Survey states that contributors often see themselves as “experts” (Glott, Schmidt, and Ghosh 2010). This study suggests that the contributors might be regarded as either *specialized experts*, with deep knowledge and/or interest in a particular issue or field, or *generalized experts*, with general knowledge and/or a broad interest related to the creation of the wiki encyclopedia. The expertise does not necessarily come from formal schooling. Here, the contributor *Huesos* personifies the specialized expert, while *Ywv* (also known as *TKU*) corresponds to a generalized expert. *Nicke L* seems to combine these two types. Even though the three articles in the study deal with quite disparate topics, *Nicke L* is involved in all of them. Both *Svjo* and *Ywv* have contributed to two articles. Besides, *Ywv* has nominated all three articles to be awarded the status of Featured Articles. Both *Nicke L* and *Ywv* are placed high on the list of contributors with the most edits on the Swedish Wikipedia, with more than 80 thousand edits each (Wikipedia 2012). On his user page, *Nicke L* initially revealed his real name; this kind of connection to “real” life might indicate responsibility and trust. Most certainly, *Nicke L* and *Ywv* are able to grasp the grand picture, even when working with small details.

On the user page, *Lapplänning* has expressed deep concern for the northern part of Sweden and its unique landscape, which might reinforce the impression of credibility, especially when it comes to aspects like the climate, weather conditions, environment, wildlife and vegetation related to this part of the country. But, as claimed by Hoff-Clausen (2011), it is only through their contributions that users become someone rather

than because of who they are or say they are; their identity on Wikipedia is based on what they have done. Through their contributions, the users will win others' trust and respect.

Every article has its front figure – one person who has made major contributions: *Popperipopp* edited the article *Free will* 24 times, *Svjo* and *Lapplänning* edited *Fell* 31 and 17 times, respectively, and *Nicke L* edited *Edgar Allan Poe* 55 times. During a relatively short period of time, these individuals increased the article's size as well as improved its quality significantly. After having been very active for a period they disappear, perhaps to become involved in other articles or projects. The graphs in Figures 1, 2 and 3 illustrate the striking enlargements in article size – seen as distinct “steps” on the lines. After the award of Featured Article is given the lines become flatter, suggesting that the articles have now stabilized, at least regarding size. The award of Featured Article seems to indicate to users that the article is now “good enough”.

As seen in the study, information is brought into the articles on the Swedish Wikipedia from other Wikipedia language versions, from other encyclopedias, and from a variety of external sources. Being able to show literacy skills, like being able to seek and deal with information, is more vital than possessing expert scholarly knowledge. Some contributors in the study might be perceived as more prominent than others because of their competent, large and/or frequent contributions.

Besides being able to add a great deal of factual information to the article *Free will*, *Popperipopp* obviously has literacy skills, such as finding, understanding and processing relevant information. Other users might make fewer and more limited edits, but nevertheless contribute to the development of both the article and Wikipedia itself.

Shirky (2008) observed that no one is responsible for doing or managing the work on Wikipedia, but yet the processes work. This study might partly contradict this statement; because even if no one is ascribed the formal responsibility, there are individuals who step up to take responsibility, at least for a defined task at a given time.

The Intercreation Aspect

Wikipedia's user-generated articles might give the impression that each article is a collaboratively shaped product. This could be true to some extent. Obviously, many individuals are involved, but this study indicates that a large part of the work is achieved by a small group of individuals, who are not necessarily collaborating with each other or anyone else.

As mentioned earlier, the contributors might interact in many different ways, and do not necessarily have to be present at the same time. Like in the hives Bruns (2008) talked about, the users gather around each entry, creating a collective mind. As seen in the study, some of the voices can be perceived as louder or more governing than the others, but together the hive stakes out the direction, makes decisions and guides the work. The collective's production becomes visible though all the edits – minor as well as major – made by the users, but also through the discussions taking place on different talk pages and in other forums. In this sense Wikipedia is a product of a collective mind, or rather of many collectives' minds, and among the voices that stand out new kinds of gatekeepers are seen.

Major edits might be regarded as the most important for an article's progress, but nevertheless, many small edits could work as binding elements and be of relatively great

importance. The following question might therefore be motivated: Who does the most important work on Wikipedia, the few who contribute through large edits, or the many who contribute through small ones?

“The Anyone-Can-Edit Syndrome”

To sum up, different users contribute in different ways, and do not necessarily cooperate even if they do coproduce the encyclopedia. Considering that the users themselves decide what to do, and that no one distributes the chores, it works amazingly well – probably because of the possibilities to interact and communicate, but also because of the transparency offered by the wiki. Wikipedia’s slogan “anyone can edit” stresses that every single individual has the possibility to be a contributor. However, the global survey conducted by Gosh, Glott and Schmidt (2010) indicated that many individuals and groups are still excluded from participation. Even if Wikipedia’s content reflects more opinions and voices than traditional encyclopedias do, inequalities as well as imbalance among the contributors could restrict the development. This study shows that there are some contributors who hold quite powerful positions – they might have the competence and/or maturity to take on the responsibility, but they may also prevent other voices from being heard. The invisible subjective boundaries that Spinellis and Louridas (2008) referred to would affect the encyclopedic content as well as its perspective. Wikipedia claims that articles should be written from a neutral point of view. However, the meaning of this guiding principle is most likely perceived differently among users, depending on the individual’s experiences and idea of the world. Wikipedia should strive not only to attract more participants, but also to attract a more diverse group of participants. Glott and Gosh (2010: 39) would like to see older users among the contributors, since “they appear to be a resource with neglected potential, as they provide a significant stock of time and expertise that could be tapped for Wikipedia”.

The notion of Wikipedia being a product or process is of great importance, whether the goal is to create a high quality encyclopedia or to engage as many as possible in its creation. A kind of social aspect can be observed in the back-and-forth editing of the three articles here. Struggles between different agendas are seen not only when vandalism occurs, but also in serious contributors’ different edits. If there are some *lone wolves* seen in the articles, there could also be *watchdogs* or *listening dogs* present. The talk pages attached to the articles provide more insight into the issues discussed, and can be used to expand the material in another study.

According to the wiki ideology, the articles on Wikipedia will never be finished; the openness for making changes will always remain. In this study, all the articles might be considered “good enough” at a certain point, but there will be new edits to be made. In the future some specific aspects of the articles, for example regarding *rodents* or *plants* in the fells, can be detached from the article *Fell* to form the basis for new entries. Wikipedia’s unfinishedness, that no one will ever have the last word, is a most interesting phenomenon, and even if an article does not change significantly over time the ongoing editing keeps its content alive.

Can anyone edit Wikipedia, or should anyone be able to edit Wikipedia? For the individual, it is very much about being able to establish a credible voice and become part of the dialogue that creates Wikipedia.

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A Quest for *Communitas*

Rethinking Mediated Memory Existentially

Amanda Lagerkvist

Abstract

Despite the fragmentation of audience behaviour and the pluralization of platforms within the media cultures of the digital age, cultural memory practices retain an important feature: They echo a basic existential quest for *communitas*. The present article compares two seemingly incomparable regimes of memory of our time: the anniversaries of 9.11 on Swedish television and web communities of commemoration of lost loved ones. It suggests through these contrasting examples that existential themes are pursued in the face of three challenges: the temporality of instantaneity, the all-pervasive networked individualism that makes memory into a matter of elective affinities, and the technological capacities that subject memory to endless revision. The article explores the existential dimension of these memory practices in line with research within the culturalist emphasis on the study of media and religion. This debate recognizes the need for a broader understanding of the mediated qualities of religion and the religious qualities of the media. The article argues that both televisual anniversaries of trauma that invite audiences to an annual return, and our new multiple and fragmented media memories compel us to conceive of our hyper-contingent, late-modern digital age as a quest for meaning, transcendence and cohesion – for what Victor Turner (1969) called *existential communitas*.

Keywords: memory, digital age, existence, anniversary journalism, web memorials, *communitas*, death

If as Merleau-Ponty observed, I can grasp myself only as ‘already reborn’ or ‘still living’, it is mostly because I know of life only as being with others, communicating with others, connecting with others. When I strive to imagine the end of my being, the first thing that comes to my mind (as a notion, not a picture) is the severance of “the sense of connection”. *Connection is more than mere co-presence*. Connection is what fills the connected with content – perhaps all the content there is. Connection makes the connected meaningful. One may say it makes the connected human, humans are distinguished by the *meaningfulness of their being*.

Zygmunt Bauman *Mortality, Immortality & Other Life Strategies*,
Cambridge: Polity Press (1992: 40, emphases added)

The Tyranny of Connectivity and the Promises of Connection¹

Digital memory practices increasingly saturate our contemporary existence. They include, for instance, the mundane activities of storing images, video clips and texts on social networking sites (SNS); our personal portable archives of images, photographs,

music and profiles; services to manage the digital afterlife; databases; digital shrines, web memorials and communities of the bereaved, and blogging about terminal illness (cf. Garde-Hansen et al. eds. 2009). Despite their all-pervasive presence in our life world, we have a scant understanding of what these digital memory cultures mean for people *existentially*.

The present article argues that existential issues are at the core of our lived experience of the media environment. Such issues deal with our basic experiences of being in the world. They concern our sense of time, space, identity, and meaning.² In the age of social media, this is quite palpable and straightforward and for some quite worrying. For example, according to psychoanalyst Sherry Turkle, we now inhabit a world where the *self itself* is tied to, and emerges through, constant connectivity and instant validation, while leaving individuals emotionally deprived and ultimately alone (2008, 2011). The digital age has simultaneously been described as an era of fragmentation where the public sphere has disintegrated into public sphericules, and ‘the audience’ into differentiated individual strata of preferences. In an era of social networking sites (SNSs), sociality sometimes seems reduced to the perpetual reinforcement of existing social ties in our own personal digital ‘echo chambers’. At the same time, what has rapidly emerged is, instead of what John Durham Peters (1999) called the tyranny of communication, a kind of tyranny of connectivity, with compulsive individual acts of broadcasting and validating the self, before a mass of onlookers. And the web simultaneously caters to us through offerings in the microcosm of our own consumer behaviour.

In this context, the very notion of collective memory has quickly become equally precarious, and memory has been transformed into what Amit Pinchevski calls “a matter of elective affinities” (2011: 263). Hence, in this era of networked hyper-individualism (Wellman 2004), one important aspect, much debated in memory studies, is the changing nature of memory itself. The present article takes cultural or mediated memory as its starting point for providing an existentialist approach to the digital ecology. It is guided by three premises:

- 1) Memory is a fundamental social, cultural and communal human practice (Halbwachs 1925/1992), and performances of memory involve and engender our sense of cohesion, identity and continuity – both individually and collectively (cf. Nora 1989; Sturken 1997; Erll 2009; Lagerkvist 2013);
- 2) In today’s world, the media and mediations constitute what Maurice Halbwachs found in the family, nation or congregation – “a social framework for memory”, as memory is in effect “media memory” (Neiger et al. eds. 2011);
- 3) Questions about memory and non-present interaction are central to media theory and especially important in the digital ecology.

To illustrate these points, and to thereby launch a novel approach to digital media inspired by existence philosophy and anthropology, I will discuss two contrasting types of contemporary memory cultures: televisual and digital commemoration. In fact, I will compare two seemingly incomparable regimes of memory. First, I will share an argument that I have put forward about televisual anniversaries of 9.11 in Sweden in the context of digitization (Lagerkvist 2012). This type of officially sanctioned mourning and commemoration, by media witnesses, is then contrasted by the second type of public

mourning and memorialization: the construction of a memory of a loved one in digital cemeteries. This second example deals with a completely different and privately sanctioned form of commemoration. These two types relate to Dorte Refslund Christensen and Kjetil Sandvik's recent theorization, building on Klaus Bruhn Jensen's typology (2010), of the materiality of the media of the first, second and third degrees (forthcoming): "Whereas media of the first degree facilitate encounters with death and loss on a personal level, media of the second degree relate to more public oriented encounters: death and suffering as the result of wars, natural disasters, famines and so on are mediated by the TV, radio and newspapers and thus circulated in the public sphere on a local, national or global level for people to engage in" (forthcoming, 2014). The materiality of the media of the third degree, in turn, refers to digital information and communication technologies that they label *metamedia*, following Bruhn Jensen.

The two regimes of memory to be discussed in the following correspond to the second and third degrees, but they also relate closely to novel types of mourning and commemoration, discussed by Tony Walter (2008). He delineates two forms of new public mourning (2008: 245ff) that are part of our mass media society, but refutes the idea that they are entirely manufactured by the media. Walter contextualizes this development by saying initially that two types of mourning lost legitimacy in the twentieth century. The first was socially mourning someone you love, and the second public mourning for people you do not know, with the important exception: "unless sanctioned by the state: e.g. the war dead, astronauts, victims of 9.11 terrorist attacks" (2008: 242).

The new public mourning hence comes in two forms. In addition to war remembrance and mourning for public figures such as heads of state, people are in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first increasingly, firstly, prone to mourn for people one did not know personally, such as celebrities (see Sumiala 2013) or victims of terrorist attacks. Secondly, people are publicizing their private losses on Internet sites. According to Walter, these two types also belong to two different temporalities: the first one is permanent, annual and cyclical and is visible in commemorations and anniversary journalism; the second one is more spontaneous (Walter 2008: 245).

Walter asks provocatively in relation to the commemoration of the loss of lives in mediated trauma: "do such messages, such sentiments, even such middle-of-the-night-tears, represent 'recreational grief', 'grief lite' – a lightweight, undemanding image of connection, a pseudo-community that is increasingly replacing face-to-face connections of family, church, and neighbourhood, as ephemeral as the television images that spawn it?" (ibid.: 241-242). This type of question echoes at least a century of mass communication critique, where the media ingredient has been accused of causing the levelling down of authenticity, community and here – *emotion* – due to the mediatization of society and culture. It is beyond doubt that mourning codes and memory practices have changed and continue to change in late modernity, through mediatization and digitalization (Hutchings 2012). But perhaps it is time to look beyond what is new, and ask questions about the digital as a cultural form, and how it relates to being. In order to arrive at this, I propose that, in the present essay, it is fruitful to examine what these new and 'residual' forms of mediated commemoration and public mourning have in common today, as both belong to and are impinged on by the 'digital age'. And furthermore, how are memories in the digital age meaningful? What kinds of communal experiences do they afford? To what extent are they allowing for a sense of connection that is more than mere co-presence, as

Zygmunt Bauman posits above (Bauman 1992)? And to what extent can digital memories bring about a sense of cohesion, hope, or profundity – what I call, highly aware of the ambiguity of the term, existential security (Lagerkvist 2013)? By comparing two very different memory practices, I propose that we may begin to discern the bigger picture. Through their commonalities, I argue, we may move beyond those most common tropes of the digital era of ‘fragmentation’.

The Existential Deficit

While the questions of community and meaning were key in early ethnographies in networked cultures (Baym 1995; Markham 1998), their full existential implications were not elaborated. In the footsteps of Raymond Williams, Cultural Studies approaches conceive of culture as ‘ordinary’, and people as involved in meaning-making practices within the this-worldly everyday. In Cultural Studies, questions of meaning and community are typically drained of any connection to the human experience of, or *quest for*, spirituality or transcendence in any form (cf. Cvetkovitch 2012). With important exceptions (e.g., Durham Peters 1997, 1999; Rothenbuler 1998; Axelson 2006; Pinchevski 2011, forthcoming; Sumiala 2013), in mainstream media studies in general, existential perspectives have played a minor role in analysing the media, or our media cultures.

An existential approach to media also relates to important debates within the science of religion and the subfield that studies *religion and the media*, where such issues have been approached through the culturalist emphasis on the need for a broader understanding of the meaning-making and mediated qualities of religion, and the religious qualities of the media (Schofield Clark and Hoover 1997; Sumiala-Seppänen et al 2006; Morgan ed. 2008; Lynch, Mitchell and Strahn eds. 2012). These approaches emphasize the need, in an ostensibly ‘secularized’ Western society, for a new understanding of people’s changing relationship to transcendent and existential dimensions in life (cf. Woodhead and Heelas 2000). Sharing this point of departure, my take on digital memory cultures and existentialism acknowledges that the exploration of existential themes takes place within the structures and through the rituals of institutionalized religions, but more importantly, it also occurs in other more uncharted contexts (cf. Hoover and Lundby eds. 1997). Here it is conceived of as occurring vividly and ubiquitously within the realm of digital media (cf. Lövheim 2004, 2006) and digital memory cultures in particular.

Approaching these matters from an existential perspective will both complement the psychological approach in this burgeoning debate, and bring other crucial facets of the analytical object into sight. The theoretical framework of my project is inspired by some of the basic themes in classic existentialist thought (see Dreyfus and Wrathall eds. 2009, or the works of Søren Kierkegaard in Hong and Hong eds. 2009), which highlight the fundamental anxiety and dread of nothingness that we are faced with in existence; the absurdity of life as a contingency and the pervasive alienation of our modern world, societies and lives. As a point of departure, humans are conceived of as existential beings, torn between freedom and necessity, who constructively and actively seek meaning in the face of these conditions. The objective is to unpack both the exigencies and potentials for pursuing existential issues through memory practices among media users of the digital age.

Instead of seeing the Internet as inherently positive or negative, liberating or controlling, democratic or undemocratic, meaningful or trivial, I conceive of it as an existential and ambiguous terrain. This terrain provides avenues to explore issues of meaning and meaninglessness, remembering and forgetting, individuality and collectivity, loneliness and sociality, the finite and the infinite. Digital memory cultures span these contradictions, and display a number of tensions and key issues in human existence. While digital memories serve to existentially secure continuity, to pursue meaning and value and to enable profundity (in terms of human growth or transcendence), they may also, existentially speaking, potentially bolster a sense of a void – a loss of meaning.³ In the following, I will focus on the problem and possibility of existential security.

Challenges of the Digital Age: In Search for Existential Security

I submit that the basic themes and predicaments in existentialism are actualized in three tensions that constitute contemporary digital memory cultures. First, as already mentioned, users' identities are shaped through increasingly fragmented and versatile forms of individual and collective remembering, and this constitutes a major challenge for the study of collective memories. This is due to the fact that digital media are pervaded by the combination of connectivity with instant, easy and affordable publishing possibilities that create endless avenues for sharing, exposing, participating in shaping, selecting, editing, revising and revaluing, individual and collective memories (Maj and Riha 2010).

Second, and related, networked publics that group around memories of individual and collective trauma and grief contribute to an accelerated evaporation of the public and the private. This amounts to a widespread, unprecedented new sense of mediated publicness, offering possibilities for the public mediation of private experiences and memories, and for the emergence of new constellations of communities of memory – often on a global scale (Reading 2010, Assmann and Conrad 2010).

Third, when our lives become increasingly digitized, this terrain may be haunted by the fear of information loss, because the speed at which we live and work compels us to practices of constantly updating ourselves while “keeping track, recording, retrieving, stock-piling, archiving, backing up and saving” (Garde-Hansen et al. 2009: 5). This constitutes a fundamental tension in our contemporary existence between remembering and forgetting, keeping and losing, saving and deleting (van Dijck 2007, Hoskins 2009; Garde-Hansen et al. 2009).

These tendencies, I propose, may also constitute for media users an impetus for entering into existential terrains of connectivity. Central to my approach, hence, is in addition the question of how I/we may secure a sense of cohesion, meaning, continuity and community, that is, what I term ‘existential security’ in the digital age? I define *existential security* as slightly differing from Giddens’s *ontological security*, which he delineates as referring to

the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action. As sense of the reliability of persons and things, so central to the notion of trust, is basic to feelings of ontological security (1990: 92).

He stresses that ontological security has to do with the phenomenological and emotional sense of 'being-in-the-world'. Existential security adds to this emphasis on the social, emotional and material, the sense in which individuals may integrate their being-in-the-world into a meaningful whole, or into beneficial meaning-making practices in the face of the challenges of life. Such meaning-making 'systems' can involve both this-worldly and other-worldly aspects of profundity *or* spirituality, transcendence and the sacred. This meaning-making system may not, however, be entirely congruent or completely lacking in discordances: In fact people's spiritual identities are often constituted by contradiction. I conceive of existential security, in addition, not only as an individual quest, but also importantly as a matter of seeking meaning and continuity through/as inspired fellowship – that is through *communitas* (see E. Turner 2012). Put differently, "communitas has an existential quality; it involves the whole man in his relations to other whole men" (Turner 1969: 127). In addition, the concept acknowledges that human existence is highly ambiguous and that existential security is a wished-for goal, never unambiguously realized. The concept thus focuses as much on the quest for it as on its actuality.

In the next section, I will discuss two examples of contemporary memory cultures where the quest for meaning and existential security is arguably played out. Is it possible to discern, through the commonalities between televisual and digital commemoration, the contours of a wider pattern? Before discussing this possibility, it is important to acknowledge their differences.

Televisual and Digital Memory

In "The Mediatisation of Memory," Andrew Hoskins outlines the main distinctions between how cultural memory operated during the so-called broadcasting age and how it works today, during the post-broadcasting age (2009). Discussing how memory has become mediatized across these two phases, Hoskins defines mediatization as an extension of the impact of the media into all social and cultural realms resulting in an increased embeddedness of the everyday into the mediascape (ibid: 29). In the mass communication era, memory was officially produced from and contained within large media institutions, broadcasting from a centre to a mass audience, administering flashbulb memories – those important TV or radio moments that seemed to constitute many of the common experiences for people of the electronic age. The first phase of mediatization "is associated with the dominant media and institutions of the broadcast era, notably television and the news networks, respectively, which produced many more flashbulb memories for a newly connected global village [...]" (ibid.). In our contemporary media environment, however, new media technologies have proliferated and they have accompanied "mediatised regimes of memory". These new memory regimes drive, maintain and refill the 'past' through connectivity and mass accretion of mnemonic fragments (2009: 31). The post-broadcasting age is thus dominated by a new memory ecology in which the media or media technologies are ubiquitous and at once both accessible and fluid, easily revised yet almost endlessly dispersed.

Televisual Commemoration and Anniversaries of Trauma

If we look at the distinguishing features of televisual memory at large, it must be noted that for some this notion is a contradiction in terms, since the medium of television has been associated with the loss of memory. Dominated by “insistent presentness” (Doane 1990: 222, see also Sturken 1997: 24), television has been conceived of as producing cultural amnesia, creating merely newness and forgetfulness rather than stable collective memories. As much as television is in the now, we must acknowledge that, in the past decade, television in the Western world has become more and more preoccupied with representing history, and hence with the production of collective memories (cf. Edgerton 2001). Scholars have shed light on the way in which *history* (historical documentaries and historical series) have become a major part of programming. Others have tended to focus on television as the primary producer of cultural memories and as the centre of the symbolic environment. According to Paul Frosh, we actually have a living relationship to television conceived of as a remembering mechanism. Broadcasting from centres, and locating the attention of the audience, televisual collective memory is also, according to Frosh, “a simulated, synchronous, connective nucleus” (Frosh 2011: 129) that informs our way of imagining the socio-historical totality and ourselves as a form of collective consciousness. As already mentioned, television is also associated with so-called flashbulb memories: exceptionally vivid memories of where we were, what we were doing when we heard of traumatic emotional or “ecstatic news” – that is impact events – that seemed to change everything, for instance, the murders of JFK, Olof Palme, Anna Lindh, the Challenger explosion, the Tsunami of 2004, the massacre on Utöya, Norway. People often envision themselves in front of a TV when they recall how they learned of the trauma. Another important trait of televisual memory is the sense in which it calls into question established notions of temporality, especially in its close connection with catastrophe (Doane 1990). Television usually drops its schedule, and disrupts the everyday routine, thereby ushering in the existential sense of when a traumatic event occurs, of being outside of time. Catastrophe is in this sense televisual *par preference*: It is both timeless and instantaneous, momentary, chaotic and fragmenting. Television often makes catastrophe instantly historical⁴, but such events also simultaneously become durable collective memory. This occurs when the images are subsequently and endlessly *repeated* internationally on television (and beyond) in chronicles, documentaries, memorials and news reports.

In sum, televisual memory has to do with the perpetual building up of an institutionally organized archive, through expectations of the present drawn from the past. These expectations are affected by schemata framing the present, as well as by how both past and future atrocities are conceived of (Hoskins 2009). Anniversaries of major breaking news events are also part of how television repeats and recycles its archival materials, and today as television, through its play functions, provides for an open archive of all the events on TV – that count as ‘historical’ events due to having been on TV – the relationship between television and collective memory seems quite outright and highly self-reflexive. I have analysed all the anniversaries of the terrorist attacks in the US on 9/11 2001 on Swedish television (Public Service and TV4), with a particular emphasis on the first and tenth anniversary. Remembering 9.11 has been a major *lieu de mémoire* on Swedish television ever since the terrorist attacks on 9.11 2001.⁵ But why is television involved in the annual commemoration of these major traumatic news events? While

I firmly acknowledge the ideological and political role of the attention paid to 9.11 in Sweden, which speaks volumes about what we are compelled to remember and whose deaths are important to commemorate, initially, my principal curiosity had to do with one of the founding texts in memory studies, which posits memory as always connected to *place* (Nora 1989). How does this square with televisual memory? My analysis of the anniversaries framed them as *electronic sites of memory*, exploring the various and inter-related spatial scales involved as television commemorates traumatic news events. My conclusion was that these memory practices, firstly, offer for audiences the performance of an annual return to the traumatic memorial site: *to the television set*. For (trans)national witnesses, the events are/were televisual; they belong to the medium and its practices of returning to its archive of images and sounds that we will never forget. Secondly, and related, I found that on anniversaries such as 9/11, TV *situates itself* as a central global nucleus, connecting people across the world around the catastrophe (cf. Frosh 2011). Television is thus involved in producing a particular imagined global “we” of witnesses to 9/11, connected through our return to the machine. This interpellated “we” seems to be transnational and even global, but in actuality it is constituted of a selective *Western* socio-historical idea of community. But more importantly, as a comparison between the anniversaries in 2002 and 2011 shows, over time this “we” increasingly emerges as *a we of media witnesses*. What does this mean in the broader context? I will return to my interpretation and conclusion, but in order to do so I will now first turn to digital memory.

Digital Memory Cultures and Web Memorials

Due to digitization and mediatization, and the all-pervasive changes in our media environments and media use, the relationships between media and memory have currently become the object of renewed interest within memory studies. Scholars have argued that digital media have effects on how we remember, what we remember and perhaps the nature of memory itself (Garde Hansen, Reading and Hoskins (eds.) 2009). The very distinctions between personal/private and public/collective memories – as well as the previous primary focus on national identity – are now also questioned and problematized. For instance, José van Dijck, in her seminal book *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age*, offers a holistic and integrative framework for analysing media memories. Moving away from a focus on cultural and shared memory, she looks into our digital ‘shoeboxes’ and finds our private and personal memories in digital archives equally valid for cultural analysis. Mediated memories in our digital age are always *embodied* and sensuously felt, *embedded* in social contexts, and *enabled* by technologies (van Dijck 2007). Hence, it seems we are emplaced within digital memories, they are embedded in us – in our existence. This means that in studying digital memory cultures, we need to dispense with the thinking that long conceived of “*the media*” as a discrete unit separated from the social or from memory.

In line with this reasoning, scholars in the field of digital memory cultures stress that we are neither retrieving memory any more nor constructing pasts through representational practices in the present. Instead memory is seen as “embedded in and distributed through our socio-technical practices ...” (Hoskins 2009a: 99). The dynamics of mediated memory hence renders it “created when needed, driven by the connectivities of digital technologies and media and inextricably forged through and constitutive of

digital social networks: in other words, a new ‘network memory’” (ibid.). As Anna Reading argues (2010), these features of the new memory ecology constitute a new dynamics of what she calls *the global memory field* in which memory is both digitized and globalized at the same time. The stress here is on keywords such as multiplicity, fragmentation, liquidity and speed.

Among a range of other functions and affordances, as listed earlier, digital memory cultures display new commemorative communities of grief on social networking sites (see for instance www.vsfb.se/Pratbubblan or Facebook). What do we make of the above-mentioned characteristics of network memory, if we turn to these outlets of grief, where the connections occur precisely because of the fact that individuals have been transposed from the mundane realm into a sequestered space of death and mourning?

Communities of grief online (sometimes run by funeral services, sometimes by individuals, larger corporations or associations) showcase and invite interaction at digital shrines and memorials, where you often find guest books you can leave notes on and candles you can light (<http://varaminnessidor.se/> and Tillminneav.se). On VIMIL (Swedish: “Vi som mist någon mitt i livet”; “We who lost someone in the middle of life”), a Swedish bereavement community of grief and support, members, as well as strangers may post their concerns and consolations in the commentary fields. Conversations on VIMIL confirm scholarship in this field, showing that the sense of togetherness, of overcoming loneliness, is a primary theme in the interactions. On the Swedish web memorial site Till Minne av.se (“In memory of”), the memorials are often constituted as obituaries. There is also a blog function, and users may upload film/video and light a candle. Most of the memorials are not particularly detailed in terms of describing the departed person, instead they convey strong feelings of grief, emptiness, and loss. They directly communicate with the dead. The role of web memorials in creating existing ties both to the dead and the living is evident. Pamela Roberts argues that there are a number of positive rewards from these communities: The bereaved may stay in touch with the dead person, strengthen bonds with the living, and create a new sense of community with others. Indeed she holds that Rheingold’s utopian vision for the Internet, as a realization of the ingrained human need and wished-for goal of creating a working and gratifying community, is fulfilled (Roberts 2004). The members are highly aware of being part of something bigger, through their communicated grief. There is a strong emphasis on relationships and feelings of community, despite the fact that there is sometimes a limited interactive affordance designed into these sites. In addition, Walter et al. hold that Facebook defragments a dead person’s social networks and allows for mourning to re-emerge as a group experience: a communal activity (2011/12: 290). In social networking they see a break with earlier technologies in terms of how death and grief are brought back, and are in the process of becoming de-sequestered and reintroduced into the everyday:

... 21st century media have the capacity to de-sequester the dying, death, and mourning of personally known individuals. *SNSs bring death back into everyday life*—from both the private and the public sphere—in a way that older media such as television and even virtual cemeteries were largely unable to. If late 20th century mass media enabled grief to become more public (to the dismay of some members of the public), 21st century Facebook enables grief to become more communal, that is, shared within the deceased’s social networks. (ibid.)

Sharedness, here in the sense of sharing loss through mediated publicness, is thus the keyword in virtual mourning. Scholarship on digital memory cultures similarly stress the idea of *connectedness* as a “fundamental value that matters in the process of global and virtual self-description” (Maj and Riha, 2009: 29). Active participation and sharing are key to thinking about digital memory practices (Garde Hansen et al. 2009). In rounding up this paper, I will offer my understanding of these tendencies.

United in the Quest for *Communitas*

I have thus far discussed the differences between two media memory practices of our time: the official archives of the anniversaries of 9.11 on Swedish television and alternative personal archives – web communities of grief and commemoration of lost loved ones. There are important differences between these two examples. Televisual commemoration sanctions particular official memories of certain events and certain deaths. Digital memories are non-official and spring from individual and collective needs to grieve, memorialize, connect (with the living and the dead), to support and be supported. But there are also interesting commonalities between televisual memory *today* and new media/new memory practices.

In my study on televisual anniversaries, I was struck by television’s self-centredness. In effect, the medium seems here, more than anything, to be involved in centring the attention on itself, and on its own nucleus of connectivity. I suggest that this has everything to do with the digitization of memories, and of media culture at large. Commemoration in the form of anniversaries is triggered by the digitalization of the media landscape. Notwithstanding the diversification of audience behaviour (Bjur 2009), and the plurality of memories on a variety of platforms as well as the selectivity and ephemerality of contemporary digital memory cultures, the anniversaries can be read as “campfires” intended to unify viewers around what to remember as well as around the very ritual of memory. Simultaneously, in fact, they reflect non-consensus around how to interpret the events remembered. On the anniversaries, television offers an existential space for working through the undecidable.⁶

In doing so, the medium, I suggest, is struggling to retain its status as the preeminent contributor to the symbolic environment and the primary memory bank of our societies. In a situation pervaded by digitalization, it acted as the unifier that many people would deny the existence of. In our contemporary digital ecology, there are countless threads, commentary fields, and statuses on which we continually edit the present into a perpetual archive of recent pasts (see Lagerkvist 2012). Attending to the tenth anniversary has led to the conclusion that television, despite these changes, attempts to hold sway by constituting itself as stable, as the *site* that will continue to offer, if not social cohesion, then at least some kind of existential security.

Here people are grouping together – or are invited to group together – in a ‘Durkheimian’ manner to experience something significant (see Sumiala 2013). I suggest that when we pay attention to memory practices of our time existentially, one thing that becomes visible is the sense in which the digital age can be described as, in effect, *a quest for communitas* – for what unites and connects us in our “common humanity and mortality” (Turner 1969: 110). *Communitas* is a sense of profound and inspired comradeship. This is of course not a new argument, and has been put forward in relation to electronic

media before. Televisual weddings, Christmases, and natural or man-made disasters, for instance, have also been depicted, as Roger Silverstone does in *Television and Everyday Life*, as "expressions of the medium's capacity to mobilize the sacred and to create ... *communitas; the shared experience, however fragile, momentary and synthetic, of community*" (Silverstone 1994: 21, emphasis added).

Famously, Victor Turner described *communitas* in the context of transformative rituals (*rites of passage*), following the three steps of van Gennep's model: the sequestering of the person, the liminal stage, and the reintegration. *Communitas*, as has been much emphasized, often belongs to the second phase – liminality. Some of the digital memory cultures that I focus on are, similarly "betwixt and between" – virtual mourning occurs as bereaved individuals are in a sequestered state and in their connectivity it seems, that "all are siblings or comrades of one another regardless of previous secular ties" (1969: 111). As in liminality, they seem to connect stripped of rank, they appear anonymous, outcast, sexless, and on the interstices of culture (*ibid.*: 128).

It is worth stressing that the mobilization of *communitas*, and of the sacred, may occur in contemporary memory practices in differentiated ways. On the 9.11 anniversaries, Swedish television consciously offered audiences a ritualistic return by staging itself as an existential space for remembering what they had experienced (in all its complexity) at this very site. I have suggested that despite all the changes within television today, the medium is making efforts to remain important and central in the face of rapid shifts in the new media landscape. Television thereby desires to be the place where audiences can go, to remember, in some cases to mourn, interpret, and assess the significance of their mediated memories of the traumatic news events, as well as to debate the global political consequences in their wake. Similarly, the web memorials and communities of grief also have, as scholars have pointed out, a strong *communal* streak. But online grief and commemoration offer spontaneous, concrete, immediate and unexpected forms of *communitas*. This is what Turner called *existential communitas*: "approximately what the hippies today would call a 'happening'" (1969: 132).

In Conclusion

As I have discussed in the present essay, memory work in the digital age is pursued in the face of three challenges: the temporality of instantaneity, technological capacities that subject memory to endless revision by networked individuals who increasingly choose what to remember, and an accelerated blurring of the private and the public. The digital age is fraught with a number of vulnerabilities because digital memory cultures are fragile and transient – both for individuals and society at large. One-sidedly emphasizing these challenges may, however, make invisible the important paradox that securing memory practices online may be elicited in order to counter the very mass proliferation of selves and memories, and the acceleration of both saving and deleting, that seem integral to our time. I propose that it is fruitful to revisit *communitas* to grasp this situation. This will bring other nuances to the discussion on network memory, and to the 'diagnosis' of the digital age. Firstly, as scholars have recently argued, social networking actually allows for transcending the sense in which there can be only a liminoid or temporary sense of community online:

Pre-modern societies tended to produce a bereaved community, modern societies tend to produce bereaved individuals, and post-modern mutual help groups (online or offline) produce a community of the bereaved, that is, connections with previously unknown others who have suffered the same category of loss—the death of a spouse, of a child, of a relative by suicide, etc. *SNSs such as Facebook, however, can produce what pre-modernity did: a bereaved community.* [...] The person's social networks are thus de-fragmented, and mourning re-emerges as a group experience ... (Walter et al 2011/12, italics added)

Hence, beyond the momentary and 'liminoid' character of *communitas*, here it seems that there is, in fact, a feature of surprising equilibrium, stability, permanence and an unexpected rootedness to these aspects of communal web commemoration and mourning, experiences that contradict or at least problematize the discussed features of the digital age and new memory ecology as endlessly versatile, flexible, fragmented. While they are indeed created when needed, they seem fast at hand but not the least short-sighted, and they seem profoundly meaningful for users. Perhaps this poses a challenge or a complement to the burgeoning discourse on network memory?

Secondly, the existential approach offers a different picture of the digital age beyond the either-or; that is as *either* a utopian realization of community *or* a threat to the collectivity of memory, politics, discourse, etc. I will suggest that both televisual anniversaries of trauma that invite audiences to an annual and collective return and our new multiple media memories compel us to conceive of our hyper-contingent, late-modern digital age as a search for meaning, transcendence and cohesiveness – for existential security. Through a new existential optics for media studies, we may be able to see that, despite the fragmentation of audience behaviour and the pluralization of platforms within the media cultures of the digital age, these cultural memory practices retain an important feature: They echo a basic existential quest for *communitas*. Victor Turner emphasized that *communitas* of religious movements as well as tribal rituals emerge “in times of radical social transition, when society itself seems to be moving from one fixed state to another whether the *terminus ad quem* is believed to be on earth or in heaven” (1969: 133). In our transitional times, new cultures of memory seem to be cultures reflecting a need for securing ourselves existentially in the wake of technological change. They echo most importantly, I will suggest in closing, a pursuit for coming together and for sharing significant moments of ultimate meaning. These phenomena merit further attention in media studies, and future work is needed on how digital memory cultures may enable and encompass a quest for *communitas*.

Notes

1. The present article outlines some of the theoretical vantage points of my project *Existential Terrains: Memory and Meaning in Cultures of Connectivity*, financed by the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation (2014-2018). A previous version of parts of the article has been published in “New Memory Cultures and Death: Existential Security in the Digital Memory Ecology” in *Thanatos*, 2(2) December 2013.
2. I propose that we approach the Internet and in particular our practices of memory online as activating those fundamental and straightforward existential issues outlined by Tomas Axelsson: *why are we here; what is the nature of human nature, God, existence; what should I/we do; who am I/who are we?* (2006: 218).
3. The present article primarily stresses the possibilities afforded, that is, how existential meaning may be secured through these memory practices. In other recent writings, I more specifically highlight the

ambivalences within the digital memory ecology, and the potential loss of meaning due to its inherent vulnerabilities (see Lagerkvist 2013).

4. If we consider the attacks on 9.11, they were in fact considered “historical” across the globe as they happened; they were described (in and on television) early on as containing “a turning-point quality”, something “we will never forget,” and the world was believed to have “changed forever”.
5. The Swedish channels SVT1, SVT2 and TV4 all commemorated the first anniversary in 2002. The channels offered different types of programming to remember the attacks: live broadcasts from ceremonies at Ground Zero, attention on the anniversary in morning hours news shows coexisted with memory segments in news programs, documentaries and fiction about 9.11, and documentaries. In 2011, the memory of 9.11 seems overdetermined, and the tenth anniversary produced a memory craze on the Internet, in newspapers, on Public Service radio channels and not least on television. It was widely encouraged across the mediascape that people *should remember September 11th* – where we were, what we were doing and how we reacted. The culminating moment was the nine-hour-long memorial broadcast “11 September: the Day that Changed the World” from SVT.
6. One might think of the anniversaries as *response events* in line with Dayan and Katz: “They mobilize popular reactions to trauma and rededicate a society to the values which were violated” (1992: 150-151). They are thus ceremonies in response to an external event. The anniversaries both pay tribute and wish well (ibid: 149), and in a sense they offer some kind of healing. And yet, in the Swedish context those societal values and in effect the interpretation of 9.11 itself offered during the anniversaries, were *not* monolithic.

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Talking Tacitly

Activities and Experiences in Highly Interactive Media

Rikke Toft Nørgård

Abstract

Some media forms we primarily take in with our senses, like movies, music or text. Other media forms are more like activities that we have to carry out with our body such as digital games on the PC, console, smart phone or tablet. Here, we are not allowed to sit still and take media in with our senses. In order to grasp this otherness and uniqueness of digital games it is not sufficient to re-use adapted media theories, concepts, methods and ways of writing. This article is written on the realization that the theories and methods we approach a research area, activity or experience with will set the boundaries of our understanding. And the ways we represent our understanding in writing to others will subsequently set the boundaries of their understanding. In this way, the article is an attempt of erecting boundaries in new ways and placing them in unfamiliar places through the use of alternative and alien methods, theories and styles of writing. This is done in order to let new formations of studying, thinking and talking about activities and experiences in highly interactive media emerge.

Keywords: interactive media, digital games, game research, multimethodology, grounded theory method, remix methods, introduction

Introduction

Some media forms we primarily take in with our senses, like movies, music or text. Other media forms are more like activities that we have to carry out with our hands such as digital games on the PC, console, smart phone or tablet. Some of these activities are highly interactive, that is, they require us to constantly express ourselves in actions with input-devices. Here, we are not allowed to sit still and take media in with our senses. It is important that we see such new forms of media and new forms of media activities as something other than mere re-mediations of older media forms and activities (Bolter and Grusin 2000). Like movies and television programs are something other than 'moving pictures' or 'visualized text,' highly interactive digital games are something other and altogether different than 'interactive cinema' or 'interactive narratives or texts.' In order to grasp the otherness and uniqueness of these media forms, activities and experiences it is therefore not sufficient to re-use adapted media theories, concepts, methods and ways of writing. Theories developed to analyze and understand text, narration, drama, movies or TV will only take us this far and perhaps even lead us astray. Similarly, methods developed to study, analyze and understand viewers, readers or listeners will like wise prove insufficient or even convince us that participating in digital games are like an interactive viewing, reading or listening activity and experience.

This article is written on the realization that the theories and methods we approach a research area, activity or experience with will set the boundaries of our understanding. And the ways we represent our understanding in writing to others will subsequently set the boundaries of their understanding. In this way, the article is an attempt of erecting boundaries in new ways and placing them in unfamiliar places through the use of alternative and alien methods, theories and styles of writing.

Accordingly, this article might be a difficult read as it merges new methods for re-searching digital games and gameplayers with new ways of writing and thinking about media and the things that take place with and within them. This is done in order to let new formations of thinking and talking about activities and experiences in highly interactive media emerge.



The article is based on the findings and results of a three-year-long study of a group of gameplayers' activities and experiences across different digital games and media platforms. The presented findings and results emerged through the use of a multimethodology (Brannen 2005, Mingers and Brocklesby 1997) that combined a grounded theory method approach (Allen 2003, Bryant and Charmaz 2011, Charmaz 2006, Haig 1995) with phenomenography (Allen-Collinson 2009, Casey 1987, Hockey and Allen-Collinson 2007, Markula and Denison 2000, Straus 1963), remix methods and interpretative ethnography (Markham 2004, Markham 2005, Markham 2006, Markham 2012) as well as visual methods (Banks 2006, Pink 2004, Pink 2011). The present article will, with the abovementioned works and concluded study as its foundation, present some of the study's main methodological developments, results and findings.

The study's produced comprehension of highly interactive media emerged through studying gameplayers as they carried out actions as digital avatars on the screen through interacting with their hands outside the screen. However, the moving hands of gameplayers, the hands that make gameplay activity and experience emerge and come to life in the gameworld proved impossible to grasp and represent adequately or satisfactorily

by use of traditional methods within media and game research such as interviews, questionnaires, onscreen participant observation, discourse analysis or collections of player-produced text or talk in the game or on online forums. Thus, these dominant and accepted ways of researching highly interactive media within media and game studies (Nørgård 2010, Nørgård 2011a, Nørgård 2012) proved to be a blind alley when these tacitly moving hands took the centre stage in the activities going on with and within digital games. Accordingly, one of the main challenges of the study became how to adequately grasp and genuinely comprehend these moving hands that seemed to be the gameplayers' main way of communicating with the game and with each other. Subsequently, another, equally important and difficult challenge proved to be the translation of these tacitly talking hands into comprehensible and acceptable research.

Thus, I found myself consumed with the task of developing a methodological framework for studying and an emphatic, appreciative language for talking about tacitly talking hands in a scholarly sound and meaningful way. In short, I found myself taking a leap of faith, as I witnessed my research on digital games unfold and manifest itself as a vibrant mix of 'research music videos,' 'film strips,' 'photo montages,' 'collages,' 'poetic tales,' 'theoretical remixes,' 'aestheticized metaphorical writings,' 'fictionalized narratives' and 'narrative inquiries.'

But, before jumping in at the deep end, I will present a short concrete example of a way of writing about what takes place when gameplayers play digital games such as the immensely popular *World of Warcraft* with over 10 million monthly subscribers (at the time of the study). This is done through articulating the ways an expert gameplayer (Tue) is acting, experiencing and thinking tacitly with the game material through using his hands during a scripted game-instance (or raid) in *World of Warcraft*.

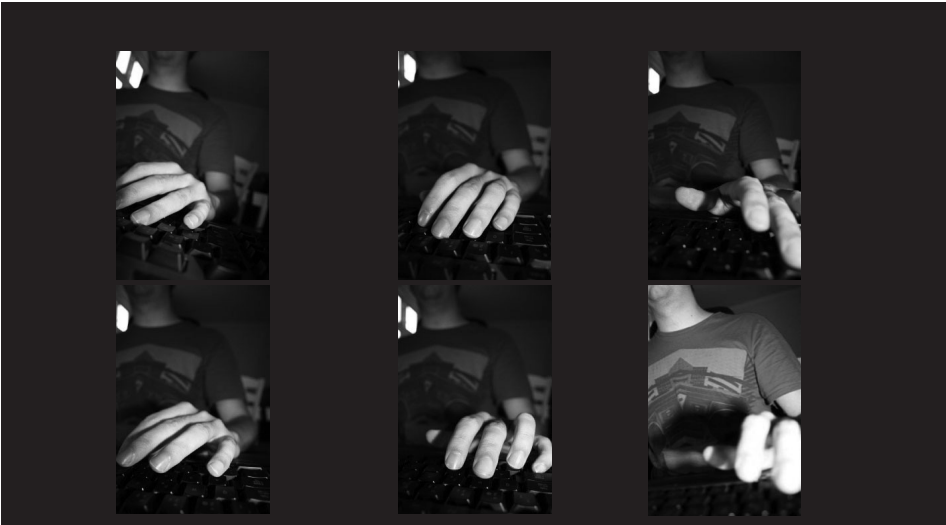
P(l)acing the Hand

The avatar stands motionless on the screen as Tue's hands lay resting on his keyboard and mouse while the raid-group officers in charge explain the course of the raid and specify how the different raid-members should align their corporeal interaction. Their hands should dance in sync to the melody of the raid's choreographed events. Everything in the raid on the screen happens at certain paces and places. Accordingly, the raid-members hands should follow this composition and be at certain places at certain paces. It is important that everybody knows the composition and his or her role in it before the raid commences. In the heat of the raid there is no time to talk it over, there is only time to grit your teeth and endure the performance while your hands move as fast and precisely as possible.

After listening for a while Tue's hands become restless. The fingers begin to make the digital avatar jump from side to side, run around in circles and dance in front of the other raid-members' avatars on the screen. Shortly after, several group-members follow Tue's example and begin to flutter about on the screen as they impatiently wait for the raid to begin so they have something useful to do with their hands. There is too much talk and not enough action. The group is getting restless.

Finally, the strategy-consultation is over and the raid-leader calls the group to action with a: '3-2-1-Go.' Promptly, Tue's left hand begins to dance on the keyboard while his right hand seizes the mouse and begins to skate with it. Keyboard-fingers and mouse-

fingers produce rhythmic waves of key-taps and mouse-clicks that ascend as a corporeal symphony: ‘1-1-A-click-click-1-W-1-2-A-click-click-2-2-click-W-2-2-click-click’. Tue’s keyboard-fingers dance around in a square on the left half of the keyboard – up and down, in and out, close together and spread out as a spider frantically spinning a very complicated, chaotic web. It is like watching a strange insect struggling to keep on its feet or staying alive. It is as if Tue’s life depended on his hands’ corporeal performance – and in a way it does. Onscreen avatar-life and offscreen hand-performance are intimately connected. Tue must make himself stay alive through delivering masterful corporeal interaction with his hands. Tue is carrying his digital life in his hands. Incessantly, the left hand dances its distinctive ‘square-dance’ choreography while the right hand skates with the mouse and composes its ‘clickclickclick’-ing melody.



Not once, does Tue look away from the onscreen interaction as he keenly monitors the other group-members digital interaction and health bars in the attempt to, through zealous corporeal locomotion, keep the other group-members health-bars up and, thus, keep them on their feet. Underneath his gaze, through and through, Tue’s hands are ceaselessly talking tacitly with the game material.



His fingers dance between the movement-keys and the spell-keys littered around on the left third of the keyboard while the onscreen digitality is exploding in shambles of information, bars, boxes, numbers, icons, dingling-sounds and digital interaction as

the gameworld reacts digitally to Tue's corporeal interaction and Tue reacts corporeally to the digital interaction. Tue's hands are moving knowingly to the rhythm of the raid-instance.

The above representation of gameplay activity and experience in *World of Warcraft* is an attempt to convey in writing how gamers are not recipients of visual screen output or digital onscreen representations. Nor is gamers partaking in a kind of interactive narration or cinema. Rather, gamers are tacitly moving first-person beings whose hands are put into motion by the game material. They have to move their hands in order to stay alive. In highly interactive media such as *World of Warcraft* a skillful gamer such as Tue shows off his competence and understanding of the game through the ways in which he lets his hands talk tacitly with the game material.

Jumping in at the Deep End

So, what are gamers experiencing through letting their hands do the talking? Pondering this questions while reviewing recordings of moving hands and trying to produce an *accurate* transcription of their ways of talking, I found that neither my subtlest writing down of their singular movements would reveal the actual significance of talking tacitly. Sentences such as "then he pressed W and then he pressed A" or "the gamer wanted to jump so he pressed space bar" simply did not capture the corporeal-locomotive activity or experience of playing *World of Warcraft* with your hands.

The way these hands were talking never seemed to consist of singular motor processes or divided movements; it seemed more like an indivisible stream of fluent locomotion flowing from the hands and into the onscreen gameworld. Tue and the other members of the raid-group are diving and dwelling in locomotion together rather than being cool cognitive, communicative or perceiving goal-oriented agents. They are beings in and of the gameworld. Their hands are incessantly weaving the ofscreen and the onscreen gameworld together and, thus, making the gamer and game material come alive together. But I could not find a method within media studies for studying this. And I did not have a scholarly language for talking about this.

So, when I, as a researcher, found myself faced with the choice of either following this revealed alien research subject – gamers' gameplay activity and experience in digital games – into totally unknown waters (tacitly talking hands) or remain on the safe side and try to squeeze the research subject into familiar frameworks (communication, reception and digital representation) I took a deep breath and jumped in at the deep end. This jump proved to be scholarly fulfilling but also, at times, very challenging, estranging and frustrating.

Furthermore, I was faced with the challenge of writing about and scholarly communicate this tacit, pre-linguistic and non-representational phenomenon. Thus, I began, literally, to follow my main participants day and night, month after month while continuously observing and trying to put translate this newfound language of tacitly talking hands. Furthermore, I was also faced with the task of trying to find ways of translating and conveying this meaningful but mute movement-born and pre-linguistic language into proper scholarly writing. I needed to make an argument strong enough for letting it be scholarly acceptable within media studies to write weird writing about tacitly talking hands, so to speak.

Learning to swim and survive in this outlandish pool of inherently meaningful, but at the outset unintelligible, moving hands became possible through the construction of a ‘messy meshwork.’ During the three-year-long study a multimethodological framework (Mingers and Brocklesby 1997) for studying corporeal-locomotive connections within highly interactive media was slowly constructed. It was an intentionally messy and multifarious framework in constant flux because I did not yet fully understand the nature and structure of what I was looking at. Therefore, I needed to study the phenomenon as indecisively as possible. I needed to let the boundary of the phenomenon form on its own rather than forcing unenlightened boundaries on the phenomenon. I needed to let the tacitly talking hands grasp me, so to speak. And, subsequently, I needed to construct a new poetic and (kin)aesthetic conceptual vocabulary for representing their talking in writing.

Consequently, observational and participatory, objective and subjective, empirically grounding, phenomenologically describing and innovatively fabricating remixing methods and theories were in the study set free to intermingle, proliferate and cross-fertilize. By allowing for methodological messiness, for seemingly unintelligible writing and for extraterritorial theoretical concepts to invade the field the alien (caco)phonic, (kin)aesthetic and (in)compatible corporeal-locomotive talking coming from the field were not silenced but curiously followed and documented. The aim was to convey the importance and significance of paying attention to tacitly talking hands in highly interactive media when we talk about activities and experiences within digital games.

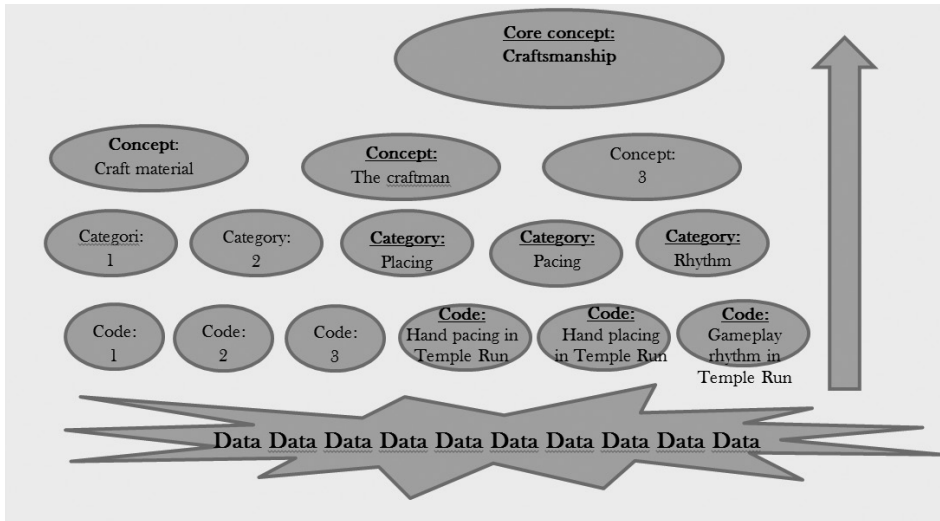
The following section presents the application of a ‘remixed and theoretically infused’ grounded theory method where the focus of attention is decidedly on letting these tacitly talking hands get a place of their own in the spotlight. The presentation is carried out with the central concept of ‘crafting media practices in highly interactive media’ as a case.

Grounded Theory Method and the Emergence of the Concept of Craftsmanship



The grounded theory method is basically a method, not for creating data or descriptions, but for creating concepts and conceptual frameworks out of data. The grounded theory method was originally presented by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in their two founding books *Awareness of Dying* (1965) and *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967) wherein they propounded the grounded theory mantra stating that ‘theory emerges from data.’ It is a method aimed at generating a theory or framework around a core concept (in this section the concept of ‘craftsmanship’). This developed core concept should then be able to account for most of the variation in the collected data. A model of the relationship between abstracted core concept and messy data could look as follows:

Figure 1. *The Grounded Theory Method Conceptualization Hierarchy*



The core of the grounded theory method approach taken in the study can be said to be the simultaneity of collecting data on ‘tacitly talking hands during gameplay’ and interpreting these data through open and selective coding as well as infusing these data with concepts, insights, modes and styles of thinking coming from such varied fields as sport phenomenology (Allen-Collinson 2009, Hockey and Allen-Collinson 2006), jazz theory (Berliner 1994, Sudnow 1978), phenomenology of the senses (Casey 1987, Straus 1963) and craftsmanship theory (Sennett 2008) to name a few.

Accordingly, the present study has not resulted in a ‘properly executed’ grounded theory but has, rather, adopted a messy grounded theory thinking in order to form a ‘substantive’ conceptual framework for tacitly talking hands in gameplay that is grounded thoroughly in empirical data *as well as* in theoretical concepts. A ‘substantive’ framework such as the one developed on ‘talking tacitly’ is a theoretical interpretation of or explanation for a discovered demarcated enigma (Bryant and Charmaz 2010, p. 610) such as the simultaneous significance of corporeal locomotion in gameplay and absence of corporeality and locomotion within game and media research (Nørgård 2010, 2011a and 2012).

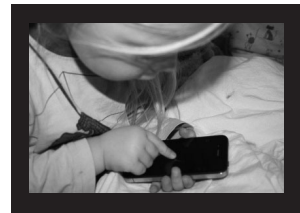
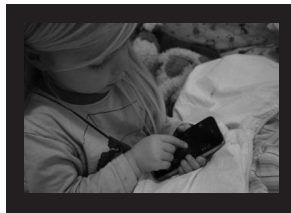
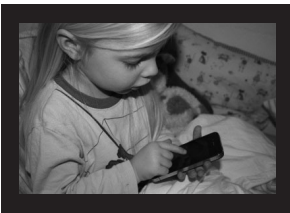
In essence, there can be no research questions only a research quest where the researcher travels along with the tacitly talking hands of gamers in order to empathi-

cally comprehend their corporeal-locomotive ways of talking. The focus is on developing a theory for grasping and comprehending something and not merely describing or confirming questions decided on in advance. Furthermore, given that the theory that had to be developed was about tacitly talking hands, grounded theory thinking seemed especially suited for the task as “Grounded theory [method] is an excellent tool for understanding invisible things. It can be used to reveal the invisible work involved in many kinds of tasks” (Bryant and Charmaz 2010 p. 79).

Below is an example of the gradual pinning down of the study’s first core concept – the concept of craftsmanship – by way of gathering data in ‘natural gameplay situations.’ In the study, research and data collection took place wherever and whenever there was gameplay in the making. In this way, gameplay was never ‘performed’ in honor of the researcher, as the participants were never ‘encouraged’ to deliver data (as is the case when using e.g. ‘interviews,’ ‘questionnaires’ or ‘lab experiments’). Instead, a three-year-long slowly matured conceptual comprehension of craftsmanship were brought about through, among other things, attentively watching the iPhone in the hands of Selma from she was three until she had turned five.

While documenting the tacitly talking of these hands through hundreds of photographs, many hours of video, several hundreds scratch notes and field notes and reading several thousand pages of theories about hands and bodies in motion a comprehension of tacitly talking slowly formed. A comprehension of inherent meaning at the tip of Selma’s finger as it glides across the shiny screen. In gameplay, it is Selma at work in the gameworld through crafting the game material with her hands. And it is myself at work in the gameworld through crafting the gameplay activity and experience with my writing. It is our laborious work together that develops a vocabulary for these tacitly talking hands as I watch and write about Selma as she play with and craft the game material.

The Tale of the Troubled Craftsman



I look attentively at Selma’s finger sliding across the screen as she plays digital games on the iPhone, with tongue in cheek and concentrates on controlling her movements with bated breath. It gradually becomes clear that an informed view on gameplay activity and experience as something contained within the process of making is needed. There is something at stake here. There is a finger that is working ceaselessly to craft Selma’s gameplay activity and experience. And there is Selma who is personally invested in her craftsmanship practices. Becoming a gameplayer requires that Selma endure repetition and do her job over and over again as she, over and over again, solves the same puzzles, avoids the same obstacles, collects the same coins, knocks over the same blocks of wood or makes the same dish. Over and over again, Selma crafts her gameplay activity and

experience by fusing thinking and doing through talking tacitly with the game material in hand.

When Selma lets a finger linger around on the screen, delicately tilts or vehemently shakes the iPhone, rhythmically taps her fingertip on the screen, pinches or stretches her fingers to minimize or maximize something on the screen or sensuously swipes her fingers across it, she is partaking in a bodily dialogue with technology. Through iPhone gameplay Selma is tacitly crafting her own first-hand gameplay activity and experience, as she is absorbed in learning to talk fluently in and with the gameworld. She sits there, with her finger on the screen and her tongue in cheek while radiating the aliveness that every craftsman before her has radiated: “‘I made this,’ ‘I am here, in this work,’ which is to say, ‘I exist.’” (Sennett 2008, p. 130). As a craftsman, Selma has spent evenings absorbed and obsessed with cutting ropes with precise timing and ‘fingerspitzengefühl’ in *Cut the Rope* or with gliding the finger smoothly around on the screen watching the tiny speck following the finger’s trail, growing as it eats the dirt she confidently leads it across in *Tasty Planet*.



Consequently, Selma’s identity as gamer becomes anchored in the tangible reality of the screen. She takes emotional pride in her handcrafting abilities, and gameplay can therefore for Selma quickly lead to frustrating tears when her corporeal-locomotive skills do not match the game’s demands for fluent craftsmanship. But Selma is patient, she struggles to curb her frustration as she knows what every craftsman knows: “To become skilled required, personally, that one be obedient.” (Sennett, 2008, p. 22). Gameplay is a dexterous form-giving activity and Selma sits obediently beside Tue and practices her dexterous form-giving skills as he encourages her to have ‘just one more go.’

Over time, Selma witnesses herself becoming a gamer as she experiences herself being able to express herself in more and more confident and multifaceted ways with the game material in hand. But, there is no way for Selma to make her tacit activity and experience explicit as it is pre-linguistic and non-representational in nature. It is, so to speak, bound to her fingertips as craftsmen “know how to do something but they cannot put what they know into words” (Sennett 2008, p. 94).

In the light of this told tale of Selma, we can see how a first conceptual framework for tacitly talking hands in which concepts of craftsmanship, first-hand doing and first-person being emerged and took center stage. It is a framework that presents the conceptualizing attempt to empathetically grasp and comprehend the unique composition of interacting and experiencing within highly interactive media. A composition that foregrounds the gamer as someone that makes gamer and gameworld come alive through first-hand corporeal-locomotive interaction and the gameworld as

something that makes gameplayer and gameworld come alive through composing and choreographing this corporeal-locomotive interaction.

Figure 2. *A Grounded Conceptual Framework for Tacitly Talking Hands & Craftsmanship Practices within Highly Interactive Digital Games*



Remix Methods and the Construction of a Refined Comprehension of Highly Interactive Media

Remix is a term originating from within the practice of music where multi-track mix tapes could be remixed. In remixing, new tracks would be added, tracks would be removed, tracks would be altered, tracks would be substituted with other tracks or tracks would be moved to the foreground or background in the final (re)mix. This notion of remixing has over time been adopted by many different practices such as software, fan art, machinema and even research. Today, remix generally refers to the ‘reworking of previously existing elements.’ Remix methods can, within a scholarly context, refer to the remixing of different styles and genres of research representation, the remixing of various concepts coming from different theoretical frameworks, the remixing of different data forms and formats or the remixing of several analytical practices and aesthetic forms.

Hence, while multimethodology or mixed methods denote the use of more than one method, remix methods denote a more radical and unorthodox remixing approach to data, analysis and theory. A central insight gained during the study’s research is that

if one wants to both conceptualize and delve deeply into an alien unfamiliar field that is characterized by a heavy emphasis on the sensuous, experiential, inarticulate and non-representational, then grounded theory thinking might be way to begin, and remix methods might be the way to proceed. In this section, remix methods as a way of remixing your way towards a refined comprehension of highly interactive media will be accounted for.

As a ‘remixing researcher,’ you play with emerging patterns, fabricate compelling narratives, make metaphorical mosaics, construct creative visual and textual collages or quilt conceptual patchworks. It is a methodological orientation that is very attentive towards the fact that research is always fabricated. Implying that, the methods you chose to mix together and apply, the concepts you chose to put forward and mix into a conceptual framework and the forms of representation and sentences you construct and mix into your scholarly statement are three layers of fabrication that merge together into an article, a rapport or a PhD thesis. In this way, every method, concept and wording count. The truth of your tale shall be judged by your abilities to fabricate truthful research; that is, research that emanates comprehension and empathy in relation to the field under study.

In this way, even though remix methods make research fun it does, however, also make research risky. Remix methods are demanding, in that remix methods do much more than ‘respectfully transfer’ elements such as quote other people’s prior research, describe empirical observations, transcribe the interview of participants and so on into a coherent piece that you as author otherwise take full ownership of in regards to ‘originality of content.’ Contrary to this, remix is more closely associated with less honorable practices of appropriation, mimicry or assembly. This is due to the fact that the empirical, analytical or theoretical elements that enter into the mix are not necessarily unaltered or even rigidly traceable back to their origin, neither in content nor form. In this way, the study’s results become the joint accomplishment of all remixed sources. Accordingly, the researcher plays the triple role of hub, translator and transformer. The researcher is a powerhouse where data, modes, forms, styles and concepts merge into an incoherent whole. When efficiently put to use, remix methods produce an potent cross-fertilization between conceptual and empirical bits and pieces into a new (re)mix.

That is, for me the potential of remix – an art and craft that does not aspire to be coherent, homogeneous, stable, streamlined or universally representational. It is a methodological approach that takes seriously the fact that research is messy and always in flux and under construction. Adopting a remix approach means, to me at least, that one acknowledges this messiness, instability and fabrication within a final not-so-polished product. Three such varied examples of remixing research in relation to tacitly talking hands in gameplay activity and experience are ‘the research music video,’ ‘the poetic tale’ and ‘the research Pixi-book.’ Below two of these forms are explicated more thoroughly in relation to tacitly talking hands.

The research music video is a way of accessing the dynamic, tangible and lived reality of playing digital games. Through the use of music, lyrics and moving imagery of gameplayers expressive being though tacitly talking hands a composite expression is crafted. By way of remixing music and video data with a theoretical perspective it became possible to convey some of the more sensuous tacit and experience-based lay-

ers of these talking hands. Thus, the developed form of the research music video tends towards the exploratory rather than the confirmatory and aims at taking both researcher and recipient into realms and comprehensions not (as easily) accessible through purely linguistic or traditional representational methods.

Figure 3. Stills from the Research Music Video 'Body Moving' Published in the Journal *Audiovisual Thinking*



As a concrete example of trying to access and convey the significance of tacitly talking hands in gameplay the research music video *Body Movin'* – *Visualizing the corporeal reality of digital computer games* (2011b) published in the academic peer-reviewed online journal *Audiovisual Thinking – the journal of academic videos* could pointed out. *Body Movin'* remixes a selected clip of music coming from Beastie Boys' *Body Movin'* with quotes from Sheets-Johnstone (1999) about the experience of corporeal locomotion and video data from six carefully selected and timed fieldwork video clips displaying different ways of partaking in and experiencing digital games through tacitly talking hands.

Accordingly, adopting such musical-visual-theoretical remix method in the research quest became a way to get the liveliness and rhythm of tacitly talking hands across in a scholarly way. Here, dynamic visual methods proved their strength in the rendering of the tacitly talking hands in gameplay, as "...the addition of visual methods can bring an added dimension, particularly in realms where the knowledge sought is beyond the range of language" (Banks 2007, p. 116).

The poetic tale is another way of accessing the more alien, sensuous, non-representational layers of tacitly talking hands. Not in moving imagery, but in moving writing. It is a way to 'talk tacitly' through the use of metaphorical and lyrical language, synesthesia, felt emotions, personal memories, expressionistic, impressionistic and abstract writing styles, evocative phrases and multi-sensory mappings. This attempt at moving through writing about movement in highly interactive media is carried out in an effort to conjure a more empathetic, lived, felt and experience-based understanding and rendition of tacitly talking hands in gameplay activity and experience. By transforming and disfiguring classic field notes and molding them into poetic writings about the lived experience of being a gamer getting moved by and moving in a gameworld the tale tries to get the message across.

In this way, a (kin)aesthetic sensible and empathetic language was sought developed in the textual corpus in order to render the sentences more "visceral; that is, they go beyond conscious reasoning, and bring us inside experience, which give them greater credibility and authority as a realistic account" (Markula and Denison 2000, p. 418). This is done to establish a close encounter with, on the one hand, non-representational passionate

language and metaphorical transformations and, on the other hand, sober descriptive representations and theoretical frameworks and concepts in order to get an accurate but multifaceted rendering of highly interactive media. Consequently, these multiple modes, forms and styles are allowed to coexist incongruently side-by-side or remixed into an incompatible whole. Concrete examples of this way of accessing and conveying the significance of tacitly talking hands in gameplay is ‘The tale of Tue and the *World of Warcraft* raid’ and ‘The tale of Selma becoming a gameplayer with the iPhone’.

A Methodological Framework for the Non-representational

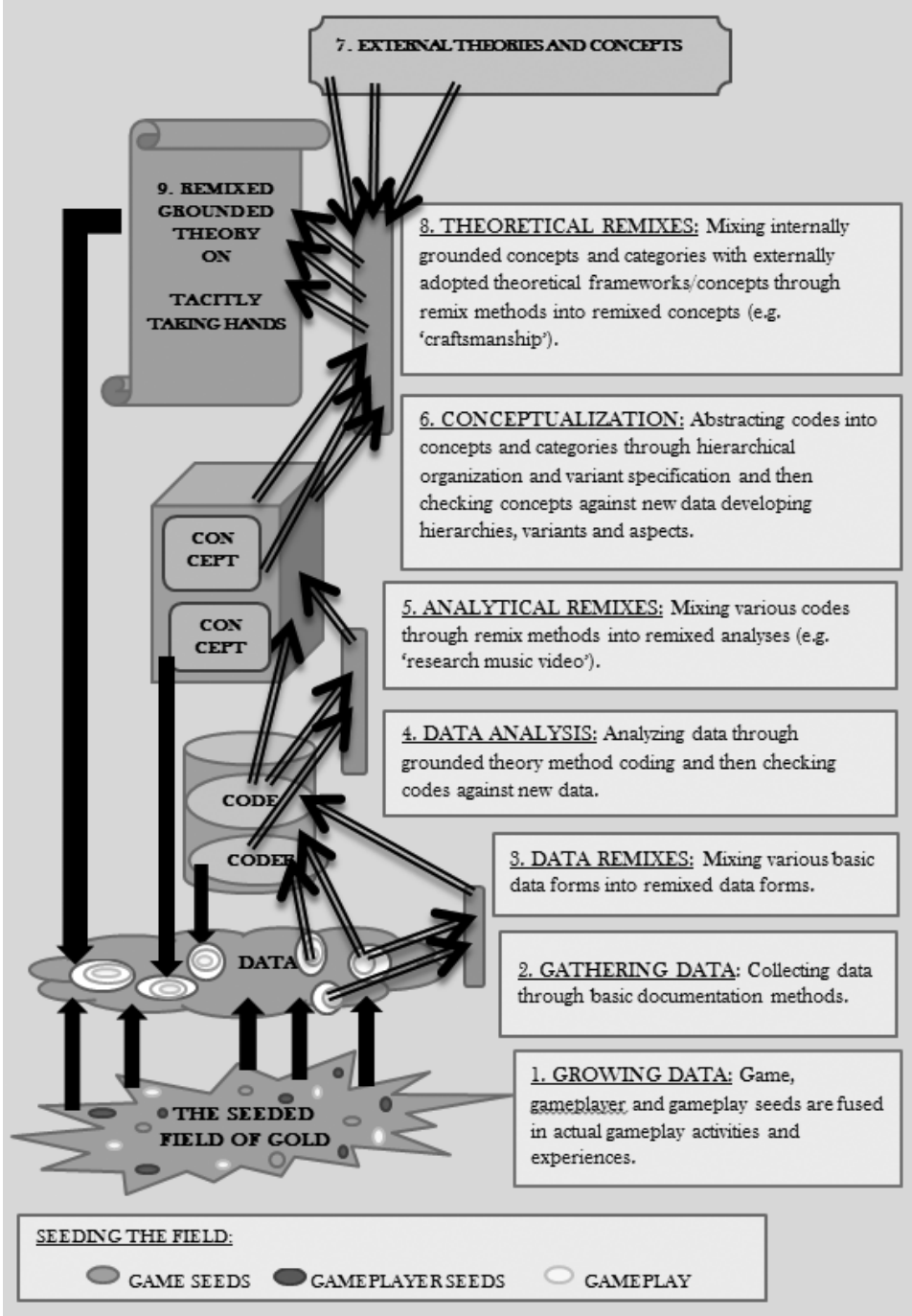
In the articles examples, both remix methods and grounded theory method come together in their joint emphasis on analytical and theoretical fabrication and synthesization, on the researcher’s interpretive authority as well as on a “method of analytical representation [which] is designed to unfocus from the individual and refocus on the patterns – those discursive activities that, when experienced live, speak to more than the specific content.” (Markham 2012, p. 344).

In this process of considering tacitly talking hands a comprehension of the intricate relationship between method and theory slowly formed. It is a formation of the realization that the emerging methodological framework shapes the theoretical approach and that the emerging conceptual framework shapes the methodological approach. Method became theory became style. And vice versa. It is the realization that method is always already inherently theoretical and theory is always already inherently methodological. And the way this theoretical-methodological intertwining plays out in articles, stories and PhDs thesis’s is style. It is “Style as theory” as Van Maanen once wrote – and theory as style. It is an intertwined methodological-conceptual-stylistic framework under constant development. Hence, the below presented framework is not solely an empirically developed methodological design for conducting research on corporeal gameplay or related areas; it is just as much a theoretical concept and a stylistic conceptualization. Accordingly, method and style are not tools, but just as much theoretical conceptions. And conversely, the developed theoretical and analytical conceptualizations are just as much methodological and stylistic expressions as they are ways of thinking about digital games.

Below is a general model of the study’s assembled methodological-theoretical-stylistic framework. Ironically, it was thus not until the study was over that the framework was practically complete. And, importantly, this is not even a finalized framework but nothing more than a temporarily crystallization of something in constant flux and formation. The model shows how specific combinations of data are decided upon and collected from the field (1+2). These data are then remixed and combined in different ways and then transformed to analysis to get a rich and varied understanding of the data (3+4). These analyses are then remixed in various ways to form products, such as the research music video or the poetic tale (5). From the analysis of data and the different analytic products a gradual conceptualization process happens where categories and concepts in relation to the phenomenon ‘tacitly talking hands’ emerge (6). The understanding of these categories and concepts, like ‘craftsmanship,’ ‘pace,’ ‘place’ and ‘choreography’ are then nuanced and qualified through fusing them with external theoretical works that relates to the categories and concepts (7+8). The data remixes, analytical remixes and

theoretical remixes are then combined into a messy methodological-theoretical-stylistic remixed grounded theory on tacitly talking hands which is brought back to the field and checked for vagueness and inconsistencies through repeating the process (9).

Figure 4. *A General Model of the Methodological Framework. To be read from the bottom up*



Through the use of cut-up techniques, fragmented observations and participation, punctuated and scattered narratives and multiple theoretical frameworks tacitly talking hands in gameplay is, in accordance with Annette Markham, presented not as a grand narrative but as a remix of imagery, insights and impressions in order to make a new conception of highly interactive media make itself heard: "...if the purpose is to break the frames we have arbitrarily set around the ways we present what it is we think we know, the form should also break the frame [...] to make readers think about many things while forming their own impressions" (A.N. Markham, 2005, p. 822).

In this way, the ability to entertain incompatible, heterogeneous and multifarious methods and theories gives the researcher a solid foundation for playing with and combining multiple methodological and theoretical ideas, modes, forms, styles and frameworks into a particular methodological-theoretical-stylistic framework of his/her own that is profoundly custom-made in order to suit the phenomenon under investigation. In this way, the article can be regarded as a reflection on the methodological struggle with representing something non-representational through persistently adhering to the activities and experiences of tacitly talking hands in highly interactive media.

However, such a 'remixing adherence' is not unproblematic. Challenges can and do emerge in at least five different ways that potentially could lead to a rejection of the validity of the produced results if the researcher is unable to rise to these challenges. Firstly, it might pose problems to openly state that data, analyses and concepts are 'fabricated.' By acknowledging that research is 'fabricated,' we also acknowledge that the 'results' and 'truths' stemming from the research might have been otherwise. Accordingly, to do a remixed grounded theory along the lines drawn here implies that one accept that the told research tale is but one among many. So we should make it as compelling as possible.

Secondly, making remixes is often more challenging than adhering to more traditional ways of doing research. Given the aestheticizing and fabricating nature of remix methods a badly composed remix will always fall back upon the producer. In this way, making a remix is always taking a risk that potentially can make the entire research argument collapse. This might be perceived as frightening. Given that the making of an excellent remix where all the parts click into place and something very powerful and commanding emerges hinges upon the producer this might discourage researchers from making remixes. In remix methods you cannot hide behind methods or theories. As researcher you are exposed and the judged quality of a scholarly remix is in some ways like the judged quality of good design or art – it is elusive and debatable.

Thirdly, making moving writing might prove to be abortive or dangerous. Making writing that aims to move and persuade the reader is within traditional research often regarded with suspicion. And making writing that insists on being in movement and under constant development often makes for a difficult read. This implies that the argument and methodological soundness has to be well above average. And, therefore, the stakes are higher.

Fourthly, insisting that style matters and that heavy metaphorical writing is as scholarly thorough as cool and distanced descriptions can seem questionable. Where is the scholarly soundness in writing up your research in alienating, abstruse or ambiguous ways? One answer might be that remix methods often trust the reader to find his or her own truths along the pathways and stories put forward in the research. In this way remix

methods become more about authenticity, interpretative power and verisimilitude than about replicability. A remix is always only one possible mix and, thus, its truths lie in its ability to ring true and create powerful associations, imagery and reflections in the mind of the reader.

Fifthly and finally, making messy methodologies that merges methods, theories and styles could easily prove catastrophic. It requires that one is able to thoroughly reflect on and account for all the methodological, theoretical and stylistic choices made. That is, even though custom-made methodological-theoretical-stylistic frameworks are perhaps able to grasp the researched field more appreciatively and fittingly, they are challenging for the researcher to produce, as the task lies on the researcher alone to argue for the validity, soundness and intelligibility of methodological-theoretical-stylistic choices made.

But regardless of the abovementioned challenges and potential problems the fabrication of a remixed grounded theory has the potential of both being profoundly rewarding for the researcher and result in the development of innovative methods, theories and concepts and perhaps even the development of a promising new research field as in this particular case. Central lessons learn in this double-sided development of researcher and research is, first and foremost, that research should be fun *as well as* serious. Research should be serious fun and fun seriousness – like producing beautiful *as well as* professional music remixes.

Secondly, research should be experimental, experiential and expressive *as well as* informed, thorough and well-read. It is often through the fusion of these two sides that a field moves forward. Actually, the former presupposes the latter. To create a profound and powerful remix that will move research forward you need in-depth understanding of tradition – every good remixer will tell you that. But, importantly fun, seriousness, wide reading and innovation can come to co-exist and intermingle as in making a 20 page ‘research pixi book’ or a 2 minute long ‘research music video’ based on 3 years of laborious fieldwork and 20.000 pages of theory and method. It was fun. And it was serious. It was a remixed grounded tribute to tacitly talking hands in gameplay activity and experience within highly interactive media.

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Worlds at Play

Space and Player Experience in Fantasy Computer Games

Claus Toft-Nielsen

Abstract

The relationship between the fantasy genre and the medium of computer games has always been a very tight-knit one. The present article explores the close connection between fantasy and computer games through different media, arguing that the fantasy genre's specific 'mode of function' is the ability to build complete fictional worlds, whereby it creates specific experiences for its users. Based on empirical data from focus group interviews with players of the most popular Western Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG) of all times, *World of Warcraft*, the article develops the concept of *worldness* as an experiential, phenomenological understanding of player experience. I discuss how this way of framing a core quality of the fantasy genre (of world-building) functions across single fictional universes and aims to grasp a specific fantasy experience of being in the world. This experience works on the level of genre, by anchoring the specific fantasy world in the larger, surrounding *fantasy genre matrix*.

Keywords: fantasy genre, MMORPG, world-building, worldness, player experience

Introduction

World of Warcraft (WoW) is the largest Western MMORPG and has been for almost a decade, with a current player base of 8 million. The game belongs to a type of games primarily defined by its persistent game world: These games are virtual meeting places where thousands of players interact with each other as they "assume the roles of heroic fantasy characters and explore a virtual world full of mystery, magic, and endless adventure" (Blizzard 2012). The game is one of the 85% of all MMORPGs set in a fantasy world (Van Geel 2012), making fantasy the predominant genre in these games by far. The world of *WoW* is "on" all the time, and the actions and events in the game continue in a cumulative way, allowing players to develop a character and influence the game space. Even though this game space is defined by rules, structure and systems, the *raison d'être* of games is rooted in our enjoyment of playing, mastering and experiencing them.

But investigating player experience is by no means an easy task, something the game studies literature can attest to. A multifaceted concept, player experience has been gauged in various ways and linked to different concepts, such as *motivations* for playing (Bartle 1996; Yee 2006), *enjoyment* (Klimmt 2003), *presence* (Lombard 1997), *flow* (Chen 2007), *gameflow* (Sweetser and Wyeth 2005), *pleasure* (Costello and Edmonds 2009), and just plain *fun* (Koster 2005). A core aspect in regard to player experience is the enjoyment of engaging with and being drawn into a game world, which is often

referred to as *immersion* (Calleja 2011; Murray 1997). Ermi and Mäyrä studied immersion in the context of digital games and proposed an experiential model of immersion consisting of three different components: *sensory immersion* (the extent to which the surface features of a game have a perceptual impact on the user), *challenge-based immersion* (the cognitive and motor aspects of the game that are needed to meet the challenges the game poses) and finally *imaginative immersion*, which is “[a] dimension of game experience in which one becomes absorbed with the stories and the world” (Ermi and Mäyrä 2005, p. 8). This imaginative immersion, with its specific focus on the game world, will serve as a lens through which to investigate the close relations between the fantasy genre and the medium of online computer games.

In the following, I investigate the relations through a shared cultural history and on the basis of common structural elements. My point of departure will be the literary roots of the fantasy genre, arguing that Tolkien is the single most important influence on present day MMORPGs. He established the genre of High Fantasy, but his ultimate worth is formulated in a poetics on how fantasy works, namely through world-building. I then relate Tolkien to the field of computer game studies, through the often overlooked but central link of table-top games, especially *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974). Creating the nascent notion of the game community and bringing Tolkien’s world to computer games, I investigate how computer games as a medium function through a particular utilization of space and spatiality. This use has the ability to generate particular user experiences, namely the experience of playing and participating in the game world and how this experience intersects with the fantasy worlds of other media. I develop the concepts of *worldness* and *fantasy media matrix* as means of framing different kinds of player experiences. In the final part of the article, I draw on empirical data from focus group interviews with *WoW* players to show how experiences of worldness are articulated by actual players and how these experiences can tie in with experiences with other media, through connections to the fantasy media matrix.

The Tolkien Connection: Fantasy and World-building

Defining the fantasy genre is notoriously difficult, as many critical works on the subject can attest to. There is no critical consensus on which works to include under the genre label, and the term has been applied to almost every form of literature deviating from a realistic mode of representation, such as myths, legends, fairy tales, utopian allegories and magical realism. Such an essentialist approach to fantasy, through a taxonomic definition, is problematic. Instead of asking for a content-/form-based classification of the fantasy genre, it is more fruitful to focus on the genre’s *function and purpose* (Miller 1984). One of the most comprehensive theorists and practitioners of fantasy was J.R.R. Tolkien. In his 1938 lecture “On Fairy-Stories”, in which he is the first to claim “Fantasy” as a label for the form of literature he aspired to work with, he creates a manifesto for the modern fantasy genre:

What really happens is that the story-maker becomes a successful “sub-creator”. He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is “true”; it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside”(Tolkien and Tolkien 1983, p. 132)¹

In this passage, Tolkien speaks about the centrality of a Secondary World to a work of fantasy. The key to crafting a successful fantasy is not simply the creation of a secondary world, but the creation of a secondary world that *makes sense*. The fantasy author must establish and then follow “laws” when creating a secondary world. Such a world “does not destroy or even insult Reason; and it does not either blunt the appetite for, nor obscure the perception of scientific verity. On the contrary. The keener and clearer is the reason, the better fantasy it will make” (Tolkien and Tolkien 1983, p. 144).

Tolkien’s world of Middle-earth was so rigorously rational with its genealogical charts, detailed chronologies and appendices, and scholarly discussions about nomenclature, geography, history, and languages that it invited the reader to approach Middle-earth both analytically and imaginatively. This mode of world-building is realized through an encyclopedic sense of detail: If the reader wants to find out how the core narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* ends, she must consult the historiographical appendix in the last volume of the novel. The most important part here is not the story or the plotline, but the texture of the fantasy world itself.

Tolkien’s fantasy is often named “high fantasy”, whereas Robert E. Howard’s Conan stories are “low fantasy”. This distinction does not concern cultural sophistication, but the extent to which the mythos and the secondary world of the fiction are connected to our world, the primary world. High fantasy, like Tolkien’s stories, are set in an entirely fictional world, which is distinct from our primary world, whereas low fantasy concerns stories where fantasy elements bleed over and manifest themselves in the primary world. “High fantasies” are fully self-coherent and secondary worlds. What Tolkien did, through his fiction and his reflections on this, was to write the modern fantasy genre, not through a taxonomic definition but through a focus on what the genre could accomplish, its function: It could build self-consistent worlds. Fantasy worlds, in both literature and games, are a series of imaginative landscapes, spatially connected. They can, in other words, be mapped out. Maps relate a series of locations to each other, visually unifying them into a world, and provide a concrete image of the world. This spatial, geographical dimension of fantasy worlds and the self-coherent consistent nature of them are key components when the genre becomes interactive and playable.

Fantasy as Playable Worlds – from Tabletop to Desktop

From the middle of 1970s and onwards, the fantasy genre spans out through a variety of different media. The genre of computer adventure or role-playing games (RPG) is closely connected to the literary genre of fantasy, especially Tolkien – so closely in fact, that computer RPG’s have been labelled “remediated Tolkien” (Bolter and Grusin 1999, p. 94; G. King and Krzywinska 2002, p. 29). But making Tolkien stand-in for the whole genre of RPG is missing a central point in the remediation from literature to computer games. One of the most influential fantasy games of all times is the pen-and-paper role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974). This game was considerably different from fantasy literature, in that the game first and foremost was a set of rules for interaction between the players and the fantasy world. It was originally created with the idea to transform the world of Tolkien into an interactive adventure, allowing the fans to experience the world from within through agency. One of the players would be responsible for the fantasy world and the characters in it (the Dungeon Master), whereas the other players would

create and role-play a single character adventuring in the game world. The game and the story took place in the imagination of the players as a “shared fantasy” (Fine 1983).

What was remediated from pen-and-paper games into computer games wasn’t only the fantasy setting, content, or the rule system – it was a whole social aspect of gaming culture, the beginning of the notion of the *game community*: Websites, walkthroughs, message boards and fanzines were an extension of the game itself, making fantasy RPG’s operate intertextually, as the context of the game is often much larger than the individual game (Myers 2003, p. 117). The cultural impact of *D&D* is not to be overlooked: “It is almost impossible to overstate the role of *Dungeons & Dragons* in the rise of computer gaming. [...] Scratch almost any game developer who worked from the late 1970s until today and you’re likely to find a vein of role-playing experience” (King and Borland 2003, p. 4).

This vein brought Tolkien’s world to computer games: Games like *PEDIT 5* and *DND* (both 1975) clearly show their cultural heritage: the first of these games was soon renamed *Orthanc* after the tower of Isengard in *Lord of the Rings*, and the latter is simply an abbreviation of ‘dungeons and dragons’. Both games attempted to bring *Dungeons & Dragons* to the computer, by using features like hit points, a level up-system, quests, monsters often set in the confined space of a dungeon. This dungeon-concept continued in games like *Dungeon* (1975), *Obliette* (1977) and *Rogue* (1980) and helped consolidate the concept of spatial exploration as a key game play component in these games. Programmer Will Crowther, an avid *Dungeons & Dragons* fan and cave explorer, wrote the game *Colossal Cave Adventure* (1976), based on his own exploration of a Kentucky cave system. Later the game was re-written by Don Woods, an avid Tolkien fan, by adding fantasy elements, such as magical items, creatures, and geographical features. The game spawned many imitations, including the very Tolkienesque *Akalabeth: World of Doom* (1979), a game that used maps to conceptualize the game world for the players. The game’s writer, Richard Garriot, would later extend the game world significantly in his series of *Ultima* games, a successful franchise of games, with each game in the series continually expanding the world through an overall world-building.

As the worlds of graphical adventure games were developing fast, the text adventure games became multiplayer. Both *Dungeons & Dragons* and fantasy literature were immensely popular on college campuses during the 1970s and 1980s. It was in this period and context that computer networks began to appear throughout both the United States and Europe. Both of these phenomena – fantasy and networked computing – converged in the minds of computer science students, and the result was the text-based MUD (Multi-User-Dungeon). Richard Bartle and Roy Trubshaw wrote, in 1978, the first MUD: A multiplayer game combining elements from *Dungeons & Dragons*, such as role-playing, action elements and the social dimension in the form of a chat room. The game was rewritten many times and it is described by Bartle as a “fantasy environment, i.e. a vaguely medieval world where magic worlds and dragons are real” (Bartle 1996). More followed and soon the conventions of the genre became codified. The MUDs spawned by pen-and-paper role-playing sustained a cult following for a decade and a half, until the mid-1990s, when they were joined by a new generation of games. The first graphical online role-playing game, *Meridian59* (1995) was, not surprisingly, set in a fantasy world. Another fantasy game, *Ultima Online* (1997) was the first game to reach 100,000 paying players, making it not just an online role-playing game – but also a massively multiplayer online role-playing game. This lineage of games has deep implications for

the contemporary MMORPGs: It connected the world-building of Tolkien, the social community aspects of pen-and-paper games and the conventions of the fantasy genre, wrapping them in a new form of game and targeting a mass audience.

Computer Games and the Utilization of Space

Space and spatiality are not just key components of the fantasy genre, they have also been a central issue for the study of computer games since the introduction of cyberspace (Benedikt 1992) and MUDs (Anders 1999). Murray has argued that spatiality is one of the core features of digital media (Murray 1997), and Aarseth accentuates space in the definition of games: “Computer games are essentially concerned with spatial representation and negotiation” (Aarseth 2001, p. 154). Jenkins has argued that computer games, through “environmental storytelling”, can be understood as spatial stories, which are being unfolded as the player moves through the game world (Jenkins 2004). In both literature and computer games, the fantasy genre has the same *modus operandi*: The construction of a space and the narrative movement through this. In an MMORPG like *WoW*, world-building has a double function as both *a frame* and *a space*.

WoW’s specific game world was established through the real-time strategy games (*Warcraft I – III*) and later both consolidated and expanded upon through a wide range of other media products such as novels, comic books, trading card games, user-driven wikis, fan fiction and the four expansions to *WoW* itself. Here the single text is replaced by a *storyworld* with a number of different media-specific points of entry (Jenkins 2007), which has resulted in a fully described, detailed and coherent world. This world is both expandable through different media and explorable by the users, which makes for a world that contains an enormous narrative potential. As with Tolkien, the world-building of *WoW* depends on the same ongoing compliance with a number of already established laws of the world. It becomes clear that these detailed, law-based, internally consistent worlds are formidable playable worlds. In computer games all these elements become quantified and explicated through the game code. Hidden underneath the interface and the aesthetics of the virtual worlds is the code, which in turn embodies the very rules and laws that are constitutive of and structure the game.

This is exactly why, in the words of Aarseth, computer games are *allegories of space*. They pretend to portray space in evermore realistic ways, but rely on their deviation from reality in order to make the illusion playable. Aarseth has compared the gameworld of *WoW* with a theme park, not unlike Disney World in both size and purpose: gated attractions connected by pathways, functional and playable, build for ease of navigation. *WoW* is a “landscape [bound] together in a seemingly seamless whole, a continuous surface that, by being continuous and labyrinthine, gives the impression of being a lot bigger than is actually is” (Aarseth 2008, p. 116).

What Aarseth is commenting on here is one form of world-building in which the utilization of both space and rules creates a consistent world. But this is quite different from the way the players *experience* the gameworld from within, when playing it and inhabiting it for extended periods of time. The specific experience that is afforded the user of a given fantasy universe is *worldness*. Where world-building is concerned with the ontology of a fantasy world, worldness is a phenomenological quality of the former and concerns the player experience.

Worldness and Player Experience

Worldness is one of the most central and at the same time one of the most elusive qualities of virtual worlds. As game researcher Celia Pearce states:

The term is used to express a sense of coherence, completeness, and consistency within the world's environment, aesthetics, and rules. To maintain a sense of worldness, a virtual world must create an aesthetic [...] a syntax, a vocabulary, and a framework that is extensible, sustainable, and robust. Every accessible location in the world must be accounted for in order to create the sense of contiguous, explorable space (Pearce 2009, p. 20)

Pearce's colleague, Tanya Krzywinska, shows how the texture and textual elements of *WoW* are essential for "world creation" and hence for the worldness of the game. She defines worldness as a consistency in regards to spatial coordinates, style, physics and past events (Krzywinska 2008, p. 127). As these references show, worldness has traditionally been theorized as a specific *textual* quality in the realization of a given fantasy world, whereas I understand it, not as text, structure or rule-system, but as a basic expression of the player's experience of engagement with the virtual world – as *experiential* quality. This experiential quality of the concept lies underneath the surface of the existing literature on the subject and will be highlighted in the following.

A core concept in Krzywinska is "thick text": A text richly populated with various allusions, correspondences, and references to the tropes and symbols of the fantasy genre or to previous realizations of a fantasy world. A thick text draws on a range of preexisting sources relevant to the invocation of a fantasy world by tapping into the player's experiences and knowledge – our genre repertoire – and uses this to infuse the gameworld with an extra layer of meaning, which the player herself is adding: "[T]he presence of multiple [...] intertexts encourages a certain type of depth engagement with the game" (Krzywinska 2008, p. 124). This depth reading of the intertexts has less to do with engagement or immersion in the fiction of the game, than it has to do with engagement in a more advanced process of reading and interpretation.

The differences between Pearce and Krzywinska notwithstanding, they both highlight a basic consistency within the world as a key component of worldness. But they also highlight how this consistency is dependent on the single player's expectations and experiences: Do the many elements of a given gameworld align with our expectations of this world? These expectations are informed by a complete mental image and knowledge of a given world we as users have, in much the same way that genres frame our understanding of media texts and transcend the individual text onto a larger and wider interpretative genre framework. Genre, as defined by Carolyn Miller, is "a rhetorical means for mediating private intentions and social exigence; it motivates by connecting the private with the public, the singular with the recurrent" (Miller 1984, p. 163). Our attraction to and engagement in a given fantasy gameworld is closely connected to our knowledge and understanding of other fantasy worlds in other media. By functioning not through immanent structures but through user expectations and interpretative codes (Culler 1981), the experience shapes and is shaped by what I call the *fantasy genre matrix*.

The Fantasy Genre Matrix

Genre theorists tend to emphasize the importance of the notion of intertextuality in regard to genre, where single texts are intersected and interrupted by dense networks of intertextuality (Bakhtin, Emerson, Holquist and McGee 1986; Bennett and Woollacott 1987). This notion is extended and reinforced in the fantasy genre, where the intertextual world-building of this genre forms an enormous experiential universe, “a complex of interrelated meanings, which its readers tend to interpret as a discrete and unified whole” (Couldry 2000, pp. 70-71). This experiential universe constitutes a *fantasy genre matrix*. The concept of ‘matrix’ has a double meaning as both ‘mold’ and ‘uterus’ and illustrates in this context a dynamic and ever-changing process of interpretation and imagination, where meaning is something that is created and procedurally arises out of our knowledge of genre texts, narratives and formulas. These function as interpretative patterns or sedimentary layers, when we engage new fantasy texts – not just as mental, cognitive schemas but also as a sensory and emotional dimension. Ermi and Mäyrä remind us, in relation to the imaginative immersion, that “[p]layers do not just engage in ready-made game play, but also actively take part in the construction of these experiences: they bring their desires, anticipations and previous experiences with them and reflect the experience in that light” (Ermi and Mäyrä 2005, p. 2). The concept of the fantasy genre matrix is a framing of this generic experiential potential – a framing of the collective generic “ongoing macrotext” we as individual users are creating across different media platforms (Bacon-Smith 1991, p. 112).

The intertextual act of building and extending worlds across different media has previously been theorized as “intermediality” (Grishakova and Ryan 2010; Lehtonen 2001), “transmedia storytelling” (Jenkins 2006), “transmedial interactions” (Bardzell, Wu, Bardzell, and Quagliara 2007), “layered worlds” (Bordwell 2006), or “multiple platforms” (Jeffery-Poulter 2003). These concepts are all concerned with the coordinated and overall strategy of the sender or the world-builder. The fantasy genre matrix is, in contrast to all of the above-mentioned concepts, suited to working with user experiences on the level of genre, across specific fantasy franchises and across the singular media technology. This concept resonates with Jenkins’ idea of convergence, which “occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others. Each of us constructs our own personal mythology from bits and fragments” (Jenkins 2006, p. 3). In the following, I will show how *WoW* gamers articulate their engagement in and experiences with the game through different aspects of worldness.

Articulating Worldness

The empirical data presented here stem from three focus group interviews with twelve *WoW* players, six men and six women, ranging from age 21 to 40 and from different European countries (Denmark, England, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden). The participants were recruited from two *WoW* guilds² from the same European PvE-server³ I was a member of for a period of several years. The participants were chosen based on a principle of maximum variation sampling, based on variables such as gender, age, education and location/geography. The focus group meetings lasted two hours and were only semi-structured by a few core research questions related to media use in general

and computer game use in particular, as I wished to facilitate discussions and negotiations among group members.

One of the first open questions I asked the participants was how important the fantasy genre is to them, when choosing a book, a film, or a computer game. To this, 32-year-old Lykke promptly answered; “Oh, it has to do with golems and such... It’s such a wonderful world to inhabit”. 21-year-old Tina backs her up by saying: “There *has* to be those creatures and those different landscapes... there just *has* to be”. What is interesting here is that both women highlight their experience of space (world, landscapes) as key to their understanding of the genre, after having tried to explain it through creatures inhabiting the world. 30-year-old Martin agrees by accentuating the coherence of the universe:

What makes it interesting is really the universe you are in... if it’s just some random universe and you just have to go out and kill monsters, it’s not interesting anymore... then there’s no adventure. [...] And the adventure is only there because the back-story, the creation of the world and everything is in place.

Martin’s polar opposite is 32-year-old Thomas: “*World of Warcraft* is... basically like pen & paper... it’s *Dungeons & Dragons*. You have a sword, there’s a mission, go kill stuff. It’s hack’n’slash, straight forward”. Thomas’ comment clearly illustrated that worldness for him is pure game mechanics. He demonstrates both a historical and a game-centric understanding of the MMORPG genre and its pen-and-paper RPG roots, centered on gameplay, hack’n’slash.⁴ Thomas’ fantasy genre matrix does not include fantasy literature or films, but is developed purely through fantasy-situated games, digital and pen-and-paper, whereas Martin’s understanding of the fantasy genre is more transmedial: He sees the game as part of a much larger fantasy genre matrix, where the texture of the world itself is crucial, whether it is literature or computer games. Game theorist Jesper Juul (2005) has argued that games consists of a level of rules and a level of fiction. The individual player can, depending on experience and preferences, choose to engage with the game as a fiction, a world or simply as a concretization of the rules of the game. Where Martin engages the game as a coherent world, Thomas is purely interested in the game as game mechanics, as rules – both of which are different constitutive aspects of the fantasy genre.

Worldness can also be articulated as the spatial aesthetics of the game, as game setting. Thomas explains how he is attracted to specific zones in the game due to their aesthetics, and Tina adds; “Yes, green and vigorous!”. 40-year-old Sharon accentuates the setting and the world as central to her experience of worldness: “I like the way it looks [...]. I don’t know anything about the lore whatsoever. I like the setting, I wouldn’t like it [if it was] set in space or something like that”. This aesthetic dimension of worldness can also be articulated negatively, in terms of demarcations, as we see in this comment by 23-year-old Nessa:

I think it is harder to connect to an environment like Outland when Burning Crusade came out and all the environments were very space age [...]. I know that I certainly enjoyed the recent expansion and the environments in that more than the Burning Crusade, because the BC was very... other-worldly [...]. You couldn’t really connect with it. Everything was so out-of-this-world strange and it didn’t really appeal to me.

With references to the spatial aesthetics of the game world (“very space age”, “other-worldly”, and “out-of-this-world”), here Nessa expresses where the fantasy genre matrix ends and science fiction begins.

Worldness has the capacity to span and connect more than a single medium. In an interview with two experienced *WoW* and *D&D* players and larpers, 25-year-old Mathias and Samuel, they started off by discussing literary fantasy but seamlessly moved on to discuss the remediation of already established fantasy universes. They know the *WoW* universe through the 3 RTS games, graphic novels, board games and especially novels:

Yeah, I'm happily surprised about most of the Warcraft-ones as well. Those writers are actually really good. And they give you a nice background on... yeah like the quests in-game [...] Yeah if you know his whole background and stuff, its... yeah quite cool

The importance of a *storyworld* anchoring the gaming experience in a wider genre grid, in a fantasy genre matrix, is an example of what Jenkins has described as “evocative narrative”, a specific feature of the narrative architecture of game space: “In the case of evoked narrative spatial design can either enhance our sense of immersion within a familiar world or communicate a fresh perspective on that world through the altering of established details” (Jenkins 2004, p. 129). This notion of evocation can be found all the way down to most detailed choices a gamer makes when creating a player character, as Samuel explains: “Its not like I made a tauren shaman because that's the strongest one, no I made a tauren shaman because I come from Mulgore and have been taught by Carin himself. [...] It's the story that counts”. Here a well-told story in the game converges with the game's mythology, player agency and the consistency of the game world and forms a total experience of worldness.

It's important to note that the experience of worldness is not necessarily limited to a specific world or a singular fantasy franchise, but can work on the level of genre, as a fantasy genre matrix. In discussing a specific area in *WoW*, 34-year-old Dennis highlights the many in-game references to Norse Mythology: “[T]ake the whole Ulduar team in the north. It's full of references to Norse mythology, like Freya and Mimeron”. Mathias is well aware of the many references in *WoW* to other playable fantasy worlds, within the fantasy genre matrix: “That zone is like taken straight out of *World of Darkness*”, and the implicit sources of inspiration *WoW* draws on: “They based the entire thing on Games Workshop in the past like *Orcs & Humans*, and they have been expanding on that and these days it can just stand on its own, and it's special”. Here, the world of *WoW* is transformed into a ‘thick text’ by interweaving intertextual references to other fantasy texts and worlds in *WoW*. When a player ‘gets’ the reference, intertextual corridors to other fantasy worlds appear. This creates a depth engagement with the game and the world of the game, which extends beyond, but at the same time informs, the game itself. This supports the total experience of worldness by creating an experiential emergence, a surplus value to the particular world, by anchoring it in the wider and surrounding fantasy genre matrix.

The fantasy genre matrix is not only concerned with cognitive processes, but also has an emotional dimension of interpretation. This dimension is expressed when the interview participants articulate the emotional impact the aesthetics of the game have on them, but it can also occur through the many intertexts in the game. Martin explains how he en-

countered a place in *WoW* that originates from one of the previous Warcraft RTS games. The encounter not only activates the recognition of the reference, but also reactivates the original experience he had when playing the earlier RTS games. This creates an engaging experience of recognition, of “having been there somehow... a historical place”. This emotional dimension of worldness encompassed in the fantasy genre matrix has the potential to enable a particular use of the game as a unique and deeply personal space:

I really like to go revisiting old places in the game. Like places that are very remote from where you normally go and you are the only one there. There is this one place, in Dun Morogh, where you can get up on top of Ironforge and there is this airfield up there! The place is just beautiful, I love the snowy landscape with the mountains and all [...] it's really amazing. It's like a small place only a small handful of people have visited and you feel kinda... special being able to go there, you know. I think I still have the screenshots on my Flickr account of that place, it's really amazing.

What is happening here is the emergence of a Lefebvrian “lived space”. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre contends that space is a dynamic participant in everyday practices, and not just a passive container but always socially produced. He describes the processes by which space is being produced as a dialectic between three forms of space: *Perceived space* (is a physical space produced by the spatial practice of everyday life, patterned by the ways that people encounter it), *Conceived space* (is representations of space, the space of scientists and planners, a space embodied by computers), and *Lived space* – a space that emerges from the struggle between perceived space and conceived space, a place populated by ‘users’ and ‘inhabitants’, whose subjective experiences produce a space redolent with meanings (Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith 1991, p. 364). In the passage cited above, we see the transformation of conceived space into lived space – an intensified space that escapes formalism and geometricality and becomes deeply personal and emotional, filled with memories. The emotional dimension is a crucial part of the fantasy genre matrix and helps explain why this matrix can span so many different fictional worlds and specific franchises. It can do this precisely because it draws on memories and experiences from the users’ previous engagements with the genre.

Conclusions

In the present article, I have explored the close relationship between the genre of fantasy and the medium of computer games and what this means in regard to the player’s experience of engaging with playable fantasy worlds. Through the article, I argue that the link between fantasy and computer games is rooted in both cultural history and structural elements. In regard to the former, I have shown how Tolkien’s world moved almost seamlessly into a playable format through the pen-and-paper RPGs. This created a cultural and historical link between a fascination with Tolkien’s books and the social community of the pen-and-paper RPGs, which in turn connected the conventions of the fantasy genre with modern MMORPGs. But fantasy and computer games also have functional elements in common. The main function of the fantasy genre is world-building, whereby successful fantasy lies in the creation of a world in which laws are established and followed throughout the fiction, which in turn has the ability to create

a fantasy world we, as users, can enter. The spatial, geographical dimension of fantasy worlds and the self-coherent, consistent nature of them are key components when the genre becomes interactive and playable, as in computer games. The encyclopedic, law-based, and internally consistent nature of fantasy lends itself well to the creation of playable worlds, because in computer games all these elements become quantified and explicated through the game code.

In analyzing the elusive concept of worldness in relation to virtual worlds, the present article suggests that we think of it in a new way. Whereas the concept traditionally has been understood as text, structure, or consistency of game rules, I conceptualize it as an *experiential* quality of engaging with a virtual world regardless of medium. The experiential dimension of worldness and the way player experience spans multiple media through the fantasy media matrix owe much to the method used in generating the empirical data. Many insights emerged through the semi-structured focus group interviews with their open-ended questions, which allowed players to explain and discuss their different media practices, their uses and relate their experiences. The article further investigates how players in an interview context articulate worldness as mythology, setting, aesthetics, intertextual readings, and as emotional gaming memories. This way of framing a core quality of the fantasy genre (world-building) functions across single fictional universes and aims to grasp a specific fantasy experience of being in the world – an experience that works on the level of genre, by anchoring the specific fantasy world in the larger, transmedial, surrounding *fantasy genre matrix* it connects to. The concepts of *worldness* and the *fantasy genre matrix* can help us frame some of the different experiences players have, when engaging with and inhabiting vast online gameworlds and how these intersect with other worlds in a wide array of media. This framework is a tool for understanding gaming and the experience of gaming as something that expands well beyond the actual moment of gameplay.

Notes

1. “Secondary world” is Tolkien’s term for a world that is made through sub-creation, that is the building of an imaginary world through the use and recombination of existing concepts and ideas. A secondary world is therefore an imaginary world existing within but ontologically different from the Primary world, the material physical world we inhabit.
2. A guild is an in-game association of players, formed to make group activities easier and more rewarding, as well as to create a social atmosphere in which to enjoy the game. Membership in a guild offers players admission into a broader social network.
3. A PvE server (Player versus Environment) is a type of server that facilitates a style of play, where the player-controlled characters compete against the game world and its computer-controlled denizens – as opposed to Player-versus-Player servers, where players fight other players. PvE is the dominant form of MMORPG games.
4. Hack’n’slash is a mode of play that emphasizes combat and where the game play consists of killing monsters and moving through a dungeon, collecting treasures. This kind of game play has its roots on pen & paper RPGs such as *Dungeons & Dragons*.

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Surrounded by Ear Candy?

The Use of Surround Sound in Oscar-nominated Movies 2000-2012

Svein Høier

Abstract

This article looks at surround sound in contemporary cinema, with the aim of discussing practices of sound design and, more particularly, pinpointing a ‘best practice’ of surround sound today – focusing here on the practices in the US. The empirical starting point for the analysis is a study of ten Oscar-nominated movies, analysing their soundtracks and especially comparing their stereo and surround versions. The method can be described as a ‘directional’ listening mode, analysing how the different channels and speakers are used when presenting sonic elements like voices, music, atmospheres and sound effects.

Keywords: film sound, surround sound, immersion, 5.1

Introduction

Surround sound has now moved beyond both the promotional and the experimental stages. Six, seven or eight channels of surround sound will be experienced in most cinemas and in many homes today. Of course, it will always be possible to develop new practices, aesthetics and ways of using surround sound, but this is now definitively an area where one can expect to find a set of conventions, some ‘tools of the trade’ and a ‘best practice’. And today one can also find recommendations from practitioners that reflect this, for instance *Recommendations for Surround Sound Production*, published by The Recording Academy’s Producers & Engineers Wing (Ainlay et al. 2004). These recommendations describe many aspects of what practitioners regard as ‘best practice’ of surround sound in the US today, mostly describing technical aspects but also discussing some of the important aesthetic aspects when designing surround sound for both music and films.

So what kinds of strategies are prominent when sound designers shape voices, music, atmospheric sounds and sound effects in today’s surround systems? How do sound designers take advantage of the possibilities such systems present, and how do they overcome the limitations? The discussion of these kinds of questions here is informed by a study of surround sound in American movies, choosing from the soundtracks of movies nominated for an Oscar in one or two of the categories “sound editing” and “sound mixing” for the years 2000-2012, and strategically selecting ten out of a list of 76 films over these 13 years.¹ Diversity in genre and in production year (in the years since the Millennium) have been the two most important criteria for the selection, and

the chosen material consists of action movies like *The Bourne Ultimatum* (Greengrass 2007) and *Skyfall* (Mendes 2012), historical and biographical dramas like *Moneyball* (Miller 2011) and *The Social Network* (Fincher 2010), science fiction films like *Minority Report* (Spielberg 2001) and *Avatar* (Camron 2009), and the adventure *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (Verbinski 2003), along with three films that are perhaps more difficult to categorize: *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (Fincher 2008), the war movie *U-571* (Mostow 2000) and *Inception* (Nolan 2010). A detailed analysis of these ten films can give a clear indication of ‘best practice’ in the American context since the Millennium, and an interest in researching such a ‘best practice’ motivates the empirical selection.

I have used three different ways of listening in logging and analysing these ten movies. The first involved listening to the surround sound with all the channels activated, to simulate the normal cinema experience (but in a 5.1 system with six speakers and thereby not using the array of speakers used in cinemas). The second mode consisted of listening to the productions in a down-mixed stereo version. This is relevant, because as many will know, there are many situations in which movies are designed for surround sound playback but are experienced in stereo. This will typically be the case when people watch movies broadcast on TV, use computers or watch DVDs or Blu-Rays without a surround system activated. This second way of listening thereby simulates these ways of experiencing the soundtrack in a down-mixed stereo version.² The third type involves listening closely to the separate channels in surround, sometimes listening to one channel, sometimes a pair of channels (especially only the two channels used in the back) and sometimes three, four, five or six channels. Overall, this can be described as a ‘directional listening mode’ that can help to clarify how sounds are spread out through the different channels and speakers when a film is experienced. The direct comparison between listening to a surround version and a down-mixed stereo version is especially important in the following, answering the short – but in some ways also multifaceted and complex – research question concerning the Oscar-nominated films:

What do the surround versions have to offer that the stereo versions do not?

The structure of the following discussion is as follows: the first section will present some possibilities, limitations and problems connected to surround sound on a general level. The second will address the use of voices in the material, after which follows a discussion of the use of sound effects, atmospheric sounds (distinguishing between exterior open space and interior walled space) and music (distinguishing between music with a source within the fictional world (diegetic) and music located outside the fictional world that is represented (non-diegetic music)). The soundtrack is split into these categories for the occasion, to pinpoint how surround is used in different ways in these particular sound categories. The categorization also mimics the main categories that many sound designers use in their technical setup, distinguishing between the mixing groups (or sub-mixes) of dialogue, ‘atmos’, sound effects and music.

Possibilities, Limitations, Problems – and Pragmatism

When 5.1 surround sound was introduced in the late seventies, audiences were simultaneously introduced to new – and sometimes overwhelming – possibilities for auditory

experiences with sounds coming from all directions, first in the cinema and later, in the nineties, in the home. It is relevant to describe the 360-degree sound experience as the auditory equivalent of spectacle in some ways – as described by Vivian Sobchack when she writes about the promotional trailers for the Dolby Digital format shown in the years around the Millennium (2005: 12). She describes how the “sonic velocity” in some movies can function as the equivalent of – and also equivalent in importance to – the visible ‘spectacle’. This ‘sonic velocity’ seems increasingly relevant today, in both trailers and full length movies of all genres – but is of course most prominent in scenes of high intensity and in the action genre.

Surround sound clearly increased the ‘sonic velocity’ of soundtracks, and also added what can be described as ‘ear candy’ – desirable sounds that could heighten an audience’s emotional involvement by being intensive, surprising, exaggerated, pleasant, shocking and more. But the introduction of surround sound also involved limitations, as well as a number of possible unwanted effects for an audience. One important limitation is that only a minority of a cinema audience will occupy seats located in (or near) the acoustic ‘sweet spot’ in the cinema; that is, the best location for listening to the sum of the loudspeakers at once (having the same distance to the various speakers). Even if sound systems in theatres are tweaked to perform at their best, the situation is not optimal, as Kerins describes: “Still, it is simply impossible to make a theatre that will sound equally good (and have the same front to surround balance) heard from a seat on the left edge side of the front row, from the middle of the auditorium, or from the back right corner” (2011: 48). The challenges connected to variation in seating, and possible strategies – like *not* mixing for a sweet spot – are discussed in the recommendations by *The Recording Academy’s Producers & Engineers Wing* (Ainlay et al. 2004).

Unwanted effects in surround sound have similarly been discussed by different authors, for instance Chion in the nineties (1994: 84) and more recently Elvemo (2013: 33). So even though the practices around surround sound have been developed and refined over the years, unwanted effects still continue to be troublesome and debated. When problems are described, the ‘exit door effect’ (sometimes called the ‘exit sign effect’) is often mentioned as well as, to some degree, the ‘in-the-wings-effect’; that is, situations in which the audience’s attention can potentially be led away from the narrative and the diegetic space because of the way sound elements are presented at the sides and back of the cinema. In this regard, Tomlinson Holman describes how sound designers need to be careful when using the surround channels: “Called the exit sign effect, drawing attention to the surrounds breaks the suspension of disbelief and brings the listener ‘down to earth’” (2008: 116). Other writers have similarly focused on how such effects can be avoided through the thoughtful use of surround (Kerins 2011: 72-74).

Overall, one can say that the combination of possibilities, limitations and possible dysfunctional results of surround sound has resulted in a practice that involves a healthy pragmatism: trying to take advantage of possibilities, coping with limitations and, just as important, *avoiding* dysfunctional results – and presenting a 360-degree sound experience only when it is fruitful to do so. On this basis, many movies do not include all the possibilities presented by surround sound; one example of this is how sound designers use frontal and centred localization of dialogue in almost any production, as discussed in the next section.

Frontal Voices that Demand our Attention

Almost all films present important and dominant voices as frontal and centred – thereby depending highly on the centre channel in a 5.1 surround system. This is also prominent in the material studied in this case. There is some supplementary use of the left and right channels, but these two channels are usually used only to add ‘a light touch’ of reverberation to centred voices. The laboratory scenes in *Avatar* can exemplify how voices are given such spatial definition by using the left and right channels to add reverb. The dialogue scene in an auditorium in *Inception* is a similar example, and the same effects are also put to use in *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*. The material also presents some examples of reflected onscreen dialogue in the back channels, but this strategy is not prominent. One example is *Skyfall*, where one can find some scenes in which this kind of reflected sound is used very lightly to indicate spacious rooms, but it should be noted that most of the dialogue in this particular film is in the centre channel *only*. Overall the dialogue is relatively dry in the ten films, and the acoustic surroundings around voices are similarly very often toned down. Intelligibility is prioritized in the design of almost any dialogue in fiction films, and centred voices will reflect this conventional practice of toning down reflected sound and prioritizing the intelligibility of voices.

The dependence on a frontal voice means that even if surround sound involves the possibility of a 360-degree sound experience – and envelopment – voices are treated traditionally in a surround mix. The dependence on the front channels is also connected to the simple fact that dialogue is mostly presented onscreen – and when it is presented offscreen (often showing a listening character), sound designers will often match the offscreen dialogue with the sound quality of the onscreen dialogue. Another good reason is that diegetic (onscreen) space is mainly experienced as having a depth that is localized *behind* the screen, while the sound speakers are largely limited to presenting the illusion of a sonic space placed *in front* of the screen. In the pragmatic use of frontal voices and the presentation of small amounts of reverb, this will result in voices that are localized at ‘screen depth’, rather than behind or in front of the screen, and this has proven to work well.

One can say that all voices meant to be interpreted semantically by an audience are placed in the foreground and stay frontal – and mostly depend on the centre channel. It should be noted, however, that when it comes to offscreen dialogue one can find some rare situations in which such dialogue is presented *only* through the use of the surround channels, which happens, for instance, a couple of times in the two movies *U-571* and *The Social Network*. But such examples make up less than one per cent of all the audible dialogue heard in the material chosen here, so it is still fair to say that one can hear all voices – and probably understand any movie – by listening to the centre channel *only*.

So what about more special uses of voices in films, like voiceovers or muffled voices from a distant crowd? The material used in this context is very limited when it comes to examples, but it is very plausible that the use of such voices also will depend on the centre channel, like the voiceover in *The Social Network*. When it comes to distant crowds talking – sometimes called ‘walla’ in the US and ‘rhubarb’ in the UK – such atmospheric voices are quite often presented through the use of back channels, but these cases will generally belong to the two next categories of atmospheric sounds.

When there was a minimal use of voices in the promotional trailers for Dolby Digital, THX and other technologies connected to surround sound around the Millennium, this

was probably done for a good reason. The experience of sound effects – and in these promos, ear candy – moving all around an audience is far more suitable for ‘showing off’ surround sound than voices are. The best practice for a voice is rather a static placement in the front and the creation of a merging of voice and character by depending highly on the centre channel. The audience accepts this static centred dialogue because of audio-visual “magnetisation”, as described by Chion (1994: 69). This term refers to how voices are experienced as spatially merged with characters, even if they differ in visual and auditory position. The left and right channels, and to some degree the two surround channels, can be used to add a touch of reverb and spatial definition to dialogue, but this is done very sparingly in the ten productions discussed here.

What happens when voices are experienced in the stereo version instead of surround? The difference between the two versions will only be marginal when it comes to voices. When six surround channels are combined in a stereo setup, a voice in the centre channel (in the 5.1 setup) will be distributed equally to the left and right stereo channels, creating a ‘phantom centre’ and giving the experience of a (physical) centred voice. And when the surround channels are used to present reverberated voices, the experience of (diegetic) space will surely be changed in the stereo version, but not in a very notable way. In sum, the difference will be far more recognizable when *other kinds of sounds elements* are mixed down to stereo, like sound elements within the five categories discussed in the next sections, beginning with sound effects.

Sound Effects that Pull Us Into the Action

Like voices, sound effects are prioritized and placed in the foreground in almost any film, but in contrast to voices, sound effects are used in ways that sometimes take full advantage of surround sound capabilities. This is because voices will generally have a static localization, while sound effects can sometimes be positioned very dynamically. The contribution of sound effects to ‘sonic velocity’ can, for instance, be very notable when sound effects follow the movements of visual sources in ‘three dimensions’ (and the trajectories of sources when sources are located offscreen). Sound effects will often be dynamic in this way, and can sometimes create an audience experience of ‘a ride’. For instance, the audience can experience riding on the back of James Bond’s motorcycle in *Skyfall*, jumping onto the ‘cars of the future’ in *Minority Report*, flying the colourful creature in *Avatar* or off-piste downhill skiing in *Inception*. In such cases, the sound designers can use sounds of various passing objects to try to pull the audience into the action, and these kinds of ‘rides’ will again often be combined with some sort of a moving and/or handheld camera.

Another typical use of sound effects that has strong links to moving objects is when the visual side stays more static, while bullets, spaceships, choppers or other objects fly by an audience. Discussing how bullets are presented in *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg 1998), sound designer Gary Rydstrom writes: “The movement of these sounds give us the impression of being in the action, having the closest possible proximity to the horrors, and of being as unsafe as the men onscreen” (2008: 197).

This kind of moving localization by using a dynamic panning of sound effects is an important strategy when designing surround sound today, and contributes greatly to the experience of ‘sonic velocity’ in films. But sound effects will sometimes also be used

as “offscreen trash”, as described by Chion (1994: 84), using for example the sounds of explosions and crashes that have no *direct* visual reference – and that will never be visualized in a direct way. Chion mentions *Die Hard* as one film that uses such ‘offscreen trash’ in the nineties, and one will find similar use of sound elements in the more recent Oscar-nominated movies studied in this case. In *U-571*, for instance, explosions from depth charges explode in the surround channels only, presenting the audience with the stressful situation of being in a submarine that is under attack from above and at the same time lacking visual reference.

One possible dysfunctional result when using dynamic panning, or the more static sounds in the case of ‘offscreen trash’, is the risk of creating the aforementioned ‘exit door effect’. Simplified, one can say that abrupt sounds without visual cues can make us ‘turn our head’. But such a dysfunctional result can also be avoided – or at least reduced – by depending on context and established links between sound elements and the diegetic world that is presented visually – both ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ links. Returning to the example from *U-571*, it is no surprise *that* depth charges are suddenly exploding in the surround channels; what is far more surprising is *the specific moment* this happens. This makes it possible to scare the audience without creating immediate scepticism. This is also relevant in, for instance, apocalyptic war scenes and high intensity car chases – these kinds of scenes make it plausible that offscreen crashes and explosions can happen at almost any time, and such sound design might work very well – even when direct visual cues are lacking.

The most dominant use of sound effects, however, involves elements that are visually presented on the screen, and such onscreen sounds mostly depend on stereo capabilities. In such cases the surround channels will mostly be reserved for presenting a low volume reverberation of highly frontal onscreen sound effects – a use that is similar to how reverberated voices are placed in the surround channels. This can be the case, for instance, when onscreen doors are opened, swords are drawn, or cars drive away. But in contrast to voices, panning between the left and right channels (stereo panning) is occasionally used to follow moving characters and objects moving horizontally across the screen, thereby taking advantage of the capabilities of stereo.

The use of the Low Frequency Effect (LFE) channel in 5.1 systems often adds drama, force, weight and materiality to sound effects and music, and a stereo version will lack this dedicated presentation of low frequencies. What else differentiates the two experiences when it comes to sound effects? First and foremost, the stereo version will of course still include the stereo panning, but it will lack the 360-degree dynamic localization of sound effects. The two sides in this dynamic localization will be kept in the stereo version – the left side stays left and the right side stays right – but offscreen sounds are suddenly limited to being placed inside a stereo width that can be less than 90 degrees wide. There is no doubt that sound effects represent one area where surround sound brings us into the action in a way stereo cannot – by enveloping the audience, by giving us the experience of moving objects coming towards us and by taking us on rides. Similar enveloping capabilities of surround systems are likewise very important for the atmospheric sounds discussed in the next two categories, but atmospheric sounds are usually used in a far more subtle way – and the consequence of down-mixing will correspondingly be less.

Atmospheric Sounds that Bring Us Into the Open (exteriors)

Atmospheric sounds will – like sound effects – often be designed as a 360-degree experience through the combined use of multiple speakers in the presentation of an auditory setting. These kinds of sonic atmospheres can either be based on surround recordings, or be the result of a combination of different mono or stereo recordings. In most cases such atmospheric sounds will involve what Chion calls “passive sounds” – that is, sounds that do not trigger attention around their source, but rather represent territorial sounds that present sonic information in more subtle ways (1994: 85). This can, for instance, be the sound of a noisy city in *Inception*, sounds from various distant human activities in *Skyfall* or the sound of nature in all its variations, like the portrait of the countryside in *Minority Report*. Further, passive sounds are those that are often familiar to us, and can likewise be said to have a comforting quality by being mostly everyday sounds that will very seldom result in the ‘exit door effect’.

Outdoor atmospheres will mostly consist of ‘direct sound’ rather than reverberated sound – connected to the lack of close surfaces that can motivate a noticeable presence of reflected sounds – and will similarly often lack the spatial definition that reverberated sound can produce. But these sound elements are often experienced as distant because of two other important factors, described by Maasø and other scholars: low volume and limited frequency range (in most cases: a reduction of high frequencies) (2008: 37).

When listening closely to the back channels *only* (at high volume), one can sometimes get the feeling that atmospheric sounds can have subliminal qualities, that they are not ‘listened to’ at a normal volume setting – but are still ‘felt’. And *only* listening to the two surround channels in movies like *Moneyball* and *The Social Network* is a very relaxing experience compared to the normal modes of listening to these two films – and films in general. One can also be surprised by what kind of atmospheres are put to use in some films; turning up the volume, one notices that such sound elements sometimes seem a bit random. But this is only audible when one listens to the surround channels only while also increasing the volume quite a bit. When using a normal listening mode – and a typical listening volume – this general ‘noise’ will probably never result in a raised eyebrow, but will rather envelope us in a subtle and functional way. Atmospheres will, like Holman writes, also contribute to continuity, and “vary from providing a sonic space for the scene to exist in to the practical covering up of presence discontinuities, auditory ‘perfume’” (2010: 163).

In general, atmospheric sounds have a more associative connection to the visual side compared to voices and sound effects. In cases of onscreen sounds, the distance to the sources often weakens the connection, seeing for instance a city skyline or a church tower in the background, combining such visual information with correspondent sound elements. The link to the visual side is also ‘weakened’ because atmospheric sounds are mostly static and are seldom combined with directional panning – and are also not presented with cues that guide a more specific localization in diegetic space. The use of atmospheric sounds therefore contributes to creating a sonic background that often consists of passive offscreen sounds but still gives important information, for instance, regarding the presence or absence of important activity in the offscreen space.

There are important differences between the surround and the stereo versions, even if such atmospheric sounds are mostly very low in volume and stay in the background. When atmospheric sounds are presented as a 360-degree experience, this can result in a

masking of the cinema space, ‘replacing’ its walls with an outdoor environment. When atmospheric sounds are presented in stereo, this depth will be lacking, and atmospheric sounds will mainly contribute on a more basic level – giving geographical information and contributing to continuity in scenes. The change will be similar when atmospheric sounds are used to presents interior qualities, and are mixed down from surround to stereo – as discussed next.

Atmospheric Sounds that Wrap Interiors Around Us

Listening closely to the Oscar-nominated movies, they often portray interior environments with subtle atmospheric sounds in the background. For instance, there are numerous scenes in different meeting rooms in *The Social Network*, *Moneyball* and *Skyfall*, and in these scenes the audience is surrounded by such atmospheric sounds as a low hum (an auditory setting created by sounds of ventilation, machinery, noise and more). The sound design can be said to contribute to a possible merging of cinema space and meeting rooms by including such envelopment, and atmospheric sounds can often have this intended result of an audience feeling that they are ‘living it’ rather than ‘observing it’.

In *Moneyball* the interior of a baseball stadium is portrayed by indicating background noise like ventilation systems, machinery, human activity and distant talking. In these interior scenes, the atmospheric sound elements stay passive and are presented as muffled and reverberated sounds that are low in volume and have a limited tonal range. And when James Bond walks through the halls with office workers inside MI6, there is a great deal of distant talking in the background. In these two cases the potential challenge of parallel voices is non-existent, because the audience is guided by huge differences in dynamics, distinguishing the important voices from the background ones, using distant voices to create the impression of two relevant working places by enveloping the audience in an atmosphere presenting background voices.

What happens when such atmospheric sounds are experienced in a down-mixed stereo version and the enveloping effect is removed? In my opinion the change is not drastic, because geographical and narrative information will still be heard. But the stereo version makes it more difficult to ‘pull’ the audience into the diegetic interior space, similar to an outdoor scene. The competition between sounds will also be increased in the stereo version, and background sounds may be masked entirely by elements placed in the foreground, particularly voices and sound effects. This is because when mixing surround sound one can take advantage of the fact that human hearing has better capabilities for hearing parallel sounds when they arrive from different angles. The possible risk of more nuanced sounds being masked by louder sound elements is also relevant for other sound elements that can sometimes be placed in the background, like diegetic music, discussed in the next section.

(Diegetic) Music that Connects Us with Diegetic Space and Characters

Music is traditionally connected to the diegetic universe by setting the volume, using a limited frequency range and controlling the ratio between direct and reflected sound (the amount of reverb). In surround sound, the use of both static and dynamic panning will similarly influence whether the music heard is understood as diegetic or non-diegetic, by

connecting it with a geographically and spatially defined (diegetic) source or not. This is the case, for instance, in a scene in which two of the main characters in the film *The Social Network* step out of a disco. When the visual focus is changed – through editing and camera work – the diegetic music is dynamically panned and thereby connected to the specific location (the disco).

Diegetic music can, however, also be presented without any specific source, functioning rather as an acousmatic sound that also continues to be acousmatic through the entire scene. In such cases, the implicit connection between music and location will often be helped by the probability of a sound source in the relevant setting, for instance in the opening scene of *The Social Network*. This scene includes diegetic music that seems to be performed live offscreen, and is one example of diegetic music being designed as offscreen ‘noise’ in the background (mostly presented through the left and right channels in this case). The instrumental music in this opening scene has the characteristics of reflected sound – as if localized just around the corner from the table of the dating couple, but the music does not really indicate any specific direction or geographical location, continuing to be acousmatic and omnipresent during the whole scene.

The difference between diegetic music presented in a surround mix and a stereo mix is not radical, but will – when statically panned – be quite similar to the transformation of atmospheric sounds. However, the difference is more radical when *dynamically* panned diegetic music is presented in a stereo mix, and this transformation will have more in common with how the aforementioned dynamically panned *sound effects* are reduced to moving along the left/right axis in the stereo version. This means, for instance, that the design of music that follows a car with its stereo on, and moves horizontally (left/right), will work well in the stereo version. The change will be more radical when, for instance, the sound of a helicopter arriving in the screen from the back (together with music playing on the helicopter’s external speakers) must be reduced to a stereo panning and thereby be ‘flattened’ in the stereo version. The same flattening can also happen to non-diegetic music in some cases, as discussed in the next section.

(Non-diegetic) Music that Immerses Us Emotionally

Tomlinson Holman describes two options – or sound perspectives – that are relevant in the design of non-diegetic music as a surround experience: 1) Sound designers can simulate some sort of seating in a concert hall, adding reverb to the direct sound when using the surround channels. This is called “direct/ambient” by Holman, and mostly involves direct sound from the front and a reverberated version of the same sound elements from the back. Alternatively, one can 2) simulate what he calls a position “inside the band”, thereby creating a more immersive experience whereby instruments (and other sources of musical sounds) can be experienced as localized all around the audience (2008: 87). Both these strategies will include some sort of spatial localization of the audience, either in some sort of a ‘performance room’ (not necessarily a concert hall) or within the space of the musical performance itself (‘inside the band’). The first of these two approaches is absolutely the dominant one in the material studied in this case, but both may be used in different scenes in the same film and can also be combined when mixing the soundtrack.

When Adele sings over the opening credits in *Skyfall*, her voice is positioned frontally and centred, as important voices generally are (like discussed above). The other

channels are mostly used to create a reverberation of her voice. This strategy adds new acoustic definition to the cinema space, and creates a feeling of being surrounded – not by Adele’s voice but by walls that reflect her voice back to us – a situation similar to sitting in a concert hall and hearing the singing directly from a stage, but combined with the reflected sounds of singing from the walls and the acoustic environment.

The music Adele sings over is mostly panned between the left and right front channels, other than some bass and strings mixed together with her voice in the centre channel. In the back, the surround channels present a reverberated version of the front, and are toned down compared to the front. So even if surround sound presents possibilities for panning instruments within a full circle, Holman’s second category (‘inside the band’) is not used to the fullest in these opening credits. It is also fair to say that such full circle panning is not a very common experience in cinemas; most film music is highly frontally weighted and the surround channels are most often used for adding space – and spice – rather than for spreading ‘the band all around’.

It should be noted that the diffusion of surround formats for music distribution has not been a success so far, and that almost all music recordings today are distributed and experienced in stereo. This also means that audiences and music producers still have stereo as their most important reference for experiencing music – outside the cinema. This will also influence the transformation from 5.1 to stereo, because it will still sound ‘normal’ (i.e., like stereo) in the down-mixed version. When non-diegetic music also lacks the direct connection to sources within the diegetic space, this will in sum make it reasonable to expect that audiences will not feel they are missing out on something big when listening to the stereo version of non-diegetic music. It should also be noted that when using the back catalogue of popular music, sound designers sometimes only have access to a song’s stereo version – something that limits the possibilities to mix such recordings in surround.

What do the Surround Versions have to Offer that the Stereo Versions do not?

When summing up the answers to this question, on a general level the discussion has shown how the surround versions can pull the audience into the diegetic world that is presented by creating envelopment and involvement. The cinema space can potentially be masked out by, for instance, atmospheric and passive sounds that similarly can contribute to the willing suspension of disbelief among members of an audience. The same feeling of envelopment can be created by the use of reverberated voices and reverberated sound effects in the surround channels, creating a relevant acoustic space by reflecting frontal sound elements from the sides and back as well. The use of ‘offscreen trash’ (active sounds) can add dramatic offscreen actions to the experience – when done with caution. The dynamic panning of sounds – especially sound effects – can further heighten the ‘sonic velocity’ and present desirable ear candy in films, but surround sound also involves a great deal more than presenting these kinds of ear candy effects in cinemas.

Surround sound increases the possibilities to present more sound elements at the same time, by widening the listening experience to a full circle and by strategically using layering. Voices and sound effects will mostly be placed in the foreground and arranged on top of background layers that most often consist of atmospheric sounds, but

sometimes also diegetic music. Non-diegetic music can again function as either a subtle background element or ‘middle ground’, or it can dominate the soundtrack entirely by being placed in the foreground. The prioritization between sound elements is followed through in the process of down-mixing to stereo, but sending all sounds through the stereo channels increases the competition between sounds.

The use of a directional listening mode makes it clear that the level of difference between the surround and stereo versions varies within the discussed sound categories. When voices are mixed down to stereo, this has smaller implications than is the case with sound effects. The conservative centring of voices in a surround mix will result in a transformation that is quite unproblematic. Horizontally panned stereo effects transform well, while panning along the front/back axis loses much of its impact. Statically panned atmospheric sounds elements will often function well in the down-mixed version and the change is often rather subtle, but at the same time the envelopment will mostly be lost.

The feeling of acoustic depth does not collapse entirely in the stereo version, because the audience will still get depth cues from the stereo panning, volume settings and frequency range as well as the ratio between direct and reflected sound. Spatial definition will, however, be more ‘flattened’ and the absence of directional depth cues highly recognizable, even if a number of today’s surround practices are continuations of stereo sound practices and depend on the more traditional spatial cues.

The analysis of the ten films revealed some notable variations in strategies and techniques among the films, but the material generally has a large degree of consistency. It is further relevant to note that the findings in this study also resonate well with both early writings on surround, like Chion (1994), along with more recent studies, like Kerins (2011). This sort of consistency among films and theoretical works indicates that it is possible to identify and describe a ‘best practice’ of surround sound today, and the use of a directional listening mode can help produce empirically grounded knowledge about such a practice. However, it should be noted, of course, that there are obvious limitations in a study of only ten Oscar-nominated films. Thousands of films are released each year, and the possibilities for variation are potentially huge – something that should be thoroughly researched and critically discussed. This study, along with the methods described here, can hopefully contribute to such future discussions.

Notes

1. See, for instance, Wikipedia for a full list: for Best Sound http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Sound, and for Best Sound Editing http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Sound_Editing.
2. It should be noted that the process of down-mixing can be performed in different ways. Some sound designers take pride in creating the best down-mixed stereo version possible, which will be distributed along with the surround version. But other processes will again involve the automated down-mixing of surround versions to stereo versions using software – and a simple summing of channels. The methods used here do not represent all variations in these processes.

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NordMedia

A Vital Venue, Then as Now

Reflections on Media Research 1973-2013

Ulla Carlsson

Three days in mid-June 1973 – the 18th to the 21st, to be exact – some seventy academics, policy-makers and media professionals gathered in Voksenåsen outside Oslo to discuss questions of an existential nature:

Where do we stand, where are we going, what kind of influence does what we do have, what do we aspire to do, and which allies, which adversaries define our function in a broader social context?

The majority of the participants were researchers, and they came from roughly a dozen different disciplines. Others were politicians and representatives of the media industry.

Among the speakers at the meeting were Kaarle Nordenstreng, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Tampere, who spoke about “Normative Directions for Mass Communication Research”, and Kjell Nowak, the Economic Research Institute, Stockholm School of Economics, who spoke about “Models for Mass Communication: In what context should the phenomenon be studied?” Another main theme during the meeting was “Media research, to whose benefit?” The report from the meeting was entitled “Media Research: Communication and Social Responsibility” (*Medieforskning: Kommunikasjon og samfunnsansvar*).

The researchers returned home with a dream of a discipline of their own, and the policy-makers and media people hoped for results from the academic community that might help them come to grips with a new media landscape.

The advent of television in the 1960s drew attention to the roles media play in society and to the conditions under which media operate – and, in extension, to the ‘logic’ of the media. The media landscape was transformed, and a new media culture emerged that had ramifications for both family life and social relations. These effects were amplified by the emergence of an unprecedented ‘culture of youth’ in a new socio-economic reality. All this, in turn, produced a number of new media genres. The terms of competition among media were fundamentally altered, which aroused concern about the effects of media on their audiences – youthful audiences in particular – in many quarters.

And ‘Information’ was a mantra in the public and private sectors alike.

This was in an era when our universities were rapidly expanding. New questions for research were raised, which had a lot to do with developments in the fields of Sociology,

Psychology, Political Science, Economic History, Linguistics, the Arts and Philosophy. Old theories and methods were revisited; new ones were elaborated.

These were the first steps toward establishing what was then called Mass Communication Research, or Media Studies, as an independent discipline, the results of which we can see these four decades later. For the Nordic meeting at Voksenåsen 1973 marks a distinct turning point – as its agenda so clearly illustrates.

These developments were largely the doings of a number of pioneers who by today's standards were extremely versatile in their research interests, readily shifting between 'micro' and 'macro'.

But, there was another key factor, as well. The founding and growth of the discipline was steered by a strong demand for new knowledge and competence on the part of both policy-makers and the industry. From its inception, media and communication research had a highly normative streak – with a focus on 'social practice'.

These, then, were factors that broke ground and cleared the way for the institutionalization of 'media and communication' in our colleges and universities.

There is yet another factor that should not be lost sight of. It is difficult to speak of the *NordMedia* Conference without speaking about Nordicom – the lives of the two are closely interwoven. Nordicom was founded the same year as the meeting in Voksenåsen. Started as a documentation center for Nordic research literature, over the years Nordicom has grown into a knowledge center for users throughout the Nordic region, Europe and the world. The research done here in the Nordic countries was no longer a mainly local concern; through Nordicom its reach became worldwide.

A Fruitful Interaction Between National, Nordic and International Research Arenas

Together, the Nordic research conferences and Nordicom constituted an arena that was large enough to constitute a 'critical mass' that allowed the development of the discipline at national level. It wasn't possible otherwise in any *one* of the countries at that time – with the exception of Finland, where Journalism and Mass Communication, and Communication Studies, respectively, had been independent and well-established disciplines for many years. But, without a doubt, Nordic collaboration has had a lot to do with the development of the discipline in the Nordic countries.

Two major assets going into this Nordic collaboration were, of course, a longstanding sense of kindredness among the Nordic countries and the similarities of our media systems. Nor should we underestimate the advantage of some degree of understanding of each other's languages, albeit far from universal. And not least, we should remind ourselves that the 1970s were still a time of post-war 'Nordism'.

Nordic research collaboration also benefited from Nordic researchers' active involvement in the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) and the organization's regularly recurring conferences. Nearly all the Nordic 'pioneer researchers' were present at the conference in Leipzig in 1974 – this conference marked a definite step in the history of IAMCR. The meetings of the 1970s addressed major issues of the time. Nordic researchers formed a striking contingent at international meetings, and they signed the spirit of the times. The Nordic imprint on the IAMCR conferences in Leicester 1976, Warsaw 1978, Caracas 1980 and so forth was unquestionable. The

region was making a name for itself in the international research community.

It is hardly coincidence that the Swedish research association was formed on the way home from Leicester 1976, and the Norwegian association at the conference in Warsaw 1978. In retrospect it is interesting to see how several different factors, especially Nordic and international processes, worked together to make an extraordinary national expansion possible in the respective countries.

An interplay of national, regional and international processes was decisive for the development of the discipline in the Nordic countries. And the region as a whole was its hub.

Research and education in media and communication were finally unified in the Nordic countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The process took place more or less simultaneously, in a variety of academic departments, some in the Social Sciences, others in the Humanities. This was the case in Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Fights, Unity and then Rethinking

Viewed in a historical perspective, media researchers in the Social Sciences and media researchers in the Humanities kept their distance from one another in terms of theory and methodology for some time. In the Humanities, the focus often rested on the meaning of human expression from the perspective of Linguistics, Philosophy, the Arts and Literature. The social scientists had, for their part, occupied themselves more with the media institutions and their relations with other institutions, particularly those having to do with democracy, and the effects and comprehension of mediated messages.

But let us not get the idea that we were all ‘one big happy family’. Far from it. In time, conflicts arose, not just squabbles, but serious divides – between scholars in the Humanities and those in the Social Sciences, between positivism and hermeneutics, between empiricism and theory, between Left and Right and, not least, between quantitative and qualitative approaches. For many years, a ‘front line’ ran through the Nordic research community, dividing those who applied quantitative methods from those who used qualitative. Harsh words rang through our ranks. There were even occasions when words led to push, and push to shove. Passions can run high, even among academics!

Then came the ‘cultural turn’ in the 1980’s. The cultural turn had a strong impact on the development – theoretical, empirical and methodological – of both the Humanities and Social Sciences in all our countries. The ‘cultural turn’ represented a development that brought researchers in the respective traditions closer. Scholars in the field increasingly trained their focus on the roles media play in cultural processes, on the media’s potential to create meaning in a broader sense, and on the adaptation of media messages to modes of understanding commonly applied to cultural phenomena. The concept of reception and text became centra. It was a process of hybridisation in some regions of the field. The ‘cultural turn’ had a far stronger impact on media and communication studies than on many other fields.

The conflicts subsided, but our field was diversifying at an accelerating pace, while it was also expanding. The statistical curves for book publication and new journals bulged, new groups of researchers were founded. And, not least, a trend toward increasing specialization ‘took off’. Most of the impulses that reached us in this era came from the USA and Great Britain.

And so came something of an identity crisis. The question, 'Is Media and Communication Studies really a discipline or just a field of study', once raised, would not go away. It haunted us – for decades.

Discussions about the relevance, the status, even the legitimacy of our work figured increasingly often on our agendas – often phrased in terms of 'rethinking'. Self-critical examinations were carried out, not least in the USA, and they colored both regional and national research conferences in our part of the world. The special issue of *Journal of Communication* in 1993, on "The Future of the Field" was widely read and sent ripples through our waters.

In the Nordic meetings of the 1990s doubts began to be raised as to the wisdom of striving to be an independent discipline. Might it not be leading in the wrong direction, toward isolation from established disciplines? These voices pointed to the major changes taking place in our societies, to the globalization of media, new ICT, democratization processes after the fall of the Wall, and the emergence of more variegated multicultural societies in Europe. There was clearly a need to develop our knowledge, to gain a better understanding of these and other phenomena.

The 'doubters' saw a risk in ever-greater specialization. Media research is, and must be, an interdisciplinary field of study, they argued. The times called for a rapprochement with 'the parent disciplines'. Several researchers pointed to the kind of cul de sac that awaited, unless we developed our theory. Continuing to 'borrow' our science from other disciplines implied a barren future. Then, as now, a good number of media studies were done outside the field of Media and Communication Studies proper, and scholars from other disciplines were invited to Nordic meetings to enrich our understanding of the media and to 'build bridges'.

Probably for a variety of reasons, it was common practice to invite American and British colleagues to our meetings. The Nordic region was a 'player' in international research, and there was a need to exchange views and findings, but it may also have been that Anglo-American 'star quality' helped to legitimize the discipline here at home. Our collective self-confidence needs a boost every now and then, it seems.

The themes of the Nordic meetings and the focus of the various working groups mark the paths we have followed over the years (Appendix 1). The number of working groups mushroomed to the extent that the arrangers of the 2007 meeting at Karlstad decided to group them into divisions. The numbers of participants continue to swell, as well. Whereas the meeting in 1973 gathered about 70 people, today we are 380, and all are academics. Twenty-five papers were presented at the 1973 meeting; here in Oslo we have 270.

Today, nearly all our colleges and universities have departments of media and communication studies. The graduates produced each year number in the thousands, and a good number of doctoral theses are presented. More than 60 dissertations were approved in the Nordic countries in 2012.

New generations of scholars, who have their backgrounds in the Media and Communication discipline contrast with the eldest generation, who started out in traditional disciplines. Society changes, and the 'communication society' has metamorphosed in many respects. Researchers move about freely in international environments – particularly Anglo-American ones – and publish articles in prestigious international journals. Yet, the Nordic meetings are still attractive. This Oslo meeting breaks all records, in terms of both the numbers who have gathered here and the papers being presented. This

must be proof of the value of *NordMedia* to the research community in our region. It represents a classic example of long-lived and vital Nordic cooperation.

Looking Forward

Digitization, coinciding as it does with increasing commercialization and far-reaching media convergence, is changing our communication systems – in terms of time and space, as well as modes of social behaviour. The structure of both governance and markets, with ever new kinds of transnational companies, has been transformed. Contemporary global and multicultural societies raise more complex issues than ever before.

The scientific community is in a situation where the accumulation of knowledge, the formulation of concepts and models of thought must respond to calls to contribute to an understanding of crises in society and social life, and to help solve them. This is a challenge for the media and communication research field, too. This situation demands that the research community revive its curiosity in order to explore new phenomena in society around us.

And the demands facing us in the Nordic research community are perhaps ‘extra large’, inasmuch as we are one of the most intensely ‘linked’ regions of the world. Globalization processes force us not only to focus more on transnational phenomena in general, but also to highlight difference. We have to work to bring about a stronger focus on regional inequalities and social transformation – there are many different kinds of widening gaps and divisions. Gender issues not to be forgotten.

Today the media and communication field is broad and characterized by diversity and extensive specialization. Few syntheses embrace the field as a whole. The rapidly growing flora of journals these days mirrors the situation. New research specialities are carved out, and new journal titles started up all the time. It is a situation of exceedingly keen competition for research funding. There is a general ‘hysteria’ concerning rankings among universities. At the individual level there is pressure to publish articles as a measure of productivity, of citations as an indicator of quality.

This implies a risk that perceptions of academic standards will continue to vary, and with them the quality of published work. Variation in standards is not to be confused with a healthy variety of interests, points of departure, concepts and methods, without which the discipline cannot thrive. Theoretical and methodological pluralism needs to be deliberately cultivated, and this requires competitive interaction between research environments of high quality.

When the issues are as complex as those we face today, holistic perspectives are really important.

The process of ‘dismantling’ public systems has also affected universities in their role as producers of knowledge, followed by effects that threaten to limit researchers’ critical and creative capacities – even in the Nordic countries. The frantic hunt for research funding, increasing pressures to publish in international journals, and far-reaching specialization – on a market that has become increasingly trend-sensitive – are not unrelated. Thought, ‘second-thoughts’ and reflection are scarce in day-to-day academic life. Monographs, as demanding of the scholar’s time and effort as they are important to our science, are not profitable ventures. All too little time is devoted to academic debate and critique; there is no ‘career value’ in such undertakings.

Viewed against this background, the *NordMedia* conferences become even more important. A regional conference that covers Media and Communication Research in all its aspects – and that builds on continuity. A conference that still has room for, and encourages, discussion, reflection and getting to know each other.

Finally...

Scholars in different parts of the world frequently come back to the question of what is needed in order to be able to formulate the really difficult, the really important questions about contemporary society. How do we move towards an innovative agenda, one that cuts across ethnic, cultural, religious and political boundaries and at the same time can enhance the quality and value of our research in different parts of the world?

Internationalization is both enriching and necessary in the intercultural and global world of today as it is with regard to our common interest in broader, more all-inclusive paradigms. Quite definitely, we need more collaboration – within our field, with other disciplines, with society around us and collaboration across national frontiers. We need to learn more from one another, to share knowledge and context.

We have to build on past work, but break new ground. We need fresh, unexpected insights and new comparative research questions. We need to develop analytical frameworks that will guide comparative analysis of communication for development. Without comparative studies we run an obvious risk that certain factors will grow out of proportion.

We have to recognize that globalization calls for regional epistemologies and multidisciplinary research approaches. It is important to maintain and further develop regional collaboration, not least as a means to ensure that internationalization does not take place at the expense of knowledge about, and reflection on, scholars' own societies and cultures. Fruitful national and regional dialogues are a great boon in international exchanges and vice versa.

So, my conclusion is that the *NordMedia* conferences have a given place in years to come, and that the meetings may even in the longer term assume decisive importance, both to the development of the discipline in the Nordic countries and to our success in the international arena. When I read through reviews of the titles Nordicom publishes in international quality periodicals – and there are many such reviews – three things stand out: 1. that the most widely read articles concern new phenomena relating to contemporary media culture; 2. that reviewers find the democracy perspective particularly interesting; and 3. that 'the Nordic voice' is so often explicitly mentioned in a most positive tone.

I have worked for many years – almost as many years as the *NordMedia* Conference has existed – with the Nordic region as a base, and I am quite convinced that constructive Nordic collaboration can both stimulate and improve efforts on a national level and strengthen the countries of the region in European and international arenas.

So, it is time to further strengthen our capacity to propose and imagine models that contribute to more holistic paradigms of civilizations – nationally, regionally and internationally. It is all about our accumulated knowledge, our memory, our ability to adopt a critical approach, our creativity and – not least our will. We must, put very simply, dare to do more – together! And *NordMedia* continues to provide a most fruitful platform for that mission – today and tomorrow.

Appendix

Themes

Nordic Conferences for Media and Communication Research 1973-2013

No	Place	Year	Theme
1	Voksenåsen, Oslo	1973	Media Research: Communication and Social Responsibility
2	Bjerringbro	1975	Communication and Democracy
3	Orivesi	1977	The Scientific Status of Mass Communication Research
4	Umeå	1979	Trends in the Mass Media in Norden: Output, demand, consequences
5	Reykjavik	1981	Is it Possible for Communication Research to Influence Media?
6	Volda	1983	Media: Structure, Distortion and Drama
7	Fuglø	1985	New Perspectives on Mass Media
8	Helsinki/Leningrad	1987	Mass Media and Cultural Change
9	Borgholm	1989	Media and Journalism in Transition. Organizational Structures, Contents and Audiences
10	Reykjavik	1991	Power and Media, Thoughts and Reflections on Contemporary Europe
11	Trondheim	1993	Research, Trends in the Media and in Research
12	Helsingør	1995	Visual Media in Our Cultures
13	Jyväskylä	1997	Theory and Methodology in Media Research. A New Media Landscape – Research on Modern ICT
14	Kungälv	1999	Where do the Front Lines of Mass Communication Research Run Today?
15	Reykjavik	2001	New Generations – New Media and Media History
16	Kristiansand	2003	Movie Rhetoric and International Politics. Media, Globalization & Identity. Rhetorics in Media Studies – Media Studies in Rhetorics
17	Aalborg	2005	Media Research – Demarcations and Interfaces
18	Helsinki	2007	Generations, Communication and Media Philosophy
19	Karlstad	2009	Body, Soul and Society
20	Akureyri	2011	Media and Communication Studies – Doing the Right Thing?
21	Oslo	2013	Defending Democracy: Nordic and Global Diversities in Media and Journalism.

Fortysome Worries

Inspired by

A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall (Bob Dylan, 1962-1963)

Oh where have you been, my blue eyed ones?
And where have you been, my daughters and sons?
We've been on the run through research divisions
We listened to futures of dystopic visions
Where glasses are empty and speakers have missions
Where platforms are plentiful, projects expanding
but deadlines approaching, and donors demanding
And it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard and it's a hard
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall

Oh, what did you see, my blue-eyed ones?
And what did you see, my daughters and sons?
We saw newspapers dying and editors moaning
Surveillance expanded and whistleblowers groaning
Saw democracy written with hands that were bleeding
on walls built up tall to bar people from reading
We saw tear gas and bullets and journalists running
We saw young men in uniforms, brutality stunning
We saw many suggestions to curb free expression
More brutally so in times of recession ...
And it's a hard ...

And what did you hear, my blue-eyed ones?
Yes, what did you hear, my daughters and sons?
We heard thousands of talkers, but little attention
We heard writers who scribbled on walls of detention
We heard film-makers framed up as bones of contention
Heard protesters' voices that no one would mention
Heard Murdochs with scandals and scam in the alley
And clapping of hands in the Silicone valley
While attackers on diversity loudly a-cheering
And politicians turning their coats overbearing
And it's a hard ...

Oh, who did you meet, my blue-eyed ones?
And who did you meet, my daughters and sons?
We met a media field that is endlessly growing
While funders of research pretend a not-knowing
We met with a system that counts publications
In ways that may sometimes disrupt our relations
to students who eagerly want revelations
of new and old media, Facebook formations
We met serious journalists loudly complaining
While markets were curbing ambitions remaining
And it's a hard ...

And what'll you do now, my blue-eyed ones?
And what'll you do now, my daughters and sons?
We're going back out where the rain starts a-falling
To shelters where voices are tired of calling
We'll speak truth to the power, wise to the soft-spoken
And prove that our research is more than a token
But shareholders' faces are always well hidden
and access to some information forbidden
Again and again we exchange our reflections
and listen to media's take on elections
with thousands of tweeters and Facebook campaigning
While the media watchdogs' true stories remaining
Are left often untold despite good intentions
and experienced journalists left with pre-pensions
But we'll stay on our ship and prevent it from sinking
and stand by our research until we stop thinking
And it's a hard ...

Elisabeth Eide 10.8.2013

Division Papers

Division 1. Environment, Science and Risk Communication

Chairs: *Mikkel Fugl Eskjær* (DK) *Kathrine Duarte* (NO)

Benulic; Kajsa-Stina: *Framing environmentally harmful consumption: A Media Analysis*. Södertörn University, School of Natural Science, Technology and Environmental Studies.

Duarte, Katherine: *Past and present of climate journalism in Norway: How has the coverage changed over time? A methodological discussion*. University of Bergen.

Eide, Elisabeth; Kunelius, Risto: *Media meets climate. Field dialogues*. University of Bergen; University of Tampere, School of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Eskjær, Mikkel: *Climate communication and media platforms – how climate change is presented across news media*. Aalborg University in Copenhagen, Communication and information studies.

Graf, Heike: *"We don't cut dead trees". Garden blogger's environmental communication*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Jönsson, Anna Maria; Magnus Boström: *Barriers for communication and responsibility in complex product chains: the case of chemical risks in textiles*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Karvonen, Erkki: *Authorities Challenged- Rhetoric of Denialism, Counter-Expertise and Communication Strategies in Science*. University of Oulu, Information and Communication Studies.

Kristiansen, Silje: *Accident and risk communication after Fukushima – An analysis of the press coverage and risk perception of nuclear energy in Switzerland?* University of Zürich, Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research.

Lakew, Yuliya: *Media identities of environmentally engaged youth*. Örebro University, Media and Communication Studies.

Rasmussen, Tove A: *Experience, Emotion and Valuebased Communication*. Aalborg University, Department of Communication and Psychology

Roslyng; Mette Marie: *Risk, media campaigns and public trust in food*. Aalborg University, Department of Communication and Psychology.

Sjölander, Annika Egan; Lischinsky, Alon: *Corporate Discourse on Sustainability and the Environment in Press Releases*. Umeå University, Department of Culture and Media Studies; Oxford Brookes University, Department of History, Philosophy and Religion.

Timonen, Päivi; Lammi, Minna: *Nature in economical imagery in Finnish films and journalism*. National Consumer Research Centre.

Division 2. Journalism Studies

Chairs: *Astrid Gynnild* (NO) *Göran Svensson* (SE)

Andersson, Ulrika: *From Broadsheet to Tabloid: Content Changes in Swedish Newspapers in the Light of a Shrunk Size*. University of and Communication.

Appelberg, Jonas: *Participatory journalism – How Swedish public service is taking part in the conversation and the concept of spreadable media*. Södertörn University, Social sciences.

Benestad Hågvar, Yngve: *Djevelen sitter i diskursen. En kritisk diskursanalyse av Marte Kroghsaken I VG*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Berglez, Peter: *Journalism in the Digital Landscape: Four Communicative Rationalities of the Web*. Örebro University, School of Humanities, Education and Social Science.

Blagaard, Bolette: *The New "Real": On Post-human Ethics and Drone Journalistic Imagery*.

Bro, Peter & Wallberg, Filip: *Gatekeeping in a Digital Era: Information, communication and co-creation*. Aalborg University, Department of Communications and Psychology.

Brurås, Svein: *Journalistisk research og kilde-tilfang i nettjournalistikken. En kvantitativ og komparativ analyse av seks nettaviser*. Høgskulen i Volda.

Bødker, Henrik: *The Circulation of Journalism and Contexts of Filtering*. Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

Blach-Ørsten, Mark and Burkal, Rasmus: *Institutional credibility and the future of Danish journalism*. Roskilde University, Department of Journalism / Department of Communication, Business and Information Technologies.

Clerwall, Christer: *Who wrote this? – users' perception of software-generated content in online news*. Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

De Maeyer, Juliette; Le Cam, Florence: *Retracing change and permanence. Towards a material approach of journalism studies*. Université Libre de Bruxelles, Information and Communication science.

Eide, Elisabeth; Jacobsen, Rachel S: *Marginalisering av mennesker med nedsatt funksjonsevne*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Svith, Flemming: *Journalism – neo modern and deliberative. An alternative journalistic approach*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

El Bour, Hamida; Frey, Elsebeth; Rahman, Golam: *What is the role of media and journalism in democracies and processes of democratization in Norway, Tunisia and Bangladesh?* Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies / University of Dhaka, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism.

Gravengaard, Gitte: *A linguistic approach to journalism practice – on how to capture the intangible parts of the socialisation process*. University of Copenhagen, Department of Scandinavian Studies and Linguistics.

Heikkilä, Heikki; Välvirronen, Jari: *Transparency – the new objectivity? Journalists' attitudes towards openness and audience interaction in Finland*. University of Tampere, School of Communication, Media and Theatre.

Hellman, Heikki: *De-professionalization or new professionalism of cultural journalists?* University of Tampere, School of Communication, Media and Theatre.

Herkman, Juha; Timo Harjuniemi: *National or European public sphere? Euro crisis in Finnish press*. Helsinki University, Department of Social Research. Communication.

Hornmoen, Harald; Rustand, Kjersti: *The credibility of true stories in literary journalism*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Hovden, Jan Fredrik; Ottosen, Rune: *To intervene or be neutral, to investigate or entertain; Persistence and changes in the professional ideals of Nordic journalism students 2005-2013*. University of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies / Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Jaakkola, Maarit: *From views to news. The change of the production environment of cultural journalism*. University of Tampere, School of Communication, Media and Theatre.

Kammer, Aske: *Online cultural criticism: when audiences are also reviewers*. University of Copenhagen, Department of Media, Cognition, and Communication.

Kammer, Aske: *The mediatization of journalism*. University of Copenhagen, Department of Media, Cognition, and Communication.

Karlsson, Michael: *Getting softer or harder? A longitudinal study of news topics in tabloid, quality and local newspaper websites in U.K. and Sweden*. Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

Karlsson, Michael; Holt, Kristoffer: *How are citizen journalists telling news? An inventory of Swedish online citizen journalism sites*. Linnæus University / Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

Kartveit Kate; Ertløv Hansen, Ola: *Narrative structures and multimodal stories in online new media, a literature review*. Aalborg University, The Danish School of Media and Journalism.

Knapskog, Karl Atle; Larsen Leif Ove: *Among pundits and prophets. On commentary as genre and strategy in cultural journalism*. University of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies.

Kvalheim, Nina: *Evolving platforms, evolving stories? An analysis of news stories published on multiple platforms*. University of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies.

Lamark, Hege; Morlandstø Lisbeth: *Mulighetenes tyranny*. University of Nordland.

Lauk, Epp; Kuutti, Heikki: *Ethical demands and responsibilities of online publishing: the Finnish experience*. University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication.

Lehtonen, Pauliina: *Promoting potential selves: Young journalists' views on career building*. University of Tampere, School of Communication, Media and Theatre.

Mehrabov, Ilkin: *What do we really know about the online news readers? Critical reflections on importance of qualitative studies of newspaper user comments*. Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

Melin, Margareta: *New News and Old Strategies. British Journalism Culture 1992-2012*. Malmö University, Art and Communication.

Mortensen, Mette and Nørgaard Kristensen, Nete: *Amateur sources breaking the news, meta sources authorizing the news of Gaddafi's death: New patterns of journalistic information gathering and dissemination in the digital age*. University of Copenhagen, Department of Media, Cognition, and Communication.

Nord, Lars; Karlsson Michael; Clerwall, Christer: *Journalism, transparency and credibility*. Mid Sweden University / Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

Nørgaard Kristensen, Nete; From, Unni: *Blockbusters on the agenda of the cultural pages – as vehicles for publicity, news content and cultural debate*. University of Copenhagen, Department of Media, Cognition, and Communication, Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

Olausson, Ulrika: *The diversified nature of "domesticated" news discourse: The case of climate change in national news media*. Örebro University, School of Humanities, Education and Social science.

Oltedal, Audgunn: *Claim and criterion; what is the difference?* Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Røe Mathisen, Birgit: *Watchdog or cheerleaders? The dual role of local journalists*. University of Nordland, Faculty of Social Science.

Riegert, Kristina, Roosvall, Anna; Widholm Andreas: *The worlds of Swedish cultural journalism: A research agenda*. Stockholm University, Section for Journalism, Media and Communication, Örebro University, School of Humanities, Education and Social science.

Schröder, Kim: *News media old and new – on their fluctuating audiences. A longitudinal of cross-media news consumption*. Roskilde University, Department of Communication, Business and Information Technologies.

Severson, Pernilla: *Participatory design theory on collaboration to further understanding of journalistic practices*. Malmö University, Art and Communication.

Skjerdal, Terje: *Professional ideals in a suppressed media context*. NLA university college, Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communication.

Steien, Solveig, Frey, Elsebeth; Knudsen Anders M.: *The Rig – Learning about press freedom through practical journalistic work for journalist students*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Svensson, Göran: *På debattsida och debattsajt. En analys av debatter om mediers och journalisters ansvar på DN-debatt och Newsmill*. Uppsala University, Department of Informatics.

Sundin, Ebba: *The concept of 'slow journalism'. The envisagement of journalist students and the traditional ideals of professional journalism*. Jönköping University, School of Education and Communication.

Svith, Flemming: *Journalism – neo-modern and deliberative. An alternative journalistic approach*. Institution? Danish School of Media and Journalism.

Uskali, Turo: *Towards ubiquitous journalism – real-time news streams and pulses*. University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication.

Utheim, Maria: *Etikken i mediedekningen av 22. Juli*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

von Krogh, Torbjørn: *Comparing aspects of press self-regulation in U.K. and Sweden in a media accountability perspective*. Mid Sweden University, Media and communication Studies.

Øvrebo, Turid: *Nyhetene i NRK/Dagsrevyen*. Volda University College, Department of Media and Communication Technology.

Division 3. Media and Communication History

Chairs: Eva Ekstrand (SE) Epp Lauk (FI)

Ekstrand, Eva Åsén (Extended abstract): *Women's magazines: A research topic*. Gävle University, Media and Communication Studies.

Agger, Gunhild: *The Role History in Bestseller and Blockbuster Culture*. Aalborg University, Department of Culture and Global Studies.

Hultén, Gunilla: *Ryska grymheter och svensk judefara. Pogromer i Ryssland och östjudisk invandring i svensk dagspress 1881-1921*. Stockholm University, Section for Journalism, Media and Communication.

Lammi, Minna; Timonen, Päivi: *Tracking the Past: How the Role of Expertise has changed in Finnish newsreels and current affairs television programs*. National Consumer Research Centre.

Lindholm, Magne: *SKUP-prisens normative prioriteringer*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Mølster, Ragnhild; Slaatta, Tore: *Nordic media research 2005- 2013: national and regional patterns in research publication data*. University of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies / University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Pedersen, Mona: *Stumfilm og det historiske publikum i Norge. Minnemateriale som historisk kilde*. Hedmark University College, Campus Rena.

Westlie, Bjørn: *Det norske pressediktaturet*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Division 4. Media, Culture and Society

Chairs: Göran Bolin (SE) Tanja Storsul (NO)

Andersson, Linus: *Alternative television: Forms of critique in artistic TV-production*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Bolongaro, Kaitlyn, Maria, Alessandra: *Communicating Social Movements in Canada: Two Languages, Two Media, One State*. Aarhus University.

Bengtsson, Stina; Lundgren, Lars: *Distinctions in (virtual), space: spatial practices and references in changing media landscapes*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Bolin, Göran: *Institution, Technology, World: Relationships between the Media, Culture and*

Society. Södertörn University, Media and Communication Studies.

Bruun, Hanne: *Eksklusive informanter. Om interviewet som redskab i produktionsanalysen*. Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

Christensen, Christa Lykke: *Danish Children's Television: Sixty Years of Public Service*. Copenhagen University, Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Faldalen, Jon Inge: *Responsibilities of response abilities. To warn and to witness: Prospects from video surveillance in Oslo, July 22, 2011*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Frandsen, Kirsten: *Mediatization of sports organizations—approaching changes on a meso-level*. Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication – Media Science.

Faldalen, Jon Inge: *Responsibilities of response abilities. To warn and to witness: Prospects from video surveillance in Oslo, July 22, 2011*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Frandsen, Kirsten: *Mediatization of sports organizations—approaching changes on a meso-level*. Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication – Media Science.

Gjesvik, Anders: *Homofilisynet i norske lederartikler*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Grünangerl, Manuela: *Defending democracy on a small scale: chances and challenges of non-commercial television broadcasting in Austria*. University of Salzburg, Kommunikationswissenschaft.

Hausken, Liv; Haagenen, Trine: *Perspectives on Surveillance*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Hjarvard, Stig: *Media as agents of cultural and social change: An institutional perspective*. University of Copenhagen. Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Jensen, Pia Majbritt; Waade, Anne Marit: *The Killing and The Bridge as "Nordic Noir": Setting, Climate, Light and Language as Production Values in Danish Television Series*. Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

Jensen, Pia Majbritt: *"A trans-national audience study of a global format genre: Talent shows in Denmark, Finland, Germany and Great Britain"*. Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

Jerslev, Anne: *Celebrification, authenticity, gossip – the celebrity humanitarian*. University of Copenhagen, Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Jerslev, Anne; Mortensen, Mette: *Taking the Extra out of the Extraordinary: Paparazzi Photography as an Online Celebrity News Genre*. University of Copenhagen. Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Krüger, Steffen: *The party continued, the evening/night was fine =>). Online “language games” and the freedom of speech*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Lammi, Minna; Timonen, Päivi: *Imagining Economy in Finnish Current Affairs Television Programs*. National Consumer Research Centre.

Moe, Hallvard: *Overreaching panel abstract: The media welfare state: the informational, cultural and democratic safety net of the Nordic model?* Department of Information Science and Media Studies, University of Bergen

Nyre, Lars; Tessem, Bjørnar: *Frequent use of Facebook increases the willingness to share locative information*. University of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies.

Opermann, Signe: *Trends in media use among five generations in Estonia: a quantitative analysis of news media consumption during 2002–2012*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Pereiro, Marta Perez; Silvia Roca Baamonde: *Role models in small cinemas. Strategies of creativity for cultural diversity*. University of Santiago de Compostela, Departamento de Ciencias de la Comunicación.

Rantala, Miia: *Is there only one kind of Finnishness? Discourses of white nationalism in contemporary Finnish TV advertisements*. University of Lapland, The Graduate School of Communication Studies.

Rasmussen, Tove A.: *Emotional Expression in Reality TV*. Aalborg University, Department of Communication and Psychology.

Sand Eira, Stine: *Media images seen from both sides of the camera*. University of Tromsø, Finnmark Faculty.

Siivonen, Jonita: *Unifying and differentiating features in descriptions of news genre subjects*. University of Helsinki, Swedish School of Social Science.

Syvvertsen, Trine; Enli, Gunn; Mjøs, Ole Johan; Moe, Hallvard: *Chapter 1: The Nordic Model and the Media Welfare State*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication / Uni-

versity of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies.

Syvvertsen, Trine; Enli, Gunn; Mjøs, Ole Johan; Moe, Hallvard: *Chapter 5: The Nordic Media Company – Nokia, Telenor, Schibsted and MTG*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication / University of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies.

Søndergaard, Henrik: *Nogle bemærkninger om den nordiske medievelfærdsstat og public service-mediernes rolle*. University of Copenhagen. Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Thorbjørnsrud, Kjersti; Ustad Figenschou, Tine; Ihlen, Øyvind: *Mediatization In Public Bureaucracies: A Typology*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Tudor, Matilda: *Sexual Expressivity and the Mediation of Queer Space*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Valtysson, Bjarki: *Dead or Alive? The Danish Digital Cultural Heritage Project and User Engagement*. University of Copenhagen, Department for Arts and Cultural Studies.

Vold, Tonje; Grue Jan: *“The disabled champion”. Reports on the Paralympic games in Norwegian newspapers*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Archivistics, Library and Information Science / University of Oslo, Department of Sociology and Human Geography.

Ytre-Arne, Brita: *Social media and the welfare state: The online experiences of long-term patients*. University of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies.

Ytreberg, Espen: *Putting history into media event theory*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Division 5. Media, Globalisation and Social Change

Chairs: Mari Maasilta (FI) Ylva Ekström (SE)

Abalo, Ernesto: *Constructing democratic (de) legitimacy: Venezuela in foreign news discourse*. Örebro University, School of Humanities Education and Social Sciences.

Bhroin, Niamh Ni: *Cracking the looking glass? Exploring how networked information flows impact political communication in minority languages in social media*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Bodström, Erna: *Hard Work, Nature and United Colours -Representing the Ethnic ‘Others’ and ‘Us’ in Communication of the Official Finland*.

University of Helsinki, Media and Communication Studies.

Andión, Margarita Ledo; Castelló Mayo, Enrique; López Gómez, Antía: *Defending democracy as a system and cultural diversity as a model: Europe's small-scale audiovisual media markets and digital inclusion*. University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

Githaiga, Grace: *Navigating the information highway: Uptake of ICTs by young women in Mathare Informal Settlement*. IDS University of Nairobi, Kenya

Gustafsson, Jessica: *Media and the Kenyan election: From hate speech to peace journalism?* Stockholm University, Department of Media Studies.

Heikkilä, Heikki; Väliverronen, Jari: *A Second Coming of Whistleblowing? The implications of Wikileaks to news organizations*. University of Tampere, Research Centre for Journalism, Media and Communication (COMET).

Hök, Jöran: *A double edged democratic deficit: The Menace of Party Politization and Oligarchisation of Mass media in East and Central European States*. Södertörn University, School of Social Sciences.

Jönhill, Jan Inge: *Observing how Diversity Management makes a difference*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education / Örebro University, School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences.

Lindell, Johan: *Expanding Social Imaginaries: Studying the Relationship Between "Actually Existing Cosmopolitanisms" and Media Practices*. Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

Maasilta, Mari; Haavisto, Camilla: *The Kony 2012-campaign in Ugandan online and offline realities and in the global news media*. University of Helsinki, Swedish School of Social Science.

Ndlela, Martin Nkosi: *Television Formats in Africa: Transnational Format Localization*. Hedmark University College, Department of Social Sciences.

Ngomba, Teke: *Look Who Got to Speak: Sourcing Patterns in British Media Coverage of Multiculturalism*. Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication – Media Science.

Nielsen, Poul Erik: *Critical perspectives on changing media environments in the Global South*. Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication

Pöyhtäri, Reeta: *It is all about the quality and atmosphere: online discussions, moderation*

practices and freedom of speech. University of Tampere, Research Centre for Journalism, Media and Communication (COMET).

Reuben, Rose: *An Exploration of the Role of FEM-INA HIP Media Programme in Empowering: Girls on Sexuality Issues*. University of Dar es Salaam.

Roosvall, Anna: *The Politics of Place. Media Representations of Traditionally Mobile Minorities: The Case of Irish Travellers at Dale Farm in the UK*. Örebro University, School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences.

Rweyemamu, Datusi K.: *Access to mass media and rejection of gender inequitable norms among unmarried youth in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania*. University of Dar es Salaam, Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

Toustrup, Morten: *Researching Cultural Implications of Media Consumption in Libya: Theoretical Challenges*. Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

Tveiten, Oddgeir: *Global journalism as a social force*. University of Agder, Department of Development Studies.

Kivikuru, Ullamajja: *Is there space for cultural translation?* University of Helsinki.

Wellbaum, Dustin: *The Social Arab: Online Developments of Expression & blogging in the Middle East*. Malmö University, Global Political Studies.

Wildermuth, Norbert: *Social Accountability and Civic Monitoring Mechanisms Going Crowd: Key Issues of an Emerging Trend*. Roskilde University, Department of Communication, Business and Information Technologies.

Division 6. Media Literacy and Media Education

Chairs: Reijo Kupiainen (FI) Jesper Tække (DK)

Erdal, Ivar John; Antvort, Kjell: *Situated technology and learning: Development of a mobile application for offshore safety training*. Volda University College, Department of Media and Communication Technology.

Hagen, Ingunn; Jorge, Ana: *"Does it really matter, or...? An exploration children and young people's negotiation of norms related to Internet risks"*. Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Media and Communication Psychology, Department of Psychology.

Kotilainen, Sirkku; Kupiainen, Reijo: *The impact of media education among 9th grade Finnish pupils*. University of Tampere, School of Communication, Media and Theatre / School of Education.

Mattus, Maria: *The anyone-can-edit syndrome. Intercreation stories of three Featured Articles in Wikipedia*. Jönköping University, School of education and communication.

Melin, Margareta: *Searching for In-between Spaces of Knowledge*. Malmö University, School of Arts and Communication (K3).

Oxstrand, Barbro: *From Media Literacy to the Swedish concept of Mediekunnighet. Teachers' perceptions and understanding of the Swedish concepts of Media Literacy and ICT at school and their approach to Media education*. University of Gothenburg, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication.

Paulsen, Michael; Tække, Jesper: *Social Media and Teaching – Education in the new media environment*. Aalborg University, Department of Learning and Philosophy / Centre For Internet Research.

Pekkala, Leo; Palsa, Lauri; Pääjärvi, Saara; Korva, Saana; Löfgren, Anu: *A Meta-Synthesis of Finnish Media Education Research*. Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audiovisual Media and Foundation for Cultural Policy Research Cupore, Helsinki.

Philipsen, Heidi: *Cultures of digital production. Policy-making, teaching and youth reflexivity across learning contexts in an era of transitions*. University of Southern Denmark, Department for the Study of Culture.

Pääjärvi, Saara: *Part of the Picture – Media Education for every Early Childhood Educator*. University of Tampere, School of Communication, Media and Theatre & School of Education.

Šťastná, Lucie: *The Czech Republic's Challenge: Media Educated Adults*. Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Social Sciences.

Thestrup, Klaus: *The transformers. Kindergartens in the center of the world*. Aarhus University, Centre for Teaching Development and Digital Media.

Uskali, Turo: *Journalism School as an Innovator: Case Data Journalism*. University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication.

Uusitalo, Niina: *Deconstructing ideas of childhood and youth in media education policy*. University of Tampere, School of Communication, Media and Theatre.

Vanwynsberghe, Hadewijch: *Adolescents' privacy strategies on social network sites: An investigation of predictors of privacy protection behavior*. Ghent University, MICT.

Division 7. Media Management, Policy and Economy

Chairs: Mart Ots (SE) Arne H. Krumsvik (NO)

Almgren, Susanne; Ekberg, Sara: *User-generated content: Organizational routines and participatory practices*. Jönköping University, School of Education and Communication.

Anciaux, Arnaud: *Subsiding the news: The search for fresh money and the assignment to a new role for journalism*. University of Rennes / University Laval.

Bakøy, Eva: *How to succeed in the private film and television industries?: A research design*. Lillehammer University College. Film and Television Studies.

Barland, Jens: *Viktigere i samfunnet – samfunnsregnskapet startet lokalt*. Gjøvik University College.

Bechmann, Anja: *Social media (non-)informed consent cultures: Privacy policies and app contracts of Facebook*. Aarhus University. Digital Footprints Research Group.

Colbjørnsen, Terje: *Technology as strategy and institutionalized practice: The case of the Kibano digireader*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Eck Hansen, Tarjei; Holand, Astrid Marie; Morlandstø, Lisbeth: *Innovasjon og alliansebygging: Historien om en ny lokal avis*. University of Nordland. Faculty of Social Sciences.

Engan, Bengt. *Verdiskaping i lokale medier: for hvem?* University of Nordland. Faculty of Social Sciences.

Gadringer, Stefan; Sparviero, Sergio: *The value ecosystem of news organisations* (extended abstract). University of Salzburg. Communication Department.

Holand, Astrid Marie: *Innovasjon i lokamedia: Når fornyer lokalpressen seg?*. University of Nordland. Faculty of Social Sciences.

Ihlebak, Karoline Andrea; Krumsvik, Arne H.; Storsul, Tanja: *En kamp om makt og mening: Casestudie av Nordlys på iPad*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication; Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Science, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Jensen, Pia Majbritt: *The use of format adaptation in Danish television broadcasting: Public service broadcasters compared to private broadcasters*.

Aarhus University. Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

Kolbeins, Guðbjörg H.: *Applying the agency theory to media organisations*. University of Iceland. Faculty of Social and Human Sciences.

Krumsvik, Arne H.: *Trends in newspaper executives' attitudes towards digital media*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Science, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Nieminen, Hannu: *Challenges of convergence to media and communications regulation: Tools for analysis* (discussion paper). University of Helsinki, Department of Social Research. Communication.

Ohlsson, Jonas: *Faded support for the Swedish press support*. University of Gothenburg, SOM Institute / Nordicom.

Puijk, Roel: *Innovation in public-service broadcasting: Hurtigruten – five days of live slow-tv in Norway*. Lillehammer University College. Film and Television Studies.

Sjøvaag, Helle: *The principles of regulation and the assumption of media effects*. University of Bergen. Department of Information Science and Media Studies.

Valle, Rune: *Presenting the PhD-project "New dramas in NRK: A production study of television drama series' produced in-house and externally for the NRK 2007–2012"* (extended abstract). Lillehammer University College. Film and Television Studies.

Van Passel, Eva: *The position of the creative author in the audiovisual media value network: A multidisciplinary perspective*. Vrije Universiteit Brussel. iMinds-SMIT.

Villi, Mikko; Matikainen, Janne; Khaldarova, Irina: *Recommend, tweet, share: News media and user-distributed content (UDC)*. University of Helsinki, Department of Social Research. Communication.

Division 8. Media, Technology and Aesthetics

Chair: *Anders Fagerjord* (NO)

Have, Iben; Stougaard Pedersen, Birgitte: *The digital renaissance of the audiobook as lit-to-go*. Aarhus University. Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

Juntti-Henriksson, Ann-Kristin; Brusila, Riitta: *Integrating media production with the new modes of communication: A joint research programme in northernmost Europe*. Lulea University of Technology, Media and Communication Studies / University of Lapland, Graphic Design.

Kammer, Aske: *Ownership, legacy media, and the use of affordances on Danish news websites*. University of Copenhagen. Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Karlsson, Michael; Clerwall, Christer; Örnebring, Henrik: *Hyperlinking practices in Swedish online news 2006–2012*. Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

Krogager, Stinne Gunder Strøm: *Mediepræferencer og medieæstetik som kønnede praksisser*. Aalborg University, Department of Communication.

Laursen, Ditte; Brügger, Niels; Sandvik, Kjetil: *Methods of collecting facebook material and their effects on later analyses*. State Library. State Media Archive / Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication / University of Copenhagen, Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Moura, Catarina: *From aesthetics to cosmetics: The erasing of memory and the deep complexity of surfaces in contemporary visual culture*. University of Beira Interior. LabCom.

Nørgaard, Rikke Toft: *Endeavours to represent the non-representational: Researching corporeal-locomotive media*. Aarhus University. Centre for Teaching Development and Digital Media.

Roosvall, Anna: *Religion as cultural commodity in online world news picture slideshows*. Örebro University. School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences.

Ruuskanen, Sauli: *With name, nickname or behind anonymity: Fear of the real and online communication of the bodily beings*. University of Vaasa, Communication Studies.

Sandvik, Kjetil; Laursen, Ditte: *Second screen production: Creating rich media experiences through synchronous interplay between TV, web and social media*. University of Copenhagen. Department of Media, Cognition and Communication. / State Library, State Media Archive.

Åker, Patrik: *Music platforms in context*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Division 9. Film Studies

Chairs: *Gunnar Iversen* (NO) *Lars-Martin Sørensen* (DK)

Asbjørnsen, Dag; Solum, Ove: *En film- og kinoinstitusjon i forandring*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Bengtsson, Bengt: *Historisk medvetenhet i medial skifte: Filmstudiorörelsens roll i synen på filmen som konstart*. Gävle University, Film Studies.

Gilje, Øystein; Groengen, Line Mette: *The making of a filmmaker: Creativity and learning among young filmmakers in early careers*. University of Oslo, Department of Education.

Helseth, Tore; Sørensen, Lars Martin: *Film and Resistance: on the narratives of the occupations of Norway and Denmark*. Lillehammer University College / Danish Film Institute.

Hoier, Svein: *The best practice of surround sound in contemporary US films: Studying the soundtracks of Oscar nominated movies 2000–2012*. Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Art and Media Studies.

Iversen, Gunnar: *Success with bad films: Tancred Ibsen in Sweden*. Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Art and Media Studies.

Lysne, Anders: *Tonally teen? Issues of audience appeal in contemporary Danish youth film*. University of Oslo. Department of Media and Communication.

Stenport, Anna W.: *The threat of the thaw: Cold War on the screen, arctic geopolitics, and environments*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Ytreberg, Espen: *Som et gap: Medier i Wim Wenders "Pars, Texas"*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Øfsti, Marius: *Kjeks, fersken og videotape: Videobutikkens historie på Steinkjer 1980–2010*. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Department of Art and Media Studies.

Division 10. Organization, Communication, and Society

Chair: *Catrin Johansson* (SE)

Egan Sjölander, Annika: *The most significant prize!: The use of the Nobel prize as a boundary object at universities with laureates*. Umeå University, Department of Culture and Media Studies.

Falco, Alessio; Laaksonen, Salla-Maaria; Aula, Pekka; Ravaja, Niklas; Salminen, Mikko: *Emotional experiences of media reputation as predecessors of media consumption*. Aalto University, School of Business / University of Helsinki, Department of Social Research. Communication.

Grønning, Anette: *Online debate in the Danish public school (the folkeskole)*. University of Southern Denmark. Department for the Study of Culture.

Ihlen, Øyvind; Thorbjørnsrud, Kjersti: *Making news and influencing decisions: Three threshold cases concerning forced return of immigrants*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Johansson, Catrin: *Discursive constructions of crisis and normality during the 2008 financial crisis*. Mid Sweden University. Department of Media and Communication.

Järventie-Thesleff, Rita; Horst, Sven-Ove: *Communicating organizational downsizing: Exploring a conflict in the use of strategic discourses*. Aalto University, School of Business. Communication.

Jönhill, Jan Inge: *Observing how diversity management makes a difference*. Södertörn University. School of Culture and Education / Örebro University. School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences.

Koskela, Merja: *Conflicting interests, conflicting discourses: How strategic are communication strategic texts?* University of Vaasa, Communication Studies.

Leivik Knowles, Britt-Marie: *Kriskommunikation mellan myndigheter och medier*. Jönköping University, School of Education and Communication.

Magnusson, Susanna: *Organizational ethos in multicultural society: A case study*. Lund University, Campus Helsingborg. Department of Strategic Communication.

Vaagan, Robert W.: *Crisis communication, media games and online newspapers: Experiences from anti-terror exercises in Norway in 2006 and 2012*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences. Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Division 11. Political Communication

Chairs: *Anders Olof Larsson* (NO) *Jakob Svensson* (SE)

Alnæs, Jørgen; Fonn, Birgitte Kjos: *Rhetorical travels*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Science, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Andersson, Linus: *What's Left of the Radical Left Online?* Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Barbosa, Maria João; Brandao, N.G.: *The Portuguese election campaign in the news broadcast television*. Instituto Superior de Novas Profissões.

Blach-Ørsten, Mark; Nielsen, Rasmus Kleis: *Political journalism and mediated visibility – news coverage of (parts of) Danish politics*. Roskilde University, Department of Communication, Business and Information Technologies.

Ekman, Mattias: *Popularising Fascist Politics: Video Activism of the Swedish Extreme Right*. Stockholm University, Section for Journalism, Media and Communication,

Ekman, Mattias; Widholm, Andreas: *Tweeting politics: Exploring the social media interrelationship between journalism and politics in Sweden*. Stockholm University, Section for Journalism, Media and Communication.

Enli, Gunn; Naper, Anja: *The one-way twitter campaign #obama2012*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Figenschou, Tine U.; Beyer, Audun: *Norwegian Identity Revisited: How the 22/7 Terror Attacks Shook the Immigration Debate*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Gudmundsson, Birgir: *Political Communication in Iceland and Norway in a Digital Age*. University of Akureyri, Faculty of Social Sciences.

Gustafsson, Nils: *An Awkward Tool: Social Media and Norms of Communication in Political Parties*. Lunds university, Department for Strategic Communication.

Herkman, Juha: *An introduction to the Academy Research Fellow project "Representations of the Nordic Populism"*. University of Helsinki, Department of Social Research. Communication.

Kalsnes, Bente; Krumsvik, Arne H.; Storsul, Tanja: *Social media as a political backchannel: Twitter use during televised election debates in Norway*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication; Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Kjeldsen, Lena: *New opportunities for communicating with voters: A literature review of politicians' use of social networking sites*. Aalborg University, Department of Political Science.

Knudsen, Erik: *Media Coverage as Attitude Source: A Study of Second-Level Agenda Setting at the Outbreak of a Norwegian Welfare Crisis*. University of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies.

Larsson, Anders Olof; Svensson, Jakob: *Politicians Online – Identifying Current Research Opportunities*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication; Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

Mehrabov, Ilkin: *Who exactly needs to be 'saved'? Looking back at fundamental concepts of media and communication in relation to political struggles and social movements of developing countries*. Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

Melián, Virginia: *Transforming the journalistic logic by activist's social media use?* Örebro University, School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences.

Nærland, Torgeir U.: *Rhythm, Rhyme and Reason: Hip Hop Expressivity as Political Discourse*. University of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies.

Palm, Göran; Sandström, Håkan: *PR officers and political reporters – new conditions for power, citizenship and democracy*. Linnaeus University, Media and Communication Studies.

Schwartz, Sander A.; Klasturp, Lisbeth: *Politics, Social Platform Use and the Media Ecology: Use Patterns in a Danish Social Media Context*. IT University of Copenhagen.

Štechová, Markéta: *Celebrities in Political Communication, Czech Republic 2010 – A Case Study*. Charles University in Prague, Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences.

Strandberg, Kim: *Designing for democracy? – An experimental study comparing the outcomes of citizen discussions in online forums to those of a designed online citizen deliberation venue*. Åbo Akademi University, Department of Politics and Administration.

Svensson, Jakob: *What Kind of Cultural Citizenship? Dissent and Antagonism when Discussing Politics in an Online Gay Community*. Karlstads University, Media and Communication.

Voronova, Liudmila: *Gendering in political journalism: manifestation of media power or political strategy? Swedish and Russian press-people about gender dimension of media –politics interactions*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Weichselbaum, Philipp: *Stepping down in mediated worlds. Press coverage of and its influence on ministerial resignations in Germany since 1949*. Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, Department of Journalism and Mass Communications.

Group 12. Theory, Philosophy and Ethics of Communication

Chairs: Mats Bergman (FI) Anna Roosvall (SE)

Ampuja, Marko; Koivisto, Juha; Väliiverronen, Esa: *Mediatization: Catchword, Analytical Tool or an Emerging New Paradigm?* University of Helsinki, Department of Social Research. Communication.

Bengtsson, Stina: *Faraway, So Close! Proximity and distance in ethnography online*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Bergman, Mats: *'Communication' as a Pragmatically Contestable Concept*. University of Helsinki, Department of Philosophy.

Eronen, Maria: *Anarchistic Corporeality: The Freedom of Speech and Absence of Moral Norms in Celebrity Gossip Online*. University of Vaasa, Communication Studies.

Kirtiklis, Kęstas: *German Media Theory: Theory of Media or Theory of Culture?* Vilnius University, Department of Logic and History of Philosophy.

Lundgren, Lars: *De-westernising television studies?* Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Mehrabov, Ilkin: *Challenging universality of music: Critical reflections and call for cross-cultural perception studies*. Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

Nyre, Lars: *Perceiving the world through screens, loudspeakers and touch panels*. University of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies

Roosvall, Anna: *Solidarity as a Mode of Communication. Limitation, moderation and/or deliberation in online news communication*. Örebro University, School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences.

Ytterstad, Andreas: *Vite, men ikke røre? Klimamoral hos norske forskere og journalister*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Temporary Working Group 1. Media and Religion

Chairs: Knut Lundby (NO) Line Nybro Petersen (DK)

Abdel-Fadil, Mona: *Islamists vs. Secularists in Post-Mubarak Media Egypt?* Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies.

Ari, Deniz: *Social Media, public participation and the effects freedom of religion in Turkey: The case of the atheist pianist Fazıl Say*. Marmara University.

Axelsson, Tomas: *Vernacular Meaning Making: Examples of narrative impact in fiction film questioning the 'banal' notion in mediatization theory*. Dalarna University, Religion Studies.

Drecun, Sofija: *Internet based religions: Alternative and deregulated systems of belief in new media environment*. University of Arts, Cultural policy and management, Belgrade, Serbia.

Hutchings, Tim: *Freedom, control and the digital bible*. Durham University, UK.

Lagerkvist, Amanda: *Revisiting communitas: Rethinking mediated collective memory existentially*

– *from televisional anniversaries to new media memories*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Lundby, Knut: *'Reading contract' on religion in Norwegian newspapers*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Petersen, Line Nybro: *Sacred Science? A mediatization of science in popular television*. University of Southern Denmark, Department for the Study of Culture.

Puustinen, Liina; Rautaniemi, Matti: *More Than Just Exercise – Yoga in Commercial Media Culture*. University of Helsinki, Department of Political and Economic Studies; Åbo Akademi University, Department of Comparative Religion.

Staurheim, Ingrid: *Kirkebranner synliggjør kirkebygget som identitetsbærer*. Kirkelig arbeidsgiver- og interesseorganisasjon.

Temporary Working Group 2. Digital Games and Playful Media

Chairs: Faltin Karlsen (NO) Anders Løvlie (NO)

Ask, Kristine: «I want to major in Altair's ass!»: *The performance of female gamer identities in a fangirl context*. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Department of Studies of Culture.

Brinch, Sara: *'The cultural test' and the state of Norwegian digital games*. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Department of Art and Media Studies.

Fast, Karin: *A Transformers Brand Experience: Play Labor and the Search for Mass Fandom*. Karlstad University, Media and Communication Studies.

Gregersen, Andreas: *"You wouldn't get it": Penny Arcade as gaming communication hub and webcomic*. University of Copenhagen. Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Hoem, Jon: *Reactive hypertexts as playful narratives*. Bergen University College, Centre for New Media.

Iversen, Sara Mosberg: *Realism and fantasy: Pleasures of playing The Sims 2 and 3*. University of Southern Denmark, Department for the Study of Culture.

Nørgård, Rikke Toft: *Corporeal-Locomotive Media?: Experiencing first-person being / first-person doing in offscreen-onscreen gameworlds*. Aarhus University, Centre for Teaching Development and Digital Media.

Prax, Patrick: *Defending Democracy while slaying Dragons – Digital Games with User-created Content as Alternative Media*. Uppsala University, Department of Informatics.

Sandvik, Kjetil: *Playful Museums: mobile audiences and exhibitions as game experiences*. University of Copenhagen. Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Toft-Nielsen, Claus: *Worldbuilding og fantasy-genrematricen*. Aarhus University, Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

Østby, Kim Johansen: *The Myth of Princess Peach, or: Shut Up, Samus!* University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Temporary Working Group 3. Nordic Media and the Cold War

Chairs: Rolf Werenskjold (NO) Henrik G. Bastiansen (NO) Paul Bjerke (NO)

Bastiansen, Henrik G.: *Linking Norwegian Media and the Cold War 1945-1991*. Volda University College, Department of Media and Communication Technology.

Bjerke, Paul: *Critical journalism in the cold war? Press coverage of the accused spy Gunvor Galtung Haavik in 1977*. Volda University College, Department of Media and Communication Technology.

Dahl, Hans Fredrik: *Images of WW2 in Cold War perspective – Outline of a research project*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Dindler, Camilla: *The Face Of Armed Power: The Danish Military In The Printed Press During The Law Amendment Of 1950 And The Political Settlement Of 2012*. Aalborg University, Department of Communication and Psychology.

Flo, Idar: *“Women for Peace” and framing in Media, 1980-1983*. Volda University College, Department of Media and Communication Technology.

Fonn, Birgitte Kjos: *The third position and the New Left press in Norway during the Cold War*. Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

Lauk, Epp; Harro-Loit, Halliki; Høyer, Svennik: *The Press from Communism to Democracy in Estonia*. University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication; University of Tartu; University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Raundalen, Jon: *Nuclear War in Film and Television Drama*. The Norwegian University of Science

and Technology (NTNU), Department of Art and Media Studies.

Roslyng-Jensen, Palle: *Danish Politics, Media and Public Opinion on Nuclear Armament during the early Second Cold War 1977-1983*. University of Copenhagen, The Saxo Institute.

Saarenmaa, Laura: *Men’s Magazines as Cold War Counterpublics*. University of Tampere, Research Centre for Journalism, Media and Communication (COMET).

Sørenssen, Bjørn: *Knut Erik Jensen’s Brent av frost and Iskyss as cinematographical reflections on Norway’s role in the Cold War*. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Department of Art and Media Studies.

Werenskjold, Rolf; Sivertsen, Erling: *Cold Lines: The Cold War in Political Cartoons in Aftenposten 1980-1984*. Volda University College, Department of Media and Communication Technology.

Werenskjold, Rolf: *The Norwegian Foreign News system during the Cold War, 1945-1991*. Volda University College, Department of Media and Communication Technology.

Åker, Patrik: *The space race in Swedish press – the launching of a global mediated centre*. Södertörn University, School of Culture and Education.

Temporary Working Group 4. Mobile Media and Communication

Chairs: Gitte Stald (DK) Anne Maarit Waade (DK)

Aam, Pål: *Production studies: From research on media production to media production as research*. Volda University College, Department of Media and Communication Technology.

Bechmann, Anja: *Managing the interoperable digital self*. Aarhus University. Digital Footprints Research Group.

Ess, Charles: *Device Analyzer*. University of Oslo, Department of Media and Communication.

Fagerjord, Anders: *Towards location literacy: Finding and documenting preliminary guidelines for designing location-based audio*. University of Oslo. Department of Media and Communication.

Johansen, Stine Liv: *The iPad as a tool for play: Methodological considerations*. Aarhus University. Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

Løvlie, Anders: *Telegaming: Distributed ubiquitous games*. Gjøvik University College.

Nyre, Lars: *The Dewey device: A live, two-way, locative, journalistic sound medium*. University

of Bergen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies.

Sandvik, Kjetil: *Mobile media challenging status quo: Smartphones, social media and the Occupy Wall Street-movement*. University of Copenhagen. Department of Media, Cognition and Communication.

Stald, Gitte: *Evolution or revolution?: Diffusion and adaptation of (smart) mobile phones among young Danes*. IT University of Copenhagen. Innovative Communication.

Toriumi, Kiyko; Mizukoshi, Shin: *Comikaruta: A practical and critical examination of mobile media play for civic engagement in Japan*. University of Tokyo.

Waade, Anne Marit: *Instagramming: Social photography, mobile media and time*. Aarhus University. Department of Aesthetics and Communication, Media Studies.

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21th Nordic Conference on Media and Communication Research August 8-10, 2013, Oslo, Norway

Programme

Thursday 8 August

12.00-15.00 Registration

Conference opening

15.00-15.30 Musical Performance by Bente Elstad
Welcome Speeches by Steen Steensen, chair, NordMedia 2013 and
Kari Toverud Jensen, Rector, Oslo and Akerhus University College
Musical performance by Svein Amund Skara

15.30-17.00 **PLENARY 1**

Keynote *Defending whose Democracy? Media Freedom and Media Power*
Natalie Fenton, Goldsmiths, London

Panel Discussion *Multiculturalism is Disputed, not Least in the Media. What are the
Consequences of Multiculturalism for Media and Democracy?*
Panel: Natalie Fenton, Inka Salovaara and Dumisiani Moyo.
Moderator: Elisabeth Eide

17.15-17.45 **PLENARY 2**

*The Significance of Nordicom and the Nordmedia Conference to
Nordic Media and Communication Research*
Kaarle Nordenstreng, Professor Emeritus, University of Tampere
Kirsten Frandsen, Associate Professor, Aarhus University Rune
Ottosen, Professor, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied
Sciences

Friday 9 August

PARALLEL PLANARIES

13.00-14.30 **Plenary A**

Keynote *Cosmopolitan Narratives: Documentary, the Global 'Other' and
Everyday Life*
Ib Bondebjerg, University of Copenhagen

Panel Discussion *What are the Major Challenges when Representing Global and
Cultural Diversities in Films and Television Documentaries?*
Panel: Ib Bondebjerg, Nefise Özkal Lorentzen and Ketil Magnussen
Moderator: Jon Raundalen

Plenary B

- Keynote *Radical Media Ethics: Responding to a Revolution*
Stephen J.A. Ward, University of Oregon-Portland
- Panel Discussion *Why and How Should Journalism Consolidate its Ethical Foundation in a Contemporary Media Landscape where Everyone Can Produce Something that Resembles Journalism?*
Panel: Stephen J.A. Ward, Thomas Hanitzsch and Kamel Labidi
Moderator: Harald Hornmoen

Saturday 10 August

13.00-13.45

- Hard talk 1 *Freedom of Expression and Diversity. What Challenges does the notion and Practice of Freedom of Expression in the Media Face in an Increasingly Globalized World?*
Participants: Helge Rønning and Peter Hervik
Moderator: Kristin Skare Orgeret

13.45-14.30

- Hard talk 2 *Does Media Research Make a Difference? A 40 Year Perspective on the Nordic Contribution*
Participants: Ulla Carlsson and Helge Østbye
Moderator: Anders Fagerfjord

19.00-01.00

Conference dinner and 40 year anniversary party at Langøyene