Book of Abstracts

ESA RN18 Mid-Term Conference

Rethinking Power in Communicative Capitalism Critical Perspectives on Media, Culture and Society

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Rethinking Power in Communicative Capitalism
Critical Perspectives on Media, Culture and Society

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The proliferation of digital media in the 21st century has once again shown the deeply ambivalent and contradictory potentials of technological development.

Digital technologies have been celebrated for enabling new levels of democratic communication, participatory media production, community building and media activism. From Wikipedia, to open source programming, open access publishing, and peer-to-peer file sharing, we have witnessed the rise of a range of alternative forms of communication and media production that seemed to challenge established media business models and momentarily contested corporate power.

However, far from decreasing the dominance of corporate media, the expansion of digital culture, the Internet and social media further strengthened the power of multinational corporations over media culture and human communication. Despite the rhetoric of 'social' media, sharing, community and collaboration, the majority of the digital media sphere remains privately owned and controlled. In this corporate media system, multinational corporations maintain almost exclusive control over large parts of the media and communication technology, infrastructure and content.

Power in communicative capitalism is uneven and corporate control confronts us with a range of problems such as the systematic surveillance of Internet users, an increasingly commercialised online environment, devastating environmental impacts of the production and usage of media technologies and the global exploitation of digital labour. (Digital) media technologies are deeply entangled with the on-going economic, social, environmental and political crises.

Mobilising the empowering qualities of digital technologies and their potential to contribute to progressive social change requires an effective critique of corporate dominance, challenging power inequalities and strengthening radical alternatives.

ABSTRACTS

News for global sustainability?
Reifying and othering social inequality in news

This paper discusses news journalism about inequality from a critical point of view, with the aim of contributing to the critical theorization of the relationship between journalism and sustainability. Sustainability and journalism on social inequality are perceived as intersecting in at least two ways. On one level, journalism can serve sustainable development by providing high-quality content that can help citizens to better understand the causes behind social inequality and how it can be overcome. On another level, journalism would itself gain much from sustainable development on a global level, since that would provide a good ground for a high-quality journalism characterized by its professional and democratic ethics rather than one that is strained by market-logics. The paper focuses on reification and problematizes the ways in which social inequality is reified in news journalism. Basing the argumentation on examples from international journalism, it is argued that although the existence of social inequality in a specific country can be acknowledged in the reporting – for example by the reference to rich and poor people and rich and poor geographic spaces – the social, political and historical causes of this inequality remain abstracted. In this sense, reification provides a rather objectivist account on inequality¢¢, which in turn limits the critique of the mechanisms that lie behind it. On the long run such constructions serve the legitimation of social inequality, which indeed ought to be seen as a sustainability problem. The paper also argues that for a more sustainable journalism to take place, a shift in the attitude towards social inequality and sustainable development must take place in the broader sociocultural context that surrounds journalism.

Author(s)

Ernesto Abalo
Jönköping University
ernesto.abalo@ju.se

Critical Theories of Power in Communicative Capitalism

We live in times of global capitalist crisis, social and economic inequalities and precarious working and living conditions. Struggles between power and counter-power, domination and resistance, the commons and the commodification of the commons characterize modern capitalist society. The media are fields of conflict in this power struggle – they both serve as tools for domination and as sites of counter-power making it important to critically deal with questions of power, inequality and resistance on a theoretical level within media and communication studies.

Author(s)

Thomas Allmer
University of Edinburgh
thomas.allmer@ed.ac.uk

Different schools aiming to conceptualise and theorize the question of power in modern society, ranging from the Frankfurt School and Political Economy of Media and Communication to Cultural Studies, Postmodern Media Theory as well as to Autonomist Marxism and Feminist Media Studies. While the Frankfurt School is strongly rooted in social theory and philosophy, it has been criticised as being too pessimistic, elitist and overlooking the possibilities of resistance. The Political Economy of Media and Communication is for historical reasons more rooted in economic theory. Critics argue that this approach has a strong focus on economic dynamics of capitalist media production, while not noticing cultural experiences and practices. Early key thinkers of the cultural studies tradition focussed on studying a diverse range of popular cultural practices in relation to power and inequalities. Cultural Studies has been criticised for overemphasising the potentials for resistance related to cultural consumption. Postmodern theory recognises alterations in culture of contemporary capitalism and offers concepts of alternative subjectivities and proletarian conditions being also relevant for critical media and communication studies. Simultaneously, the school is often criticised as being to relativistic and ambiguous giving up important notions such as reason and rationality and thereby loosing possibilities of common political projects. Autonomist Marxism is of certain importance for analysing new media technologies as both instruments of capitalist domination and potential resources of anti-capitalist struggle. According to their critics, Autonomist Marxists are too optimistic about resistance and overestimate the counter-hegemonic elements of new information and communication technologies. Feminist media scholars have critically interrogated the specificities of gender identities, relations and representation in capitalist media cultures. Especially liberal feminism has been criticised for aligning itself too closely with neoliberal discourses of upward mobility and for looking at the oppression of women in isolation from other social struggles and inequalities.

How do these schools conceptualise power in communicative capitalism? What are the communalities and differences of those theories? What are the advantages and disadvantages of different conceptions of communication power? Can we favour any theory over another and for what reason or do we rather need a multitude of critical theories for 21st century capitalism?

My talk will deal with the question of how to best conceptualise and theorise power in communicative capitalism that can also stimulate political potentials, strengthen resistance and overcome inequality. I will do so by focusing on selected authors within those theories.

The Media of Power, the Power of Media

This paper/presentation combines international political economy with a critical political economy of media perspective that recognizes the crucial role of transnational media corporations (TNMC) in building consent for neoliberal globalization. Media are found to be instrumental for consolidating transnational capitalist hegemony—creating a localized popular culture based on individualism, deference to authority, and consumerism. TNMCs consolidate diverse national media for the production of hybrid programming that features multiple local images and symbols wrapped in consumerist ideology and narratives. Examples from animation reveal consistent themes in TNMC content that entertain and appeal to diverse audiences, illustrating media's persuasive messages essential to the cultural hegemony of transnational capitalist leadership. The conclusion here finds that alternative media (and a democratic cultural hegemony) requires political power robustly exerted either by social movements or by structural political and social change.

Author(s)

Lee Artz
Department of Communication
Purdue University Northwest
artz@purdue.edu

Activism 'as if you were there':
Virtual reality journalism concepts, uses, opportunities and limits towards a new form of activist media practice

Nowadays, virtual reality technologies are at a turning point. Over the past three years, new virtual reality devices were introduced and a huge amount of money was poured by several investors into companies developing these technologies. We could say that it all started with the development of Oculus Rift headset in 2012, which was bought by Facebook in 2014 for $2 billion. Since then, many other headsets and related devices have emerged and virtual reality is rapidly turning into Silicon Valley's next gold rush, powering mostly the entertainment industry. In this emerging system, journalism is still a minor component. Nevertheless, the media industry has already produced a few virtual reality journalistic works. The New York Times has launched New York Times VR, a mobile app with a wide range of virtual reality pieces. The BBC filmed and produced a virtual reality piece in Calais about the living conditions of a refugee camp. Vice broadcasted the first ever virtual reality news piece covering the Millions March in New York, where 60,000 New Yorkers took to the streets and marched as one to call for an end to racial profiling by police. All the above mentioned examples give us a clear idea that there is a growing tendency to develop virtual reality journalism, specially works that portray critical social and cultural issues, thus setting the conditions for the emergence of a new ecosystem of media activists involved in virtual reality projects. Drawing on Ibrahim Shaw's (2011) idea that journalists do not only hold the power to inform the public, but have the moral responsibility as duty bearers to educate and increase awareness, as well as Kant's cosmopolitan principle of global justice, but also Witmer & Singer's (1998) concept of immersion, Kim & Biocca's (1997) concept of presence, the immersive journalism piece of De la Peña (2014) about Syrian refugees, commissioned by The World Economic Forum, and the Michael Madary & Thomas Metzinger's (2016) virtual reality code of ethical conduct, we will analyze, reflect and provide a general overview of the main concepts, uses, opportunities and limits of immersive journalism as new form of activist media practice.The conclusion here finds that alternative media (and a democratic cultural hegemony) requires political power robustly exerted either by social movements or by structural political and social change.

Author(s)

António Baía Reis
University of Porto
antoniocastrobaiareis@gmail.com

Digital Media Practices and Conflict in a Grassroots Movement:

The Case of Imrahor Garden

Debate on the relationship between social movements and digital media technologies often highlights the opportunities that these technologies provide for "largely unfettered deliberation and coordination of action" (Castells, 2012, p. 10). Also, the correspondence between the horizontal structure of recent social movements and the decentralized structure of networked digital and social media is noted as an empowering relationship (Hardt & Negri, 2012). For instance, according to Juris, "horizontal networking logic facilitated by new digital technologies" presents "an effective method of social movement organizing" and "a broader model for creating alternative forms of social, political, and economic organization" (Juris, 2005, p. 191). On the basis of these claims, this study investigates the role of ICTs and social media within a local social movement organization and focuses on internal and external communication processes, collective identity claims and recruitment of new members. The study draws on participant observation which covers one and a half year long field work and in-depth interviews with the activists in an urban garden project initiated by one of the forums, i.e., general assemblies that were formed in the aftermath of Gezi Park Protests. The urban garden, which is called Imrahor Bostanı (Imrahor Garden), was founded in January, 2014, by a group of activists on an "occupied land" in Istanbul following the example of an urban garden founded within the Gezi Park during the height of the protests. The study suggests that while ICTs and social media provide activists with opportunities in moments of crisis and with regard to recruitment and external communication, they also introduce a contested field of conflict in terms of collective identity claims, factionalism and organizational sustainability.

Author(s)

Haluk Mert Bal
College of Social Sciences and Humanities
hbal13@ku.edu.tr

Lemi Baruh
College of Social Sciences and Humanities
lbaruh@ku.edu.tr

The Promises and Limits of Media Activism
for Poor People´s Movements in Portugal after 2011

Social media played an important role in the protest wave starting with the Arab Spring in 2010 and also in Portugal they were an important factor in organizing protest. The protest of the Desperate Generation (Geração à Rasca) on 12 March 2011, for example, was initiated by a Facebook call by four friends. Activists also in later protest events put a lot of effort in social media activities.

Our aim is evaluate the role of social media activism for activist groups that tried to organize unemployed people between 2011 and 2013. This time period in Portugal was characterized by several large protests against austerity measures and related issues. But there were also long phases of absence of protest and some protests that stood rather small. Furthermore the degree of political organization of unemployed people in activist groups stood small.

Author(s)

Britta Baumgarten
CIES-IUL, ISCTE
britta.baumgarten@iscte.pt

Lídia Fernandes
DINÂMIA'CET-IUL, ISCTE
lidiacanha@gmail.com

Inês Pereira
CIES-IUL, ISCTE
inescfpereira@gmail.com

Based on participant observation, interviews and focus groups with activists and former activists of activist groups that tried to mobilize the unemployed, we

1) analyse activists experiences with different media regarding the organization of unemployed people
2) compare various activities belonging to media activism with alternative forms of mobilization and
3) analyse the interplay of media activities and alternative forms of mobilization in the activists repertoire of action.

Theoretically we contribute to the question how people with weak resources become politically organized. Unemployed people tend to be socially isolated and the lack social ties is considered an obstacle to mobilization. In how far can this obstacle be overcome by the use of social media activism? We focus on the experiences of activists with different forms of organization and thereby add a focus of social media activism to the existing social movement theories. We further focus on a context of high grievances but a continuingly low degree of political organization of unemployed people.

We argue that the role of social media and media capitalism for political participation cannot be evaluated in a wholesale way. It is the specific interplay of social media activities with other activities and the interplay of social media with traditional media that mobilizes people to become politically active. In the case of the unemployed and the precarious workers in Portugal such an interplay resulted sometimes in short term, but in the long-term did not lead to a durable political organization of these groups in a larger scale.

Doomed to Fail: Political Protest and Political Imagination in an era of Communicative Capitalism

The waves of social protests in recent years in both non-democratic and advanced democracies are often seen as proof of the rise civil alternatives and as testimony to the power of the Internet and social media to nurture alternative communication and to empower the average citizen. These waves of protests, like the 15th of May movement in Spain, Occupy Wall Street in the US, as well as the more recent "Nuit Debout" protests in France and many others are seen as representing a significant shift in the way citizens view political institutions, as well in their belief that they can generate real political change.

In this paper we suggest that all of these social movements, all the social unrest and agitation are in fact incapable of bringing about significant, long term sustainable political change in spite of the fact that citizens feel that they control the discourse. These groups fall victim to and are trapped by the social networks – networks ultimately controlled by commercial interests, abandoning what little is left of the public sphere to private corporations, trapped in the dual webs of surveillance and communicative capitalism (Zuboff, 2015; Dean, 2005). These same corporations restrict and shape the discourse potential of these groups – primarily by the emasculation of political imagination, and the rejection or dilution of the political.

Author(s)

Mouli Bentman
Sapir College, Israel

Michael Dahan
Sapir College, Israel
dahanm@gmail.com

In this paper we suggest that political imagination is dependent on the capability of the citizen to: 1. See themselves as part of a whole rather than as individuals (i.e., to imagine the categorical migration from private life to communal life with it's attending mutual effects); 2. Be able, at the epistemological level, to receive and view the imagined dimension of the existing social order; and 3. Be able to imagine alternatives to existing political structures, political realities and balances of power (Ezrahi, 2015; Castoriadis, 1987/1997). These three dimensions are the key to germinating and fostering thought regarding significant political change. Thus, we claim that in all the social protests of recent years in advanced capitalist societies these dimensions were absent – causing these protests to turn into a form of "anti politics", paradoxically strengthening the corporations and their control of political and social life and to their ultimate benefit. These same corporations deny the creation of sustainable political imagination that would serve to foster the creation of a meaningful political alternative. In a way, these structures "sterilize" the political imagination, much in the way that citizens in advanced democracies find it difficult, if not utterly impossible, to imagine an alternative social, political and economic system not based on capitalism and the free market. Anti politics is expressed in the rise of political movements like the Tea Party in the US, the candidacy of Donald Trump (Drumpf) in the US or Duterte in the Philippines, the rise of the AfD in Germany and other far right wing groups in Europe, and the dearth of rational discourse in contemporary politics.

There is a recurring theme and demand in almost all the recent political and social protests: direct citizen discourse, open dialogue and consensual forms of decision making while at the same time distancing the "political" and the political system from the discourse. In this paper we claim that these phenomena are evidence of the fact that in all these instances of protest, while it would seem that citizens are willing to take that first step moving from the individual to the social, they are foiled from even this initial move by social networks that tend to prevent a long lasting and sustainable social dimension. More so, the citizen fails to understand the imagined components of the political system, nor, as a result, can they imagine a viable and sustainable political alternative – in large part due to the character of the platforms for discourse which dilutes the political dimension of the discourse, sustaining the status quo and throttling political imagination. When citizens do succeed in all three dimensions – significant political change can be achieved – as is the case in Tunisia.

Layers of ideology and labour behind Google's search algorithm

This presentation aims to untangle the closely knit relationship between Google's ideologies of technical neutrality and global market dominance. Neutrality construction comprises an important element sustaining the company's economic position. Constant updates, estimates and changes to utility and relevance of search results reflect this operating norm. However, providing a purely technical solution to web search proves increasingly difficult without a human hand in steering algorithmic solutions. Neutrality fluctuates and shifts through continuous tinkering and tweaking of the search algorithm. To aid this process the company uses third parties to hire human raters for performing quality assessments of algorithmic updates in linguistically and culturally diverse global markets. The adaptation process contradicts the technical foundations of the company and calculations based on the Page Rank algorithm. A full account of the relations between company engineers, internet users and the work of human raters who adapt search results to local languages in global markets is not entirely disclosed by the company.

Theoretically, the presentation draws on the social contextualisation and social arrangements of machines and algorithms (MacKenzie, 1984, 2014; Gillespie, 2014) and, more broadly, theoretical approaches from the critical political economy of communication and digital labour (Garnham, 1986; Mosco, 2009, 2011; Fuchs, 2010; 2015; Fuchs and Sevignani, 2013; Fisher, 2015; Comor, 2015; Robinson, 2015). It takes an inductive, explorative and critical approach to determine contingencies between publicised technical decisions and to clarify how, and where, they interweave with profit motives and discourses legitimising these choices. Annual market reports and other publicly available documents will be analysed and presented. Intertwined layers of ideology, hidden labour of human raters, advertising revenues, market dominance and control will be discussed throughout the presentation.

Author(s)

Paško Bilić
Department for Culture and Communication
Institute for Development and International
Relations
pasko@irmo.hr

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Examining the concepts of "no response", 'fantasy of abundance' and resistance to co-optation in the context of a patient-based social media movement.

This presentation aims to contribute to theorising the ways in which power operates in communicative capitalism and will give examples of possible resistance to co-optation. It will examine the way in which corporations reacted to the challenge of social media movements. It focuses on a case study of a patient-based social media movement, designed to inform Multiple Sclerosis (MS) patients about clinical research into a significant medical discovery (CCSVI). This social media movement has been challenging the vested corporate interests that typically drive investments in medical research, and has evolved into a formalised network of off-line, legally recognised societies dedicated to CCSVI. This presentation will draw upon the researcher's personal observation and 60 semi-structured face to face interviews with activists.

Author(s)
Antonello Bocchino
University of Westminster
Antonello.bocchino@my.westminster.ac.uk

I will begin by analysing how the institutionalised national MS associations reacted to the new medical theory (CCSVI) using a strategy of co-optation; first ignoring it, then initiating research into the new discovery so as to ensure their control over the message circulated to patients, the medical community, and the main media, which permitted official medical policy to retain the status quo. I will use commodification theory (Marx, 1976; Mosco 2009; Hardy 2014) to shed light on the mechanism behind the production of this "message", by positing that the main traditional actors are in some way commodified to the corporate power that have a vested economic interest in refuting the new medical theory related to MS. The extent to which the social media movement supporting the new theory has mobilised MS patients and challenged corporate power, has exposed some of the mechanisms of the strategy of co-optation essential in the interdependent relation between the base and the superstructure, and critical to the psychological supremacy of the dominant ideologies towards non-official and in-the-making ideologies.

I will then turn to examine whether the formalised network of legally-recognised societies dedicated to CCSVI mentioned that arose out of the social media movement may be characterised as a challenge to communicative capitalism, resisting co-optation.

I will conclude by contrasting this case study to the one put forward by Dean (2005) applying the concepts of "no response", "fantasy of abundance", "participation" and "wholeness".

The Extraction of 'Life' in Communicative Capitalism: Reinterpreting Relative and Absolute Surplus Value
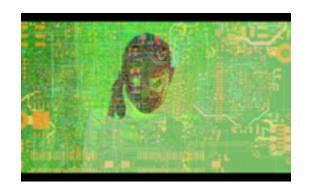
The extraction of surplus value is the defining moment between capitalist and worker, but how do we address this relationship under digital capitalism where what defines work and life, or production and reproduction is intentionally blurred. In this paper I will develop an argument around the way that our lives are an increasing source of value for capital, by drawing on post Operaismo, and Marxist feminist' readings of reproduction. Ursula Huws points to the continued privatisation of public services as one move to increased commodification or the extraction from the commons.   This case demonstrates the way the sphere of reproduction – that is life outside of our work life, has increasingly become a source of value for capital. This same transformation can be seen in the digital commons, but more specifically the way all social relations and communications are enacted and thus controlled through digital and communicative capitalism.

Author(s)

Carina Brand
De Montfort University, Leicester
Carina.brand@dmu.ac.uk

I will then reinterpret Marx's formulation of absolute and relative surplus value in relation to the way digital technology both extends and transforms time and develops new technology to enable new ways of extracting value from all aspects of our life.   This by no means ignores the global relationship of extraction proper, but seeks to understand the role of machines in extracting value. I will argue, in line with Christian Fuchs' reading of digital labour, that Marx's analysis of absolute and relative surplus value provides an illuminating template for understanding extraction and digital capitalism. However I will point out where there are limits to Marx's approach and explain that by using a Marxist feminist approach we are able to understand the way capitalism is transforming non-value producing activities into value producing, or commoditised ones.

Time permitting I would also like to show part of a short film I have made titled Private Life (2015) that deals explicitly with the intentional blurring between work and life through the development of a virtual sphere.

Stories of Chairs — participatory action engaged with citizens and digital media towards a new territorial model

The following paper presents the case study "Stories of Chairs", that endorses design and digital media as part of social, cultural and economic contemporaneity, Ascertain this as a strategic constituent for the development of organizations stimulates a new model for the territory.

We sought to characterize the complex global context of communicative phenomena and how it applies human experience in a new model. This triggers changes in organization, political, economic, social, cultural and educational levels. Design and communication—as mediated construction of messages—assume a relevant role in the construction and deconstruction of this, and in the current paradigm digital becomes an increasingly internalized presence in daily lives and activities. The reframing of communication, in the relationship with digital media, recognizes its ubiquity in the network society. This ubiquity interests to communities that incorporate dialogue with its stakeholders as a condition for its development. It is developed on the interpretation of communication as a territory and its redefinition in the context of digital media. This interpretation brings to the discussion its organizational dimension into society and culture, relating to communities and citizens. In the context of globalization of economic activities and the increasingly important insertion of local economies and industries in the international sphere, the idea of developing local and regional culture emphasizes the necessary conditions to ensure the competitiveness and sustainability of economic activity.

The participatory attitude is directly associated with another feature of our current social and digital environment: emergence. Communication turns into a collectively shared symbolic territory. This sharing enables countless expressions, which incorporate technology as their fabric and enhance the effects of networked communication and collective intelligence to be developed.

This is the theoretical framework of the research project "Stories of Chairs", an on-going case study interfacing design, digital media, local heritage and participatory culture, based in its territory. This is assessed in the municipality of Paredes, a traditional industrial region in Northern Portugal, with a symbolic deficit in its main industrial activity, the furniture industry.

Author(s)

Jorge M.L. Brandão Pereira
School of Design, Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave
jmpereira@ipca.pt

Heitor Alvelos
University of Porto, ID+: Research Institute for Design, Media and Culture
halvelos@gmail.com

The political economy of intellectual property and cognitive capitalism

This presentation begins with a critical exposure of the political economy of information – and, by extension, of intellectual property -, moving on to an analysis of the role of information as a public good (a non-rival and non-excludable good) and the abundance intrinsic to this type of goods, leading to zero marginal costs when it comes to reproducing information. Bearing in mind the dominant perspective in economics, according to which intellectual property laws – as mechanisms for the artificial creation of scarcity in information – must aim to strike a balance between free access to culture and knowledge by the public (static efficiency) and encouraging the creation of new works by artists and creators (dynamic efficiency), I conclude that what legal experts such as James Boyle refer to as a "second enclosure movement", focused on "the intangible commons of the mind", constitutes a breakdown of this balance. Next, I will consider one of the factors most frequently invoked to support the expansion – both in terms of length and scope – of intellectual property laws, namely the alleged growing importance of information and knowledge as sources of wealth in the context of a new economic mode of production.

Author(s)

Miguel Afonso Caetano
CIES-IUL
miguel.a.caetano@gmail.com

Along with theories of the information and network society, another set of contemporary social theories that places emphasis in this increased predominance of information and knowledge in the wider economy hinges on the concept of cognitive capitalism. Nevertheless, this current of thought differs from these previous social theories by bringing to discussion a more appropriate interpretation of the processes of privatization of information and knowledge resulting from the artificial creation of scarcity accomplished by way of intellectual property rights. Therefore, in the second part of this presentation I intend to lay out in broad strokes the ideas of three of the most significant authors of the cognitive capitalism school of thought: Yann Moulier-Boutang, Carlo Vercellone and André Gorz.

According to these authors, capitalism is facing a shift towards a third phase, following the earlier phases of mercantile capitalism (17th and 18th centuries) and industrial capitalism (19th and 20th centuries). This third phase would be cognitive capitalism, where cognitive and immaterial labor becomes prevalent and workers take over the production of knowledge from the owners of capital. In their view, the value generated by knowledge tends to exceed the value generated by the labor power involved in the direct production of commodities. Since the work on which that knowledge is based cannot be calculated according to a specific number of hours, it no longer makes sense to determine of the value of a commodity by its socially necessary labor time as prescribed by Marx's labor theory of value.

Notwithstanding the appropriateness of these theses, I will end this presentation by pointing to some of the criticisms made by authors close to Marxist thought to what they see as an attempt to disseminate labor relations typical of Silicon Valley hi-tech companies to the rest of the world, resulting in a forceful split between immaterial and material labor as well as in a hasty rejection of the labor theory of value.

Leaking Journalism: A Self-Defense Tool Against Mass Surveillance

Author(s)
Behlül Çalışkan
Marmara University, Faculty of Communication
Istanbul-TURKEY

behlul.caliskan@marmara.edu.tr

From Pentagon Papers to WikiLeaks disclosures and recently published Panama Papers, information leaks were an essential part of journalism throughout press history and had a democratic function. They give a sustained and extensive view of how power works as well as what it thinks and does; and by this way, they change the conception and practice journalism. Leaking journalism is an innovative journalism practice that is implemented in collaboration with the citizens and professional journalists. It may be defined as a process in which leaked information obtained from whistleblowers within a network are edited by journalists and experts and published through mainstream or alternative media organizations. This study aims to suggest a normative model for leaking journalism that constitutes of the organizational and operational factors of leaking journalism as well as the action motivations of involved actors. Three information leak cases, namely "Police Notices", "YÖK Leaks" and "Reyhanlı Files", carried out by RedHack group which acts with the claim of being a leaking platform are also analyzed based on leaking journalism model following the case study logic. In this regard, the study answers the questions "what kind of organizational structure does RedHack have?", "how does it ensure the security and privacy?", "how does it publish the leaks?" and "why does it leak information?" by means of the data collected from organizational documents such as regulation or declarations and interview records. The study concludes that information leaks are counter-surveillance practices against panoptic world system built by power and the privacy of whistleblowers is a self-defense mechanism they use to protect themselves against mass surveillance, that journalistic works in the process of publishing information leaks with leaking journalism create a form of peer-production, and that RedHack may not be seen as an example of leaking journalism.

Reformulating communicative capital from a Bourdieusian perspective

Dean's (2005, 2010) concept of communicative capital is a compelling theory. It ascribes a value to the individual and multiple acts of discourse which proliferate and circulate, feeding into the pre-existing economic system and castrating the political drive among the populace. The definition Dean presents insists, however, on two important exclusions: that the content of (online) communication and the identity of the speaker are irrelevant. These exclusions bolster her case that exchange value overtakes use value, thereby allowing communicative capital to be perceived in grand overarching terms.

Author(s)
Paul Candon
Department of Sociology, Trinity College
University of Dublin, Ireland
candonp@tcd.ie

While adhering to many of Dean's ideas, this paper seeks to redefine and unpick certain aspects of communicative capital. It presents data from localised discussions taking place on blogs and news sites based in Ireland. These were observed over a three-year period characterised as a time of legitimation crisis. Methods drawn from critical discourse analysis and cultural studies were used. I argue here that aside from being a central aspect of late capitalism, communicative capital is something that may be generated, exchanged and displayed by the individual. It therefore operates at a micro level and it also invariably has implications at the miso level.

There are, I propose, strong links between the suite of Bourdieusian (1986) capital and communicative capital. I further contend that communicative capital is fungible, i.e. capable of being exchanged or converted into other forms, conferring advantages on the speaker. Such advantages impact on the individual's 'e-reputation' within an increasingly accelerating and hyper-competitive marketplace of the mediated self. All of this has implications for our communicative activities and our identities; the particular tactics and strategies used to generate this form of capital are the core subject-matter of this paper. While Dean points to psychological (Lancanian) drives to account for our participation in public communication, I question whether more mundane and mercenary motivations may be at play within a reputational economy, and briefly consider whether such motivations are conscious or latent.

Communicative capital is nothing new. The academic domain, the legal profession and the press are obvious instances of established loci of communicative capital pre-internet. The massification of communication, particularly through social media, has made it available to wider publics. I argue here that communicative capital allows for those with pre-existing reputation, privilege and status to transfer this into online space, thereby mirroring the inequality that exists more widely and enhancing these individuals' e-reputation and the possibility of much wider advantage.

Production of value and selfhood-commodity fetishism on Facebook

This paper, based on the labor theory of value, it proposes a cross-questioning by the culture industry and advertising, whereas no longer produce cultural goods as before. The media and messages are others, targeted and personalized, so the market itself changes and transforms the consumer also is an active producer of publicity. Under this rationale, considering that Facebook constitutes a platform conducive for the generation and management of personal information, the focal points will be the production of value, distinction and fetishism, on the assumption that Facebook itself is able to create worth references and a vicious circle of appreciation and depreciation, based on what the user accesses. Pursuant to the production and sharing of content, the generation and tabulating of personal data converted into targeted advertising and consumption of goods and time, there is a trade in 'real' goods which

Author(s)

Laysmara Carneiro Edoardo
USP - Universidade de São Paulo
laysedoardo@gmail.com

feeds the system and promotes a consumer market also transacted, because there is likewise the generation of desire, demand and anticipation of consumption. Whilst the production of value (through the handle of profile and production of imagetic self-expression) generates distinction and anxiety of usefulness, the hypothesis anticipates the selfhood- commodity fetishism, built a self continuously metonymic expression, where the body, the image and the shared experiences become the hub of identity. Thus it is a consumer relationship, where a company monopolizes the process of buying and selling of images, information and services, over a printout of freedom, transparency and self expression by the user. In other words, the production of itself, although conserved in 'material' support in the timelines, it is less reflective than fetishized and fetishist, since there is an illusion on the part of the individual to be the owner of your information and activities within the site and have complete control of their performance. Therefore, the paper will discuss the platform and the production of value regarding the user, towards the production of 'eigenvalue' of the appropriations and the generation of information. By having a language accessible, since it supports a production of a local network, acquainted communication and delegates the production of content to users, the site happens to be produced daily by your audience, also improving periodically its functions according to internal requirements. Examples are the creation of News Feed in 2006 (which significantly expanded the platform usage time), personal and shared albums, private chats, games, external applications created by developers not bound (Graph API), plug-ins for the use of identity on other sites and platforms (SDK for Java), streaming, promotions and trade, applications for smartphones, besides other latest features. All these technical changes make the users spend more time inside the platform and produce more content each time they update their profiles, when establishing relationship with another user or group, and even when browsing other sites (RSS). Although the regular user is not aware about the extent of these resources, it makes use of the vast majority of them, especially the production and reproduction of images which, in turn, are central to the generation of information and identity. So, the materiality of the bodies, signs and images are put into question, resulting in an "aesthetic of the ephemeral" when the display of intimacy is guided on an unprecedented iconoclasm, with respect to the shares of experiences through allegorizations and their rewards, as well as use of images which constitute, therefore, in exchange value and commodities, now in the proceedings of transactions among the users themselves.

Constructing an alternative genealogy of the Media:
An examination of the micro-power relationship between planned-obsolescence and reuse in contemporary media studies

This study aims to investigate the hidden micro-power relationship between the reuse and planned-obsolescence of media in contemporary era with the scope of political economy, especially under the context of contemporary electronic waste (Parikka, & Hertz , 2012).

Based on the foundation described above, media archaeology approaches were adopted to focus on the analyses about how we regard media as an "archive" to be excavated and reorganize the orders of these archives to unearth the hidden discourse relationships among them.

The architecture of this study could be divided into four parts. First issue is to reconsider how media, regarded as a material objects, highlight the accumulation procedures of their own capitals in the circulation, exchange, and distribution stages of social system. Furthermore, how to redistribute the relationships described above and produce new symbolic

Author(s)
Hui-Lan Chang
Department of Journalism
National Chengchi University, Taiwan

diordiorster@gmail.com

power circuits when there is newcomer entering this system. Second, based on the previous issue, the reasons why this study chose media archaeology as the foundation for investigation is elaborated, which disagrees to investigate the single lineages of media with "inherent" viewpoints. Instead, this study attempts to excavate how different histories, discursive setting, and actions be placed and the potential imaginations crossing above the media. In other words, on one hand, this study investigates the changing trajectory of media as the normal development during alterations. What hidden political, economic, aesthetic, or cultural factors are involved in the inherent context? How we perceive these hidden factors? Is it possible to find other different spatial practices?

On the other hand, this study tried to investigate the hidden heterogeneity narratives of users between planned-obsolescence and reuse of old media with the clues from the deep time of media (Zielinski, 2008). With this argument, the non-occurring and unrealized past of the media can lead to the potential future of media. Third, old media objects such as televisions, computers, mobile phones, and etc. serves as study cases to describe how they interweave circuits with abundant memories and emotions with the living contexts of users. From this argumentation in this study, media archaeology not merely highlights the mixing and matching problems among media with the spirits of hardware hacking (Parikka, & Hertz , 2012) but also arouse the hidden memories and emotions of individuals during interactions with media objects in different stages again via the resurrect and reform procedures of old media.

Finally, to summarize the overall intentions of this study, it is deemed that the social life of things could be used to reconsidered how media, as material objects, interact with people and how implied meaning within expand in different time and spatial dimensions. On this account, the transform imaginations and practices of media could be reconstructed to construct an alternative media genealogy.

Selling thyself: Communicative capitalism and the emergence of personal data markets

More than anything else, neoliberal capitalism is manifested by convictions that the market is a natural state of mankind (Mirowski, 2013), that human beings are merely market actors in an all-encompassing economic environment that colonizes every single human activity (Brown, 2015). Nothing is outside the reach of the market anymore as everything - including human relationships, education etc. - is treated as an investment that should require minimum costs and produce maximum results (Read 2009). This is further exemplified in communicative capitalism where even dissent, opposition and resistance fuels, rather than disrupts, the system (Dean, 2009) as it is users' active participation in commercial computer mediated environments that is appropriated, exploited and sold as a commodity to advertisers (Fuchs 2014).

Author(s)

Vassilis Charitsis
Karlstad University
vasileios.charitsis@kau.se

Alan Bradshaw
Royal Holloway University of London
Alan.Bradshaw@rhul.ac.uk

The exploitation of users' online participation has been highlighted both in academic and popular publications and has triggered oppositional campaigns. More recently, a number of online platforms have emerged that promise to ameliorate this exploitation by providing monetary compensation (or other rewards) to those who agree to sell their data. We explore on this development by presenting a critical analysis of these personal data markets focusing on the empowerment discourse that they employ in order to attract users. We argue that instead of actually contesting communicative capitalism and the unequal distribution of capital, the platforms embrace the basic premise of neoliberalism as they present the market as the sole answer to the exploitation of users, while empowerment can be achieved only if users function as enterprises (Dardot and Laval 2014). Accordingly, we read the quickly short-circuiting promises of consumer empowerment as ideological moments that seek to smooth over the many contradictions inherent in communicative capitalism in contexts of social media, user-lead platforms and big data.

The attention economy and algorithmic filters of Facebook and protest in contemporary Italy: a critical perspective

Author(s)

Lorenzo Coretti
The American University of Rome
l.coretti@aur.edu

This paper provides an analysis of how the use of Facebook by social movements affects their mobilization processes, organizational levels, and collective identity. The study is built upon three years of research on the Purple Movement (Popolo Viola), an Italian protest network which opposed Berlusconi's neo-liberal policies between 2009 and 2011, using a both qualitative and quantitative methodology. Based on critical theory of technology and social movement theory, the paper suggests that the proprietary nature of Facebook Pages promotes centralization of power and the formation of hidden unaccountable leadership in social movements. Moreover, Facebook's attention economy and algorithmic filters, decreasing visibility of individual voices within social movements, potentially hinder solidarity and mutuality among activists. These patterns are particularly detrimental for those anti-capitalistic movements which, such as the Purple Movement, include equality, horizontality and full participation among their core values. Such ideals clash against the capitalist ideology and the commercial exploitative interests of Facebook as embedded within Facebook's communication protocols and design. Facebook might have well enabled large-scale events of protest, such as the No Berlusconi Day when, in December 2009, a million citizens marched in Rome and in major capitals around the world to ask the Italian prime minister to resign. However, such mobilization processes were short-lived. The inability to manage their Facebook presence according to mutually agreed principles led to internal struggles and the decline of the movement's solidarity and collective identity. In conclusion, this paper aims to contribute to debunk the myth of Facebook as a fully open and horizontal network, a finding useful not only to the academic debate on the potential of social media for social and political change, but also to those activists, now a majority, that engage in social media-supported campaigns.

Marxist categories in communicative capitalism. Social networks and its potential as exemplifications of the applicability of Marxist theory.

The paper presents an analysis of the importance of Marxist theory in the comprehension of communicative capitalism. In doing so, it focuses on the applicability of concepts such as class, use-value and exchange-value particularly applied to the comprehension of social networks freely available to the public without direct money mediation; intrinsically related to the two former concepts is proposed an analysis of the commodity in those social networks.

The concept of class is defended by arguing that its use is still necessary to understand limits to specific actions, and also by defending the existence of subjective self-identification that may confront or deny class objective positions but never transgress it before rarely successfully concrete actions tending to do that are taken. Therefore, it is needed to understand that there are two possible sides of the class: an objective one and a subjective one. The presentation will expose the differences and interrelations of these two sides, and exemplify that even though the concept of class can be "flexibilised" by recognising a proliferation of self-identifications related to an emergence of new identities, it shows social objective positions in capitalism.

Use-and exchange-value are absolutely applicable concepts to communicative capitalism even though exchange-value seems the only extant. A shallow focus on freely-available-touse social networks shows use-value prevalence, but a cautious grasp on the subject evince exchange-value as the mainly important one, where the extremely fast circulation of messages is central to capital accumulation. This assertion does not imply an insignificant roll of use-value, on the contrary, it plays a part in capital circulation process: use-value is central to attract users to social network platforms as fast circulation of messages permit the concretion of exchange-value's purpose, allowing thus to maintain capital's circulation vital, and with it, the logic of the capital. Commodity therefore needs to be situated on a chain starting in social network freely-available-services and ending in adverts offered by the owners of those social networks.

Finally, digitally mediated communications, transversal as they are in communicative capitalism, imply a progressive commodification of every aspect of human lives, making leisure moments progressively important to the logic of the capital. Nevertheless, when seeing the whole picture one should not take an extremely pessimistic position as digital technologies obduracy –using a concept developed within STS studies– allow several activities with subversive potential (not always subversive) like hackerism, political coordination, activism. A critical comprehension of technology needs to be undertaken in order to boost this positive potential, and that is something underlying the whole presentation.

Author(s)
Horacio Correa Lucero
IESAC Centre, National University of Quilmes & CONICET
hcorrealucero@elais.tech

"Digital platform" as a basis of communicative capitalism.

21st century revealed and aggravated modern capitalism main contradictions shaded with dazzling results of 1970 – 1980's scientific revolution. Term "informational age" at the moment means not only rise of communicative abundance or enhancing digital divide, but also industrial logic of informational technologies production and distribution. We consider so called "IT-platform" or "digital platform" based on networks of communicative capitalism.

Author(s)
Vladislav Dekalov
Saint Petersburg State University,
School of Journalism and Mass Communications

andavior@gmail.ru

This platform:
- emerges as a result of international IT-companies and neoliberal states convergence;
- tends to be autonomous as subsystem of global social system
- consists of five supply chains: 1) networks; 2) databases; 3) devices; 4) software; 5) apps.

In a democracy capital, government and civil society are mediated. Mass-media convey and broadcast messages from subjects they affiliate with to recipients gathered into private or public spheres. But informational age adds another level of mediatization: politics, economy and social movements can hardly avoid ubiquitous digital networks which are necessary both for transmitting information or creating of meanings and for communicative action itself. Fueled with multiples of actors from international giants such as Microsoft, Apple, Cisco or Google to thousand and thousand big and small companies interconnected and interdepend "digital platform" becomes some kind of ontological necessity. Rephrasing Marx: the media are mediated. And as Jodi Dean says: communication as primary function of human being is exploited.

"Digital platform" concentrates not resources or assets, but market itself and tends to be autonomous and homogeneous. It is a highly competitive field with high barriers to entry, few "winners" and long tail of "outsiders": in production and in consumption (remember Lacanian "drive"). Being a Younger Brother of consumer society communicative capitalism presents itself as Baudrillard's "tentacular structure", which transcends functionality of social relationships and becomes not only new ideology, but also new philosophy of technocratic world. So, "digital platform" is new core element of this world's basis.

There are five processes of digital platform development we are researching:
- spreading and homogenizing of physical networks;
- filling-in local and global databases;
- production and distribution of consumer devices;
- software development: OS and enterprise solutions for work;
- apps development: social networks, media and games for enjoyment.

The problem is that social institutes and figurations of industrial capitalism still exist. But now we have more devices, Twitter and 4G. So called post-capitalist sector needs to be analyzed critical perspective. But we claim that researchers should use empirical methods of economics and sociology to divide an "industrial" and a "post-industrial" / "informational" / "communicative" and conceptualize such a split that won't disappear in nearest 10-15 years.

Mediatization and Crisis of Democracy: The Issue Corruption in Portugal

In this paper we intend to draw a picture of the changes in the role of the media, on the so-call de-democratization (Stiglitz, 2012; Streek, 2013) of European societies, where the issue of political corruption has gained great visibility especially in the European southern countries. The so call de-democratization follows the financial crisis of 2008 and the adoption of measures of "adjustment" and "austerity" where the social rights of workers were seriously affected (Standing 2013) in favor of capital accumulation (Piketty, 2014). The mainstream media, mainly televisions, have played a key role in shaping European citizens opinion (Nordenstreng, 2013) in the South Europe, repeating ad nauseam the dominant discourse of the inevitability of "neoliberal measures" and citizens' individual responsibility in the collapse of their countries. The media mainstream have informed and shaped opinions over this period, coining and disseminating

Author(s)

Isabel Ferin Cunha
University of Coimbra, Portugal

barone.ferin@gmail.com

expressions like PIGS (acronym of the rescued countries, Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain), Troika (funding institutions of countries in difficulty, IMF, ECB, EU), "austerity" and "rescue" among others, while inculcating the dominant thought of the inevitability of a single economic policy to be pursued. In this process, political corruption emerges as a national phenomenon within globalized standards (Johnston, 2005), monitored by international prevention bodies, as well as national institutions. If, on the one hand, Journalism has investigated and denounced illegal practices of elites and interest groups often organized in national and international cartels, on the other hand, the media system through journalistic practices have standardized situations and exceptional phenomena from the repetition of images, which tends to confer upon accusations of corruption, popular entertainment features (Stromback, 2011). Based on these theoretical frameworks we aim to reflect on the changes produced in the media and its reflection on democracy, from the theorizing of the concept the mediatization (Ampuja, Koivisto & Valiverronen, 2014; Livingstone & Lunt, 2014) and the analysis of coverage of political corruption in Portugal.

Beneath the Clouds, the Beach

In Iceland, information activists, inspired by visits with John Perry Barlow and Julian Assange, have come together under the organization, the International Modern Media Institute (IMMI), to put forth a body of legislation that would make Iceland the most secure location in the world for the preservation of data—a data haven.

These laws include source protection from Sweden, communication protection from Belgium, freedom of information law from Norway and Estonia, libel protection from New York state, and others best practices. One important case exemplifies the difficulties of generating a data haven. The Silk Road server--containing a trove of incriminating information about the selling of drugs, arms, and other contraband--was housed in an Iceland data centre. In the course of a 2014 FBI investigation the Silk Road server was confiscated from the Icelandic data centre. The relative ease with which the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) acquired this server shows the faultlines in the data haven proposal.

Drawing on fieldwork in Iceland in 2015, this talk will focus on issues of data retention, data protection, and intermediary limited liability and the Silk Road server seizures.

Theories of data territoriality and internet balkanization will be mobilized in a critique of the data haven concept. In summation I will propose what is needed for the emergence of a non-evil inforamation infrastructure.

Author(s)

Adam Fish
Dept of Sociology Lancaster University
a.fish2@lancaster.ac.uk

The costumer is always right, and pays three times. Crowdfunding for performing arts projects: a Portuguese case-study.

Portuguese crowdfunding platforms operate since 2011, collecting over one million euro, but only in 2015 collaborative financing models' legal framework was defined and in 2016 the Lisbon City Hall launches its own platform.

Arts and culture figure between the most popular and financed categories, where famous and emergent artists appear into an apparent meritocratic system, having to launch campaigns and become "culturpreneurs" (Walter, 2015).

Scholars argue that this online funding channel, promoted by social media, "focuses on consumers" (Ordanini et al, 2011), who support by resources and personal commitment to receive tangible or not benefits, and it is a "set of technical, organizational and social factors" (Davies, 2014).

Author(s)
Caterina Foà
ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon, Portugal

caterina.foa@iscte.pt

Lipovetsky's World-Culture theory helps to frame the struggles of Portuguese performing arts production scenario, where State's funding is lowering, companies sponsor stages and grants, publics participation is scarce for an oversupplied market with strong competition.

To explore crowdfunding for performing arts phenomenon three analytical axes emerge:

- techno-economical: as a transactions channel for good, monetary and symbolic capitals owned by specific organizations;
- creative: as collective support for art production and dissemination;
- social: as communicative exchanges environment with collaborative basis and strong added value to profit.

This paper presents an ongoing research, which focuses on the multiple roles necessary played by artist and publics in crowdfunding context, to highlight the emerging paradox of communicative capitalism and culture mercantilization, which forces power dynamics, exalting and taking advantage of the individual action at each production stage. weakening the set of values associated to the collaborative production idea and behaviours. The crowdfunding projects sample, selected from the national market leader platform, includes different artistic outputs always including a live performance, allowing monitorization of online pages (qualitative data analysis) and users (backers' survey), as well as of offline actors (artists in-depth interviews and offline publics survey). Findings point to relevant trends concerning artists and publics' perspectives. Due to the lack of resources and weak structures of production the artists have to manage strategies and campaigns, developing entrepreneurial and communicational skills, sometimes struggling with a markeeter approach to their work and the timeconsuming tasks. They rely on personal social networks to promote the campaigns, and wanting to achieve more audience and media attention, asking for an additional effort to backers but also to social media users.

Then we find citizens who already paid taxes, facing the lack of public funds for culture, to be the same people who fund the campaigns but also invest time and effort to create online buzz for campaign visibility. Moreover backers receive benefits for funding but many times they have to buy a show ticket, because in that case they are costumers, who are always right if they pay.

There is No Snow in Silicon Valley: Materialities of Communicative Capitalism in a Canadian Digital Tech Cluster

This paper is based an on-going ethnographic case study of a digital technology cluster in the region of Kitchener-Waterloo (KW), Ontario, Canada and its cultures of production and innovation. In the wake of the demise of RIM/Blackberry as a dominant player in the global mobile media and communication business, a vibrant network or "ecosystem" of tech startups, SMEs, incubators and accelerators has emerged in the troubled company's home of Waterloo.   The KW tech cluster was ranked 16th on a global ranking of startup ecosystems based in part on startup funding, output, performance, talent, and support infrastructure (Epson, 2012).and the New York Times published a front page article in December 2013 about the cluster entitled "A Snowier Silicon Valley in BlackBerry's Backyard" (Austen, 2013)

Author(s)

Andrew Herman
Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada
aherman@wlu.ca

Vincent Manzerolle
University of Windsor
vmanzero@uwindsor.ca

Brett Caraway
University of Toronto

Our argument begins with a critical appraisal of the rhetorics about the KW tech cluster development that are performed in the aforementioned TechCrunch/StartUp Genome and New York Times articles. These rhetorics embody an implicit and hegemonic narrative of digital tech development that locates "Silicon Valley"—with its valorization of venture capital led financing, technological utopianism, neo-liberal market fundamentalism, and ideology of innovation as disruption—as the inevitable telos of communicative capital/ism (Dean, 2010; 2012; 2014a, 2014b). Such teleologies, we argue, elide the very different ways in which informational capital/ism has taken form in places other than "the Valley". In order to critically understand the specificities of communicativecapitalism as embodied in regional digital tech innovation clusters, we argue that it is necessary to use a multi-faceted media-materialistic approach (cf. Herman, Hadlaw and Swiss, 2014; Packer and Wiley, 2011; Parrika, 2012a, 2012b) As a coherent analytic, this approach identifies and examines several different registers of materialities that are articulated within a tech sector's "ecosystem." These registers include materialities of the political economy of institutional and organizational power; materialities of space and infrastructure embodied in regional geography, landscape, the urban built environment and workplace architecture; materialities of media forms and communicative practices enabled by their sociotechnical affordances; and the of "matierialities of materials" (Parikka, 2012b) that can be ephemeral (code, electricity, Wi-Fi radio signals, light) as well as solid (glass, fiber optic cables, glass, silicon). We will argue that different varieties of informational capitalism can be discerned in specific articulations of these registers of materialities. Just as there is no snow in Silicon Valley, there is no such thing as a snowier Silicon Valley.

Towards a Fatal Politics:
Raising the Stakes of Communicative Subversion

Author(s)

Ingrid M. Hoofd
Department of Media and Culture at the
Humanities Faculty of Utrecht University
Netherlands

i.m.hoofd@uu.nl

This paper hopes to demonstrate by way of the works of Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio that the stakes of resistance, activism and subversion under communicative capitalism have been raised beyond more territorialist and agentic understandings of power. It will start by noting that the critiques from Jodi Dean and Christian Fuchs on the encapsulation of expression and resistance in the circuits of capitalism are certainly insightful, but that they eventually fall short of truly rethinking what the consequences of the reconfigurations of power due to the growing ubiquity of new media technologies for activism entail. By pushing the work of Dean and Fuchs to their respective limits, this paper argues that contemporary power has been deterritorialised to such an extent that any substantive conception of resistance not only renders such resistance near-impotent, but also (and even more seriously) makes it thoroughly complicit with the current mode of capitalism and its core activist ideology. Therefore, however sympathetic, Fuchs' suggestion of seizing the technologies of production regrettably becomes implicated in a thoroughly productivist logic – reproducing the technological optimism and instrumentalism at the base of this logic that is dominant today – while Dean's romanticisation of localised activisms such as Occupy, that seek to take over public spaces and squares, forgets that such activisms by necessity implicate themselves ever more in the ongoing circulation of spectacular mediation, especially when they rely on the false opposition between the online and offline. Both Dean's nostalgic fantasy of the possibility of resistance lying outside the informational networks and Fuchs neo-Marxist fantasy of resistance as foremost presenting a tool-redistribution problem therefore depend on outdated notions of power as a kind of space-and-time-bound substance that can be actively grasped and wielded by the marginalised subject. Instead, this paper claims that a proper subversion of communicative capitalism should today be thought of as requiring a certain 'fatal' element that stabs at the core of this capitalism's huge reliance on fantasies of instrumentalist, productivist and territorial agency. The paper will conclude by showing that such fatalism will also have unexpected consequences beyond the work of Dean and Fuchs for critical theory and academic research into activism in general today.

Avaaz and the democratic quality of digital mass politics

The Internet and social media have facilitated a wealth of apparently spontaneous forms of participation in global governance. The new phenomenon of "mass digital politics" has enthused media, politicians, scholars and Internet users alike, reinforcing concepts of "global democracy" such as that of "monitory democracy" by Keane (2009) or "network society" by Castells (2005). The recent self-proclaimed "digital green" movements, such as Avaaz, MoveOn, SumOfUs, 350.org and 38 degrees, are growing by the hundreds, sometimes thousands, of new supporters each week, outpacing "traditional" activist organisations and making noise about every conceivable critical issue in any country in the world, powered by technology, well-oiled PR teams and the pooling of thousands of small tax-free donations from their supporters.

Author(s)

Lanka Horstink
ICS-ULisboa (Institute of Social Sciences), Lisbon, Portugal

lanka@gaia.org.pt

While many of the campaigns promoted by these new organisations appear genuinely environmentalist or socially-oriented, some involve challenging the sovereignty of foreign countries or even deciding on the lives of thousands of people, some appear to offer a particular solution instead of opening up a discussion, and some are actually local campaigns that were swallowed up by the PR machines of these global digital NGOs. Most of the campaigns spread over the Internet and mobile networks like wildfire, creating instant media hits, but depriving their audience of time to reflect on the issue or measure the consequences of the actions demanded. The structure of participation in these campaigns is also mostly limited to signing petitions, retweeting and reposting the soundbytes provided, although occasionally supporters are asked to show up for protest rallies (350.org appears to be an exception with balanced on and offline activities). Finally, research reveals many of these digital NGOs are (indirectly) backed by powerful progressive foundations, mostly from Anglo-Saxon countries and some are actually companies.

Despite the thinness of democratic practices within these organisations, they tend to self-describe as "member-driven", "people-powered" and see themselves as hubs of direct democracy. The scale of these new Internet "movements" and their capacity to attract media and political attention therefore begs the question as to their legitimacy, representativeness and democratic governance. Might some of the digital NGOs behind the mass movements be chasing an agenda of their own or from their unknown backers? What are the dangers of movements that claim to be democratic, have high impact yet fail the test of simple democratic criteria such as transparency and accountability? This research takes a look at the recent trend of digital mass mobilisation, and will analyse the discourse, claims and practices of the web's largest movement, Avaaz, in an attempt to assess the democratic quality of a movement that insists it is "bringing people-powered politics to decision-making worldwide".

Media, spectacle culture, and journalistic precariousness

Author(s)

Hajrudin Hromadžić
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,
Department of Cultural Studies,
University of Rijeka, Croatia

hhromadzic@ffri.hr

The presentation, recognizable divided into two parts, will try to point out the possible symptomatic interweaving of several perspectives that affect labor issues in the media (journalism, editorial work) within the context of the dominant economic, political, social and cultural trends of precariousness work and life in the period of so-called late capitalism (predominately marked by the terror of financial capital under work), as well as with the fascination of spectacle products within the media industry. I advocate the thesis that the media representations of the social world and the consequent construction of meaning is possible and necessary to bring in relation to the structural conditions of problematic working precariousness living conditions of many journalists and editors nowadays. If we roughly draw the contours of media reality and journalistic profession today, it is determined by the concentration of market deregulated media ownership, as well as media institutions dependence on marketing, that is advertisers, on the one hand, and consequently connected to that, miserable price of journalistic work, on the other side. It leads to the fragmentation of collective social subject to individual micro fighting for the purpose of mere survival.

This will bring us a step closer to the systematically conditioned, antagonistic and dialectical relation between mediated spectacle as a single, but important puzzle within the ideological core of postindustrial image of neoliberalism, with the precarious conditions of media production of social reality. The core question is: If the spectacle, pathetically studded by aura of magnetically attractive glamour and unabashed luxury, is pure, unadulterated form of the so-called post-ideological and post-political time, is not it then a growing pauperized masses of precarious workers, including those who are directly involved in production of media spectacle, actually a logical addition to such order of the social reality?

Activism in the Popular Media:
Fat Sexuality, Capitalism, and the Finnish Fa(t)shion Blog More to Love

The concept of activism is often seen referring to demonstrations or practices taking place outside media contexts. Still, activism has, since the end of the 1990s, intertwined with popular youth cultures and media performances both in the internet and in the old media. 'Popularized media activism' can reach the general public but, on the other hand, being put on the popular stage may tame the activist message. This kind of domestication of activism has to do with capitalist demands: popular culture needs to sell, and too harsh an activist critique is not particularly sellable.

Author(s)
Kaisu Hynnä
University of Turku, Finland

klhynn@utu.fi

In this paper, I will discuss 'fat activism'– a form of activism that fights against fat-discrimination in society – as an example of the way popular media domesticates activism. Similar to, for example, the 'Black is beautiful' movement, fat activism puts an emphasis on the beauty and attractiveness of fat-identified subjects. The representation of fat people – especially fat women – as desirable is simultaneously revolutionary, since fat subjects are usually seen as unattractive in the mainstream media, and backward, since accentuating the physical attractiveness of women in the media is a cliché.

The case discussed in this paper is the Finnish fa(t)shion blog More to Love (Finland 2009–2013, <http://www.more-tolove.fi>) created by two plus-size women. Not unlike many other internet phenomena, More to Love started marginal, but quickly became so popular that it turned mainstream. The mainstreaming of the blog was greeted with dislike by many of its old followers. They detested the way the self-ironic posts had been displaced by countless photos taken as part of the bloggers' collaboration with Finnish clothing brands. They also did not like, how the blog had started to include commercials of makeup, clothes and accessories. Still, many people did not mind at all. The blog continued to grow and find new followers.

This paper discusses the way fat activism is negotiated with the capitalist pressures of hosting a nationally successful fashion blog. It looks at fashion blogs as a genre that puts an emphasis on the desirability of the blogger. In the case of a fatshion blog, this becomes simultaneously empowering and mainstream. The focus will be not on the blog posts themselves, but in the interaction between the bloggers and their followers. How is fat activism communicated in the popular More to Love fa(t)shion blog?

Cultural Disruption of [Communicative] Capitalism from Groucho Marxism to 4chan

Author(s)
Will Jaques
York University
wjaques@protonmail.ch

Network technologies have been deployed to mobilize and organize a number of social movements with varying degrees of success. This seems particularly true in recent years with the explosion of so-called 'social' media networks. While the organizational potentials of network technology are indisputable, it is suggested here that certain emerging 'cyberspace' cultures are continuing and perhaps accelerating a potentially more radical and transformative aesthetic tradition that works by creatively disrupting the otherwise smooth reproduction of rigid social orders, including communicative capitalism, at the cultural level. As Guattari suggests in Chaosmosis, it is 'social creativity that co-opts the ideological structures which have traditionally preserved the state and the capitalist market'. The occasional cultural disruptions caused by users of websites like 4chan, Something Awful, Reddit, and so on, exasperate underlying contradictions and absurdities in contemporary capitalist social relations. Although these activities are not always intentionally political, they often create an existential moment that bears similarities to detournement (as practised by Situationist International), Autard's "theatre of cruelty", or Bey's "poetic terrorism". Such experiences force a visceral confrontation with the absurdity of existence within repressive and exploitative social orders. The author argues that this type of cultural disruption/creativity is crucial in both contemporary and future social movements because they create diffused moments of existential crisis that seriously undermine the legitimacy of existing and undesirable social orders. This has the potential to compromise the willingness to perpetuate and participate in these orders. Moreover, given the scale of the internet and the speed at which information travels through networks, performative disruptions in 'cyber' space have a scope that might be historically unmatched. Drawing from the aforementioned authors, new materialism, as well as the work of Nietzsche, Camus, Deleuze, and Benjamin, the paper suggests that much of the power of communicative capitalism is in the collective performance that is, quite literally, taking life within such an order too seriously. Embracing the inherent absurdity of communicative capitalism through a public, often collective, performance in 'cyber' culture has the potential to undermine this particular source of power and legitimation without engaging in a traditional battle for control of the social order, which often results in replacing one mode of control with another.

(In)Securing Cyberspace:
Reterritorialising Cyber-Security as Cyber-Absurdity

While the cyberspace is not, nor has ever been, an entirely borderless and free-flowing space—as theorists of communicative capitalism such as Dean (2005) have been at pains to point out—the history of the concept of 'cybersecurity' is largely the history of ideological attempts by state and corporate apparatuses to justify their territorialisation of the relatively fluid processes of the digital sphere. Shrouded in the post-9/11 rhetoric of risk-assessment and fear-mongering—as pointed to by the works of Beck (1986) and Furedi (2005)—monolithic, omnipotent institutions of information gathering and surveillance are further encoding the neoliberal logics of the 'nation,' the 'free market,' and the 'individual' onto digital territories.

Author(s)

Adam T. Kingsmith
York University
adam.kingsmith@gmail.com

Ironically, such attempts to re-territorialise cyberspace by 'securing' the digital from purported dangers such as unregulated crypto-currencies (Bitcoin, Litecoin), hacker groups (Anonymous, Decocidio), and anonymous message boards (4chan, Reddit), threaten to destroy the very spaces and cultures that make the digital terrain such a unique articulation of new political, economic, and social possibilities. As such, this paper proceeds in two parts. First, grounded in the theoretical frame of Deleuze and Guattari (1933, 1987) it traces a genealogy of the concept of cybersecurity in order to map the ways it functions as a discursive device that legitimises the deepening securitisation and financialisation of the relatively free-flowing nature of cyberspace.

Following this, it moves to propose an alternative challenge to the practices of cybersecurity—a particular outgrowth of the overarching capture of communicative capitalism—by introducing the concept of 'cyber-absurdity,' a new form of political action that recognises the fundamental importance of the dispersed, anonymous, and at times, seemingly ridiculous processes of cyberspace for a more transparent and democratic society. In short, it pushes us to ask: How much cyber-security do we need? Who do cyber-securitising processes really benefit? And what features of the digital terrain, and of democracy, will be lost if we allow the captures of cyber-absurdities so inherent to the processes of communicative capitalism to continue?

Renewing Resistances in Communicative Capitalism: Protest-Image and Political Imaginaries

Author(s)

Arkaitz Letamendia
Parte Hartuz Research Group, University
of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)
arkaitz.letamendia@ehu.eus

Ion Andoni Del Amo
NOR Research Group, University
of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)
ionandoni.delamo@ehu.eus

Jasón Diaux
Department of Sociology 2, University
of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)
jason.diaux@ehu.eus

Digital technologies seem to encourage a shift from the representation of struggles, or Image of the Protest, to the spread of Protest-Image, where the visual performance of the conflict is the protest itself. Iconography and self-expressive dimensions have always been relevant in political mobilizations. Before the digital era these dimensions were represented by mass media –along with their unilateral message- as well as by protest promoting groups themselves, through the self-construction of alternative media like fanzines, free radios or working class newspapers. In these cases, the main focus was the material dimension of the conflict, while the communicative dimension (and its counter-narratives) was an important but secondary element. Nowadays in our image saturated digital society, more than an Image of the protest, what emerges is the Protest-Image, in which aesthetics, self-expressive and symbolic visual dimensions of the struggle impose on its material side. There is self-production of the image and of messages, but not of the medium. Social networks are used because they allow greater potential for dissemination, but these are based on a particular political economy focused on for-profit companies. In this context Protest-Image emerges, where the self-construction of the political subject is observed.

We focus on the evolution of modes of mobilization in the Basque Country in the last two decades. We analyze three cases of conflict-related images taken from YouTube. The first one matches with the Image of the Protest model, and reflects scenes of political street fighting in the 1990s. The second case, taken in 2011-2012 (when ETA declares the end of its armed activity), corresponds to the Identity Protest-Image model, and refers to an imaginary constructed by different particular identities in conflict. The third and most recent case (years 2015-2016), refers to the Popular Protest-Image model, where a construction of a new imaginary is observed. In it, rather than differentiated identities, preference is given to the common and the popular -in connection with global protest imaginaries as Occupy Wall Street or 15-M. As a result, we suggest that different types of emerging Protest-Images prioritize the representation of the struggle on the struggle itself. The "digital reproductibility" in communicative capitalism permeates political and socio-cultural fields, stressing the visual and expressive elements of the conflict. Finally, we warn about the risk of symbolic phagocytosis of capitalism on these new modes of resistance.

Power and Microtemporality:
High-Frequency Trading and the Infrastructure of Capitalism's Space-Time Continuum

The financialization of the global economy is historically and contemporaneously intertwined with the adoption of digital media technologies and networks. Arguably, the dependence on ICT infrastructure by financial networks offers a clear site for examining the articulation of political economic power. The materiality of financial networks, and the power structures they support, is therefore reflected in the close infrastructural relationship between media of finance and media of communication. For example, this connection is exemplified by the "flash crashes" of 2010 and 2013. In 2010, a single order triggered a cascading response from trading algorithms resulting in the Dow Jones droppings 998 points (9%) in under 10 minutes. In 2013, the Associated Press' Twitter account was hacked and used to post a misleading tweet suggesting a bomb had gone off in the White House; it resulted in a loss of $136 billion in value for the S&P Index. These two cases in particular demonstrate the central role of ICTs in the functioning of the market, suggesting a post-human era in which trade is governed not by human agency but by algorithmic reasoning operating at speeds nearly imperceptible to humans. Because financial networks constitute an increasing percentage of the overall global economy, the shift towards reducing human involvement in financial trading only exacerbates the volatile nature of these markets. As a result, the infrastructure of finance supports a relatively new space-time continuum focusing on market exchanges as microtemporal events below the threshold of direct human intervention and agency.

Author(s)

Vincent Manzerolle

Benjamin J. Birkinbine

To that end, our paper develops a critical political economy of media by interrogating the role that ICTs play in providing the material foundation for the production of financial networks at the microtemporal level. In doing so, we call for a materialist understanding of how ICTs provide the infrastructure necessary for facilitating financial exchange within a space-time continuum conducive to market exchanges approaching the speed of light, thereby boosting the potential for the increased financialization of the global economy. Indeed, most global financial activity (including stock markets) increasingly depends on supercomputers, fiber-optic undersea cables, microwave towers, coding and software development, consumer technologies, and other digital media. In our analysis, we map the interrelationship between the centers of financial power and material infrastructures that support them in order to understand how power emerges from the construction of a particular type of space-time. Specifically, we focus on the case of algorithmic, or "high-frequency" trading to illustrate how the critical political economy of media can be used to link the materiality of financial networks and their specific mediational substrate (supercomputers, fiber-optic cables, algorithms, data servers) to the articulation and concentration of power. In our paper we draw on regulatory policies, corporate communications, business press, and white papers to support our analysis.

Call centre workers: loyalty, exit or… voice?

Under the rubble of Fordism, following the emergence of a new stage of capitalism, which is the response of the system to the crisis started in the 70s, a new economic activity emerged and expanded: the call centres, which have concentrated an important share of the employment worldwide, creating what Huws (2001, 2003) calls a "cybertariat".

Its expansion has been fuelled by the hegemonic neoliberal globalization, the service sector growth, the widespread diffusion of information and communication technologies and by the productive restructuring that features the new regime of accumulation that Harvey (1989) calls "flexible accumulation", which strongly reinforces the destructive nature of capital (Mészáros, 1997).

Being an activity mediated by the use of technology, particularly the computer, in it can be found the brave new world of information and communication technologies and working conditions that are typical of the past. There is evidence of a deep "real degradation of the virtual work" (Antunes and Braga, 2009). In fact, contrary to the post-Fordism theses, these workplaces reveal the continued application of the principles of the scientific management's despotic regime of Taylor and Ford in terms of work organization.

On the other hand, call centres are the symbol of the business organization model of the current stage of capitalism. It is a network organization consisting of three levels, standing these centres at the third, providing services to companies located in the others. In this logic, the rationalization of costs, through the widespread practice of subcontracting involving a generalized precariousness, is of great importance.

But the changes under the flexible accumulation were not only punctuated by an objective character. Through the ideological sphere the subjective dimension of workers was reached, with the apology of individualism to encourage competition between them. New hegemonic logics of domination are also implemented alongside with the old coercive ones and a newspeak arises in order to produce the consent of domination by the workers, leading them to cooperate with the reproduction of capital, as evidenced by Burawoy (1979).

Under these conditions, what is the place for collective action in the call centres? Although the logics of domination implemented hinder it, through the production of conformism that leads to loyalty, and despite the individual exit attitude that prevails, hence the high levels of turnover that exist in this industry in Portugal, collective action is possible. And we have some examples of that in Portugal that we will analyse in this paper. However, for it to take place it is necessary that the conditions that were set out by O'Sullivan and Turner (2013) are present: the existence of a common sense of injustice; to target a clear and identifiable entity, making an objective distinction between "we" and "them"; and develop the confidence in the group, with "us" taking precedence over "me". Furthermore, it is essential that the group see effectiveness in the action and that someone predisposes to be a spokesman of the group. Finally, the presence of militant unions in the workplace and the communication face-to-face between workers and unions is absolutely crucial.

Author(s)
Paulo Marques Alves
ISCTE-IUL and DINÂMIA'CET-IUL
paulo.alves@iscte.pt

All-In: capitalism as the medium, mediatization as its pervader, we as cogs

What are the impacts of the recent socio-communicative changes in the production and reproduction of social realities? In a time of neoliberalism, capitalism is the media, and mediatization becomes fully operative as the mechanism of social production, strongly decreasing the latitude for the possibilities of demos transforming action.

In this paper, we explore a new conceptualization of the present political-economic organization of society as that of mediatized capitalism. Following this, capitalism become the most important medium of production and reproduction of society, at least since the beginning of the last century but, more unavoidably, since the coming of age of online social networks. Capitalism is now content and materiality: both message and media, both messenger and process.

Concomitantly, mediatization has grown into the most important pervader of capitalism, becoming an "art in itself" and requiring the conjunction of a large set of resources and know-hows, both economic and communicative, for its social effectiveness. These could only be constructed and can only be maintained by those with economic/political power. For the most part, society is left "at sea", always, and only, navigating on the winds of capitalism with "mediatizers" becoming the managers of the social, the spinners and blowers of the setting and changing of realities.

In this context, social transformative action becomes mostly unattainable or else ineffective for the majority of resourceless and/or uninitiated in the mechanisms of mediatization. Moreover, in a time of progressive transference of the human to the non-human, both as hardware and software, the coming of age and succession of these new media (as if extensions of humanity) are mostly counteracted or subsumed by capitalism when we consider, as we do here, capitalism as the medium of society. Rather than suffering from the noisiness of the media, capitalism produces itself as a clean and clear medium, and even manages the production of its own self-reinforcing social noise.

Both the pervasiveness of capitalism, through mediatization, and the alienation of the human in the non-human, lead us to conceive the present political-economic organization of society and its underlying processes as the "final bet" of capitalism. The "all-in" of us all, in an hodiernal world that neither result from a shared construction of humanity, nor is controlled by human entities: a world reified in processes autonomous of a human creator.

Author(s)
Paulo Martins
Universidade Nova de Lisboa – Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas – CIMJ
aquiaolado@gmail.com

The expansion of digital intermediation platforms: where will the web stop?

Previous research on content aggregation and cultural crowdsourcing and crowdfunding (Bouquillion, Matthews 2010; Matthews, Rouzé, Vachet, 2014) has confirmed that digital intermediation platforms are vectors of structural changes that go beyond the traditional scope of culture industries. I have proposed to interrogate these platforms as "vanguards" of a new stage of cultural industrialisation (Matthews 2016a). Enthusiastic commentators see the emergence of a "collaborative economy" as the basis of a worldwide market, open to a multitude of players of various sizes and linked by digital networks and communication tools. Despite the reservations one may have about this enchanted vision of a "sharing economy", it appears that the present development of the web is accompanied by disruption and innovation in the processes of production and capitalisation of numerous goods and services. Digital intermediation platforms offer a field for socio-economic experimentation in "industrial and economic environments [that] have become less and less controllable by the usual methods of management and organisation of resources" (Bouquillion, Miege, Moeglin, 2013: 14).

Author(s)

Jacob T. Matthews
Cemti / Université Paris 8
jacob.matthews@univ-paris8.fr

My communication questions this expansion of digital intermediation platforms within and beyond the areas of e-commerce and the culture and communication industries. First, I consider how the field of web players extends to a de facto labour management and organisational activities in sectors which are distant from the culture and communication sector. This raises important questions in relation to the control of production processes, the role of these platforms in the value chain and with regard to (new) forms of exploitation of labour (Matthews, 2016b). Secondly, I examine how these players also contribute to work and organisational "cultures" of various professions. Indeed, these platforms play a significant role in the production of ideological discourse, justifying and/or concealing their socio-economic prerogatives and producing an illusion of modified relations of production and inverted positions within production cycles. In this respect too, it is tempting to analyse this development as an extension of the culture industries to other socioeconomic fields, a hypothesis which was formulated almost twenty years ago (Lacroix, Tremblay 1997) and appears to be confirmed in the present context (Nixon 2014, Matthews 2016a).

Charismatic Power in the Web 2.0:
the Italian case and the theoretical issue

My speech will focus on the case of the Italian political movement "Five Stars", founded in 2009 by former comedian Beppe Grillo, at the height of economic crisis, and actually sharing many instances – such as corruption, upper classes privileges, and the myth of digital direct democracy – typical of other political movements, such as Spanish 15M or Occupy America. While 15M and Occupy are inspired by a properly decentralized and participative nature, nonetheless, in Five Stars decision-making is totally embedded in the very figure of its leader, Beppe Grillo himself. Nonetheless, since its birth the movement has been exploiting the democratic rhetoric of the web as a topical argument as well as a critique to traditional hierarchies, and has been growing in popularity and consensus.

Author(s)

Andrea Miconi
IULM University, Milan, Italy
andrea.miconi@iulm.it

For this purpose, I will analyze the resurfacing of a particular kind of power – charismatic authority – through a platform such as Web 2.0 that was expected to promote more rational consensus strategies. Although the political action of the Five Stars movement pretends to be inspired by a participative culture, it is in fact directly ruled by the founder via his blog, with a little space allowed for discussions. In this sense, the rise of Grillo as a political leader seems to both retrieve and renew an old form of authority grounded in a very traditional legitimacy – the charismatic and undisputed leadership of the boss – while at the same time being able to spread through the network. I will offer an overview of events and also provide a theoretical interpretation, trying to figure out whether this process is due to the specific conditions of Italian history or a to a broader affordance of the Web for the spread of information cascades, the rise of echo chambers, and the rise of non-democratic authorities, as suggested by many scholars (such as Farhad Manjo, Geert Lovink, Cass Sunstein, Mathieu O'Neil, Albert-László Barabási). It is therefore necessary to take into account both Italian recent history and Internet critical theory, given that my concern is not only for the political consequences directly brought about by the movement, but also for the extent to which digital environments, in a broader sense, are exposed to the rise of populist leaderships.

Alternative Media in Portuguese-speaking cyberspace:
A comparative study of Brazilian "Outras Palavras" and Portuguese "O Corvo"

Alternative media are defined as media that challenge the dominant capitalist forms of production, media structures, content, distribution and reception (Fuchs, 2010). This paper discusses the resonance of Portuguese-speaking alternative media in cyberspace, based on an exploratory analysis of Portuguese and Brazilian online media: "O Corvo" and "Outras Palavras", respectively, with their websites and Facebook pages. "O Corvo" is defined as community media project, from Lisbon, whereas "Outras Palavras" is left-wing, with a postcapitalist ideology, and . We compared the two media and their different cultures, in a study from October 2015 until February 2016, using content analysis of Facebook pages and interaction from the users, and interviews with readers/users of both media, as well as non-users, from Portugal and Brazil.

Author(s)

Lina Moscoso Teixeira
independent researcher
linamoscoso@gmail.com

Ana Jorge
CECC/Catholic University of Portugal
anaratojorge@outlook.pt

Through the analysis of "Outras Palavras" and "O Corvo", we saw how they disclose critical issues and add information that was not available to the public before, through mainstream media, from local stories to corruption cases. They invite reflection from their readers, by deepening themes and diversifying approaches, as interviewees revealed. These projects break away from financial dependencies from the State, government or market, in a sphere apart from the mainstream media, and seem to offer a new type of journalism that seeks to promote democracy and emancipated thought.

"O Corvo" and "Outras Palavras" attempt to reach the audience not only with their websites, but also by investing in digital media, particularly social networking sites, and media convergence. With this, they try to facilitate interaction and participation. On the one hand, one could notice that the functioning of these platforms favours a bubble effect, in that the discussion is more between people who are already favourable to a view that is similar to the alternative medium's; due to algorhythms, information is more readily available to those who already react, comment and share.

On the other hand, by resorting to social networking sites, a substantial difference between the Portuguese and Brazilian cases emerges: whereas "Outras Palavras" has a much larger audience, and more engaged in discussions, "O Corvo" has a smaller scale, also because of its local focus, and struggles with means to guarantee information production and the storage of the platform. The potential of the platforms is taken up differently, according to the culture, including the political culture, of the country. Whereas Portugal has a higher level of education, and a more transparent media system, Brazilian political seems to involve individuals more with alternative media.

Breaking down of cultural hierarchies: the use of social media

The logic of late capitalism is related to the debates on postmodernism and post colonialism. Post colonialism relates to hybridity while postmodernism holds the multiculturalism as one of its basic premises. If ideology is the general material production of ideas and beliefs and values in social life and ideology or culture can donate the signifying practices and symbolic processes in a particular society, this can allude to the way individuals to live their social practices. In cultural area, there is a constant flow of confusion; leading to new problematic areas to emerge, and to be discussed in the cultural politics field. In cultural theory has moved decisively beyond such dramatic simplifications and binary reversals. In cultural theory, binary positions had broken down and new hybrid forms came to being. Hybrid forms created a potential of mobility however in the other hand, mobility and hybridity are creating an authoritative character. Although hybridity can create an authoritative character, use of political power can also create an authoritative character to suppress the "other". Although social media can be seen as a tool for freedom of speech and a new form of hybridity, it is limited by trolling, aggressive comments or censorship from a political power. The social media appearance of self is leading to an auto – censorship. The positioning of political power in social media and individual representation will be discussed in this article.

Author(s)
Özge Mumcu
Baskent University
omumcu@gmail.com

Encountering and negotiating ethnicity and class traumas: web 2.0 memorial pages as archives and public spheres

The study examines the ways content-specific social media platforms (in Facebook and YouTube) can function as alternative public spheres (Frazer, 1990, p. 61) and as online digital archives, entailing a degree of citizen control (although delimited by corporate ownership) (Fuchs, 2014, p. 68) and allowing a variety of issues to arise, often excluded from the mainstream national public sphere (Butsch, 2007, p. 5). The empirical focus of the study is the photography-orientated Facebook group and its YouTube page entitled 'old photographs of Thessaloniki'.

Focusing on the city of Thessaloniki - Greece's second most populated city, and its histories of class and ethnic oppression, the study looks at the ways these stories are reconstructed, remembered, negotiated and contested online, through the informal participatory practices of people

Author(s)
Yiannis Mylonas
Media Department, Higher School of Economics
Moscow, Russia
ymylonas@hse.ru

(Thessaloniki dwellers and others interested in the city and the material offered by the specific pages) using and following the particular social media resources and deploying formal and informal sources to produce such multimodal narratives. Following the premises of critical analysis (Buck-Morss, 1977, p. 52), the past is not understood as a stable entity but as a contingent one, denoted by the present, and simultaneously, as an entity carrying the force to challenge the certainties and the truth-regimes constructing the present itself. Past events can 'enter vividly into the figurability of the present' (Ross, 2015, p. 6) and are able to capture the imagination and understanding of the present and the future. Other than implying a teleological understanding of history, the study understands the memory of past events to carry a promise (Fritsch, 2005, p. 104) towards present injustices and their connections to the past, along with their potential extensions to the future.

The analysis deploys Benjamin's and Agamben's theorizations of memory, media and witnessing. The public encountering of such past events can enhance the recognition of historical traumas, injustices and inequalities perpetrated in the city, and develop a form of civic reflexivity and imagination (Dean, 2003, p. 14), that may allow the formulation of new subjectivities and identities and new socio-political struggles in the space of the city and beyond. On another level, the study also looks at the limits of such informal spaces to develop these potentials. The study concludes that the pages form a highly informed digital archive in constant development that fosters narratives enhancing cultural toleration and understanding, while challenging official, nationalist master frames. A class-orientated understanding of the city's 'ruinification' and oblivion is however, undermined, although it remains in a 'spectral' form.

Ideas, Opinions and Ideologies of the Internet and Social Media: A Case Study of Chinese Users

This prospective research aims to find out Chinese people's ideas, opinions and ideology or ideologies of the Internet and social media. Instead of conducting a public opinion survey to study people's opinions on the superficial level, or interpreting people's opinions from a subjective anthropological perspective, this research, instead, will deal with this question from a critical perspective. It is a study of people's ideas, opinions and ideology relating to the reality: the oppressive social structures. From a critical perspective ideology inevitably corresponds to contradictions in reality. It reflects this reality through the mediation that is the inverse appearances between reality and ideology. These appearances have a deceptive character to disguise the contradictions. Thus they have an ideological influence on people's mind. At the same time, ideology should not be perceived as a static and single mode of thinking. It has a complex

Author(s)
Yuqi Na
CAMRI, University of Westminster
yuqi.na@my.westmminster.ac.uk

and dynamic character that is related to people's everyday living experiences. This presentation will first analyse the development of the Internet and social media in China from both economic and political aspects. From an economic perspective, it will first show the labour issues relating to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Then it will illustrate the expansive development of the mostly used Chinese Internet and social media platforms. From a political perspective, it will display the main discourses constructed by the Chinese government about the development of the Chinese Internet.

This research will conduct interviews and focus groups to scrutinise people's opinions of the Internet and how they construct these opinions in accordance with their living experiences. Because of the importance of the relationships between people's opinions and their positions in production structures, this research will recruit three types of participants: intense users, software engineers in Huawei, and workers in ICTs related assembly factory Foxconn. This classification is based on the division of digital labour. Furthermore, three main categories of issues relating to the Internet will be addressed. The first one is cultural issues, such as individualism, social coercion, freedom and fun (playbour) on the Internet. The second one is about economic aspects of the Internet and people's opinions about alternative platforms. This part mainly addresses the issues of free access or exploitation, privacy policy, targeted advertising and control of personal data. The last part deals with political issues such as surveillance and democratic participation. Since some of these issues are sensitive, I will first conduct 3 individual interviews with each type of participants separately. Then based on these interviews, 5 focus groups will be conducted. 3 of them are groups with homogenous participants with one type of participants in each group. Then I will conduct 2 mixed focus groups, a mixture of 3 types of participants. In order to facilitate a vivid discussion, I will make videos within which two people holding opposite views of the Internet will discuss the issues. Through the interviews and focus groups, this research hopes to a) identify the key ideology or ideologies of the Chinese Internet and social media, b) find out several important elements which could raise people's critical assessments about the Internet.

Chaturbate.com: Pornotopia and the Surprising Challenge to the Ills of Communicative Capitalism

This paper deals with the intersection of two major discussions that preoccupy the observers and critics of cyberspace:

1. The ways in which spontaneous online social activities generate expropriated value turned into proprietary resources for mammonist accumulation (or, the vicissitudes of work and labor online)
and
2. The ways in which digital connectivity transforms pornography from a literary genre to derivatives of interactive communication (nature of sex work online and its relationship to pornography)

Chaturbate.com is a live webcam site that was launched in 2011 and currently (May 2016) ranks 338 on Alexa. As it is structured, it realizes the ultimate transformation of both networked sex and its (derivative) products of "obscenity." It is the realization of pornotopia online.

Author(s)
Ofer Nordheimer Nur
The Multidsiciplinary Program in the Humanities
Tel Aviv University
nur@ucla.edu

Chaturbate is distinct from other for-profit webcam sites in that it is free (really free) to watch and participate. It fosters an open source spirit on its user interface, in a form of a chat for all watchers, along with the performers as well as selected moderators. It involves performers who, I would argue, can be seen (and this needs further ethnographic research) as autonomous and emancipated (much like bloggers) sex-positive amateurs. In addition, in the spirit of sharing, performers can garner optional tips from multiple watchers who "pitch in." This structure proves itself profitable as dozens and sometimes hundreds of watchers send individually moderate tips that could, however, amount to considerable sums. Payments are interactive and are understood by the exchange concept of a "tip." I argue that chaturbate stands for a potential step back from business driven exploitation of sexual interaction online on for-profit webcam sites. Such websites indirectly exploit globalized sex workers who struggle with poverty. They perform private "peep shows" whose one-on-one pecuniary nature, combined with a dehumanizing ranking system leads to abuse and exploitation. In contrast, Chaturbate fulfills the online promises of free access, a culture of sharing, potentially spontaneous and emancipated erotic shows and potential on-going multilateral social interaction and fandom.

One of the most contentious concepts in digital media studies is that of online work and labor. How are we to understand Chaturbate and the thousands of performers on it? Both the popular and academic discourses on the internet lie between two poles: the optimist, neo-positivist, technologist digital discourse, highlighting interactive "participatory culture." On the other side we find the critics of digital connectivity and its evolved web culture, armed by the powerful concept of communicative capitalism, exposing exploitation, commodification, reification and other social ills online. Are the sexualized activities performed and watched on Chaturbate considered work or hobby? Does the fact that the performers derive an income from their "show" make them just another variety of sex workers, or are they autonomous amateurs fulfilling an exhibitionist desire? I propose to use sociologist Robert A. Stebbins' concepts of "casual leisure" and "serious leisure" with Axel Honneth's concept of recognition, and with Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello's treatment of free time, creative joy, pleasure and personal initiative in their "New Spirit of Capitalism." This way, perhaps we could overcome the dichotomy of labor vs. leisurely hobby in communicative capitalism and also ponder the nature of sex work on the digital medium.

Migration Flows, Nationalism and Extreme Right: Ideological Challenge for European Solidarity

It is common knowledge that euroscepticism is raising in recent years in many EU countries due to the economic crisis and the new pressure coming from the massive migration flows in the year 2015.

Primarily, the financial crises in association to a spreading political crisis and a democratic deficit of the EU communication policy have nourished extreme stances in many member states. On the other hand international relations such as the numerous migration flows from Asia and Africa to EU countries especially in the last year have aggravated euroscepticism and are questioning the fundamental priorities of member state solidarity. Many countries have followed their own political decisions ignoring the EU efforts to shape a common policy approach towards the new migration waves. This has ended in closing the boarders in some member states and reverse long existing fundamental treaties (e.g. Schengen) which have guaranteed common policy in Europe. It seems that in times of economic - political uncertainty, national interests and national policies tend to prevail and be sustained by larger parts of the population.

Extreme right parties gain citizens support because they nourish all kind of prejudices, fears, nationalistic sentiments, racist ideology, anti-EU and anti-immigrants' stances and finally rage against the marginalization of broad social strata. Some extreme right parties, in close relation to fascism theories, sustain an anti-European political program that is based on national purity, xenophobia and an promote an exit from the EU. The migration issue tends to become a major challenge for the future integration of the EU and members mutual solidarity. The democratic communication deficit which characterizes the official Brussels policy since years is now becoming a decisive handicap to promote new ways for common policy.

This paper aims to analyze publications promoting or adopting a Eurosceptic approach and been published during September 2015 – 18 March 2016 in one national newspaper in Greece, Italy, Germany, Austria and France. The aim is to present common arguments and scopes of parties' political stances regarding migration flows and a common EU policy encounter. The argumentation and migration policy of the so called 'Wiesengrad' countries will be examined in comparison to the rest of the EU member states. Adequate frames will be created intending to point out similarities, differences and intentions to shape a common EU policy towards migration. Regarding the monitoring of news items we will use a combination of framing and content analysis.

Author(s)

Roy Panagiotopoulou
National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens
rpanag@media.uoa.gr

Video Game Company in time of "creative": the case in Beijing

This article analyzes the discourse of video games companies in building their cultural legitimacy and struggling for power in face of escalating media competition and commercialization. As being identified mostly as both productive and pathological by Chinese government, mainstream media and the public, voices from Chinese companies to state their identity are rarely analyzed. Being targeted as an entertainment media, a creative cultural product, a video company is not only doomed to following mediated marketing logic, but also facing great pressure from the information capitalism which shows power through networks. Since China has put great emphasis on developing creative industry so as to upgrading its industry structure, within with game is an important part, it is very interesting to see how video game companies in China advocates themselves so as to fit in the "creative" realm.

Author(s)

Huang Pei
London School of Economics
and Political Science
huangpei@bupt.edu.cn

This article will take companies in Beijing as a case and will pay particular attention to interviews from companies' founders, CEOs from various media outlets. And it will also take a look at the identity management strategies of those famous companies in Beijing. By analyzing the above sources, this article firstly tries to invite historical contexts of Chinese video game development in a global-local nexus, and then analyze materials to pick up strategies of fitting in national policy while facing global trends. Last but not least, the article will focus on current situations of companies' discourses of "going out"(a national strategy for exporting cultural products), which in fact reflect power struggle between small company, domestic platform companies and foreign companies.

Internet as Space of Imagined Agency by Romanian Youth; voice and power in virtual worlds

Author(s)
Petre, Raluca
Ovidius University of Constanța
rpetre@univ-ovidius.ro

This paper proposes a qualitative exploration of the Internet in the life of young Romanians; the findings of this inquiry are contrasted against other research results on the same issue (Fernández-Montalvo, Peñalva, Irazaba, 2015; Aslanidou & Menexes, 2008; Gross, 2004; Rosen, Cheever & Carrier, 2008). In this paper I argue, based on empirical exploratory evidence, that the Internet is considered a space of exerted power by young people coming of age. After having exerted agency and having had a voice in the virtual world from early ages, via moderating forums or online gaming, young Romanians experience tension in directive environments. The perceived agency that the youth have on the Internet adds to the already strained relation of teen-adult relation in the real world. The participants in the research explained that they come from a world, the Internet world, where they were the ones to be the filter and decision maker. I collected accounts of young people that are puzzled about adults that tell them what to do and how to do it in formal academic settings. Consequently, within the formal structure of an academic program young people sense a loss of agency; and they find the agency that the adults have upon them illegitimate, as opposed to the fully-fledged power that they believe they have within the Internet space. In this context, it is instructive to contrast the perceived agency with the actual power that the young people do/not have within the corporate media world.

The journalistic field: news media and the rising importance of civil society media

In the analysis of the journalistic field (Bourdieu, 1996), three types of media can be identified as subfields, based on their modes of production that determines their operation in general: private, commercial media, PSB media and civil society media. The dominant type of media operating in contemporary society is commercial media in private ownership that produces goods within the capitalist system with an aim to maximize profit. This results in the production of media content that, among other things, reproduces the hegemonic discourse and reinforce market dominance and profit orientations as highest social values, legitimized through the 'market demand' i.e. the demand of the audiences. Needless to say, this does not provide room for the media to fulfill their public role assigned to them in democratic political systems. The other type of media is the PSB, financed through license fees, that are institutionally closely connected

Author(s)
Helena Popovic
Faculty of Political Science,
University of Zagreb, Croatia
helena.popovic@fpzg.hr

to the state and the ways cultural values are defined in that domain – they offer a paternalistic state media discourse based on a shared national unity (Carpentier, 2001), legitimized as an institution that serves the public interest. However, as a result of the dominance of commercial media and the overall commodification of society that is the main external force dominating the journalistic field (Bourdieu, 1996), the PSB is undergoing a crisis, especially in terms of production processes that mimic commercial media. In this constellation, the importance of civil society media is rising for several reasons: firstly, as a result of the rising importance of civil society in general viewed as an 'outsourced' domain of the neoliberal state; secondly and more specifically - within the journalistic field - as the result of the fact that journalists previously employed in commercial media lost their positions due to the economic crisis and were forced to find another way to operate; and thirdly, due to the spread of new technologies that more easily enables engagement in public communication. Since one of the functions of civil society is the "discovery and problem resolution" (Habermas, 451), it could be argued that civil society media has become the main actor that today fulfils the function ascribed to them within democracies, as institutions serving the public interest. In Croatia, it is vivid that critically oriented journalism, analytical texts, investigative journalism, and topics of public interest that are not covered in dominant media are to be found within civil society media, albeit with a marginal audience and insufficient financing. Media policy analysis in Croatia shows that civil society media has emerged as a subfield (Bourdieu, 1996) in the last few years, but structural constraints hinder a stable operation of such media: they are financially weak, and journalists work in precarious conditions. Thus, the paper will use the journalistic field (Bourdieu, 1996) as a theoretical framework for the analysis of internal and external workings of the field with a focus on the subfield of civil society media, which will be applied to the concrete case of Croatia.

Labour practices in the audiovisual industry: The impact of virtual work in runaway productions

Author(s)

Jaka Primorac
Department for Culture and Communication
Institute for Development and International
Relations (IRMO)
jaka@irmo.hr

In this presentation I will focus on the critical analysis of the input of virtual work in the so called 'runaway productions' of the audiovisual industry in the Republic of Croatia. The case of runaway productions has caused a large concern from the perspective of (the unions of) audio-visual workers from 'outgoing' countries. This concern has been twofold; firstly, it was based on the fear for the loss of jobs on the 'local' level; and secondly, it was based on regards around the diminishing of the labour rights and the lowering of labour costs of audiovisual workers on the global scale (Mosco and McKercher, 2008). Taking into account the global flow of the cultural and audiovisual products and services, thus, the impact of the (global) cultural industries (Lash and Lury, 2007) and the transnationalisation of audiences and labour(Mosco, 2008), it is ever more difficult to establish the common ground for the labour rights protection on the global scale. Furthermore, in broader discussions on creative labour and media work, virtual working practices are mostly taken for granted, and only recently have been more critically analyzed (see forthcoming: Webster and Randle, 2016). The notion that runaway productions bring jobs and funding to particular locations under the hegemonic discourse of 'growth and jobs', needs to be critically reassessed from the angle of the quality of these jobs (Elmer and Gasher, 2005), labour right protection, the input of virtual work and the overall sustainability of such (cultural) development in particular locations. These questions will be examined by using the data from the case study on runaway productions in Croatia that has been executed in the period 2015-2016.

Capital Accumulation in Digital Networks: Revisiting Karl Marx with the Approaches of "Digital Labour" and "Informational Labour"

This article proposes to revisit the capital accumulation cycle (Marx), discussing it in the context of digital networks. The aim is to highlight the explanatory potential of this theory to understand contemporary capitalism, especially, the validity of one of their fundamental principles: the labour theory of value. For this, we start from two approaches that undertake this analysis in the field of Critical Political Economy of Communication, namely: "Informational Labour", from Marcos Dantas, and "Digital Labour" from Christian Fuchs. Our proposal is to present these theoretical formulations, highlighting their problematization of Marxist categories, showing their common bases, and establishing a dialogue between their distinctive and complementary aspects. By analyzing digital media business model, both approaches assume that the main value creation would be based on data and behavior generated by users on activities mediated by these platforms. In this sense, there are two types of work involved in the process: waged workers (responsible for creating and managing platforms that capture data) and audience unpaid labor (responsible for producing the monetizable data throughout their leisure on these platforms). The "Digital Labour" approach makes an important contribution by providing reflections on exploration, class and commodification in that productive network environment. The category of digital labour refers not only to cultural work aimed at producing digital content, but to everyone involved in the overall production mode that allows the existence and use of digital media. The "Informational Labour" approach, in turn, stands out for situating the centrality of sign materials in relation to labour in those networks. It problematizes value with the help of the aesthetic dimension of the commodity. The discussion offers theoretical advances by relating topics such as surplus value 2.0 (Marcos Dantas), the dual role of the audience as commodity and work (Dallas Smythe), prosumer (Alvin Toffler), walled gardens (Marcos Dantas, C. Marsden), and society of the spectacle (Guy Debórd). Thus, we hope to contribute to finding out to what extent Marx's categories still stand and to what extent they need to be modified in order to reflect contemporary realities. Such a theoretical systematization can therefore serve as a basis of understanding of today's challenges in respect to capitalism and communication.

Author(s)

Gabriela Raulino
Federal University of Rio de Janeiro
gabrielaraulino@yahoo.com.br

Crisis, Memory and Media in Europe

Author(s)

Rita Ribeiro
Department of Sociology
Institute of Social Sciences
Communication and Society Research Centre
University of Minho
rmgr@ics.uminho.pt

Europe is going through a serious crisis that began in 2008 in the financial field and is today a much wider and deeper crisis in the social, economic and political domains. In the European public sphere the debate about the several crisis situations has been passionate and polarized. Our aim is to analyze how the European crisis is presented and discussed in European online media, mostly in the countries where the crisis are particularly noticeable. Concerning the European debt crisis or the refugee crisis, Europe appears divided and public opinion reveals a significant tendency to national-centric positions. Similarly, the positions taken by governments show the fissures that have been opened in the building of the European Union. The analysis of media contents allows us to suggest that the arguments wielded over the crisis have dug up memories of a past that we no longer expected to visit. Furthermore we are witnessing the use of these memories as resources in power relations in various scales. According to this research, World War II memories are especially evoked and resentment, humiliation and revenge emerge as paramount categories. Put another way, the debate on the European crisis in the media reflects and contributes to a less united Europe, increasingly divided along national borders. Therefore, the relations between the European countries are now contaminated by painful memories of the past and the six decades of political unification of Europe and the formation of a European identity give rise to a public space broken by the re-emergence of nationalism, intolerance and heterophobia. At the same time, our analysis shows that European values of democracy, social justice, human rights and citizenship are challenged by discourses of segregation, authoritarianism and rejection of the European political and social model.

The relationship between the Lisbon Popular Marches and the Media: an alternative of mediatized world

In this paper, we present a working in progress as part of our investigation in Communication Sciences about the Lisbon Popular Marches and their relationship with media. The Marches are the main folklore representation in the «Festas de Lisboa» inside the context of the popular celebrations of June, namely in honor to the saints Anthony, 13th, John the Baptist, 24th, and Peter, 30th.

Author(s)

Élmano Ricarte de Azevêdo Souza
elmricarte@gmail.com

Rita Maria Brás Pedro Figueiras
ritafigueiras@fch.lisboa.ucp.pt

The methodology we undertake to address this study is the sociocultural photocartography. Through this method, we observe, collect data, interview and we photograph the relationship of these folklore groups and media. Thus, we try to map the «mediatized world» of the Lisbon Popular Marches. In the context of the mediatazition studies, the task of this paper is to investigate how, through social media and the communities' engagement, the daily life of neighborhoods are self-mediatized. Hence, the focus of this paper is to consider: how the communities of Lisbon are using social media? How does this relation create mediated communities? What cultural and social changes the Marches and media inter-relationship are promoting within a local context?

We think that the Marches may emancipate through the relationship with the media, especially with the social media. It is important to highlight the Marches as a local representation of the way of life within respective neighborhoods. In addition, on the social media, they can to communicate this way of life with specific social aspect such as traditions, local economy, local characterizes, etc. In this relationship, we observe a possibility of opening horizons to these communities, namely the right of communication.

Fragmented Occupational Identities.
A study on the Portuguese and British Contact Centre Industry

The Digital Revolution of the 21st century allowed work to become virtual, performed in network and in constant connection, enabling a greater ease for new technologies' incorporation. Flexibility, unstable labor markets, outsourcing, labor intensification, ageing labour and a high level of emotional demands are becoming a pandemic, putting decent work into question. Commodification of labor and skills led to a process of deskilling and reskilling, where the majority of workers cannot put into practice what their academic or generic skills qualified them for. This scenario complicates the construction process of occupational identities, leading to a status frustration. According to the Marxian theory, there is the general tendency to reduce workers to an undifferentiated mass, who can be easily replaced - cybertariat, precariat or proletariat. Work is deeply connected with the subjective dimension of the human being. A person's occupation is one of the most important delineators of social identity. Workers have become not only alienated from their social labor rights but also from their selves, leading to psychic illnesses, a precarious mind. One of the sectors that personifies the whole set of technological innovation is the contact centre area, a symbol of the modern service economy in which services are available all around the clock and can be delivered from almost any spot . Call centres also represent the fastest developing form of e-work, being considered as "information processing factories" or "modern-day sweatshops", providing images of call handlers chained to cage-like workstations by their headphones (Huws, Paul, 2002). In this sense, the present study aims at analyzing the process of (de)construction of occupational identities as well the consequences of virtual work. It aims at analyzing subjetive precarity, that is, how Portuguese and British contact centre workers deal with psychic suffering and how they react to that through their actions and social engagement. What kind of working conditions do these workers experience? Do contact centre workers produce value? Can call and contact centre workers be creative and fulfill themselves from the work they execute everyday? How do these workers organize themselves? The analysis took place in Portugal and Britain during 2015. Several biographic and semi-structured interviews were conducted to present and former call and contact centre workers, also important academics, activists and representatives from trade unions. It was concluded that there are major differences between British and Portuguese call and contact centres, especially in the British case where trade unions and workers are more active by involving themselves in unionization and social struggling.

Author(s)

Isabel Maria Bonito Roque
CES_FEUC
elmricarte@gmail.com

Digitization's effects on professional field of Romanian journalists

This paper aims to highlight the effects of digitization on professional field of Romanian journalists in the theoretical context of Jodi Dean's Communicative Capitalism.

In Romania, the so-called 'smart' industries technologies are considered to be the most dynamic market, with the best business opportunities and paid jobs. Digitization appears as the most important factor of economic growth in the context of globalization. While traditional media industries have been radically transformed - the print almost no longer exists, and the public television and radio are facing a chronic crisis (in terms of revenues and audience) -, online media erupted in various and unanticipated forms of alternative communication and information.

Author(s)

Luminita Rosca
Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies
University of Bucharest
elmricarte@gmail.com

Nowadays, mediated technoculture capitalism promotes the show, the individual subjectivity, the interconnectivity, while the institutional communication and legacy media institutions have a diminishing role, in the Romanian public sphere.

The effects of digital labor exploitation in the Romanian media industry is highlighted by the professional activity itself (with new professional practices, management strategies, labor organization, and forms of employment), but also in the journalist's professional imaginary.

My analysis follows the transformation that Romanian public sphere has suffered under the pressure of digitization and the new roles assumed by journalists in this new stage of fetishism technologies.
The proposed analysis will be a qualitative content analysis which will assess the relevant statistical data, and interpret the findings from 10 interviews with media professionals and from a questionnaire applied to 150 subjects (journalism students and journalists).

Reclaiming Social Media. Cooperative Politics in Communicative Capitalism

In the age of social media the term 'social' has moved from the margins to the very centre of the business vocabulary. The 'social' has come to signify the various ways of 'sharing' content, communicating and collaborating online. Despite the rhetoric of sociality and sharing, social media remain embedded within a largely corporate controlled media landscape. Corporate social media are shaped by private structures of ownership and decision-making, power inequalities, consumerism and systematic surveillance. Going beyond this narrow understanding of the social requires challenging the political economic structures of media power and media ownership.

Author(s)

Marisol Sandoval

Centre of Culture and Creative Industries
Department of Sociology
City University London
marisol.sandoval.1@city.ac.uk

In this talk I discuss the potentials of co-operative models to help reclaiming social media. Connecting to recent debates on Platform Cooperativism I explore whether prosumer co-operatives could create an alternative to corporate social media and therefore challenge power in communicative capitalism. The co-operative form is not without problems. I argue that within capitalism co-operatives are confronted with an economic contradiction between anti-capitalism and capitalist reality, a political contradiction between radical politics and neoliberal self-help and a cultural contradiction between values co-operation and values of competition. The extent to which prosumer co-ops can contribute to creating truly social media depends on their ability to navigate these contradictions.

The Government of Publics by Communication Controlling

The proposed paper will in a first step discuss the theory of publics as actor-networks worked out by Bruno Latour and other authors in the field of Actor Network Theory (ANT). The starting points of the debate may include Latour's philosophical essays "We have never been modern" and "Politics of nature" (Latour 1993 & 2004), which opened up science and technology studies, where ANT originates from, for sociological and philosophical analyses of politics and publics. One major argument in these books was that the "modern constitution" of the "public" is divided into two distinct spheres called "nature" and "society" with "objects" being included in nature and "subjects" being the only elements of society. While in modern thinking "nature" counts as the exclusive field of (natural) sciences and expertise, "society" appears as the sphere of deliberation on politics and other issues related to humans living together. However,

Author(s)

Hagen Schölzel
University of Erfurt/Germany
Faculty of Law, Social Sciences and Economics
hagen.schoelzel@uni-erfurt.de

that constitution allows for an accelerated production of hybrids in between nature and society, for example technology, as well as a growing number of problematic developments, for example climate warming, which – precisely because of the divided constitution of the modern public – are hardly to discuss in a public sphere exclusively reserved to human issues. Consequently, Latour argues for taking "things" into account in public discussion. What is needed, according to him, is a "parliament of things" as a new public "constitution" (Latour 1993 & 2004), and "Dingpolitik" [politics of things], which help to "make things public" (Latour 2005, Latour & Weibel 2005). In later writings, Latour also discusses, as a further element for the formation of publics, a specific form of political enunciation which is intended to enable a kind of circular movement of reassembling the social (Latour 2003; 2013, 327-355).

In my talk I want to build on that theoretical background in order to analyse a specific concept of strategic corporate communication developed by the "world leading" authors (as they call themselves) in that field, i.e. the concept of Communication Controlling (cf. Pfannenberg & Zerfass 2010; www.communicationcontrolling. com). Its main idea is to combine certain concepts from public relations practice and empirical communication research, for example evaluation tools such as media content analysis, with concepts or tools from corporate management, for example strategy maps and scorecards, in order to establish a complex system of the government of publics. That system serves as an infrastructure for the government of publics by creating a kind of circular "symbolic corridor". Communication Controlling is supposed to shift a certain publics attention and action towards a preestablished goal, i.e. to "create value" – economic as well as symbolic value – for a corporation.

What is the social mechanism that establishes power inequalities in communicative capitalism?

Using the example of social media, the paper discusses insights from critical surveillance studies and important strands of class theory in order to learn about the social mechanisms that establish social inequality between Internet service owners and users as the foundation for power inequalities in digital capitalism. Erik Olin Wright, in a recent systematization, identifies the following social mechanisms: individual attributes, opportunity hoarding/ social closure, and domination and exploitation.

With the first approach, social inequality is explained by the differing social background conditions in an individual's life that provides the individual with different class-relevant attributes. These attributes translate then in different class positions. In this case, the rich are rich because they have favourable attributes and the poor are lacking them. In the case of markets in information and my example social media, this could mean that entrepreneurs, such as Facebooks' Mark Zuckerberg, Google's Brin brothers and others, are rich because they have had the right resources. For instance, breaking business ideas, talents, a good training e.g. by elite colleges and universities, and accumulated social capital, all these resources enabled them to found, develop and sustain the Internet services that they own to large extents.

The second approach is opportunity hoarding and claims a relation between classes; here the rich are rich because the poor are poor. Opportunity hoarding presupposes an exclusionary relation enforced by a form of power among individuals in regard to different internalised and external resources. There is an exclusion of users from several machinical, informational, knowledge, and media resources. Private property is the most crucial mean to establish an exclusionary relation in capitalism. For instance, users do not own and control the Internet providers IT infrastructure and economic and social network effects trigger monopoly situations and the exclusion of competitors. Applied to social media this means that the owners of social media hold network making power. They set the terms of use and design and program the service according to their profit goals (programming power). And they are able to connect the social network to the advertising networks and financial networks. Commercial social media control the access to potential consumers and are therefore able to connect or disconnect to advertising corporations' marketing data and networks. They also hold the power to connect social cooperation to financial networks, such as stock markets for the purpose of gaining profits. There is a systemic interconnection between the opportunity hoarding approach and the third inequality creating social mechanism because the exclusion from the means of production through private property enables exploitation. The paper argues that a revised notion of exploitation and antagonistic social relations should not be omitted from theorizing online communication. Exploitation establishes an antagonism between all Internet users and the owners of the means of communication, surveillance, and classification. An analysis of life-chances however orients us to stratifications among users.

The proposed revisions include the following: First, an extension of our understanding of labour that is not only situated it in the sphere of production, is not wage-labour centrist, and does not separate it strictly from communicative aspects and restrict it to pure instrumental activity but include playful aspects as well; second, an extension of the means of production to include the means of communication; third, the existence of an online correspondence to the wage contract that we can find in the privacy contract inscribed into the terms of use and privacy policies of commercial Internet services.

Author(s)

Sebastian Sevignani
Institute of Sociology
Department of General and Theoretical Sociology
Friedrich-Schiller University Jena, Germany
sebastian.sevignani@uni-jena.de

Hate speech and social media platforms

Author(s)

Eugenia Siapera
DCU University

Paloma Viejo Otero
Dublin City University
paloma.viejootero2@mail.dcu.ie

The proposed paper is concerned with the role of social media corporations in regulating hate speech. Focusing on the three main social media platforms, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, the paper relies on a discourse analysis of the community standards and terms of service as published by these platforms, alongside three in-depth interviews with key informants responsible for developing, monitoring and upholding relevant policy in the three corporations. The analysis seeks to identify firstly what constitutes acceptable and non-acceptable speech in the three environments, and the operational definitions for hate speech adopted by the three platforms. In a second move, the analysis examines the ways in which policy is arrived at, the procedures followed in monitoring the platforms and the ways in which dilemmas are resolved. Thirdly, through the interviews, the analysis identifies the underlying ideologies and strategic orientation of the social media corporations, the ways in which they perceive there role vis-à-vis hate speech and freedom of expression and their vision for the future. In terms of corporations' ideologies and strategic vision, the main findings trace the increasingly state-like power that social media corporations have over their platforms and the ways in which they condition users to behave in ways conforming to social media corporations' liberal ideology. More broadly, the results are interpreted in the light of van Djick's (2013) arguments that social media automate the social by engineering and manipulation social connections; these arguments are extended to included instances of 'negative' sociality as it in the case of hate speech.

Into the Glorious Future:
The Utopia of Cyber-Capitalism
according to Google's Ideologues

Author(s)
Timothy Erik Ström
Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University
Centre for Global Research, RMIT University

t.strom@westernsydney.edu.au

Cyber-capitalist are fond of weaving techno-futurist fantasies to promote their ideological world vision. They invite us to imagine, for instance, care-free people being whisked around automated smart-cities in self-driving cars while playing online games through their augmented glasses. In fantasies like this, the concept of 'the future' is given a powerful ideologically function, where serves to naturalizes, legitimizes and extend a particular mode of social practice. This presentation explores the concept of techno-futurism by asking what kind vision of future do cyber-capitalist firms project, what informs this conception and what are its implications? To answer these questions, I draw on an extensive collection of public statements issued by elite members of Google from between 1998-2016. As Google occupy the commanding heights of the Silicon Valley techindustry, their comments can be seen as indicative of a tendency within the boarder social formation of cyber-capitalism. These statements are subjected to a multi-dimensional ideological analysis that seeks to critically interpret them from a subjective materialist perspective. These techno-futurist claims are located in their historic context, being seen as part of a phenomena that began with the ontological and imaginary mutations that were bound up with the myth of Progress; a myth that has long had a dubious symbiotic relationship with imperial expansion, industrial production and capitalist accumulation. In its current iteration, techno-futurism merges a crude technological determinism with an entrepreneurial scientism and a market utopianism, all over a background of US hegemony and a spiralling military-industrial complex. In this way, firms like Google use techno-futurism as an ideological element in advancing their cyber-capitalist vision of the world. This presentation concludes by criticizing cyber-capitalism's vision of the future, for the this vision takes a privileged and sterilized present and imposes it on the future by basically adding more hightech toys. The Google elite's future can be seen as a control fantasy—with all of the repressed anxiety that this entails—and it says more about their fears and limitations than about any possible future. In short, techno-futurism is a vision of the future which imagines a purified world scrubbed clean of uncertainty and alternatives.

The environmental performance of media: from normative concept to research and activism strategy

This paper contributes to the debate on communicative capitalism by problematizing the links between contemporary media and the global ecological system. On the one hand, it offers critical perspectives on how commercial media, by accelerating consumerism capitalism, contribute to a deepening environmental crisis (i.e., the interrelated crises of overuse of environmental resources, multiple waste problems, global climate change, mass extinction of species, and growing environmental injustice). On the other hand, it offers an empirical research methodology to measure "the environmental performance of the media". It also develops a related activist strategy to evaluate media organizations according to their environmental performance and promote good practices of green media that support a more just, equal and sustainable society.

Author(s)
Miklos Sukosd
Department of Media, Cognition
and Communication,
University of Copenhagen
kjm518@hum.ku.dk

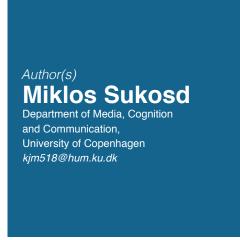The central concept of the project is the "the environmental performance of media". At the normative level, it is based on the value of "sustainability" that we propose to include as a key communicative value among other key concepts (equality, freedom, order) of democratic media performance as defined by McQuail. We argue that without "sustainability" as a key communicative value, media can hardly serve the public interest in the 21st century.

At the empirical level, "the environmental performance of media" is defined as the cumulative environmental impact caused directly or indirectly by the activities of a media organizaton within a certain time frame.

"The environmental performance of media" is operationalized in three dimensions (see below). Each dimension is further divided into several domains. The paper proposes clusters of specific indicators in each dimension. By using these indicators, it becomes possible to actually measure the environmental performance of media organizations.

1. Environmental content of media

In this dimension, the media content and its framing are quantified and evaluated from the perspective of environmental sustainability. How frequently does a certain medium cover and reflect on environmental issues? How detailed is the coverage? What are the relative proportions of environmental coverage vs. coverage of other topics? Which environmental issues does the medium cover? In case of non-environmental content, can the degree of "support of non-sustainability" and "criticism of non-sustainability" be established? In the coverage of environmentally relevant issues, what are the frames used (sustainability, ecological modernization, deep ecology, etc. vs. non-environmental frames)? Conversely, are environmental frames used for covering traditional issues (economic, social, political, cultural issues etc.)? How frequently and how (negatively or positively; with what frames) are environmental NGOs and movements covered? In case of social media, how do environmental NGOs and movements use the particular medium, or its specific communities/pages (in terms of number and frequency of users, etc.)? In case of advertising in the particular medium, to what degree are the promoted products and services sustainable or non-sustainable?

2. Environmental impacts by media audiences and users (as a result of media exposure/use)
The presentation and framing of media content (including commercial advertisements) impact media audience/ users in multiple ways. Based on the media effect on behavioral changes, it is possible to establish quantitative environmental effects of media, e.g. change in consumption patterns, change in energy use etc. Examples of the effects of advertisement could be consumers' changing preference (changing attitude towards and actual consumer behavior) regarding buying cars with high/lower fuel efficiency, percentage of local/organic food, or increased share of consumers' budget that is used on apparel or cosmetics.

These quantified physical changes can be coupled with readily available life cycle information. We use Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), which quantifies all emissions and resources in the life cycle of a product or service. We have access to several databases with high quality and very detailed information on the life cycle of numerous products and services. The calculated cumulative emissions/resources will be used to calculate different metrics, such as carbon footprint, monetarised impact (which is also used in Environmental Profit and Loss accounts and Natural Capital accounting), ecological footprint, water footprint, cumulative energy demand, and complex indices of the metrics above (and other metrics).

3. The direct environmental impact of media organization
Media organizations also have a direct impact on the environment. In this dimension, a particular media organization's direct environmental impact (including their headquarters' energy consumption, electronic waste strategy, etc.), is measured through Life Cycle Assessment in terms or carbon footprint, monetarized impact, and cumulative energy demand, etc. and complex indices of the metrics above.
We construct a new index, the Environmental Performance of Media Index (EMPI), which is a composite index of indicators in the three dimensions above. Using EPMI it becomes possible to actually measure the environmental performance of any media organization in the three dimensions. Obviously, corporate capitalist media with heavy commercial content and advertising perform poor in this index. On the contrary, public service media and community media with rich environmental coverage, the promotion of sustainable society and lifestyle, and little commercial advertising, rank high in the index.
The measurement system utilizes concepts and indicators from critical media studies, advertising and marketing research as environmental impact analysis. A paper presents the steps of conceptualization, operationalization, and the measurement of environmental media impacts. We also propose activist projects that compare concrete media organizations' performance in any country. In terms of applications of EPMI, ranking of European and international media organizations (television radio, press, online media and social media) become possible. Stakeholders at the respective media organizations as well as journalist, media, environmental and labour organizations are also proposed as strategic allies for related public activism projects.

Negotiation of Poland's soft power narratives: problematizing nation branding on Facebook

This paper explores how and why social media have been utilized as a discursive space to extend Poland's soft power resources. Given the political economy changes, the state actors responsible for the governance of Poland's soft power have been adapting the governance of their communicative resources. This process includes 'flux' of multi-stakeholders' management practices. Against this backdrop, social media have added to the promise of citizens' participation in the articulation of Poland's collective identity and the management of its reputation in a global society. To inform this qualitative study, this paper explores the use of Facebook in the 2014 'Logo for Poland' campaign (14 October-December, 2014) run by a coalition of governmental and corporate actors, including an interest group of self-proclaimed nation branders. The paper draws on a stored package (Netwizz) of data from Facebook, and it is complemented by semi-structured interviews with nation branders (collected between June 2014 and March 2015). By employing critical discourse analysis we explore discursive exchanges between citizens-users of social media and nation branding campaign managers in order to unpack transformational features of nation branding as a practice marketizing collective identities making in Poland. The finding of this study unpacks tensions, ideological negotiations, resistance and acts of compliance towards the reinvention of 'Poland as a brand'. Our findings also reveal discrepancies between the promises of nation branding and citizens' discourses on nation branding. Finally, our examination reveals dynamics of the re-invention of Polishness to the tune of corporate practices and discourses.

Author(s)
Paweł Surowiec
Bournemouth University | United Kingdom
knewsome@bournemouth.ac.uk

Magdalena Kania-Lundholm
Uppsala University | Sweden

Subjectivity of Digital Journalists: A theoretical approach

Digital media requires a reconsideration of the way in which journalists position themselves in the social and professional system they belong to. The process is, in fact, in evolution, and it is very influenced by how the journalists themselves are relating to the changing system, as a whole. Based on empirical findings (participant observation and semi-structured/ non-structured interviews), the present research aims at investigating the working conditions of digital journalists and at theorizing their professional status.

Author(s)
Romina Surugiu
Department of Journalism
University of Bucharest, Romania
romina.surugiu@fjsc.ro

The journalists of digital era are no longer considered, and do not longer consider themselves to be inert components of the media system. They say that they have the ability to interact with the system they belong to not only as simple elements, but as 'conscious' elements. Journalists of the pre-digital era included themselves in the model of a classical industrial enterprise – intellectual workers who put their labour in the benefit of the company, but without having the possibility to influence decisions regarding the company.

The journalists of the digital era present themselves as, and look like participants in decision-making of the company to which they belong. It can be easily grasp that the interaction between the media system as a whole and its components (journalists) has become an essential aspect of the profession. In the digital world, the profession of journalist clarifies its meaning on the basis of the meaning that journalists attribute to those who practice it and, in return, it gives meaning to the whole media system.

In philosophical terms, the foregoing can be stated as a thesis: digital journalists (as workers) were endowed – through information technology – with subjectivity, i.e. the ability to establish/use/modify their own conception of the universe (the exercise of the profession), in which the individual integrates by the means of voluntary adhesion. This subjectivity would distinguish the digital journalist from the pre-digital journalist, who had no structural ability to create, influence and change the professional field that was built from the outside (as employee).

The aim of our research is to clarify the context of the above-mentioned thesis and to produce evidence in support of the contrary thesis, that digital subjectivity is not an authentic subjectivity, but an acceptance, on the subjective level, of old objective conditions of the journalist: a worker who puts the labour in the service of the system to which he/she belongs.

Power Misrecognised: MOOCs and the Neoliberal Subject

This paper will introduce an approach to using the theoretical concept of doxa to investigate the systemic reality of neoliberal capitalist power as deployed in one aspect of digital communication: Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). The concept of doxa was developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu as a way of conceptualising what he termed the "misrecognition" (méconnaissance) of power relations in epistemic contexts, in order to map social practice to modes of domination. The paper will use the concept to consider the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of knowledge in MOOCs currently taking place within a contested field of social practice: a globalised, or at any rate rapidly globalising, education-labour apparatus, and the elites and hierarchical social structures implicated in it.

Author(s)
Richard Terry
Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies
University of Warwick, UK
R.Terry@warwick.ac.uk

In this contested field of MOOCs, a struggle is underway. Some educators are positing a counter-imaginary that comprises a view of the digital as a space where "unconditional and free" learning and "intellectual stimulation and personal development" flourish, in dynamic opposition to another bid for control of reality: a neo-Weberian "silicon cage" of institutionalised instrumentalism in which "learning to do digital labour" is one of the key social attributes. This latter derives its momentum in part from the strategic rationality identified by Foucault and others that springs from the globalising and totalising ambition of neoliberal capitalist power. Can Bourdieu's concept of doxa help to shed light on these developments?

The paper will also seek to address how the socio-historical specificity of the values and institutions of neoliberal capitalism, an edifice raised on Enlightenment humanist foundations, find expression in the unfolding development of the MOOC phenomenon. These values and institutions draw sustenance from an ontology of the individual subject based on specific notions of human freedom and emancipation, which presume and necessitate an infinitude of opportunities to conquer, colonise and gain power over space and time.

In particular neoliberal values presume to circumscribe human ontology within the terms of a reworking of homo oeconomicus, an entrepreneurial subjectivity that paradoxically in its unending quest for novel forms of dominance substitutes closure for possibility, seeking to radically deny any real freedom of choice over alternative futures. It is this misrecognition of a deracinated homo oeconomicus for the real potential for human agency and subjectivity, with the closing down of social possibility this necessarily entails, that neoliberalism has sought to articulate and legitimise, in the digital realm as much as elsewhere. While MOOCs may be alternatively conceived as potential sites for critical knowledge production and exchange, or even as a form of digital commons, nevertheless the struggle for dominance over these environments, a struggle to transform them into apparatuses for the production of entrepreneurial subjects shackled to corporate power and ownership, calls for critical analysis.

Intelligence for the people?: "Leaking", the public's right to know, and the informational mode of power

Author(s)
Julian von Bargen
Department of Political Science
York University
julianvonbargen@gmail.com

With the release of the Panama Papers, "leaking", or the anonymous distribution of classified or secret information for the purposes of public disclosure and in the service of the public interest, is again the subject of considerable debate. However, unlike the politicized debates that followed disclosures from Wikileaks and Edward Snowden, with the Panama Papers there is a more nuanced debate around "leaking". This paper examines one critique in particular, one that began quietly in the wake of the Snowden revelations and has become more confident since the Panama Papers. Voiced most forcefully perhaps by John Young of Cryptome.org, there is a growing frustration with the proprietary models of distribution that are limiting access to information necessary to the public interest. Part of this shift is captured through the lens of communicative capitalism. Drawing on CC, this paper argues that in light of the distributional models of the Snowden leaks and the Panama Papers, a reconceptualization of "leaking" in the public's interest is necessary. This is because, though the democratic potential of leaking is indisputable, its capture by the logic of communicative capitalism has undermined its radical potentiality. This capture is demonstrated through an analysis of patterns in the public release of leaked documents, in the selection of stories and their headlines, and the monopolized control over and access to the actual complete set of leaked materials. Yet the analysis also suggests that communication flows are not merely determined by streams of capital. Rather, capital is a means of trying to capture the power intrinsic to access to and control over informational resources. The paper concludes by elaborating on the informational mode of power and the potential for rethinking leaking in service of, at the very least, a public's right to know. Inspiration is provided by Julian Assange's suggestion from years ago, for an intelligence agency of the people, as well as by Barrett Brown's attempt to organize Project PM.

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Manufacturing Ideological Consent
A Structural Analysis of the hegemonic role of CCTV-Africa

It is quite noticeable that the global power structure is experiencing an epoch-making change. With the rapid capitalist development of the developing countries, such as BRICS, the expansion of global capitalism has reached a new dynamic that sub-imperialism of developing countries is becoming as significant as the imperialism of developed countries. One key relationship within the BRICS nations is between China and South Africa. With the establishment of CCTV's African centre in Nairobi in January 2012, the grand project of 'China's media going out,' launched by the central government of China in 2001, has officially reached Africa. Although China and many African countries are usually regarded as the passive recipients of the Western cultural and media hegemony, the power structure between China and Africa has developed into a far more complex one than the alliance of the 'Third World' against superpowers in the Cold War years. In the age of globalization, China has emerged as a major presence globally including in Africa. China's trade with Africa, mostly for natural resources, has increased dramatically in past ten years. It has been suggested that China's relations with most African countries have evolved into a new dependent economic mode underpinned by China's sub-imperialist expansion (Luce, 2015). Using Johan Galtung's structural imperialism thesis, (Galtung, 1971), this paper will explore whether China's state-owned media, such as CCTV-Africa, are playing an agenda-setting role in Africa, given the power of the dominant structures through manufacturing ideological consent among the central groups both in centre and peripheral countries. This presentation is aimed to answer this question within the dimension of theory, in terms of providing a revision of the frame of structural imperialism developed by Galtung, combining it with the recently revived theories of sub-imperialism developed by Ruy Mauro Marini firstly in the 1960s and in the concrete case of Sino-African economic relations.

Author(s)
Yu Xiang
University of Westminster
yu.xiang@my.westminster.ac.uk

Book of Abstracts

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