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**Theme:**  
**What is**  
**Communication History?**  
**European Answers II**

**Learning from Braudel**

**Seeing the familiar strange**

**Re-mapping Journalism History**

**Methodological Approaches to**  
**European Communication and**  
**Media History**

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**Susanne Kinnebrock**  
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# European Communication History II: An Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives

Ed McLuskie, Susanne Kinnebrock, and Christian Schwarzenegger

*In memory of Hanno Hardt, 1934-2011*

This issue of *Medien & Zeit* follows up a range of case studies aimed at revealing communication histories that were analyzed in Part I, studies conducted in light of geographical and cultural borders. They highlighted historical artifacts; examined their availability in university curricula and research centers; addressed for different countries the status and history of communication history as an academic profession; and highlighted strengths, limitations, and prospects awaiting a distinctly European account of the historical record. Such scholarship seeks to uncover history. Part II aims to turn the matter around, showing how history might inform scholarship. Here, four essays examine theoretical shifts as appropriate to historical shifts that produce re-readings of communication history. Specifically, shifts in historiography from the national to the transnational address the thematic question, “What is European Communication History?”, with theoretical issues and recommendations that take note of the recursive, EU-era problem of the nation in a transnational milieu. Essays in Part II trace this recursiveness to earlier times, preceding the formation of today’s Europe, and locate it along lines — theoretical and material — of communication and media history. Each essay offers ontological and material reasons to reconceptualize European communication history as a transnational project. Three of the four authors make distinctly different cases for communication history as transnational history, suggesting, at the very least, that “the national” cannot and, in fact, has not developed within the geographical borders of the nation. A fourth essay offers reflections on the conduct of European communication history beyond the shift from national to transnational frameworks for theory.

The first essay by Kittler argues to retain Jürgen Habermas’s concept, public sphere, as an ontological category for European communication

history, even though controversies and criticisms persist with Habermas’s concept. Kittler notes its advantage for connecting unduly separated academic disciplines, leading to another outlook on communication history that can be fruitful if one studies the city as a transnational thread of human experience throughout Europe. Cities, according to Kittler, interpenetrate one another as models of civilization and debating publics. Conversations alight across European cities, supported, the second essay by Fickers argues, by media whose history at least since the telegraph is a history of movement across national borders into city centers. Kittler takes a theoretical cue from Fernand Braudel’s emphasis on cities for European history in general, proposing a concept of a “transnational public sphere” as a revision of Habermas’s analysis. While cautioning against adopting “the public sphere” concept wholesale, Kittler suggests that the city instead of the nation enriches the theory of a transnational public sphere. Thus modified, using the transnational public sphere for European communication history can proceed without entanglements that often linger in pro-con issues about the status of nations and, for some, nationalism in contemporary Europe. Kittler’s analysis of the city as the jump-off point for reconceptualizing the public sphere into transnational territory becomes an account of communication as the potential and actual engine of social-political change emanating from multiple city-points in Europe.

Fickers describes the transnational perspective as both historiographical trend for theory and old news for the history of media technologies. While issues surround what some see as a theoretical paradigm shift, Fickers uses national cases to show that the national explanatory narrative did not fit since the telegraph bypassed borders and newspapers differentiated through

variegated cultural enclaves. From telegraphic transgressions of nations and regions, through newspaper content traveling new technologies of transmission, to the clandestine reception of other countries' television programming, Fickers demonstrates that media developments since the nineteenth century encouraged processes throughout Europe that were indifferent to borders, as well as cultivating audiences exposed to alternatives across the border(s). Fickers concludes that national media diets included inevitable and sometimes clandestine media consumption. European communication history, therefore, may be much more transnational than the practice of communication historiography has thus far explicated.

Ellefson's essay takes the idea of the transnational even beyond Europe, proposing a linguistic and cultural re-mapping of history. Like Kittler, Ellefson proposes making the transnational a conceptual starting point for European communication history. Focusing on journalism history, that history of inquiry appears to Ellefson too nationalistic, regardless of debates within the histories involved. Making the case that too much of journalism history is nationalistic, Ellefson finds impetus to perform a re-mapping beyond geographic borders. In addition, Ellefson takes a lesson from the history of nations: national histories are less durable than linguistic and cultural histories, reason enough to substitute the more durable for conceptual tools of historical research. Whereas Kittler proposes to ground communication history in the cultural reach of city-based geographies, Ellefson grounds analysis in linguistic and cultural traditions that historically persisted across geographic borders. Ellefson offers cases of long-standing cross-border linguistic practices that should be read as a theoretical extension of nations already established throughout, for example, Scandinavia, into Estonia and Pomerania, and even into Africa and the Caribbean. These linguistically and culturally produced nations carve out other nations in ways that map transnationality while retaining the concept of the nation-state in a manner quite different from any geographical framework.

Concluding the issue, Klaus Arnold's essay elaborates on methodological approaches to the writing of European communication and media histories. Arnold reminds us that a re-calibration

of perspectives in communication historiography from a mainly national to a transnational level, and to thereby broaden views to the wider field of Europe is not only advisable because of reasons intrinsically scientific and to let research keep pace with processes of Globalization and Europeanization. It also has a political dimension. In order to foster the idea of Europe's unity and the concept of a European identity, research that treats Europe as a single field contributes to the perception of the described as just that, a single unit and common field. Depicting recent studies and how they methodologically dealt with the history of mass media communication in Europe Arnold showcases typical ways and conceptions of how Europe and a European public sphere are sketched and re-enforced in current comparisons and transfer analyses. By unveiling modes, strategies and also scarcities – like and especially the low representation of Southern and Eastern European countries – in the slowly emerging field of European communication historiography Arnold's essay not only approaches an answer to the state and practice of communication history in Europe today but also allows to conclude what ideas of "Europe" or "European public sphere" prevail in this field.

The four essays in this second special issue open various perspectives on European Communication History as they approach it from different directions. They – each text by its own means – present manifold reasons to challenge, supplement and go beyond the framework of the nation state. The theoretical positions in this issue encourage us to question and re-draw borders in the reconstruction of communication flows to bring 'hidden publics' and minority matters in the spotlight of historiography. They stimulate research that does not neglect the spatial dimension and local provenience of social life-worlds, while emphasizing perspectives on transnational dynamics and connectivities that allow for different preconditions and patterns of cultural practice on subnational levels and at special localities. Moreover, the articles in this and in the first issue remind us of the critical point that writing the past is dialectically political with interventionist potential. As histories are shaped by social realities, the academy's assertions, in turn, also shape "what European communication history is" and what, therefore, European communication history will become.

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# Learning from Braudel:

## A Quest for a Comprehensive History of the Public Sphere

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### Abstract

This study argues that despite enduring criticism Habermas' project of the comprehensive history of the public sphere is still possible if we are willing to adopt some basic methodological strategies pioneered by Fernand Braudel. The opening section contends that the concept of the public sphere itself continues to be intellectually stimulating. Indeed, the enormous impact that Habermas' work has had on generations of scholars in the West turned it into one of the key concepts that enabled Europeans to gain better understanding of their own history - complex and properly contextualized. The study follows on with a set of epistemological and ontological moves used by Braudel that may help to overcome basic design flaws of the original Habermasian project. In doing so it argues not only for the abandonment of artificially created disciplinary boundaries, but also for overcoming of the traditional borders of nation-states, and indeed of continental confines. Consequently, the paper suggests the idea of a fluid transnational public sphere on global scale with a historical sequence of hegemonic cities at its center, and invites communication historians to cross the comfortable geographic scales of their research in order to better contextualize local, regional, or national histories. Similarly, it conceptualizes both the public sphere as well as evolving communication technologies as composite dialectic constructs that can be understood only in broad social, cultural, political, and economic historical contexts.

Ever since the 1930s when archeologists formally confirmed the actual site of the Athenian Agora, the term has captured the imagination of the Western world and gradually developed into an iconic symbol of the ancient, and implicitly, of the modern democratic public space/sphere. The Agora in Athens was supposed to be a place where people of different walks of life met in the full light of the strong Mediterranean sun, which had the unique power to render transparency to all social relations. There, deliberations of various aspects of public life were guided by the imperative of Aristotelian pragmatism, and everyone who came to the Agora was expected to be a rational human being whose actions were driven solely by the pursuit of the common good.

This was, obviously, a fantasy. A utopian dream woven together from the surviving fragments of classical philosophical writings (Millet, 1998, pp. 211-27). Yet, it was a fantasy which so much captured the imagination of ensuing generations of social scientists that they were ultimately willing to rewrite history in order to extol the parallel noble roots of our modern Western democracies in the coffeehouses of London,

salons of Paris, and the table societies of Germany. The cross-disciplinary Enlightenment project research movement reached one of its climaxes in the English translation of Habermas' *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989). Yet just as the Agora of Athens could not escape the fundamental dialectical tensions characteristic of the society that produced it in the first place, the Habermasian idealized public sphere of the Enlightenment also had been subjected to a crushing critique led on one side by classically trained historians and on the other by revisionist sociologists (Calhoun, 1992). The historians openly manifested their innate disdain for any kind of sociological generalization; the sociologists called for a more inclusive version of the public sphere. Together, stone-by-stone, they dismantled the unifying architecture of the Habermasian *Öffentlichkeit*, with its grand narrative relying on a teleological premise (Nerone, 2006, pp. 255 and 259). In their zeal, both sides acted with such a vengeance that they almost threw out also the baby with the bathwater.

Under the growing pressure of empirical evidence, Habermas himself in the end refused to revisit the project which, as he argued, emerged from the



synthesis of several disciplines whose number even at the time of its conception “almost exceeded what one author could hope to master” (1992, p. 421). Yet, the concept itself in the meantime generated an enormous pool of research across many previously unrelated disciplines in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. It de facto became one of the principal ontological lenses through which Western scholars started looking at the past of their own societies. Finally, it was John Nerone who, in his essay *The Future of Communication History* (2006), expressed the hope that a public sphere synthesis of communication history can still be written. This study similarly argues that the Habermasian project still matters, indeed it is indispensable for our fuller understanding of the way communication practices and technological innovations recursively operate within the societies that produced them in the first place. Furthermore, such a project is also feasible if several important lessons from the work of Fernand Braudel, an intellectual who enjoys equal respect in both the fields of history as well as sociology, can be learned and applied to communication scholarship.

In 1969, Braudel published a series of his essays, *On History*, which brought together two decades of his reflections on historical research and its main methodological challenges. The Annales School, of which Braudel was one of the main protagonists, is widely credited for spearheading interest in social history. If one argument stands out among Braudel’s historiographical reflections, it is the repeating call for reconciliation between history and the social sciences. And Braudel shows us the path by trying to mentally recreate not only the materiality of the world of the ordinary people whom he follows, but by attempting to get insights into “their habits of mind and their feelings” (1979/1982-84, p. 27). By doing so, the author opened the door to the type of research that ultimately became known as social and cultural history.

### **Lesson One: *Salvare il Salvabile*, or Saving What Can Be Saved**

Despite all its flaws, the genius of Habermas’ approach was in formulating the ontological category of the *public sphere*. The author defined it in simple, almost intentionally vague terms as a “realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed,” and whose portion “comes into being in every

conversation in which private individuals assemble to form public body” (Habermas, 1979, p. 198). Such an inclusive definition fully corresponds with Marx’s (1973, p. 100) assertion that any kind of social inquiry should start from the *simplest determinations* - general and abstract relations characteristic of the system of complex social structures. Consequently, the *public sphere* as an ontological category has the power to transcend the set of artificially created boundaries of academic disciplines which in the past represented one of the most serious obstacles in the quest to capture the historical metamorphosis of the Athenian Agora - both as a normative ideal as well as an empirically perceptible social reality. The unifying power of the holistically conceived ontological category of the *public sphere* thus fully complies with Braudel’s call for a history that is both complex and contextualized (1969/1980, p. 25).

The broadly defined category of the public sphere allows the researcher to conceive of its various historical permutations as a conflux of physical settings and mediated virtual flows through which public opinion has been historically produced and reproduced. The physicality of the public sphere is epitomized mainly by urbanized space whose spatial organization, architecture, and embedded social institutions serve as a container for any social interaction. The virtual dimension of the public sphere is represented by information flows mediated through communication technologies that animate social life in a given period of historical inquiry. Communication scholarship for the most part ignores urban geography (and vice-versa), but it is important to remember that the materiality of the public sphere continues to play a key role even at the stage of history when many researchers are eager to embrace the fantasy of a dematerialized cyberspace.

Habermas himself located the *bourgeois* public sphere in early eighteenth century London coffeehouses where a blend of face-to-face interactions and information flows, mediated by the early, uncensored political newspapers, resulted in unexpected synergies of democratic deliberation. Yet Mah (2000, pp. 158-161) argues that with more focus on the actual physical space instead of the ambiguous attribute *bourgeois*, Habermas could have avoided a lot of criticism for excluding different publics and counterpublics from his idealized public sphere (cf. Eley, 1992; Ryan, 1992). This is again fully in

line with Braudel (1969/1980, pp. 17-18), who sees geography as one of the cornerstones of any historical research. Indeed, the primary sources clearly show that London coffeehouses were after all places where people of all walks of life, social classes, races, religions, and genders met and contributed to the discussion while simultaneously shaping each other's understanding of the world (Downie, 2003).

## Lesson Two: A Sequence of Dominant Cities

In establishing the basic ontological categories of inquiry, Braudel may further show us the way in the third volume of his monumental opus *Civilization and Capitalism* subtitled *The Perspective of the World* (1979/1982-84). Despite his ambition to write a "total history" of capitalism, the author understood that in practical terms, his project was too ambitious to be executed and even if attempted, he could have very easily gotten sidetracked in the labyrinths of marginal historical developments and tangential trends. To avoid this trap, Braudel employed what he called *the classic sequence of dominant cities* (p. 34). They are places that in different periods held a hegemonic power-grip over the entire Western supranational world-system of capitalist exchange that was the focus of his inquiry and as such "referred to the system as a whole at different stages of its development" (Arrighi, 1994, p. xi).

Giddens (1984, pp. 195-96) calls such dominant cities *power containers* with an enormous concentration of assets, especially administrative resources. Braudel sees them almost as pulse points on the human body through which one can capture the heartbeat of the entire system. This implies a transnational approach from the outset. For the lack of a better term, Braudel's 'unit of analysis' is a supranational *world-economy* that he defined as the "economically autonomous section of the planet able to provide for most of its own needs, a section to which its internal links and exchanges give a certain organic unity" (1979/1982-84, p. 21-22). Immanuel Wallerstein, whose work was closely inspired by Braudelian philosophy, later defined the capitalist *world-system* as a unit "with single division of labor and multiple cultural systems" (1976, p. 6). Similarly the *democratic world-system*, representing the Western historical republican tradition, can be defined as the sum of territorially and/or politically autonomous entities that, despite

the various co-existing cultural systems, shared at a given point in history at least some basic tenets of democratic deliberative practices and representative governments.

Applying this concept to the medieval world, Henri Pirenne (1937, p. 211) compared the city-states of Flanders and Northern Italy with their rudimentary systems of representative governments to small islands of personal and political freedom that were emerging from the ocean of the feudal world still dominated by vassal relationships (although any closer look shows that such 'islands of freedom' were never completely isolated from their peripheries). It was the enormous economic success of such urban communities that made their political systems attractive enough to be imitated by others (Pirenne, 1925/1956, pp. 26-27). Therefore the expansion of the *economic world-system* system went often hand-in-hand with the ideas of representative government and free speech. As a result, the physical confines of both *world-systems* never attained any permanence in time. Indeed, despite some temporary contractions, one of their fundamental qualities seems to be conveyed in their expansive nature.

In order to write a comprehensive history of the public sphere, and ultimately of Western democracy, the researcher must start at the cradle of its democratic experience, classical Athens, and consequently explore also the inner workings of the republican Rome. The goal is to contrast normative discourse with the social and cultural practices connected to the formation of public opinion and issues of representation in marketplaces and public forums, theatres and arenas, legislative assemblies and popular taverns, temples and public baths. The next important step for any comprehensive historical inquiry of the public sphere is to avoid the lure of the Enlightenment trap that derailed Habermas and instead, to follow Pirenne's theories mentioned above that located the re-emergence of classical republican ideals in the midst of medieval urban communities. The partial focus on Bruges and the Hanseatic cities, but mainly the political culture of Florence and Venice, may constitute the next important steppingstones in constructing a comprehensive sequence of dominant republican-democratic cities. Despite the fact that the texts of Plato and Aristotle were already known in the feudalism-dominated parts of Europe as of the twelfth century, it was only the republican

experience of Northern Italian city-states that allowed emerging modern Western political philosophy to get a full grasp of the timeless messages encoded in their writings (Kohl & Witt, 1978, p. 4). The result was the full-blown Renaissance, not only in the sense of artistic accomplishment, but also the resurrection of classical political philosophy.

The Republic of Venice which, at the peak of its glory in 1500, boasted that its own constitution was far better than Plato would have ever imagined (George of Trebizond, 1997) is the best illustration of the fact that historical experience is cumulative. In its uncovering, the social or cultural historian resembles the archeologists who, in order to understand a particular stratum, must always dig deeper to analyze the preceding layer. Venetians brought back to life the classical political heritage, and passed it across the Alps, where emerging Dutch cities like Antwerp or Amsterdam readily advanced the message. From there mid-seventeenth century London took over the torch in a move that later caused Voltaire (1947, p. 57) to hail the city as the Athens of his own age. London held the hegemonic position for the entire long eighteenth century but in the meantime accidentally passed it across the Atlantic, where revolutionary Boston and Philadelphia gradually started seeing themselves as heirs of the classical tradition. “May your Philadelphia be the future Athens of America; may plenty of her sons arise, qualified with learning, virtue and politeness,” wrote the subscribers of Franklin’s Library Company of America in a 1733 salutary letter to their colonial proprietor, Thomas Penn.

The sequence becomes more complicated now. On one hand, it follows European continental philosophy with the history of strong paternalistic interventions of the state, represented by urban centers like Paris. On the other hand, it meshes with the free market philosophy and libertarian theories of the press with their own implications for the public sphere. They are reflected in the experience of a series of dominant cities, which different authors trace through the melting pots of New York and Chicago, the suburban metropolis of Los Angeles, to the amorphous postmodern global megalopolis epitomized by Las Vegas (Warner, 1968, p. ix; Postman, 1985, p. 3).

It is the U.S. and implicitly its own leading cities that in the past century represented the dominant paradigm within the democratic world-system.

At the normative level, this hegemonic position was reflected by the gradual imposition of U.S. political, economic, and cultural models on the rest of the democratic world-system. Barrera (2011) points out the various degrees to which the hegemonic U.S. school of journalism, rooted in the positivist tradition, influenced a wide array of emerging Western European schools in the post-WWI period. In his comparative study of the French and the U.S. press system, Napoli (2001, p. 105) illustrates how the American press system became reflected in the organization of continental newsrooms, in the construction of stories and notion of objectivity, as well as in the overall commercialization of media environments, even though the author cautions that such changes did not happen strictly *à l’américaine*. In this context Hepp *et al.* (2009, pp. 46-47) suggest that researchers conceptualize the transnational public sphere as a multi-segmented space of political communication that reflects various landscapes articulated through geographic proximity and/or shared cultural heritage. Thus any scholar working in a particular national or regional historical context has almost no choice but to keep comparing empirical findings at the local level with parallel trend-setting circumstances of the hegemonically positioned dominant cities. Although it must be emphasized that such a relationship between the centers of power and their peripheries is neither linear nor unilateral, but subject to a complex web of mutually constituted negotiations.

### **Lesson Three: The Inductive Approach Based on Primary Sources**

In the introduction to his monumental opus *Civilization and Capitalism*, Braudel argued that he had “deliberately set out to write outside the world of theory, of all theories, and had intended to be guided by concrete observation and comparative history alone. Compared both through time, using the language, which has never disappointed me, of the *longue durée* and the dialectic past/present; and comparative through as wide space as possible, since I wanted my study to cover the whole world if such thing could be done” (1979/1992, p. 25). Critics usually agree that the ultimate flaw of Habermas’ thesis was in his epistemological approach. While Braudel pushed aside all existing theories, relying strictly on inductive reasoning based on primary sources and their interpretations,

Habermas was ostensibly driven by an *ex ante* formulated hypothesis heavily influenced by the biased Enlightenment project, which he tested on selectively collected evidence taken mainly from secondary sources (Gestrich, 2006, p. 415).

Most of the grand social theories - because of the enormous breadth of human experience they aim at capturing - fall into the same epistemological trap. Braudel avoided it by weaving his grand narrative from the firsthand testimonies of those who populated the remote worlds he studied (cf. Ogborn, 2000, p. 44). Understandably it is beyond the human power of anyone who works within the framework of a grand narrative to spend years digging in the archives without any reasonable expectation of the Eureka moment. But this is exactly the moment when classically trained historians with their meticulous attention to detail can help communication scholars in their historical research. By now the professional historians discovered, restored, painstakingly decoded, and transcribed (and often also translated from dead languages and ancient dialects) countless archival manuscripts - official documents, diplomatic dispatches, personal letters, journals, and travelogues that had been in the meantime published solo or in various anthologies that are widely available. Their texts, while often partially historically contextualized, are still relatively wide open to original sociological interpretation and can be used as quasi-primary sources that are available to communication scholars interested in history without the requirement to descend into endless labyrinths of dust-filled archives - a task for which they often neither have enough time, nor appropriate professional training. Such shortcuts certainly entail a procedural compromise, but a reasonable one that Braudel himself often used in his work.

Another source that Braudel relied upon in his inquiry is historical material evidence. Communication history too often limits its focus almost exclusively on written records and their interpretation, failing to take into account the materiality of the world. It theoretically recognizes, but for practical reasons for the most part ignores, the reflexive loop that exists between the material base and psychological superstructure (Grassby, 2005). Braudel himself expressed a slight personal bias towards the term *culture* that was too closely associated with the immaterial superstructure. Instead, he preferred the term *civilization* that was

much more inclusive. Consequently he defined civilization as the sum of its cultural assets and material resources that comprehended not only the artifacts of everyday use, but also urbanism and geography (1963/1995, pp. 3-9). Translated in practical terms, Braudelian histories are often relying on the primary testimonies of ancient woodcuts, maps, paintings, surviving artifacts, architecture, and landscapes that attest to the materiality of the world when analyzing its social and cultural practices.

Through the deep appropriation of such a vast array of primary evidence, the researcher can attempt to mentally recreate both the materiality of distant worlds as well as existential feelings and positionalities of those who populated them. This is what Braudel means by writing outside of the theory, being guided solely by concrete observation and comparative history (1979/1982-84, p. 25-27). Only after absorbing all available empirical evidence, the mind becomes resilient enough that the researcher can start confronting his/her own interpretations of the past with the secondary sources and existing theories, without running the risk of uncritically espousing their own biased analysis - a problem so evident in Habermas' own study.

## Lesson Four: A Dialectic View of Society

The notion of the *structural transformation* of the public sphere that Habermas used in the title of his seminal work implies an imperative to see any social change through the prism of an ever-evolving process. Similarly for Braudel, science, technology, religion, political institutions, and basic structural elements of culture, all have "their own rhythms of life and growth" (1969/1980, p. 30). Advancing Braudelian thought, Mosco (1996, p. 8) recommends that scholars conceptualize social development as a set of mutually constitutive abstract processes - for example, ones that are associated with the advent of modernity such as individuation, commodification, rationalization, spation, fragmentation, abstraction, and/or alienation. According to Mosco, such processes act simultaneously upon one another in various stages of their formation, resulting in unpredictable mutual synergies. Braudel similarly calls for "the history of conjunctures" of such long-term processes, a history that will be complete only when "it has made up a whole orchestra of them all" (1969/1980, p. 30). Yet such structural

changes are slow by definition. To capture their subtle advancements, Braudel recommends that the scholar step back in order to get the feeling of what he described as the dynamics of the *longue durée* (1969/1980, pp. 27-31).

Constructing his history inductively as a composite of testimonies based on primary sources, Braudel systematically populates his dominant cities with ordinary people. He tries to put himself in their shoes, walks with them a mile or two in order to penetrate their social worlds (1979/1982-84, p. 27-28). His aim is to compare their existential feelings and material realities with those who lived in other historical periods, and ultimately, with our own experience. At the same time he reminds us that human life is not a “mechanism that can be stopped at leisure in order to reveal a frozen image” (1969/1980, p. 78). Otherwise, the history of single events, the *histoire événementielle* as he calls it, becomes a dust that can blind our eyes, preventing us from seeing the whole image. Invoking the words of Edmond Faral, Braudel blamed his own discipline’s apprehension of the grand scale narrative for killing the History (1969/1980, p. 5). To prove his point, the author himself moves constantly between those two poles of time, the *instant* and the *longue durée*.

In order to stick to fundamental dialectic principles, the social body itself must be seen as a dynamic process, rather than a static thing. Braudel conceptualized it as an *ensemble des ensembles*, a set of sets, arguing that “any given social reality we may observe in isolation is itself contained in some greater set” (1979/1982-84, p. 459). The result is a complex construct that envisions the social body as an aggregate of mutually interconnected and often overlapping smaller subsets whose evolutionary trajectories are often propelled by their own internal contradictions. Braudel argues that we must be able to locate any studied social structure not only in itself, but even more importantly, in relation to the movement of all associated structures (1969/1980, pp. 3-4). His own view of society is reminiscent of John Dewey’s claim (1927/1954, p. 17) that there is not a one single public, but a *multiplicity of publics* which are brought into existence at different intersections of time and space as reactions to the actions of other publics. Similarly Eley, in his critique of the Habermasian project, suggests that the public sphere should be conceptualized as a setting “where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among a variety of publics takes

place, rather than as the spontaneous and class-specific achievement of the bourgeoisie in some sufficient sense” (1992, p. 306).

Each of the multiple publics comes to the table with its own vision of an ideal social organization. Such views may be compared to ideologies at various stages of articulation, depending mainly on the level of social consciousness and intellectual capabilities of a particular segment of society. In any case, it is the dominant group that is able to formulate a set of principles that are by-and-large accepted as normative by substantial segments of a given society. For the social or cultural historian, one of the biggest challenges is the problem described by Giddens (1982, p. 7) as *double hermeneutics*. In the case of the public sphere, the focus is mainly on the ability to extricate the normative ideal from actual social reality when analyzing primary testimonies, which often have a tendency to blur the dominant ideology with everyday experience. Alexander admonishes the researcher that the very concept of civil society is only “a utopian ideal that has never been fully realized in any actually existing social system, and never will be” (1998, p. 8). Habermas drew heavily on the writings of Arendt and Weber who in many cases accepted the normative utopian writings of Plato and Aristotle on their face value as actual historical testimonies of life in classical Athens (Millett, 1998, pp. 218-24). How can such trap be avoided? The experience indicates that the times of social, political, or economic crisis have a propensity to exacerbate the basic internal contradictions of any social system, rendering them more pronounced and thus better observable by social and cultural historians. Accordingly, such moments of crisis may be the best entry points through which the researcher can plunge into remote worlds.

## Lesson Five: The Role of Technology

Contrary to Habermas, whose focus is mainly on public discourse, Braudel pays much more attention to technologically mediated aspects of transportation and communication. In doing so, he dismisses any attempts to see technology as a fetish that can singlehandedly bring about any significant social or cultural change. Braudel is therefore very critical of the dominant scientific paradigm obsessed with “technology’s features and effects” (1969/1980, p. 212). Technology for him is not something developing on the outside



of society that, once finally introduced, has the singlehanded power to change it from the inside. Just as man cannot live by bread alone, he cannot live by technology alone, argued the author (1969/1980, p. 192). Consequently, he added, “we can no longer believe in the explanation of history in terms of this or that dominant factor” (1969/1980, p. 10).

A classical example of such monocausal historical explanations is the genesis of book print whose histories, from the communication science point of view, are traditionally almost totally absorbed with the focus on social practices and cultural significance related to early printed texts. At the most, the evolving price of the book may be of interest to some scholars as an indicator of its availability to the masses. Yet, to fully grasp the contribution of print, one must understand that not the scribal work, but paper and binding were actually the most expensive elements of early book production (Grendler, 1988, pp. 25-31). Thus it is impossible to grasp the dynamics of the Incunabula period without understanding the evolution of papermaking with its own technological, economic, and political ramifications. Furthermore, one needs to understand the extent to which Western learning benefitted from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 that pushed hundreds of learned Greeks to seek refuge in Italy, carrying with them a treasure trove of ancient scrolls with original classical texts. Aldus Manutius, the most famous printer of the Renaissance, employed many of them in his printing shop in Venice as editors and translators (Geanakopulos, 1962). Due to their contributions, between 1495-1515 Aldus was able to print the essence of surviving classical knowledge. Yet his own commercial success depended largely on distribution networks such as the regular postal service that, as of the 1490s, gradually connected Venice with all important centers of power and learning. It allowed the books to be shipped to his university clientele in Polish Krakow as well as to his business liaison in Paris (Nolhac, 1961, pp. 213-19). Ultimately, by overly focusing on the printed word, media historians overlook the fact that most of the Renaissance world was still illiterate. Thus it was the printing of allegorical images in the form of posters and broadsheets that arguably stirred up the Reformation process in German-speaking lands more than all the other erudite scholarly treatises together (Scribner, 1997).

Braudel understood such dynamics and in his historical work, technology is framed as an organic element that interacts with other parallel social trends and developments. Its overall contribution to social and cultural change can be grasped only through the full orchestration of such synergic conjunctures (1969/1980, p. 10). We can conclude that his view of technology was fully in line with the imperative expressed shortly before his death by James Carey, who reminded us that only “if we adequately place the various technologies of communication in a historical context - not just the history and ecology of technology but the wider world of politics, economics, and culture - we may be able to state meaningful and useful (although contingent) generalizations” (2005, p. 452).

## Conclusion

This paper argues that Braudel’s project of what he calls the ‘total history’ of Western capitalism relies on series of relatively forthright methodological tenets that can be adopted by communication scholarship and applied in its quest for a comprehensive history of the public sphere/space. At the ontological level, Braudel intentionally ignored the borders of states, conceptualizing instead his own ‘unit of analysis’ as a supranational world-system that is at any given stage of its historical development dominated by one of the sequence of hegemonic cities. Starting with the cradle of democracy, classical Athens, each one of the subsequent cities develops its own normative version of the public sphere by blending the preceding hegemonic model with a set of its own socio-cultural values and practices. It is mainly due to hard power - the combination of economic and military strength - that the dominant cities consequently are able to impose also many of their cultural values and social practices on the rest of the democratic world-system at different stages of its development. Such imposition of superstructural elements representing the soft power of the dominant cities is never absolute, but it is significant enough for understanding any other parallel local or regional dynamics within the world-system. The holistic approach in designing fundamental ontological categories is matched by Braudel at the epistemological level. Just as he intentionally ignored the borders of traditional nation states, he strove to overcome also the artificially created borders of scientific disciplines.

Braudel himself concluded the inquiry of the history of capitalism in eighteenth century London, though he made clear that the next dominant city in his classical sequence was New York. Furthermore, he acknowledged that by the time he published his work, New York was already being overshadowed by other North American cities (1979/1982-84, p. 32). Importantly for continental scholars, often brought up within traditional Eurocentric positions and nation-state approaches, the fluid borders of the democratic world-system at some point outgrew the geographic limits of the Old World, and its leading cities moved overseas. Therefore, the study of the public sphere in North America in particular becomes indispensable for understanding parallel European developments. Yet as the borders of the democratic world-system

expand, the focus of future inquiry may be on the emerging dominant cities of Asia such as Bombay or Bangalore, Beijing or Shanghai. The parts of the world that they represent adopted - under different historical circumstances - the basic tenets of the ancient Greek democratic ideal, infusing it with their own unique set of social and cultural historical experiences, and consequently may be expected to produce their own normative models of the public sphere. It seems reasonable to expect that relying on their growing economic might, one of the above-mentioned urban metropolises may become the next hegemonic city of the ever-expanding democratic world-system. Their histories will be the focus of forthcoming studies undertaken by social and cultural historians in order to understand the future trajectories undertaken by our own Western societies.

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# Seeing the familiar strange:

Some reflections about actants, actors and arenas of transnational media history<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The essay pleads for a critical reassessment of the nation as long lasting paradigm of historical research on mass media. By presenting the transnational perspective as a useful framework for seeing the familiar strange, the author introduces the three interrelated concepts of actants, actors and arenas as critical tools for the study of transnational media flows. Based on three historical short stories dealing with the emergence of a telegraph infrastructure for news reporting in Sweden, the establishment of a transnational „pirate“ radio and television station in the Saar region, and subversive viewing practices of the Romanian television audience in the 1980s, the authors aims at problematizing the complex spatial and topological nature of transnational mediascape by using an integral media historical approach.

„Going transnational“ is in. While some interpret this latest „turn“ in the intricate path of historiography as a challenge to older historiographic traditions like world or international history, others see it as a new paradigm, superseding the national perspective as the founding frame of reference for a „modern“ scientific production of history. In any case the vivid discussion of what transnational history is, or should be, witnesses an ongoing interest in and recognition of the importance of the historical phenomena and processes that lie beyond the explanatory framework of the nation state.

The strong tie of media historiography with the national project has, as Jean K. Chalaby has rightly formulated, its origins in the fact that “no other media institution was more central to the modernist intent of engineering a national identity” (Chalaby, 2005, p.1). This intrinsic quality of mass media as national institutions has tempted most historians to analyze mass media such as the press, radio or television using a more or less strict national perspective. The search for the nation in newspapers, film, radio

and television programs, and media institutions or legislation has produced a variety of excellent historical scholarship, reinforcing Benedict Anderson’s thesis of the constitutive role of the media in the creation of “imagined communities”.

Yet an emergent body of transnational historical research significantly complicates this (albeit deliberately exaggerated) picture. This research asks us to re-evaluate the primary function of mass media as pillars of nation building and catalysts of national communion (Bösch, 2011). This essay aims to question common assumptions in media historiography by offering some alternative perspectives on the complex processes of transnational circulation and national or regional appropriation of the “floating signifiers” that characterize – in the words of Arjun Appadurai – the “space of flows” of our mediascape (Appadurai, 1996, pp. 27-44). I will argue that the process-oriented approach of modern transfer and translation studies is especially fruitful for a cultural history of the media and for the understanding of the geographies and topologies of modern communication spaces. It enables the

<sup>1</sup> The following reflections build on discussions and workshops realized within the European Television History Network (<http://cms.hum.uu.nl/ethn/>) and the Tensions of Europe network ([www.tensionsofeurope.eu](http://www.tensionsofeurope.eu)). I would like to thank the Communication History Section of the ECREA

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analysis of the complex trajectories of media forms and contents as they go through processes of adaptation, resistance, inertia, and modification in their circulation between and across different cultural frames and contexts. My aim is not to present the transnational perspective as the new paradigm of future media historiography (next to other labels such as “global history”, “entangled history”, “connected history” or “histoire croisée”), but to use it as a lens for seeing the familiar strange (Budde, Conrad, & Janz, 2006). Rather than focusing on actants, actors and arenas developing, shaping and using media as tools or means for the construction and/ or stabilization of national identities, the transnational perspectives invites us – and here I follow the characterization given by Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier in the Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History – “to look at links and nodes of flows of people, products, processes and patterns that operate over, across, through, beyond, above, under, or in-between politics and societies” (Iriye & Saunier, 2009, p. 18).

I will do so by starting with three short and unrelated stories about different media technologies and uses in three different moments of time: the first story plays in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Sweden and deals with the local appropriation of the telegraph as a transnational infrastructure for the circulation of news; the second story brings us to the German-French border right after the Second World War and the birth of a transnationally operating “pirate” radio station; finally, a third story introduces us to subversive practices of cross-border television reception in the last decade of Ceausescu’s regime of austerity in Romania. The three stories will – this is at least my hope – work as eclectic showcases for different approaches to or readings of transnational media phenomena and form the basis for a more systematic reflection on the challenges of thinking and doing transnational media history.

## First story: News Heading North

In comparing two local Swedish newspapers, the *Norrebottens-Posten* in Piteå (in the north-east

of Sweden, close to the Finnish border) and the *Öresunds-Posten* in Helsingborg (in the south-west of Sweden, close to Denmark), the Swedish historian Jonas Harvard comes to a number of very interesting conclusions about the spatial and temporal impact of the electrical telegraph as new technology for news reporting (Harvard). Both cities were connected at an early stage to the nationalized telegraph network, Helsingborg in 1854 and Piteå in 1857. By the end of the 1850s, Sweden was linked to Denmark by a submarine cable, laid in 1855, and through it to Hamburg, which connected it also to the Russian network via Harparanda and the Finnish lines.

But while the *Öresunds-Posten* embraced the new technology as a means to further strengthen its position as a mediator of news heading north via Copenhagen and Hamburg, *Norrebottens-Posten* showed a different pattern of appropriation of the telegraph as transnational infrastructure for the circulation of news<sup>3</sup> (Harvard, p. 36). In part, this was undoubtedly due to the fact that Piteå was smaller than Helsingborg, and therefore witnessed a less active economy. That circumstance was also reflected in the frequency of publishing of the two newspapers: weekly in Piteå and thrice weekly in Helsingborg. But according to Harvard, the differences in the adoption of the new technology were due less to social and political determinants than to geography and climate. Harsh winters and endemic vandalism severely affected the reliability of the telegraph lines to the north of Sweden. The high cost of employing a correspondent in Stockholm to supply the small local newspaper with news from the Swedish and other European capitals seemed excessive, given the limited interest in these matters on the part of the readers of the *Norrebottens-Posten*. It was sufficient to report on the main European news stories with articles taken from other national newspapers.

Although these would arrive with some delay by ordinary mail to Piteå, the *Norrebottens-Posten* did not scruple to give them the byline ‘telegraphic news’ or ‘the latest telegrams’. Only when it came to extraordinary events – mainly political crises or wars – was the telegraphic infrastructure really

<sup>2</sup> Two of the stories presented in this article rely on research and studies realized by two colleagues of mine: the first one on work of my Swedish colleague Jonas Harvard, the second one is based on the findings of my former PhD student Dana Mustata. I would like to thank both of them for granting me the permit to use their cases as illustrations in this article.

<sup>3</sup> While the use of the telegraph as news transmitter remained rather limited in Piteå (reaching approximately 1,000 telegrams in 1862), the number of telegrams passing the telegraph office of the *Öresunds-Posten* amounted to almost 50,000 in the same year. On 2 December, the *Öresunds-Posten* reported that the telegraph personnel had become sick from the intensity of their work!

employed to provide readers in the vast territories of a country like Sweden with speedy coverage. In day-to-day reporting however, it was acceptable (even for the *Öresunds-Posten*) to stick to older, well-established channels of news transmission via regular mail and business networks, even if that meant a delay of three to four days. As Harvard observes, it was apparent to all that news reporting had several levels of urgency. In contradiction of popular narratives that interpret the advent of the telegraph as a first wave of electronic shrinking of the world, the initial effect of telegraphy in the case presented above was to reinforce the spatial and temporal divide between the peasant regions of the north and the economic and cultural centers of the south. “When the telegraph worked as it should, in the 1870s *Öresunds-Posten* could get news *faster* from cities far away than from nearby locations in the province. The telegraph placed news from Berlin, Paris, London and Vienna on a single temporal scale, and regional news was left behind” (Harvard, p. 80). The interesting findings of Jonas Harvard thus force us to rethink the popular narrative of the electrical telegraph as the ‘Victorian Internet’ (see for example Standage, 1999; Hartmann, 2006) and remind us that the business of news gathering and dissemination was largely local and regional. The electric telegraph, although almost always interpreted as a new medium with the power to annihilate time and space, also had contrary effects. It was capable of fragmenting communication spaces and establishing territorial friction between privileged and underprivileged gateways or nodes of electrical transmission and reception of information. This tension, as we will see in the following stories, post-dated the advent of the telegraph.

## Second Story: Birth of a European “pirate”

Now let’s make a giant step in both chronology and geography and move to the French-German border in the early 1950s, more precisely to the Saar region, which was under French protectorate at that time (and remained so until 1955). As an occupational power, France invested a huge amount of money and energy in strengthening the economic ties between the coal and steel industries of the Saar region and its own heavy industries in Alsace-Lorraine and in winning the German population for their policy of re-education and democratization. Radio, this was

already the declared will of General de Gaulle in July 1945, then Head of the provisional French government, ought to play a crucial role in guaranteeing a strong French influence on the public opinion in the Saar region and post-war Germany (Hudemann & Heinen, 2007). But next to the re-establishment of the *Saarländischer Rundfunk* in early 1946, which remained under French control until the reintegration of the Saar in 1957 which was based on the pro-German vote of the public referendum in 1955, another French initiative is worth telling, namely the foundation of the *Saarland Television Corporation* in May 1952.

It was Frédéric Billmann, a French Journalist and collaborator of de Gaulle during wartime in Algeria that had been nominated as Director General of *Radio Saarbrücken* by the High Commissioner of occupied Saarland in 1949 (Gilbert Grandval), who initiated the setting up of a private television station in the Saar region with French capital, technology and stakeholders in late 1951 (Fickers, 2010). Within a few months, Billmann managed to win over Henri de France, a prominent pioneer of French television technology and father of the high-definition line standard of French television (819line system), and as prominent principal shareholders the Prince Rainier from Monaco and the Romanian-born businessman, former owner of *Radio Impérial* in Tangier and holder of *Télé Monte Carlo* Charles Michelson. Thanks to his privileged position as Director General of *Radio Saarbrücken* – which also participated as a minor stakeholder in the deal – Billmann successfully pitched the project to Prime Minister Johannes Hoffmann as a lucrative business for the Land, which was in desperate need for money in order to run its own radio station. And indeed, within a week after Billmann had presented the project to Hoffmann, the latter informed Billmann about the positive opinion of the Saar government.

Yet the clue of this deal has not been revealed: in order to finance the cost-intensive erection and operation of a private television station in Saarebruck, Billmann had asked for permission for starting a commercial broadcasting station too, which should generate enough capital to cover the expenses of the costly television station. With the founding of the *Saar Television Corporation* in May 1952 and the start of an experimental but regularly television service in December 1954, Billmann had in fact killed two birds with one

stone: He had managed to offer French television technology and industry a strategic entry into the promising German market, and he became father and midwife of one of Europe's most successful commercial radio stations in the post-war decades: *Europe No 1* (Bernard, 1990).

The newly founded station - enthroned as a „modern cathedral of airwaves“ on the hill sides of the Saar region, only a few kilometers from the French border - knew a fast-paced development and great success by its French speaking audience. This despite the fact that the station operated on a medium wave frequency (182 kHz) that caused numerous interferences with other European stations and was therefore attacked as a „pirate“ by the regulatory bodies of the ITU and EBU. The progressive programming of the station with its focus on first-hand news production, live reportages and juvenile music programs („Salut les copains“ / „Vous êtes formidables“) made the station an important transnational player in the post-war European radio landscape - much to the chagrin of some public service institutions, especially the French RTF. As a so-called „station périphérique“, *Europe No 1* successfully undermined the authority of the government-controlled broadcasting service in the young Fifth's Republic, and thereby demonstrated the civilian power of transnational broadcasting in times of political crises - most tellingly during the Algerian War or the May 68 protests in Paris (Bussière, Méadel, & Ulmann-Mauriat, 1999).

Although the re-integration of the Saarland into the Federal Republic of Germany on the 1st of January 1957 heralded the termination of a commercial television service in Germany - *Tele-Saar* had to resign its activities on the 15th of July 1958 -, *Europe No 1* kept transmitting its signals from German territory and thereby kicked off a 20 year long juridical and political debate about the legitimacy of commercial broadcasting services in Germany, which eventually led to the so-called „third broadcasting decree“ of the Federal Court of Justice in June 1981 that paved the way for the dual broadcasting system in West Germany.

### **Third Story: Subversive cross-border viewing practices in Romania**

In Europe, transnational instances of television, such as transfers or exchanges, have negotiated

state politics in different ways, whether by challenging, reasserting or undermining them. The centrality of state politics to these transnational instances of television however, has defined television's crossing of borders in different positions to the state. Cross-border television in communist regimes however illustrates a different zone of transnational television: a grey zone situated outside the state, but inside national boundaries (Mustata, 2010).

In the early 1980s, Romania underwent a severe economic crisis, caused by the policies of economic planning in the previous decades. In the attempt to achieve extensive growth, dictator Nicolai Ceausescu used Western credit to expand production, achieve excess capacity in heavy industries, while sectors such as agriculture and consumer goods were neglected. As excess capacity was realized, Romanian industrial output did not live up to standards of international competition. This left the country's output excess wasted, while areas such as agriculture and consumer industries remained underdeveloped and foreign debt accumulated steadily (Nelson, 1988: xiv). Rather than reforming the economy, Ceausescu chose to deal with the situation by forcing lower living standards on the population, forcing them to consume less, while the country's produced goods were destined for export and imports were cut off. As part of Ceausescu's regime of austerity, living conditions drastically worsened. Significant cut-backs on water, electricity and heating were introduced; food became rationed, while basic commodities and services became simply unavailable. These policies of austerity also affected television broadcasting. By 1985, TV schedules were reduced to two hours on weekdays from 8 -10 pm, four hours on Saturdays from 3-5 and 8 -10 pm, and five hours on Sundays: from 12-3 pm and 8-10 pm. The second channel of Romanian television, together with all territorial stations, was ceased. From 5377 broadcast hours in 1980, Romanian television dropped to 1411 hours by 1985 and 1263 hours by 1987-1988. In parallel with a decrease in broadcast hours, an intense politicization of content occurred. As Ceausescu's personality cult had reached its peak in the 1980s, television content shifted primarily to coverage of the dictator and to grandiose productions made to bring homage to the state leader. Under circumstances in which the very few broadcast hours were filled with programs on Ceausescu, Romanian television experienced

the lowest audience rate in its history and its entertainment and leisure factor disappeared almost entirely (Mustata, 2012a).

As a consequence, Romanian audiences turned their television sets to neighboring countries' television. The first protests against the unsatisfactory TV schedules were voiced already in 1980, when the public broadcasters received the first phone calls of complaints from viewers. However, the peak of audiences' dissatisfaction was reached in 1982, when Ceausescu banned the transmission of the World Football Cup on the Romanian territory. Cross-border television reception escalated in the summer of that year.

Ceausescu's secret police, the *Securitate*, took notice of the phenomenon. They recorded that there was a massive increase in the number of viewers who bought antennas as well as portable television sets. Antennas were installed on domestic roofs to facilitate a better signal reception of neighboring countries television, while portable TV sets were used for

travelling to high areas in the country, from where better access to foreign television could be obtained. 'Once the football championships started, it became noticeable [...] that large groups of citizens are travelling to high geographical areas' wrote a *Securitate* report. Hilly areas in the country with good access to foreign television became the preferred touristic spots of Romanian audiences. Moreover, signal amplifiers became available on the Romanian market. Electronica Factory in Bucharest manufactured both amplifiers for single-household use as well as collective amplifiers that could be used in blocks of flats. It was reported that in the summer of 1982, 13000 individual amplifiers and 2500 collective amplifiers were sold in Bucharest only. As soon as the *Securitate* became alerted of the fact, Electronica factory was forced to cease manufacturing amplifiers. However, antennas and amplifiers continued to be made available by amateurs, who experimented with artifacts meant to enhance cross-border television reception in Romania (Mustata, 2012b).

As a result of this deterioration of both content and amount of Romanian television output, significant areas of Romania were tuned in to the television programs of the neighboring countries. The *Securitate* observed that areas with the best foreign signal reception predominantly had an unsatisfactory or a complete lack of domestic signal. At the border with the Soviet Union, Hungary and Yugoslavia, entire areas were outside the reach of Romanian television. Near the Soviet border, 75% of Romanian audience did not receive Romanian programs. The situation was worsened by the efforts of neighboring countries to install transmitters in the proximity of Romanian borders. The Republic of Moldova built trans-

mission stations with pillars of 350 meters, which propagated TV signal onto the Romanian territory. Moreover, Moldavian television was broadcasting from 7 in the morning until 12-1 at night, with parts of its programs in Romanian language. At Kiev, a new radio and television centre was also launched, whose programs were accessible for Romanian

The Romanian case confronts us with an astonishing case of cross-border spillovers and subversive transnational viewing practices, that forces us to rethink some of the common interpretations of media politics and practices in totalitarian or communist regimes.

audiences. The *Securitate* recorded that Yugoslavia had the most signal spillovers. These were mostly generated by transmitters positioned near Romanian borders, but they also came from the Novi Sad station whose power of 1000 KW allowed the border crossing of signal. Hungarian television crossed into the Romanian territory with a high-power station of 600 KW and a station located near the Romanian border. From Bulgaria, signal spillovers came from a station situated at Ruse, in the proximity of Romania.

The results of all these dissident cross-border practices were alarming: 6-8 million people in the South of Romania watched Bulgarian television; 3-4 millions in the South-West watched Yugoslavian television, while audiences in the North and East viewed Soviet programs. The Romanian case confronts us with an astonishing case of cross-border spillovers and subversive transnational viewing practices, that forces us to rethink some of the common interpretations of media politics and practices in totalitarian or communist regimes.



## Actors, Actants and Arenas: Theorizing three interlinked dimensions of transnational media flows

The three short stories presented above confront us with three different narratives of transnational media flows: While the telegraph story showed how transnational infrastructures (electrical telegraph network) become locally appropriated and enable alternative uses of a large technological system depending on the regional or local environment, the *Europe No 1* story underlines how techno-political and commercial actors foster transnational media institutions and determine their political and cultural function as an agent of transnational circulation of information. And finally, the Romanian story highlights how the existence of a dictatorial political regime in decline and transnational media events like the World Football Championship can provoke subversive cross-border reception practices that undermine the oppressive authority of the state. What the three narratives have in common is a triangular relationship or mutual interference of three domains or dimensions that I would like to characterize as actants, actors and arenas of transnational media flows. The three categories of actants, actors and arenas of transnational media flows aim at emphasizing the intrinsic interconnectedness of the material, institutional and performative character of transnational media flows and underline the necessity to analyze both the means and meanings of the flows that characterize our transnational mediascape.

Many journalistic works have been dedicated to prominent players in the field of transnational or global media industries and institutions (Tuccille, 2003; Chenoweth, 2001), and recent studies in European media history have paid attention to institutional actors of transnational media flows, such as the *International Broadcasting Union* (founded in 1925), (Lommers, 2011), or the *European Broadcasting Union* (the Western European successor of the IBU founded in 1950), (Zelle, 2002; Degenhardt, 2002). But while industrial actors or business people have been acting as transnational system builders by economic motivation, non-governmental institutional actors such as the IBU or EBU have often been dominated by technical experts,

driven by a technocratic vision of “practical internationalism” (Lommers, 2011, pp. 210ff). In contrast to the study of individual or collective actors, non-human actants<sup>4</sup> (Latour, 2005) of transnational media flows have received little attention by media scholars so far. By non-human actants I mean both transnational infrastructures such as cable networks, wireless links of relay stations or the satellite system and media technologies such as devices for recording, transmitting and receiving electronic signals for professional and amateur use. From the telegraph news ticker to the home tape recorder, from the microphone to the mobile phone – both the devices and infrastructures interfere as active mediators in our every-day communication practices and thereby function as actants of the spatial and temporal organisation of our mediascape.

In order to study the interaction and multiple interferences between actors and actants of transnational media flows, the media historian has to identify specific arenas of their simultaneous appearance in order to be able to analyze their spatial and temporal evidence. The spatial scope of such arenas can be downscaled to very specific *places* of media production or consumption such as the studio or the home, but more hybrid and blurred *spaces* such as metropolises, border regions, or coverage zones of broadcasting frequencies can also be studied as specific arenas of transnational media flows. While media theorists such as Manuel Castells (Castells, 2009) or Arjun Appadurai (Appadurai, 1996) deal with the flexible and dynamic nature between places and spaces of the transnational mediascape in a rather associative and abstract manner, media historians have to think about where to *locate* (transnational) actors, actants, and arenas in a physical and topological sense.

In a physical sense, submarine telegraph cables, broadcasting frequencies or the orbit filled with geostationary satellites enable a very precise spatial analysis of their spread and outreach. This mapping of the physical nature of information and communication networks and of the specific geographies of communication they produce is unfortunately a highly neglected domain of current media historiography and mainly in the realm of geographers or engineers (Adams,

<sup>4</sup> In the Latourian sense of the term, actants are active actors – both human and non-human – that mediate and interfere

in human-technology interactions.

2009). In addition to this physical nature of information and communication networks, the pure geographical position and topographical nature has of course an impact on both conditions of diffusion or transmission of signals as on their quality of reception. Those living on Islands, mountainous regions or vast planes have historically been disadvantaged in accessing modern communication infrastructures – and a similar inequality can be observed in a centre-periphery logic on a national scale too.

In a topological sense, flows of transnational information and communication can best be analysed using the network metaphor. In this logic, locating the flows means basically identifying the important nodes and analysing the relationship between them (Adams, 2009, p.85). But the historical perspective once again questions the causal relationship between a high degree of connectivity and social, economic or political relevance. This is especially visible when it comes to such hybrid spaces such as overlapping layers of coverage zones (for example, between FM and medium wave and short wave broadcasting signals). The many attempts to either foster (by means of high power transmitter stations along the Iron Curtain) or hamper (by means of jamming) the transnational flow of broadcasting signals from West to East or East to West during the Cold War emphasize the fact that these flows cannot only or adequately be analysed by looking at nodes and links, but that one has to study the many strategies of circumvention practices of subversive reception in order to pay duty to the historical complexity and spatial fragmentation of information and communication flows across ideological, geographical and physical borders (Badenoch, Fickers, & Heinrich-Franke). In fact, the spatial approach to media flows forces us to question the huge body of political sciences literature dealing with the concept of the “public sphere(s)”. Instead of such a normative approach, transnational media history should be thinking of “accessibility” in terms of a duality of (virtual) spaces and (physical) places. In analysing the

complicated nature of such dynamic “zones of convergence” (Reid) where political power structures, physical reception and transmission zones, and cultural norms and values overlap and intermingle, the media historian could successfully challenge the normative and highly politicized reflection about the “public sphere” and offer a more sophisticated view on the ambiguous nature of local, regional, national, transnational and global processes of circulation and appropriation of media technologies and contents.

In addition to the question of where to locate the flows of our present and past mediascapes, a transnational perspective on communication history has to deal with the problem of *how* to analyse and interpret these flows? As three decades of media research in the fields of media and cultural studies have shown, processes of circulation and appropriation of media products (programs, formats, genres) and technologies (devices of production, dissemination and reception of media

content) are embedded in the complex “circuit of culture”. (Gay, 1997) Studying these processes of multiple translations, various phenomena of adaptation, assimilation, appropriation and resistance have been identified. What makes the analysis of such processes so complicated is the “double nature” of the flows that constitute our mediascape: the fact that one has to analyse the simultaneous

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evidence of both media technologies *and* media contents. Both the means and the meanings have to be studied in their intrinsic interconnectedness. Media scholars such as Eggo Müller have shown the complicated travelling of television formats from one television culture to another, emphasizing that only those formats with a “flexible matrix” can easily travel between and successfully customized in the still highly nationalized television cultures (Müller, 2011, pp. 175-191). What travels between different television cultures is the format’s “genotype”, not the culturally specific “phenotype”.

This leads us to a final reflection on the importance of the nation as a cultural more than political frame for a future media history.



The transnational perspective should not be misinterpreted as an abandoning of the nation as important concept for the study of media history, but instead pave the way for a critical re-assessing of the nation as an analytical framework. As the examples of subversive viewing practices in Romania or cross-border radio activities in the Saar region have shown, we can only understand processes of transnational circulation and resistance of media flows by *contextualizing* the cultures of production, the mechanisms of

circulation, and the discourses of adaptation / assimilation / appropriation. In this sense, the nation and national cultures will necessarily remain crucial parameters for our understanding of transnational media phenomena. At the same time, the transnational perspective should function as an intellectual challenge to see the familiar strange and to question some of the meta-narratives of national media historiography we have become fond of.

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# Re-mapping Journalism History:

Development of the Press in the Swedish Empire and Its Former Colonies Finland, Estonia and Livonia until the Early 20th Century

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## Abstract

With history writing in general, press history is often linked to the framework of the nation state. Such nationalist approaches may, however, lead to a fragmented view of history. We should remember that many current European nation states have fairly short histories, and, even old kingdoms, such as Sweden, have changed shape several times. During the 17th and 18th century, the Swedish Empire included Finland, Estonia, Livonia, Ingria, Pomerania, Wismar and Bremen/Verden, and the previously Danish areas in the south and northwest. Later, Sweden even had small colonies in Africa and the Caribbean. The empire, however, began to disintegrate during the Great Nordic War. During the 18th century Finland, Estonia and Livonia belonged to the Russian Empire. My purpose is to provide an overview of the development of the press in the Swedish Empire and the 19th century Finland, Estonia and Livonia, and discuss limitations of national perspectives.

As with history writing in general, press history is often linked to the framework of the nation state. Klinge (1990, p. 113) warns against retroactive history writing using the emergence of the nation state to explain entire historical development. We should remember that many European nation states have short histories, and even old kingdoms, such as Sweden, have changed shape several times. Europe has seen many multiethnic empires, such as Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Russia and Austria - itself formerly a part of the Holy Roman Empire. Burbank and Hagen (2007, p. 1) point out that revulsion against empires and imperial power is a fairly recent phenomenon. Nationalism first appeared in the 19th century. For example, until the 1860s, Estonians were known as “country folks” (*maarahwa*), not Estonians (Höyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993, p. 74).

Sweden emerged as one of the great European powers during the 16th and 17th century. Conquest of Finland began in the early 13th century, and Estonia became Swedish in 1561. Ingria, Vyborg province, Livonia, the previously Danish areas in the south and northwest, and German Pomerania, Wismar, and Bremen/Verden were annexed during the Thirty Years War. Later, Sweden even had small colonies in Africa and the Caribbean. Historians have debated whether to call this country Sweden, Sweden-Finland, or the

Swedish Empire. This seemingly trivial matter highlights problems of writing national history. What should be included? When and where does national history begin? To avoid confusion, I will use the term “Swedish Empire” for the entire kingdom, and “Sweden” for the territory of present day Sweden.

The Swedish empire began to disintegrate during the Great Nordic War (1700-1721), when Bremen/Verden and the Baltic provinces were lost. Wismar was lost in 1803, Finland in 1809, and Pomerania in 1815. In 1814, Sweden formed a union with Norway, against the wishes of Norwegians, which lasted until 1905. (Melin, Johansson, & Hedenborg, 2006, Engman, 2009) Finland, Estonia, and Livonia were part of the Russian Empire until the end of World War I. Were they in a colonial situation? Balandier (2010, p. 36) lists five conditions: domination by a foreign minority, difference, industrialized society, antagonistic relationship, and system of justification.

The Baltic Germans were an ethnically and culturally different foreign minority that imposed its domination on native majority populations. So did the Swedes in Finland. Finns and Estonians, (and Latvians and Livs), outnumbered the invading foreigners, but were inferior from a material point of view. Balandier’s third condition does not apply, since here the conquest of the

borderlands began hundreds of years before modern industrialization.

The second, fourth and fifth conditions address the relationship between the dominating and dominated ethnicities and how that domination is maintained and justified. In the Baltic provinces, the native population clearly had a subservient role. The Baltic Barons claimed that the security they provided was only positive, and that serfdom, abolished in the 1810s, was for the peasants' own good. Such paternalistic arguments, founded more on demagoguery than reality, were widely used. The gap between the Germans and the Estonians was sanctioned by tradition and law, and was accepted as the normal way of the world until the 19th century. (Seppel, 2006; Zetterberg, 2007) Sweden's attempt to introduce Swedish legal and administrative systems threatened the Germans' privileges. The relationship between Finns and Swedes was a more complicated matter. Elenius (1999) says that, although Sweden and Finland were equal on the institutional level, Finns suffered discrimination, since social advancement meant Swedification. Yet, until the end of the 19th century, there was no sharp conflict between these two ethnicities.

My purpose is to provide an overview of the development of the press in the Swedish Empire and 19th century Finland, Estonia, and Livonia, and discuss limitations of national perspectives. My focus is on the period from the late 17th to the early 20th century. Actually, the story should end in the 1810s, with Sweden's loss of Finland and the remaining German areas. However, the shift to Russian rule did not totally end the Swedish influence in Finland. Besides, the majority language press and the national movements in Finland and the Baltic emerged during the 19th century. There were only a few non-elite minority language publications. Nationalism in Sweden, on the other hand, had a different meaning. Norway and Russia are excluded, since post-1809 Sweden, despite the union with Norway, turned into a more Swedish Sweden. Finland and the Baltic provinces may have been part of the Russian Empire, but journalistic influences came from elsewhere. The empire, however, provided the institutional framework within which the press operated.

A further complication is the administrative division of Estonia. During the second half of the 16th century, the Old Livonia, *die Ordensstaat*, or Monastic state, was split into three areas: Estonia, Livonia, and Courland. This division lasted until 1917 (Taube, Thomson, & Garleff, 2001, p. 54). Thus, Livonia contained both Estonian and Latvian speaking areas. What, in this case, constitutes Estonian press history?

There are many works that study specific periodicals, publishers, journalists, or periods of time. Since my purpose is to discuss the difficulties arising within national perspectives, the focus is on works, seeking to provide an overall picture. National perspectives are demonstrated in the decision of where to begin the story. Swedish press histories begin with the first newspaper published in Stockholm, Finns start with the first one published on Finnish soil, and Estonians begin with the first Estonian language paper. None of the studied works covers the whole Swedish empire. Another tendency is to exclude women and minorities, or study them separately, which makes

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journalism an unnecessarily male and monoethnic affair.

I have primarily used *Suomen lehdistön historia* (1988) and *Tidningar för alla* (2000), which provide an overall picture of Finnish journalism. Mervola's (1995) study of the outward appearance of Finnish newspapers, and Pietilä's (2008) analysis of the journalistic genres are also longitudinal studies, but focus on specific journalistic aspects. All of them use 1771 as a starting point. The extent to which the earlier Swedish press is presented varies. Nieminen (2006) writes about the development of the national public sphere, but since press is only one of the aspects, and his story begins in 1809, it is not included.

As for Baltic press history, *Towards a Civic Society* (1993) compares the development of the press in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania until the early 1990s. This approach makes the parallel development of Estonian and Latvian language press clearer. It also covers the Baltic German

press. Since parts of the Latvian speaking area never belonged to Sweden, I have excluded the Latvian press. Peegel (1966), Peegel *et al* (1994), and Annus (1993) present the Baltic German newspapers, as well. The tendency, otherwise, is to begin in 1766 and focus on the 19th century. Kurvits (2010), partly inspired by Mervola, has an interesting study of the outward look of the Estonian press. Her empirical material, however, consists of Estonian language papers starting from 1806 and it is therefore not included here.

Early press history is not well researched in Sweden, either. I have mainly used *A History of the Press in Sweden* (2010), *Den svenska pressens historia* (2000), and Leth (1998), which offers a periodization of the Swedish press. Only Önnersfors (2003, 2004) seems to have written about Pomeranian newspapers. His main focus, however, is Pomeranian people and their cultural identification.

## The 17<sup>th</sup> Century Press

The first newspapers in the Swedish Empire emerged during the 17th century, with the first attempts in the 1620s. Influences, technology, expertise, and news stories came mainly from German cities, particularly Hamburg. The foundation of *Ordinari Post Tijdender*, (or *Posttidningen*), in Stockholm 1645 is linked to Sweden's territorial expansion during the Thirty Years War. The war, better and more reliable postal service, larger cities, and improved national bureaucracy created the conditions necessary for its establishment. Reforms in the education system, new schools, and universities also played important roles. Universities were founded in Dorpat/Tartu in 1632 (in German), Åbo/Turku in 1640, and Lund in 1666. *Posttidningen's* content was carefully monitored, although censorship wasn't officially introduced until the 1660s, and codified twenty years later. (Gustafsson & Rydén, 2010; Leth 1998, *Den svenska pressens historia I*, 2000) The codification of the Swedish autocracy also increased state control over print media.

Periodicals were founded in other cities, as well. In Estonian press histories, the Swedish Empire mainly provides the larger societal context. For example, the importance of the postal service and the improved economic and cultural life are mentioned. Since the ruling elite consisted of Baltic Germans, there were more ties to the German cultural world than to Sweden. In Riga, newspapers from Königsberg satisfied the need

for news until the 1680s, when distribution was prohibited. Letters were opened to make sure no copies slipped through the border. The loss of the newspaper led the municipality to start its own papers. *Rigische Montags Ordinari Post-Zeitung* was founded in 1680, and *Rigische Novellen* in 1681. It is unclear whether they were two different publications, or the same under different names. Reval/Tallinn also had two newspapers, *Ordinari Donnerstags Post-Zeitung*, founded in 1675, and *Revalsche Post-Zeitung*, founded in 1689. German papers appeared also in Pernau/Pärnu and Narva around 1700. (Höyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993, pp. 50-52; Annus, 1993, p. 17; Peegel *et al* 1994, pp. 268-270) Two newspapers were published in Stralsund, Pomerania during the 1680s and 1690s (Önnersfors, 2004, p. 31).

These German language papers do not seem to be fully integrated parts of any history. Neither Leth (1998), Gustafsson & Rydén (2010), nor the studied Finnish works mention them. Although *Den svenska pressens historia I* (2000, p. 57) describes the papers in Riga and Reval/Tallinn briefly, it pays more attention to *Åbo Tidningar*, founded in 1771 in Finland. Nor does it explain why the Baltic papers were published in German. Estonians appear to have somewhat ambivalent feelings about the Baltic German press, which is interesting when compared to the way Finns handle their Swedish language papers. They are seen more as *Finnish* papers written in Swedish, than as Swedish papers, which might also be problematic.

In Estonian and Finnish press histories, this early period is seen as a preface to the main chapter, the emergence of national press markets. Klinge (1990, p. 117) thinks the empire's main axis was west-east, reaching from Gothenburg to Stockholm, Åbo/Turku, Vyborg, and Reval/Tallinn, whereas Elenius (1999) speaks only of the Stockholm-Åbo/Turku axis. Although the axis first turned in the north-south direction after the loss of Finland in 1809, Swedish press histories apply it even in the imperial era.

The national perspectives both highlight and obscure the link between ethnicity, social class, readership, and development of the press. Aru (2002, p. 90), for example, states that the Baltic German papers entirely ignored the Estonian-speaking population, which wasn't part of the world reflected on newspaper pages. This is true, of course, but, things look slightly different from an imperial point of view. Swedish readers came from the top five percent of the population (*Den*



*svenska pressens historia I*, 2000, p. 83). Finland can be included, since its higher social orders were either Swedish or Swedified. Thus, neither Swedish nor Finnish peasants belonged to the target audience, or as Nieminen (2006) puts it: “people stood farther away”. In the Finnish and Baltic context, however, this exclusivity is more palpable, since the social stratification followed the ethnic/linguistic division. In Sweden, the papers may have been intended for the elite, but they were written in the majority language.

Further, by dealing with the various German-speaking areas separately, these people, their cultural world, identity and publications appear in a vacuum. Also, if we assume that the Swedish Empire rotated around the west-east axis, the lack of newspaper publishing in Åbo/Turku is interesting. *Suomen lehdistön historia I* (1988) explains it by saying that, until the 1750s, access to Swedish and (occasional) German papers satisfied the need for news. However, this closeness to Stockholm becomes much clearer if put in an imperial context.

## Baltic New Beginning and Diversifying Swedish Press

The Great Nordic War affected various areas differently. Sweden suffered less direct damage, whereas Finland was occupied by Russian troops for eight years. Despite difficult times, newspaper publishing in Stockholm continued, although *Posttidningen* became smaller, thinner, and more infrequent (*Den svenska pressens historia I*, 2000, pp. 61–62). Estonia's and Livonia's Swedish history came to an end. All German newspapers disappeared, and during 1710–1761, almanacs were the only available periodicals. (Höyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993, p. 52) The Russian Empire, just as the Swedish Empire before it, mainly provided the institutional frame. Estonian language journalism was modeled on Baltic German, not Russian, papers. Zetterberg (2007) says the Baltic Barons welcomed the Russian takeover, since Tsar Peter I returned their old privileges and system of self-government. Raun (2001) places the zenith and eclipse of serfdom in the period of 1710–1860.

In Sweden, the 18th century turned out to be rather positive. The death of Charles XII and the lost war ended autocratic rule, and the Age of Liberty began. A weaker royal house and stronger parliament, with two rival parties (Hats and Caps), made more open debate possible,

although freedom of speech was still limited. The first Freedom of the Press Act, drafted by Finnish chaplain Chydenius, was issued in 1766. Pre-publishing censorship was abolished, post-publishing control was restricted, and the general public was granted access to government documents. However, the freer political climate was short lived. Gustav III's coup d'état in 1772 brought a return to autocracy, more restricted press policy, and harsher censorship. The number of periodicals diminished, public debates became more careful, and the press developed more slowly. (Gustafsson & Rydén, 2010; Leth, 1998; *Den svenska pressens historia I*, 2000) With the king's murder, control relaxed somewhat, but the regime remained restrictive until the turn of the century.

Swedish press histories write at length about the flourishing and diversifying press market. New moral, cultural, and educational papers were founded. *Then Svenska Argus*, the first moral paper, was founded in 1732, whereas the first one in Åbo/Turku was founded fifty years later. Journalistic influences came mainly from the British press. Political journalism emerged as Hats and Caps started their own party newspapers. *Posttidningen*'s news monopoly was broken with the foundation of the first daily, *Dagligt Allehanda*, in 1767. *Stockholms Posten* was known for its enlightened and cultural spirit. The founders were Lenngren, and the author Kellgren. Contributors also included Lenngren's wife, Anna Maria, another well-known author. Lundgren & Ney (2000) and Berger (1977) write about printers' widows, particularly Margareta Momma, who, together with her husband, edited two Stockholm papers. In 1738, she founded the first magazine written from a female point of view. Women were involved in moral journalism and attempted to start such magazines. Printers' widows in Finland do not seem to have founded any periodicals.

Swedish regional press emerged in the 1750s, as local printers in administrative city centers saw new business opportunities in newspaper publishing. In the 1770s, newspapers were founded in the university cities of Lund, Uppsala, and Åbo/Turku. Although *Den svenska pressens historia I* (2000, pp. 178–180) describes *Åbo Tidningar* and the short-lived Finnish paper *Suomenkieliset Tieto-Sanommat*, they do not quite belong to Swedish press history. Neither Leth (1998) nor Gustafsson & Rydén (2010) mention them.

Finnish press histories must pay more attention to Sweden and its newspaper tradition, since Finland was a fully integrated part of the state, and, on the institutional level, equal with Sweden. Thus, Finland's status, relevant state policies, social stratification, and the use of Finnish language have to be clarified. However, by beginning the story in 1771, the multifaceted development of the Swedish press is turned into a minor contextual detail. If we see *Åbo Tidningar* primarily as a *Finnish* paper written in Swedish – and not as a Swedish newspaper – we need to ask, what does it mean? Did it differ, for example, from the newspapers published in Lund, or Uppsala?

Newspaper publishing in Estonia and Livonia began again in the 1760s and 1780s, when Riga, Reval/Tallinn, and Dorpat/Tartu acquired new German language papers. By the end of the century, the Baltic German press progressed to political journalism. Papers covered the French revolution, for example. The first Estonian language periodicals were *Lühike Öppetud*, founded in 1766 by Peter Ernst Wilde, and *Tarto maa rahwa Näddali-Leht*, founded in 1806. Wilde's aim was to educate and enlighten the peasant population. His magazine was also published in a Latvian translation, but both versions were short-lived. The educated classes were still German speaking, and Wilde needed to translate his own texts. *Näddali-Leht* contained mainly translated articles from *Dörptsche Zeitung*. (Höyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm 1993, pp. 54-56; Aru, 2002, pp. 90-91; Peegel *et al*, 1994, pp. 271-272; Peegel, 1966)

Estonian scholars link this new beginning to the influence of rationalism and enlightenment, and the gradual disintegration of the conservative, self-centered Baltic German public life. Peasant mass organizations and pietist Herrnhutism, with its emphasis on literacy and self-awareness, also played an important role. They offered forums for oppressed persons to express themselves more freely, and learn the basic elements of democracy. Peegel *et al* (1994, p. 270) also speaks of the importance of German book imports, Baltic students in German universities, and the influence of incoming German school teachers. The emergence of a majority language press and the continued administrative division, however, means that Latvian and Estonian press histories now begin to overlap in Livonia.

The national focus obscures possible cultural and personal ties across the Baltic Sea. Connections

between Germany and the Baltic have been mentioned. There were also personal ties between Finland and Sweden. For example, Catharina Swedenmarck, who published poems in *Åbo Tidningar*, came from Stockholm. Her literary ambitions, however, were thwarted by Kellgren, one of the founders of *Stockholms-Posten*. During the 1770s, he studied at the university in Åbo/Turku and wrote for *Åbo Tidningar*. Catharina Ahlgren, who, during the 1770s and 1780s published women's magazines in Sweden, may have also written for *Åbo Tidningar*. However, there doesn't seem to be any definite proof. (Lundgren & Ney 2000, pp. 15-23; Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2005, p. 20; Berger, 1977 and 1984). Personal contacts did not end when Finland became part of Russian Empire. Katajisto (2008), who has studied the elite's identity shift after 1809, shows that many aristocratic families had close ties to Sweden.

## National Press Markets and National Awakening

The 19th century was a time of emerging national movements, increased urbanization and industrialization, expanding school systems, new economic and social relations, as well as the evolution of the public sphere and modernization. New technical innovations were adopted. Telegraph services expanded as cables were installed around the world. News agencies were founded both globally and locally. More publishers could afford steam-powered printing presses and typesetting machines. (Höyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993; Lauk 1996, pp. 11-13; Tommila & Salokangas, 2000, pp. 73-76; Rantanen & Boyd-Barrett, 2004, pp. 39-41) As national press markets began to develop, the national perspective of history writing seems less problematic. The focus on the nation states, however, makes it difficult to follow the varied pace of development.

The role of the institutional framework of the state in the development of the press becomes particularly visible when comparing Sweden with its former colonies. Although Sweden suffered serious losses, it stayed independent. Estonia and Livonia remained traditional, hierarchical agrarian societies with German elites. While serfdom in Estonia and Livonia was abolished, the peasants' life did not improve significantly until the passport laws were changed in the 1860s (Raun, 2001, pp. 37-38). Tsar Alexander I allowed Finland to keep its existing Swedish constitution,

and gave it fairly broad self-government, which was an important factor in the development of the national identity, society, and the press. Thus, the Swedish influence in Finland did not end abruptly. The shift to Russian rule, however, put Finland in a similar situation to that of the Baltic areas. The Russian Empire was the colonial master. The local elite spoke one language, and the masses spoke another.

Russian censorship practices hampered the development of the Finnish and Baltic press, although the practices varied. During the reign of Alexander I, the relationship between the press and the state was fairly good. As an enlightened autocrat, he aimed to use the press and the censorship as means of advancing knowledge. Nicolas I, on the other hand, feared political and social revolution. His reign was characterized by tight censorship, surveillance and repression, frightening the educated classes, and discouraging enlightenment. Alexander II issued a new press law in 1865. Although relief from preliminary censorship lasted only a couple of years, the burden of censorship was still eased. (Höyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993, p. 66; Ruud, 1982, pp. 25-31; Balmuth, 1960; Choldin 1985) Russification began in earnest in 1885, after the coronation of Alexander III, who chose not to confirm the Baltic Germans' old privileges. Censorship was also tightened. Earlier Polish uprisings had angered the Russians and encouraged panslavist and slavophile trends. A heated debate about the Baltic provinces broke out in Russian papers in the 1860s, when Katkov, editor of *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, accused Baltic Germans of unacceptable separatism. Russian liberal papers, on the other hand, were more upset about the Baltic Barons' medieval oppressive privileges. (Zetterberg, 2007, pp. 445-447; Durman, 1988, pp. 70-78) In Finland, a new censorship statute was issued in 1891. It increased the power and the authority of the General Governor and made the Finnish censors obsolete (Leino-Kaukiainen, 1984). The Estonian national movement's struggle against the Baltic German elites and Russian authorities, and the struggle between Tsarist policies and Baltic German separatism made censorship a very complicated matter.

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As Finland was becoming accustomed to its new self-government under the Russian umbrella, a new kind of Sweden began to take shape. The new king had more limited powers, and his conservatism met resistance from the liberal faction in parliament and the emerging liberal press (Melin, Johansson, & Hedenborg, 2006). The loss of Finland changed the image of the Swedish nation. This trauma could only be handled by selective memory, which meant seeing the remaining Sweden as more genuinely Swedish, and erasing Finland from the Swedish history (Elenius, 1999, pp. 75-77). As already demonstrated, this

tendency can be seen in the press histories, as well.

Although the Swedish government's right to confiscate provocative publications was not abolished until the 1840s, the press market flourished. New topics and genres,

such as crime stories, satirical columns, and feuilletons were introduced. Liberal papers, particularly *Aftonbladet*, had a leading position. The first female reporter, Wendela Hebbe, was hired by *Aftonbladet* in 1841. Liberal papers were greatly influenced by their British counterparts. The foundation of *Publicistklubben* (Association for Newspaper Editors) in 1874 was an important step in the professionalization of journalism. Mass circulation press, modern political parties, and party papers emerged. The conservative *Svenska Dagbladet* and the leftist *Social-Demokraten* were both founded in the 1880s. Liberal *Dagens Nyheter*, founded in 1864, was a new type of newspaper, with its lower price, less demanding style, clearer layout with larger headlines, and more entertaining topics. Its main competitor, *Stockholms-Tidningen*, was the first mass circulation paper. Regional press developed as well, particularly in the northern and middle part of the country. (Leth, 1998; *Den svenska pressens historia II*, 2000) Minority media was not very successful, but *Haparandabladet* began to publish a Finnish edition, *Haaparannan lehti*, in 1882 (Elenius, 2001, p. 425). Later, there were attempts to start periodicals for the Sámi. New cultural, family, and illustrated magazines, as well as women's magazines, such as *Idun* and *Dagny*, were founded. Female reporters were still rare. In



Estonia, the first women's magazine was *Linda*, founded in 1887. (Lundgren & Ney, 2000; Lauk, 1996, p. 33)

From a humble beginning, the Finnish newspaper market grew rapidly. *Åbo Tidningar's* monopoly was broken in early 1820s, when new Swedish language papers and the Finnish *Turun Wiikko-Sanomat* were founded. Vyborg even had German language papers. Åbo/Turku, however, lost its leading position after the 1827 fire and the relocation of the capitol and the university to Helsinki. Helsinki papers took the leading role. Fredrika Runeberg, wife of author and newspaper editor Johan Ludvig Runeberg, is thought to be the first female reporter. However, Adelaide Ehrnrooth, in the 1860s, was the first to use her own name. While more women entered journalism, and the first female editor in chief was hired in 1889, their numbers remained small. There were a few liberal papers, but, unlike their Swedish counterparts, they appeared within an authoritarian system. Finnish language periodicals outnumbered Swedish ones by the late 1870s. The market for magazines began to grow and diversify during the second half of the century. (*Suomen lehdistön historia I*, 1988; Tommila & Salokangas, 2000; Zilliacus-Tikkanen 2005)

The politization and nationalization of the press did not occur simultaneously, nor did it mean exactly the same thing. Swedish press histories do not explicitly speak of politization, at least not in the same manner as the Finnish and Estonian ones. Swedish political journalism was born in the 18th century with the Hat and Caps. Modern political parties and party papers emerged in the 1880s. This process was not possible under Russian rule. The Swedish press struggled against the Royal House, censorship and control, and, at times, challenged ideas of good taste and what was considered appropriate. In Finland, Estonia and Livonia politization was linked to national struggle, the relationship between the ruling elites and the majority population, and to Russification that began at the end of the century. There were, however, important differences.

Finnish self-government created so-called language parties: Svekomans and Fennomans.

Fennomans sought to protect self-government by forming an alliance with the Finns. In the process, they were willing to make concessions and improve the status of the Finnish language and people. A Finnish national movement was thus born among the Swedish speaking elite. For example, Fennomans crusader, Snellman, couldn't speak Finnish. The Svekomans, on the other hand, wanted to maintain Swedish dominance. Just as in Sweden a hundred years earlier, the existence of competing political groups led to the foundation of political papers. Fennomans *Suometar* (in Finnish) and *Saima* (in Swedish) were founded in the 1840s, and Svekomans *Vikingen* in 1871. (Tommila & Salokangas, 2000, pp. 34-44; *Suomen lehdistön historia I*, 1988)

Politization of the press in the Baltic began with debate about the peasant question and accelerated during the 1860s, the years of the great reforms. *Revalsche Zeitung* and *Neue Dörptsche Zeitung*, both founded in 1860s, criticized the German elite's conservatism, while defending its rights

against Russian interests. These Baltic German public debates influenced the Estonians' rising national self-consciousness. Jannsen's pro-Estonian, anti-German papers, *Perno Postimees* and *Eesti Postimees*, functioned as voices of a national movement. Jannsen was also the first person to speak of "Estonians". As his papers lost popularity, his former reporter, Jakobson, started *Sakala*, which was the first publication with a clear political profile, and the first to be used as a political weapon. His aim was not only to describe, but also to set up goals and lead the people. (Höyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993, pp. 71-74; Aru 2002, pp. 94-96; Peegel *et al*, 1996) The Estonian national movement was inspired by Finnish experiences. However, the rise of the Finnish national movement was connected to the birth of language parties and party papers, a development which was not possible in the Baltic. The first female journalist in Estonia was hired in 1861. By the turn of the century, ten women were fully employed, and around thirty published texts in various papers. The first woman working in the field of political journalism was Marie Koppel, employed at *Olevik*, in 1903. *Olevik* was shut down in 1906, and was restarted four years later. During the late 19th century, there were also

The politization and nationalization of the press did not occur simultaneously, nor did it mean exactly the same thing.

Russian language papers in Riga, Narva, Reval/Tallinn, and Dorpat/Tartu. (Annus, 1993; Lauk & Pallas, 2008; Mälik, 2000)

Russification affected different areas and different layers of the societies in different ways, and led to a new wave of politization of the press. The Estonian national movement initially swore loyalty to the Tsar. Nationalists saw Russians more as allies than enemies, since the new reforms undermined the Baltic German elite's privileges and improved the life of native inhabitants. Russians tolerated it, until the movement radicalized and could no longer be seen as merely an anti-German opposition. Russians tried to use majority language papers to promote their cause and create a more positive public opinion. The Estonian language press played an important role by strengthening the national consciousness and defending continuity. For example, Jaan Tõnisson and his *Postimees* believed in national unity and sovereignty and held the concept of nation very high, but he preferred peaceful and legal demands for political and economic rights. (Aru, 2002; Höyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993; Peegel *et al*, 1996)

Finns, on the other hand, had nothing good to say about russification, which began ten years later than in the Baltic. Tensions between the Swedish speaking elite and the Finnish speaking masses existed, but, due to the Fennoman dominance and the wide public support for self-government, the primary target here was not the local elite, but the Russians. Russification both efficiently united the people and created new dividing lines. The crucial question was no longer the language, but the tactics used against the common enemy. The Fennoman party split, and a new dividing line was drawn between the Old Fennoman government, with its appeasement politics, and the opposition, defenders of the Finnish constitution. The Constitutionals consisted of several different political parties. From their point of view, Tsarist politics were plainly illegal, which of course was contrary to the idea of autocracy. These new political parties had their own newspapers. (Tommila & Salokangas, 2000; *Suomen lehdistön historia I*, 1988)

Despite russification, the newspaper market in Finland, Estonia and Livonia expanded rapidly. During the second half of the century, Estonian newspapers began to have supplements, extra

pages with educative or entertaining content (Lauk, 1996, p. 31). Circulation numbers grew, and retained multiple readers per issue. Increasing advertising revenues created better economic conditions, and it was easier for papers to survive - at least economically. Still, it would be a couple of more decades before one could speak of a fully developed commercial press market. Journalism became more diversified. New genres, such as feuilletons, became popular, and papers contained more pictures. The press became more political as well, although formation of political parties was not possible in the Baltic until after 1905. Newspapers often served as instruments for creating public opinion and challenging power, whether the local elites or the Russian authorities. The 1905 revolution halted the Russification in Finland and the Baltic, and, for a while, a pleasant thaw reigned. During the revolution, many papers functioned not only as providers of the latest news, but also as political centers. Finland legalized universal suffrage in 1906, and with it came modern political parties and party papers. Parliamentarism, however, was only possible after 1917. In Estonia, new political parties were founded around certain newspapers, for example, Tõnisson and his *Postimees* belonged to the Progressive Party. He was also one of the Estonian members in the Duma. The Estonian press was dissatisfied with the new press law, with its threats of confiscation and legal action. Yet, more diversified journalism still developed, the level of professionalization increased, and the first interest organizations were founded. (Höyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993, pp. 99-112; Zetterberg, 2007, p. 464; Tommila & Salokangas, 2000, pp. 92-104)

The rise of the working class movement seems to have been a fairly simultaneous process. The first social democratic newspapers were founded in the 1880s and 1890s, for example, *Zhizn* in Russia, *Suupohjan Työmies* and *Työmies* in Finland, and *Social-Demokraten* and *Arbetet* in Sweden. Estonian *Uudised* was founded in 1903. Finnish papers were often a result of local initiatives, which, to the party's great irritation, could create competition between them. Swedish social democratic papers were more of a party affair. Many editors and reporters were leading figures in the movement, and newsrooms could, at times, resemble party headquarters. (Tommila & Salokangas, 2000, pp. 57- 63; *Den svenska pressens historia II*, 2000, pp. 277-281; Höyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993, pp. 106-108)

## Conclusions

We should, perhaps, consider avoiding retroactive history, and refrain from applying a national frame to multiethnic empires. An imperial and more postcolonial approach to early press history de-centers ethnicities, shows their multitude, and reveals how an ethnicity - even a dominating one such as the Swedes - may be a majority in a specific part of the empire, and one of many minorities in other areas. Such an approach makes even small ethnic groups, their existence, and often long histories more visible. It is naturally important to study female journalists and minority media separately, just as it is important to pay attention to specific types of journalism, publications, publishers, reporters, corporations, etc. Women and minorities should, nevertheless, be included in more general press historical presentations. After all, it is the grand national narratives that make them look marginal and unimportant.

Wider comparative or imperial perspectives can provide a sharper picture of journalism's common features. Such features may encompass technologies used for newspaper production, distribution and information retrieval, or patterns for professionalization of journalism, growth, and diversification of press and audience markets. The pace at which such changes take place naturally varies. Journalism's dependence on language should, perhaps, also be mentioned. National press histories tend to ignore this aspect, or reduce it to a rightful conquest of majority language press. The matter is, however, more complicated. For example, during the 19th century, Estonian language press was an important bearer of Estonian language and culture. The press can, thus, contribute to preservation and development

of lesser-used languages, whether representing majorities, or minorities. The press can be particularly important for small minorities, since once an ethnic majority has reached the dominating position, its own experience of being colonized does not necessarily stop it from discriminating others. Access to periodicals published across the border may be beneficial, but this can change, once the building of nation states has begun; for example, the Swedish newspapers in Sweden did not necessarily address the needs of Finnish or Estonian Swedes, who were part of different national projects. After all, the press has been deeply involved in nation building projects. The fact that only certain minorities have been able to sustain their own publications deserves more attention. Possible existence of, (or lack of), multiple voices should be taken into account. For example, Husband (2000) speaks of minorities' right to communicate and to be understood.

Lastly, national perspectives make it difficult to see an overall picture of how imperial governments' actions, policies, censorship practices, etc., and local reactions to them, affected the development of the society and the press in different areas. In colonized areas, the struggle took place on two fronts. Both Sweden and Russia, in their time, tried to harmonize the administrative system and more firmly integrate all their territories into the state. Such attempts affected different social classes in different ways. The local ruling elites developed different survival strategies, which reflected their attitudes to the common people, as well as to their colonial masters. Sweden and Russia also differed from each other. Burbank & Hagen (2007) wonder whether the imperial frame ever left Russia.

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# Methodological Approaches to European Communication and Media History

About comparisons, transfers, and a European public sphere

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## Abstract

In this paper European communication and media history is described as an emerging field of studies. Considering the methodological concepts for transnational research that were developed in historiography, it is discussed how these concepts are applied in communication and media history. In this specialized field of studies various kinds of comparisons are the most common methodological concepts. Transfers and their repercussions have been analyzed less frequently. Another concept is the analysis of the emergence and the development of transnational institutions. Here research efforts concentrate mainly on the European public sphere. Although all these concepts can be distinguished theoretically and most studies center on one or the other, they are more or less closely intertwined. Since European communication and media studies are still something new, there are numerous options for future research which are discussed at the end of this article.

Globalization is one of the key words used to describe the main trends in society at the beginning of the 21st century. The process of globalization is generally linked to the development of economic structures and to modern mass media. As the Western model of a market-driven economy has become the standard worldwide, international trade and multinational corporations have undergone rapid expansion, accompanied by the spread of Western lifestyle and culture. The mass media clearly play an important role in this process: they have an enormous impact on cultural patterns in various societies and life-worlds, and they provide basic information regarding current “world” events that everybody can be expected to know about. In this manner, they foster a specific kind of “world” consciousness. While “old” mass media, such as TV or radio broadcasting, perform this role more indirectly, the Internet not only offers direct access to worldwide information, it facilitates direct communication between people globally, especially in the Social Web.

In Europe, countries (and later nations) were always closely intertwined. Despite internal differences, Europe can be seen as a single cultural region and, in contrast to other regions and in a more historical perspective, as a certain

type of civilization. Attempts were made to unite Europeans after the widespread destruction of the Second World War, to overcome the perils of extreme forms of nationalism and to foster European integration. As a first step, common economic institutions were established, followed by the foundation of the European Union as a supranational political body. Mass media are undoubtedly of essential relevance for European integration and the emergence of a European public: they provide information on current developments in other European countries and on European events and have great relevance in constructing a common cultural background.

The powerful present-day trends of globalization and European unification are stimulating transnational research in the social sciences, cultural studies, and history. Communication or media history, located somewhere in between these disciplines, is also challenged to develop a transnational research perspective. When considering mass media as one of the major factors in modern societies and as one of the main driving forces in creating common cultural backgrounds at a transnational level, it is reasonable to take a closer look at how mass media have developed in a range of countries, how they have been influenced by cultural, societal, and technological impacts, and vice versa: how they have influenced culture,

society, and individual life-worlds. This type of (difficult and complex) research can be undertaken at the global level, but concentrating on Europe appears especially attractive because the proximal nature of European societies should make it easier to identify transfer processes and those factors responsible for differences or similarities in media development compared to a global perspective. Moreover, in a European and therefore somewhat limited setting, argumentation can be more concrete and empirically driven, and there is less danger of generalizations becoming too abstract and missing too many important details.

Another argument for undertaking European studies with respect to mass media history is not an academic one but is political or normative in nature. Research into European history and the common patterns, traditions,

or common culture contributes to the construction of a European identity. This might be particularly true for communication and media studies in two different ways. First, studies that treat Europe as a single field of research and reveal common developments in the field of mass media and communication underline the existence of common economic, political, and cultural foundations and therefore foster the idea of a European identity. Second, in a more direct way, communication and media studies can concentrate on the question of how Europe or European countries are represented in the media or other public forums and in this way analyze the role that these arenas play in forming European identities.

In this article, I will first describe European communication and media history as an emerging field of studies before considering the main methods of historical transnational research and the way they can be applied to communication and media history. Finally, I will discuss various research topics to encourage future research efforts in this field of study.

## European media and communication history as an emerging field of studies

Transnational research that compares different cases or that investigates transfers between

nations or societies has never been a mainstream of historical science. While the historiography of the Enlightenment used comparisons to identify universal historical processes, the comparative perspective using transnational comparisons as a methodical instrument did not appear until the 1930s. Affected by the experiences of nationalist outbreaks that led to the devastation of World War I, historians, including Marc Bloch in France and Otto Hintze in Germany, adopted approaches from related disciplines, mostly from social science, to advocate the idea of comparing in historiography. After 1945, historical sociology, comparing societies at the macro level and examining theoretical questions, provided

**Research into European history and the common patterns, traditions, or common culture contributes to the construction of a European identity.**

inputs for comparative history. Another impetus for comparing historical developments was the theory of modernization, which emphasizes a market-driven economy and political democracy as the most important criteria

for modernity. In the 1960s and 1970s, a time when historical science was strongly influenced by sociological theories and thinking, historical comparison experienced an upswing, with the comparative method most commonly used in the field of social history (Crossick, 1996; Haupt, 1996/2001; Kocka, 1996). In recent decades, historical comparisons have apparently become more attractive for historians. Kaelble (1996) listed approximately 200 books and articles published in the 1980s and 1990s based on international comparative research of European history in the 19th and 20th centuries, while in a recent publication in transnational history (Budde, Conrad, & Janz, 2010), the editors observed rising interest in transnational history, e.g., European history, postcolonial studies, and global history projects.

In communication and media history, there have been discussions in recent years that comparisons between countries and more transnational research would be desirable projects (Dahl, 2002; Jensen, 2002; Scannell, 2002). However, as the renowned scholar of communication studies Paddy Scannell (2002) stated in regard to Europe and North America: "Comparative media history does not yet exist" (p. 205). Although ten years ago the situation did not look as bleak as Scannell described it and some comparative studies already had been published, it is true

that a transnational perspective played a rather marginal role. This has changed recently. Three major introductions into transnational media and communication history are now available, and a number of more specialized studies in this field have been carried out. For example, Chapman (2005) in her introduction to media history uses a comparative approach to describe continuity and change in seven media industries – newspapers, radio, music, film, television, advertising, and the Internet – in Britain, France, the United States, Japan, and Germany since the French revolution 1789. The book demonstrates how basic concepts such as freedom of press, political repression, industrialization, and technological change and later, commercialization, consumerism, globalization, etc. influenced the emergence and the development of media in diachronic but similar ways in five major countries.

Briggs and Burke's *Social History of the Media* (2005), which covers the last 500 years of media development in the modern West since the invention of the printing press, is focused on

*the communication of information and ideas in words and images by means of speech, writing, print, radio, television and most recently by the Internet* (p. 2).

In their social and cultural history, Briggs and Burke concentrate mainly on the question how political, economic, and technological processes are connected with media change and the emergence of a public sphere. Social and cultural aspects of media history are also stressed in a rather recent publication *Mediengeschichte* [Media history] by Bösch (2011). Here the focus is on the development of mass media from the printing of the first books in the 15th century up to the introduction of commercial television in the 1970s/80s in Europe, influenced by technological innovations, societal modernization, political processes, and events like the reformation, the revolutions in the 18th/19th century, or the hot and cold wars of the 20th century.

Concerning more specialized transnational communication and media studies, I do not intend to provide a complete overview in this article. Considering the manifold language barriers in Europe, this might not only be a difficult, but also an impossible task. Instead, I will discuss some typical recent studies on different aspects of the development of modern mass media since the late 19th century when I

later describe methodological approaches to European communication and media history.

## Methodological concepts of transnational research in historiography

There are mainly two methodological concepts used in transnational research in historiography: comparisons and, more recently, transfer analyses and *histoire croisée*. Let us first take a closer look at comparisons. A historical comparison can be defined as an

*explicit and systematic comparison of two or more historical societies. The aim of this operation is to discover similarities and differences and the respective convergent or divergent processes* (Kaelble, 1999, p. 12 – translated by author).

The comparison generally extends to certain limited aspects or specific processes rather than whole societies, with the purpose of explaining the differences or similarities thus revealed and/or constructing a typology. Explanations concentrate on the causes of the differences or similarities against some larger common background. Typologies focus on the inner logic of the same phenomena in different societies, and thus help to understand their distinctive features.

Various methods of comparison have been discussed by historians, historical sociologists, and philosophers. The most important issue in this debate has been the distinction of a generalizing and an individualizing historical comparison: a generalizing comparison concentrates on universal norms that can be observed in all societies, while an individualizing comparison brings out the differences between societies and their specific trajectories as these are believed to be more powerful than universal norms or laws (Kaelble, 1999).

A frequently cited and almost classical concept of historical comparison by Charles Tilly (1984) is based not only on differentiation between a more individualizing comparison with one or just a few cases and a universalizing comparison with many cases. It also includes another dimension that concentrates on the multiplicity of forms or trajectories: Is only one to be analyzed or is the comparison about multiple forms? In this way, four forms of historical comparisons are



introduced. The individualizing comparison focuses on the alternative development of two or just a few cases. By contrast, the encompassing comparison selects instances at various locations within a larger structure or process and explains their characteristics as a function of their relationships to the whole, e.g., the economic development of England, Canada, and India in terms of their different relationships to the British Empire. Furthermore, the universalizing comparison searches for the general rules underlying historical developments, which can be found in many cases. Finally, the variation-finding comparison attempts to identify a general process that can take different trajectories in different cases, for example, the different trajectories of industrialization and modernization.

Based on the concepts of Tilly and others, Kaelble (1999) distinguished four main types of comparison based on their heuristic intention:

the analytical comparison tries to explain the causes of historical structures, institutions, mentalities, discourses, symbols, events, etc. and aims to construct typologies. The enlightening and evaluating comparison seeks to explain an aberration by contrasting positive and negative developments in two or more societies, whereas the comprehensive comparison focuses

on advancing the understanding of a foreign society, its otherness, and the inner logic of its institutions, mentalities, or structures. Finally, Kaelble mentions comparisons that construct some kind of identity. This can be a regional, national, or transnational (e.g., European) one.

Many historians warn against comparing too many cases and recommend working with smaller numbers at a medium level of abstraction (Baldwin, 2004; Haupt, 2001/2010; Haupt & Kocka, 1996; Tilly, 1984). With large numbers of cases, familiarity with the context declines and it is generally not possible to access sources directly, thereby increasing the reliance on secondary sources. Green (2004) points out that very different results can be achieved depending on whether the analysis is based on structural resemblance at the macro level or differences in specific micro-level settings. Ambitious

comparisons take both aspects into account, analyzing structural similarities and the specific agency within structural constraints.

The methodological concepts of transfer analyses and *histoire croisée* ("entangled history") have been applied mainly in countries with a long imperial history and in the field of postcolonial studies. However, for some time, these concepts have been considered an appropriate method for analyzing European social history. Scholars who favor transfer concepts emphasize the notion that comparisons underline the national framework and differences between nations. Phenomena that can be observed in two or more countries at the same time are contrasted without considering sequences and interferences (Paulmann, 1998). Therefore, transfer concepts adopt a diachronic perspective on relations, influences, and movements that cross national borders and cultures (Osterhammel, 2001). The aim of such

**The authors criticize both comparisons and transfer analyses: they hold that comparisons are static by nature and influenced by the observer's perspective or the choice of the scale and object of comparison. Transfer analyses can also miss the dynamics of processes.**

concepts is to analyze the way that transfers are adapted or redefined in other cultural contexts. Transfer objects can be ideas, material goods, people, institutions, etc. However, transfer history is impossible without comparisons. According to Paulmann (1998), a historian who wants to recognize what occurs in an intercultural transfer must at least

compare the old state of the examined object in its original cultural setting to its new context within a different culture. The most elaborated concept in this field—*histoire croisée*—is defined in a programmatic article by Werner and Zimmermann (2006) as an approach that "offers new leads for getting beyond the stalemate in the debate between comparativists and transfer specialists" (Werner & Zimmermann, 2006, p. 32). The authors criticize both comparisons and transfer analyses: they hold that comparisons are static by nature and influenced by the observer's perspective or the choice of the scale and object of comparison. Transfer analyses can also miss the dynamics of processes; e.g., when they conceptualize transfers as linear processes or define points of departure and arrival in different cultures as stable situations.

For Werner and Zimmermann, the notion of intersection is of central relevance in transfer

analyses and has four consequences: first, the objects of research are not considered merely in relation to one another, “but also through one another, in terms of relationships, interactions and circulation,” thus indicating the active and dynamic character of intersections. Second, *histoire croisée* pays particular attention to the consequences—the effects and repercussions—of intercrossings. Third, the intercrossings are seen as processes of crisscrossing and interweaving, with special emphasis on the resistance, inertia, modifications, and new combinations that are developed in the process of crossing. Finally,

*the entities, persons, practices, or objects that are intertwined with, or affected by, the crossing process, do not necessarily remain intact and identical in form*  
(Werner & Zimmermann, 2006, p. 38).

We may therefore conclude that transfers should be taken into account to some extent when comparing developments between diverse countries or cultures to avoid overestimating the national framework as a point of reference and guard against constructing “artificial” synchronic differences that would not be present in a more diachronic perspective. On the other hand, transfer analyses are not possible without comparing, and they should not only concentrate on a one-way transfer process but also consider possible feedbacks and reciprocal effects.

## Applying methodological concepts of transnational research in European communication and media history

The above-described concepts can be applied in communication and media history, but some additions and modifications to this specialized field of research are necessary. In communication and media history research, we can differentiate mainly three concepts:

- Comparisons between different aspects of media communication (media production, media as institutions, media content, audiences, effects) in its various forms and the interrelations with culture, society, politics, economy, and technological developments.
- The concept of transfers, including adaptations and possible reciprocal effects, can be applied to the field of media production (spreading of new technologies, professional

practices, genres, etc.) and to media content (for example, transborder broadcasting, the export of TV programs, and the reception of these contents by audiences).

- The analysis of the emergence and development of transnational institutions, such as media companies and public spheres. The latter are of course especially relevant in a European setting where a common public sphere is seen as a prerequisite for the European unification process.

So far comparisons have dominated European communication and media history. Combining and modifying the concepts of Tilly and Kaelble, we can identify the individualizing comparison as a first type in communication and media history. It aims to contrast “specific instances of a given phenomenon as a means of grasping the peculiarities of each case” (Tilly, 1984, p. 82) (here Kaelble distinguishes an enlightening and a comprehensive comparison; the first one focuses on evaluations while the other one is rather neutral). An example for an individualizing comparison is Bösch’s *Öffentliche Geheimnisse* [Public Secrets] (2009) about press scandals in Britain and Germany around 1900. The publication of previously tabooed or concealed norm violations, such as homosexuality, adultery, corruption, or atrocities in the colonies, came to be a common phenomenon in both countries at that time. Bösch explains this with the rise of the modern popular mass press and the politicization and democratization of societies, which led to new ideological cleavages. His aim is not only to demonstrate how norms, patterns of interpretation, politics, and media changed, but he also wants to reveal the specific political cultures of Britain and Germany. Surprisingly, the detailed study shows that in the German *Kaiserreich* some remarkable modernization processes could be observed and that the political and cultural liberality of the British parliamentary democracy should not be overestimated. For example, instances of high-ranking officers or noble men with homosexual inclinations or cases of adulterous politicians were treated more liberally in Germany than in Britain.

Another example of an individualizing comparison comprising more than two countries is Requate’s (1995) study of the professionalization of journalism in the late 19th century. Requate compares the emergence of professional journalism in the United States, Britain, France, and Germany. Yet the focus is clearly on Germany. The other countries are

included to demonstrate the peculiarities of the German case. Requate concludes that Germany, in contrast to Anglo-Saxon countries, provided a discredited norm of objectivity, partly because harsh censorship was simultaneously the norm in former times. On the other hand, newspapers did not play such an important role in the formation of political parties as in France. Thus, German journalists could develop the ideal of an independent partisan journalism.

The second type of comparisons Kaelble calls analytical. These comparisons are not focused on the peculiarities of a single case but aim to explain the causes for similar or different structures, institutions, processes, etc. Tilly differentiates the analytical comparison into two different concepts: the universalizing comparison “aims to establish that every instance of a phenomenon follows essentially the same rule” whereas the variation-finding comparison is

*supposed to establish a principle of variation in the character or intensity of a phenomenon by examining systematic differences among instances* (Tilly, 1984, p. 82).

Thus, universalizing comparisons focus more on communalities and variation-finding comparisons more on differences.

Good examples of variation-finding and universalizing comparisons are four studies that treat a similar theme but set their focus quite differently. Humphreys (1996) compares the media systems and media politics in Britain, France, Germany, and Italy in the second half of the 20th century. Although he takes into account technological innovations and economic trends that point towards historically convergent outcomes, he is more occupied with demonstrating differences between Western European countries, explaining them by referring to nationally specific political and cultural factors. Thus, he finds distinct models of media systems based on particular combinations of libertarian/free market and social responsibility principles. The main differences can be seen, for example, in the public broadcasting systems and their relationships to the political sphere or in the different extent of state support for the press.

In his analysis of European media systems, Williams' (2005) focus is more on the last decades and the forces producing similar structures, contents, practices, and performances. His main thesis is that due to technological, political, and

economic changes, “European media systems are beginning to converge” (Williams, 2005, p. 4). Specific national differences have been eroding mainly since the 1980s when new media technologies became available and the markets were deregulated. An international study group not only concentrated on markets and institutional developments of European media systems over the last 50 years but also carried out a content analysis of European newspapers and television programs (Gripsrud & Weibull, 2010). Although the study group observed differences in detail, the analyses concentrated on revealing common trends, such as the trivialization of newspaper reporting or the fictionalization of television programs.

Finally, Weymouth and Lamizet (1996), in their study of media markets in Britain, France, Germany, and Italy since 1945, find a considerable degree of variation mostly in the years before 1980 whereas the post-1980 period is marked by various commonalities that are linked to common technological, political, and socio-economic developments. As in Weymouth and Lamizet's study, some comparisons do not fit into the distinction of variation-finding or universalizing comparisons. For example, in Zimmermann's (2007) analysis of media systems in Nazi-Germany, fascist Italy, and Spain, variations and similarities are treated rather equally and are explained based on concepts such as modernization, mediatization of politics, and totalitarianism.

Another international study group does not compare whole media systems but concentrates on European television mostly for the years after 1945 (Bignell & Fickers 2008). In a rather broad approach, the authors in this book employ a comparative perspective of the variation-finding and universalizing kind and analyze transfers. Based on different methods and various theoretical concepts, case studies are presented that concentrate on the institutional development of television, media contents, and audience reception. It is shown, for example, how state control of television mattered in such different countries as France, Greece, and Romania, how TV programs are perceived and interpreted quite differently in national European settings, and how American television always has been an important point of reference for European TV. The work of this study group thus combines comparative approaches and transfer analyses. However, even in cases not explicitly aimed at combining these two methods, they are usually in

some way intertwined so that many comparative studies also include transfer analysis: for example, Williams (2005) discusses the American influence on European journalism, and Bösch (2010) takes into account interrelations between British and German press scandals.

Studies on communication and media history concentrating on transfers of new technologies or professional practices and formats are rather rare. The examples discussed here focus on the diffusion of forms and styles of news reporting (Broersma 2007) and news paradigms (Høyer & Pöttker, 2005). The book edited by Broersma is concerned with the spreading of the American form and style of news reporting across Europe after the 1890s and the ways these concepts were adapted in various countries. Case studies on Scandinavia, Germany, and the Netherlands demonstrate that, due to national traditions and political and cultural circumstances, the adoption of American journalism was a rather long-term process and often only parts of the American model found their way into European journalism. In the book edited by Høyer and Pöttker, authors from various countries, in similar ways and coming mostly to similar results, analyze the diffusion of the news paradigm in Scandinavia, Germany, and Central and Eastern Europe. In the case of the Central and Eastern European countries, the authors describe, for example, how the Western news model was only partially adapted in Poland and Russia after the breakdown of the communist regimes in the 1980/90s and a mixture of new and old styles became dominant instead.

Regarding transfers of media content, some studies have been carried out concentrating on the institutions and programs of international radio propaganda, although the analyses relatively seldom addressed the reception of these programs in target countries and therefore the actual transfer processes. In contrast, a recent publication edited by Johnson and Parta (2010) about American radio programs focuses on the reception of Western broadcasts in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Based on an analysis of various audience surveys and studies carried out by American broadcasters and by researchers of the target countries, the reactions of Soviet and Eastern European party officials to the Western radio programs and the countermeasures undertaken, such as jamming, the editors come to the conclusion that the Western information programs in the Cold War were a remarkable

success: the programs had a relatively large regular audience and influenced attitudes and opinions. Another good example of a study about international radio propaganda is Ribeiro's (2011) analyses of BBC broadcasts to Portugal in World War II. Ribeiro not only considers contents and reception but also the historical political and societal background. Due to harsh censorship of war news in politically neutral but authoritarian governed Portugal, there was a strong need for outside information. Since the BBC did not openly broadcast propaganda and presented itself as an objective news source, it gained huge popularity among the majority of the Portuguese and was much more successful than the German Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft with its Portuguese programs. Thus, the BBC broadcasts strengthened pro-British sentiments in Portuguese society and the general support for the Allied cause.

Regarding the export of TV programs or TV formats and their reception in different countries, examples can be found in the above-cited multifaceted reader edited by Bignell and Fickers (2008). Bourdon et al. (2008), for instance, analyze the European circulation of the German crime reality show *Aktenzeichen XY ... ungelöst* (Case XY ... Unsolved), broadcasted in Germany since 1967. Since the show animated its audience to help the police solve real crimes, it evoked public debates on questions of democratic legitimacy and moral responsibility in Germany and the Netherlands, where it was introduced in the early 1980s. By contrast, the British adaption, *Crimewatch UK*, which was introduced in 1984, did not provoke any discussions about legal and moral issues. Bourdon et al. explain this with the different sociopolitical climate in Thatcherite Britain in the mid-1980s where the program corresponded ideologically with the government's policy of reinforcing *law and order*.

The last methodological concept relevant for European communication and media history is the analysis of transnational institutions. Of course, transfers and comparisons can also be part of this kind of analysis, but methodologically it is a different concept because the central aim is not to grasp the peculiarities of particular cases, to explain variations according to some rules, or to see how innovations or media contents are adapted, but rather to understand how transnational institutions emerge and evolve. Transnational institutions are, for example, international media companies and public spheres. Yet, the main institution that research in European communication and media history

has revolved around so far is the European public sphere. The analysis of the European public sphere, especially when comparing countries, comes close to Tilly's concept of an encompassing comparison: variations are not explained by certain principles (alone) but by their relationship to the whole. The characteristics of the instances to be compared can be functional or dysfunctional for the larger whole. The analysis of the European public sphere also resembles Kaelbe's fourth type of comparisons, which aims to construct some kind of identity, in this case, of course, the European one.

Due to the European unification process (and possibly the funding by the European Union), the analysis of the European public sphere has been a rather prominent theme in communication studies. However, these studies are usually not historical and are geared toward mapping the current situation instead. There are nevertheless a few studies on the origins and development of the European public sphere, which is usually conceptualized as a forum or a multitude of forums where people from different European countries discuss issues of importance for Europe as a whole and thus, to some degree, leave national framings or perspectives behind and form a common identity. The forums can be conceptualized as face-to-face or media publics. Since European transnational media only play a marginal role (e.g., the Franco-German cultural TV channel *Arte*), usually the reporting of European issues in national media is analyzed assuming that the Europeanization of national media can be perceived as an equivalent to a European public sphere.

For example, in an anthology published by Kaelbe, Kirsch, and Schmidt-Gernig (2002), the authors attempt to trace early European publics since the 1900s. Although not all examples in this book are convincing, the authors show how transnational networks and forums, such as congresses and meetings, played an important role in the women's rights movement in the early 20th century (Zimmermann, 2002), in

European non-governmental organizations after 1945 (Fetzer, 2002), in the students movement of 1968 (Gilcher-Holtey, 2002), or in the so-called new social movements some years later (Rucht, 2002). Thus, these movements and organizations could be regarded as a kind of "catalyst" for the emergence of a European identity. In another interesting anthology (Requate & Wessel, 1999), the early European public in the 19th and early 20th century is conceptualized not as something tangible but as a normative idea that groups with little power in national settings, such as the European Jews or ethnic minorities, could appeal to.

In a European research project (Triandafyllidou, Wodak, & Krzyzhanowski, 2009), scholars from various countries aimed to find out how the European public sphere emerged in European media after 1945. The group carried out several case studies concentrating on discourse about the European idea and the emergence of European values in various media from different countries in times of European and international crisis. They draw the conclusion that Europe as community of values did not exist in the media until the beginning of the 21st century. In the second half of the 20th century, Europe was mainly seen as a geographical territory; more important at that time was the East-West divide. Values were not perceived as European

but as national, universal, or Western values. Nevertheless, a European public sphere already existed in a very limited way because the media in the various countries reported about the same events or issues, but, of course, the interpretations and framings were rather different. Still another example is a study by Meyer (2010) on the development of the European public sphere in the two decades before the Maastricht treaty (1969-1991). Based on quantitative content and qualitative discourse analysis of newspapers in France, Britain, and Germany, he draws the conclusion that there are traces of a development pointing towards a European public sphere. For example, European integration and the emerging European polity increasingly became a point of reference in the newspapers. Meyer also underlines some differences between the three countries: for

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instance, when discussing European issues, British media had a stronger focus on domestic actors than German newspapers. All these studies show that the European public sphere is not something that has developed only since the 1990s but that its emergence has been rather a long-term, complex, and by no means linear process.

### Future research into European media history

Since European communication and media history is an emerging field of studies that became more visible just recently, there are plenty of opportunities for future research, which can go in many directions. At this point, it is not possible to point out research gaps systematically. Only some suggestions can be made as to what themes could prove to be interesting areas of research in the future. Comparative research has so far focused on studies concerned with the institutional development of European mass media and the political, technological, economic, and social contexts in the years following 1945. Therefore, more studies systematically addressing earlier periods would be desirable, especially studies ranging from the time of the emergence of modern mass media in the late 19th century up to the middle of the last century. Such a wider historical background could help us develop historically rooted typologies of European media systems and add more depth to existing typologies, such as the three reasonably well-known models by Hallin and Mancini (2004). Moreover, studies analyzing media content are also rather scarce. Here, not only rather formal content analyses about topics such as the trivialization of newspapers or TV programs would be interesting but also more thematic analyses about the role European media played in important historical political, social, or cultural discourses or conflicts, e.g., the rise of fascist and national socialist movements in the years between the two world wars, the cultural restoration in the 1950s, the East-West divide of Europe, the rise of student movements in the late 1960s, or the rising concern for environmental issues since the 1970s. Other research topics of considerable interest are

discourses in different countries about the media itself: Was the emergence of new media welcomed or subject to controversy? What social norms are discussed in debates about new media or media contents? Besides content analyses, comparative studies on the historical development of media professions and media audiences are also research themes deserving more attention. Finally, it might be a promising endeavor to analyze the path of European societies toward becoming “media societies” in the past decades, especially how the process of mediatization has changed politics in Europe.

In transfer research, more detailed studies about the dissemination of forms and styles in journalism would be interesting. So far, the focus seems to be on newspaper journalism and journalism in general. But how did innovations in other news media, such as magazines, radio,

In many transnational studies, and not only in those on the European public sphere, research efforts are concentrated on Western and Northern Europe. Much fewer studies take Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe into account. Future studies should aim to fill this geographical gap.

or television spread? And what can be said about the diffusion and adaption of entertaining formats such as TV dramas, quiz shows, etc. Were transfers of innovations a one-way street (mostly from the United States to Europe or generally from the West to the East) or are there repercussions that have to be

taken into account? Deeper analyses about modes of production, editorial organization, or technological innovations could also be rewarding projects. Whereas there are studies into international transborder broadcasting, the reception of certain imported TV programs or other internationally disseminated media contents relatively seldom have been analyzed so far. This draws attention to questions about the transnationalization of media spaces, about the ways Europeans have influenced each other, and maybe more important, how they were influenced from the “outside,” primarily from the United States (or in the case of Eastern Europe also by the Soviet Union).

Concerning transnational media institutions other than the rise of multinational companies and the media politics of the European Community and the European Union respectively, research on the emergence and development of the European



public sphere might pose the most challenging task. Interesting research themes might be the public sphere in the early days of the European institutions in the 1950s and 1960s, the linkage between the development of media discourses and public opinions, or the European public sphere in diverse non-media publics, for example, in European networks of scientists, employers, unions, churches, etc.

In many transnational studies, and not only in those on the European public sphere, research efforts are concentrated on Western and Northern Europe. Much fewer studies take Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe into account. Future studies should aim to fill this geographical gap. A great problem in transnational communication and media studies are, of course, language barriers. They are less severe in case studies comparing only two or three countries; however, it is common for researchers to compare their own country with those with a familiar language. Because most scholars know English and, apart from their mother tongue, perhaps one other language (such as French), this tends to limit comparisons to a few countries. The language problem can only be overcome by collaborative European research. Therefore, in performing transnational studies, it is necessary to actively search for scholars with similar interests in other countries and form European networks.

## Conclusion

Stimulated by the present-day trend of globalization and European unification, transnational studies have become more attractive for scholars of communication and media history. Since the last decade, three introductions with a focus on Western and European media and communication history and a number of more specialized studies have been published. In historiography, methodological concepts for transnational research have been developed, such as typologies of comparisons and transfer analysis,

specifically *histoire croisée*. These concepts, with some modifications, can be applied to the specialized field of communication and media history. The most common methodological concept in European communication and media history is the comparison. Comparisons can aim to reveal the peculiarities of one or two cases or can focus on explaining either variations or similarities in structures, institutional settings, processes, etc. However, not all comparisons follow such a clear concept; often both common characteristics and variations are described and explained, sometimes using a theoretical concept. Transfers (and their repercussions) have been analyzed less frequently in communication and media history. Here, the major themes are the diffusion of innovations in media and journalism and the reception of transborder broadcasts and foreign media contents. Another concept relevant for European communication and media history is the analysis of transnational institutions, especially the analysis of the European public sphere. Although all these concepts can be distinguished theoretically and most studies center on one or the other, they are more or less intertwined: comparisons refer to transfers, transfers without comparisons seem logically impossible, and analyses of transnational institutions usually compare or take transfers into account.

Since European communication and media history is an emerging field of study, there are numerous options for future research. While there are some comparative studies and analyses of the historical development of the European public sphere, transfers, their reception and reciprocal effects relatively seldom have been research topics. Certain European regions, such as Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe, are also scarcely addressed. Finally, it should be remarked that studies on European media and communication history in most cases have to take relations with other world regions into account. This is especially true for influences from the United States.

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## Rezensionen

HORST PÖTTKER / CHRISTIAN SCHWARZENEGGER (Hrsg.): *Europäische Öffentlichkeit und journalistische Verantwortung*. Köln: Herbert von Halem Verlag 2010, 484 Seiten.

Gibt es sie bzw. wird es eine europäische Öffentlichkeit jemals geben? Und was exakt ist unter dem Begriff „Öffentlichkeit“ überhaupt zu verstehen? Wie in anderen Werken zum Thema kommen auch die Autoren dieses Sammelbandes nicht umhin, sich diesen Fragen zu stellen, die hierin zwischen Kommunikationstheorie und -philosophie sowie europäischen Kommunikations-Welten oszillieren. Auf den Ergebnissen einer Tagung fundierend, zu der das Institut für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft Wien und der Verein zur Förderung der publizistischen Selbstkontrolle anno 2009 nach Wien luden, stellten die Herausgeber ein mit 23 Beiträgen in deutscher und englischer Sprache üppiges Werk zusammen. Den vier Abschnitten inhaltlicher Auseinandersetzungen in Form von Artikeln folgen ein Transkript der Expertendiskussion im Rahmen der Tagung sowie ein Fazit. Einen breiten Blickwinkel bietet der Band nicht zuletzt durch die Internationalität der aus verschiedensten Regionen Europas stammenden Autoren. Der thematische Fokus konzentriert sich neben der Auseinandersetzung mit „Öffentlichkeit“ an sich mit verschiedenen Formen einer Medien-Selbstregulierung im Unterschied zu Kontrollvarianten von „Außen“.

In der Einleitung legt Miklos Haraszti die Grundregeln fest: „Creating a *public sphere*, which we think of, since the time of the great scholar, Jürgen Habermas, as the process of elaboration of a rational discourse in society, has an elementary importance for the sanity of democracy.“ (S. 36) Einen spannenden Input zum Thema Selbstregulierung gibt Haraszti mit Blick auf die Debatten um die Mohammed-Karikaturen, die in den letzten Jahren (nicht nur) Medien- und Wissenschaftslandschaften beschäftigten: „We [...] advised governments not to pass new laws and supported the idea that media professionals and media self-regulatory mechanisms should handle this challenge.“ (S. 36f.) Jens Woelke, Christian Steininger und Torsten Maurer beschäftigen sich mit der „Realität europäischer Öffentlichkeit“,

indem sie die „Darstellung der EU in Informationssendungen des deutschen und österreichischen Fernsehens“ untersuchen. Dabei kommen sie u.a. zum Schluss, dass der ORF, besonders der TV-Sender ORF 1, seiner Rolle als Informant über europäische Fragen nicht in der Weise nachkommt wie das deutsche Pendant ZDF. Ob EU-Korrespondenten einer europäischen Öffentlichkeit den Weg bereiten können, fragt Anke Offerhaus in ihrer tiefgehenden, ertragreichen Untersuchung der Bedingungen dieser Redakteure an den EU-Schnittstellen. Trotz Ansätzen einer Selbstregulierung der Korrespondenten fällt ihr Fazit allerdings ernüchternd aus.

Oder könnte Entertainment als Vorbild dienen? Cornelia Wallner sieht die Notwendigkeit einer Ausweitung der kommunikationswissenschaftlichen Europafor schung auch in diese Richtung: „Die Unterhaltungsinhalte fließen in die gesellschaftlichen (auch grenzübergreifenden) Ausverhandlungsprozesse von Werten und Normen ein, was u.a. an der den Massenmedien zugesprochenen Sozialisationsfunktion erkennbar wird.“ (S. 79) Dabei erkennt sie in diesem Feld bereits eine weitaus größere Internationalisierung als im Bereich der politischen Öffentlichkeit. Cornelia Brantner bespielt das „österreichische EU-Theater“: Von den (medialen) Akteuren nimmt in ihrem auf einem Vergleich der Berichterstattung zur EU-Osterweiterung in österreichischen Medien fußenden Befund das rot-weiß-rote Boulevardblatt *Kronen Zeitung* (einmal mehr) eine Sonderrolle als gleichsam mächtiges und Europaskeptisches Medium ein. Einem zutiefst klischeehaft typischen Phänomen der europäischen Öffentlichkeit widmet sich Natasa Simeunovic: dem „Eurovision Song Contest“. Aber übertreffen die nationalen, lokalen und regionalen Identitäten in Wahrheit die pan-europäischen Emotionen? Der Song Contest entwickle zumindest Debatten über Angelegenheiten in Bezug auf Europa, folgert Simeunovic vorsichtig optimistisch.

Der nächste Abschnitt im Buch ist dem strukturellen Überblick gewidmet: Adeline Hulin und Robert Pinker vergleichen die Presseräte in den verschiedenen EU-Mitgliedsstaaten, beschreiben ihre Kompetenzen, Defizite, Kontexte und Strukturen. Einer europaweiten Einrichtung dieser Art sagen sie ab. Mikhail Fedotovs Beitrag führt eine

Reihe von nationalen Fallbeispielen und Ländervergleichen an und bewertet dabei die russische „Grand Jury“ und ihre Instrumente als durchaus effizient. Huub Evers konstatiert, dass der niederländische Ombudsmann etwa in Zeitungen nur in einer unabhängigen Form zur besseren Selbstkontrolle im Journalismus beiträgt, diese Idealform aber „zu einer kleinen Minderheit gehört“ (S. 231). Eine Fallstudie zur Problematik grenzüberschreitender Selbstregulierung präsentiert Radomir Cholakov am Beispiel Bulgariens und behandelt die Frage, ob europäische „Einmischung“ nationale Selbstregulierung schwächen kann. Philipp Schmallegger überprüft, wie die Europäische Union in türkischen und österreichischen Zeitungen bildlich und textlich dargestellt wird und argumentiert, dass nur EU-Berichterstattung in ausreichender Qualität und Quantität für eine europäische Integration entscheidend sein kann.

Am Anfang des vierten Teil des Bandes („Journalistische Selbstkontrolle als Bestandteil des Kommunikationsraumes – Möglichkeiten und Barrieren“) entwickeln Roland Burkart, Uta Russmann und Jürgen Grimm für den österreichischen Nationalratswahlkampf 2008 einen „Verständigungsorientierungs-Index“, der zeigt, dass „weniger als ein Viertel der Berichterstattung als verständigungsorientiert begriffen werden kann“ (S. 257), also neben Positionen auch Begründungen liefert. William Gore dagegen umreißt die Vor- und Nachteile eines pan-europäischen Presserates und gibt am Ende des Textes zu, den Titel seines Beitrags, „Benefits and disadvantages“, eigentlich zu verraten: Denn auch er sieht das Modell als wenig zielführend an. Für den Austausch zwischen nationalen Räten wäre die „Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe“ geeigneter. „Vorläufig nicht...“ titelt auch Peter Studer seinen Beitrag „Vom Sinn und Unsinn eines europäischen Presserates“. Im Gegenteil: Ein europäischer Kodex oder Rat könnte die Entwicklung des sich internationalisierenden Systems gar verkomplizieren und verlangsamen, befürchtet er in seiner auch die rechtlichen Grundlagen betrachtenden Auseinandersetzung. Ergebnisse einer vergleichenden Inhaltsanalyse von Zeitungskommentaren über Verfassungsdebatten der EU, durchgeführt von Hans-Jörg Trenz, machen einmal mehr die Macht und die Verantwortung der Medien deutlich, nicht zuletzt, wenn es um Euroskeptizismus geht.

Im letzten Beitragsteil des Sammelbandes sucht Henrik Kaufholz nach alternativen Möglich-

keiten für die gelungene Selbstkontrolle – und kann sich vor allem mit der Einrichtung von Ombudsmännern anfreunden. Horst Pöttker appelliert in seinem Beitrag wiederum für eine europäische Kommission, an der Journalisten, Herausgeber und das Publikum beteiligt sind. Vielmehr als einen Presserat hat Pöttker die Vision eines „Councils for the European Public Sphere“. Co-Herausgeber Christian Schwarzenegger seziert Europa abseits der nationalen Grenzen. Der Beitrag argumentiert, dass unter der vieldiskutierten „großen“ EU-Öffentlichkeit bereits jetzt viele grenzüberschreitende bestehen, so wie auch die Nationalstaaten-„Container“ kleinere, regionale Container beinhalten, in denen sich soziale Gruppen finden und von anderen abgrenzen. Der Debatte um eine europäische Öffentlichkeit gibt Schwarzenegger mit auf den Weg: „There is not one communication space in the making; there are plenty of them.“ (S. 373) Strukturanalytisch wird es wieder im Beitrag von Marcus Kreutler, der journalistische Ethik-Kodizes aus 44 europäischen Ländern vergleicht. Dabei findet er erstaunlich viele Gemeinsamkeiten. Komplexe Fragen zur medialen europäischen Integration sind für ihn aber nur durch einen gemeinsamen Kodex möglich, wie ihn das „Forum for European Journalism Students“ bereits entwickelt hat.

In der Transparenz und der Vernetzung durch Online-Medien sieht Katrin Enders ein Erfolgskriterium, wie Selbstregulierung zukünftig aussehen kann. Kaarle Nordenstreng betont abschließend, dass in der Medienselbstregulierung eine vierte Form der Medienregulierung neben Gesetz, Markt und Öffentlichkeit durch Bürger verstanden werden kann und tritt für einen Europäischen Rat für Medienselbstregulierung ein.

Abgerundet wird der Band durch das Transkript einer Diskussion zwischen Vertretern aus den Medien und der Wissenschaft sowie durch ein Fazit von Wolfgang R. Langenbacher. Viele in den vorigen Beiträgen bereits angesprochenen Aspekte nochmals streifend diskutiert Langenbacher den „Königsweg“ einer „Europäisierung der nationalen Öffentlichkeiten“ (S. 470), der allerdings ein langer Weg ohne Abkürzungen zu sein scheint. Das Fazit stellt einen passenden Schlusspunkt eines Sammelbandes dar, der hohe Erwartungen weckt – und auch einige davon erfüllen kann. Allein: Der etwas zu oft auftauchende Österreich-Bezug und die trotz allem noch zu wenig vertretenen Perspektiven aus weiteren



europäischen Regionen lassen (noch) breitere internationale Blickwinkel vermissen. Und der an manchen Stellen etwas enge theoretische Fokus gibt wenig Antwort darauf, welche weiteren kommunikationswissenschaftlichen Sichtweisen auf das Thema europäische Öffentlichkeit und Selbstkontrolle im Journalismus gibt.

Richard Solder, Wien

**PADDY SCANNELL:** *Medien und Kommunikation*. Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Matthias Berg und Maren Hartmann. Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag 2011, 361 Seiten.

Paddy Scannell, Mitbegründer (1979) und bis heute Mitherausgeber der Fachzeitschrift *Media, Culture & Society*, ist ein englischer Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaftler, der sich u.a. als Spezialist für die Geschichte des Rundfunks einen Namen gemacht hat, aber im deutschsprachigen Raum wenig bekannt ist. Er blickt auf jahrzehntelange Lehrerfahrung in Großbritannien (Univ. of Westminster, London) zurück und hat seit 2006 eine Professur an der Univ. of Michigan in Ann Arbor, USA inne. Das vorliegende Buch ist ein Produkt dieser langjährigen Lehrstätigkeit und erschien 2007 in der englischen Originalversion. Zur Übersetzung ins Deutsche kam es, als sich Studenten des Bachelorstudiengangs Kulturwissenschaft an der Universität Bremen unter der Leitung von Matthias Berg mit den Inhalten des Buches auseinandersetzten und unter dem Motto „von Studierenden für Studierende“ eine erste deutschsprachige Fassung erarbeiteten. Gemeinsam mit Maren Hartmann hat Berg schließlich die deutsche Übersetzung herausgegeben.

Scannells primäres Anliegen ist es – wie er in der Einleitung schreibt – Studierenden der Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft eine Darstellung der Entwicklung dieser beiden Fächer im Laufe des letzten Jahrhunderts zu geben. Damit meint er zum einen die Entwicklung einer Soziologie der Massenkommunikation in den USA von den 1930ern bis in die 1950er Jahre und zum anderen die Entstehung der media studies als Zweig der Cultural Studies in Großbritannien von den 1960ern bis Ende der 1970er Jahre. Darüber hinaus fokussiert er noch einen dritten Strang, nämlich die deutsche intellektuelle Tradition der kritischen Sozialtheorie im Umfeld der Frankfurter Schule. Insgesamt geht es ihm nicht um Voll-

ständigkeit, sondern eher um einen „Blick auf die Berggipfel“ (S. 15).

Worin bestehen diese „Gipfel“?

Das Buch ist in drei Teile gegliedert. Der erste Teil heißt: „Die Massen“ und versammelt zunächst unter dem Titel „Massenkommunikation“ die kommunikationssoziologischen Urväter und intellektuellen Schwergewichte aus den 1930er und 1940er Jahren. Das sind der Österreicher Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, der Deutsche Theodor W(iesengrund) Adorno und der Amerikaner Robert K. Merton. Bereits das Durchlesen dieses ersten (etwa 25seitigen) Kapitels zeigt die Besonderheit der Herangehensweise von Paddy Scannell: Er fokussiert eine wissenschaftliche Zeitströmung im Kontext gesellschaftlicher Entwicklungen und technischer Innovationen gleichsam im Brennglas herausragender Persönlichkeiten. Hier sind es die soeben genannten, anhand derer er die von Amerika her aufkeimende (Idee der) Massengesellschaft mit der Entstehung der (kritischen) Sozialforschung und der beginnenden Auseinandersetzung mit dem neuen Medium „Rundfunk“ in Verbindung bringt. Man erfährt, wie Lazarsfeld aus dem Wiener Institut für Psychologie heraus begann, kommerzielle Auftragsforschung zu betreiben und diese Idee (die später zur Marktforschung wurde) im Zuge seiner Emigration in die USA exportierte, dort mit damals jungen Soziologen wie Robert Merton kooperierte und wie Teddy Wiesengrund auf Betreiben Lazarsfelds in die USA geholt wurde (dann den Namen seiner italienischen Mutter „Adorno“ annahm), zunächst für CBS Hörerforschung betrieb und sein erstes Memorandum über *Musik im Rundfunk* verfasste.

Möglicherweise täuscht diese Darstellung jetzt: Es handelt sich nämlich nicht um eine Aneinanderreihung biografischer Details über die genannten Personen – ganz im Gegenteil: Was Scannell tut und was ihm auch gelingt, das ist vielmehr eine Einbettung, besser vielleicht: eine Verflechtung biografischer Details mit theoretischen und methodischen Entwicklungen – hier: der frühen Kommunikations- und Mediensoziologie.

Unter dem Titel „Massenkultur“ greift Scannell dann abermals auf Adorno, aber v.a. auch auf Max Horkheimer, Bert Brecht und Walter Benjamin zurück. Ein drittes Unterkapitel („Das Ende der Massen“) bemüht schließlich neben Lazarsfeld und Merton auch David Riesman und Elihu Katz mit ihren Lebenslauf-Details als Zeitzeugen (und zugleich Protagonisten) einer Entwicklung,

die – nicht zuletzt auch durch den auf Lazarsfeld zurückgehenden Opinion Leader-Ansatz – zu berechtigten Zweifeln am Glauben an die Wirkungs-Allmacht der Medien führte.

In diesem Stil ist eigentlich das gesamte Buch verfasst. Es hat noch zwei weitere große Teile: „Der Alltag“ (Teil 2) zeigt uns, wie der Blick auf Medien als Teil der Alltagskultur gerichtet wird (wir lernen hier im deutschsprachigen Raum wenig erwähnte englische Autoren wie Leavis, Hoggart und Williams kennen), der Blick wird aber auch auf Medien als technische Innovationen gerichtet (Innis, McLuhan) und auf den bis heute sehr präsenten Interaktionskontext (vertreten durch die Klassiker Goffman und Garfinkel). Teil 3 („Kommunikative Rationalität und Irrationalität“) beginnt mit der auch bei uns unter dem Label „linguistic turn“ bekannten Hinwendung zur Sprache als dem zentralen menschlichen Kommunikationsmedium (die handelnden Personen sind hier Austin, Grice, Sacks und Levinson) und führt über die ideologische Wende in der Kommunikationsperspektive (durch Stuart Hall und seine Cultural Studies) hin zum deutschen Theoretiker einer kommunikativen Öffentlichkeit schlechthin, zu Jürgen Habermas. Ihm ist als einzigem Protagonisten ein ganzes (knapp 30seitiges) Kapitel gewidmet.

Insgesamt stellen sich die Abschnitte des Buches als eine durchgehende, ineinander verflochtene Narration dar: Anhand zentraler Figuren der Kommunikationsforschung wird ein wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Kontext nachvollziehbar, der aus einer Gemengelage von gesellschaftlicher Entwicklung, (medien-)technischem Fortschritt, kritischer Reflexion und individuell-biografischer Entwicklung besteht. Der Aufstieg der Medien- und Kommunikationswissenschaft wird anhand einiger zentraler Gipfelstürmer nachvollziehbar gemacht. Wir wissen am Ende der Lektüre nun – um ein Wort von Robert K. Merton aufzugreifen – auf den Schultern welcher Riesen wir stehen. Das ist als Lektüre-Ertrag nicht wenig. Auch die Sprache ist einfach und verständlich. Die Übersetzung ist also gelungen. Für alle, die sich für die Fundamente medien- und kommunikationswissenschaftlichen Denkens interessieren, handelt es sich somit um ein höchst lesenswertes Buch.

Roland Burkart, Wien

**ERHARD SCHÜTZ:** *Echte falsche Pracht. Kleine Schriften zur Literatur.* Herausgegeben von Jörg Döring und David Oels. Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag 2011, 586 Seiten.

Erhard Schütz – wann ist einem dieser Name erstmals begegnet? Das muss Jahrzehnte her sein und ist doch bis heute die Erinnerung an Anthologien, Sammelbände und monographische Studien, die geradezu eine Entdeckung waren. Kaum jemand in der Kommunikationswissenschaft – Wilmont Haackes dreibändiges *Handbuch des Feuilletons* (1951-1953) war längst vergessen (nicht bei diesem Autor!) – beschäftigte sich mit solchen Themen: *Theorie und Praxis der Reportage der Zwanziger Jahre* (1974); oder: *Literarische Reportage. Ein Arbeitsbuch* (1978); und: Wer war damals vorurteilslos genug, sich zu Egon Erwin Kisch zu bekennen (seine Werke erschienen ja in einem DDR-Verlag und der heute so renommierte Preis wurde erst 1977 von Henri Nannen (1913 – 1996) gestiftet!)? Soweit ich sehe, kam es zwischen diesem kultur-, medien- und literaturwissenschaftlichen Journalismus- und Feuilletonforscher und unserem Fach kaum zu einer engeren Zusammenarbeit, aber dass einige wichtige Anregungen von den genannten und staunenswert zahllosen weiteren Veröffentlichungen ausgingen, ist unübersehbar, darf eingestanden werden und enthält ein provozierendes Potential für die Zukunft (<http://www.literatur.hu-berlin.de/institutsmitarbeiter/1680865>).

Was genau in diesem Werk an Funden, Anregungen und vernachlässigten Themen aufzuspüren ist, lässt sich nun in einem Sammelband seiner, ja feuilletonistischen Schriften nachlesen. Erhard Schütz (\*1946) ist ein *Öffentlicher Wissenschaftler*, keine Frage, aber nicht in den gängigen Formen heutiger Medienvermittlung, sondern in der Tradition stilistisch anspruchsvoller *kleiner Formen* (für die er eine schöne Definition findet: „Transitraum von Essayistik und Anekdote, Kritik und Reportage“, S. 259). Über solche literarisch-journalistischen Fähigkeiten muss man als Wissenschaftler nicht verfügen, aber wer sie besitzt, kann mit wissensgesättigten Unikaten brillieren, die der Kapazität eines „notorischen Schnell- und Viellesers“ (Jörg Döring im Nachwort, S. 583) zu verdanken sind. Dabei spiegelt der Band auf fast 600 Seiten in einem handlichen Brevierformat in zehn Kapiteln die beneidenswerte thematische Bandbreite des Wissenschaftlers Erhard Schütz, aber eben in der Form *kleiner Schriften*.

Die hier speziell interessierenden elf Stücke sind „Feuilletonisten und Reporter“ überschrieben (S. 219-289), erschienen zwischen 1992 und 2009 in den Zeitungen *Freitag* (Berlin), *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Tagesspiegel* (Berlin) und *Die Welt* (Berlin). Sie lesen sich allesamt vergnüglich und sind für unsereins doch keine leichte Lektürekost, weil schwer beladen mit Hinweisen auf Versäumnisse z.B. der Kommunikations- und insbesondere der Journalismusgeschichte, Aufträge für eine notwendige Geschichtsschreibung wie auch eine sich disziplinär bereitwillig inspirieren lassende Forschung. Dazu trägt allein schon seine stupende Werk- und Autorenkenntnis bei. Damit muss ja jede Beschäftigung mit Qualitätsjournalismus beginnen – nicht anders als in der Kunst- oder Literaturwissenschaft. Ein selbstverständliches Resultat dessen ist seine Präsenz von Kenntnissen über Traditionslinien, Vorbilder und die „Schatzkammern der Vergangenheit“ (Niklaus Meienberg 1940 – 1993) auch, ja gerade, im Journalismus (ikonisch: Johann Peter Hebel, Egon Erwin Kisch, Joseph Roth, Alfred Polgar, Kurt Tucholsky, Peter Altenberg, Gabriele Tergit, auch Janet Flanner...). Dazu kommt die analytisch unterfütterte Fähigkeit und Bereitschaft zur Etikettierung (so macht er für die 1980er Jahre eine „Kohorte von Kolumnisten“ aus, die „Epitexte der Popkultur“ schreiben, S. 234); er findet Spuren eines deutschen „Sonderlings-Sonderweges“ aus dem 19. Jahrhundert bei Max Goldt und erinnert sich bei dieser Gelegenheit auch an einen erstaunlichen Text von Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874 – 1929) über „kulturellen Journalismus“ (S. 242); markiert als überfälliges Thema eine Studie über die journalistischen „Wechsler zwischen Wien und Berlin“ (S. 245) oder plädiert für die Wiederentdeckung des Wiener emigrierten Journalisten Richard Arnold Berman, besser bekannt unter seinem Pseudonym Arnold Höllriegel (1883 – 1939).

Nicht verwunderlich, dass dieser Autor auch klar und verbindlich argumentiert, wenn es um die „Grenzübertritte“ von Dichtung und Journalismus geht, deren symbiotische Beziehung. In solchem Zusammenhang interessiert ihn ebenso der „Literaturpapst“ der Schweiz, Eduard Korrodi (1885 – 1955) wie der große, von Bernd Sösemann kanonisierte Theodor Wolff (1868 – 1943) und die „literaturkulturelle Fundierung“ von dessen journalistischer Produktion (S. 253). Sein an der Literaturkritik geschultes Urteilsvermögen scheidet auch im Journalismus mit Gründen *gut* von *mittelmäßig* oder eben *schlecht, misslungen*. Erhard Schütz findet übrigens: es gibt heute mehr

Qualität als noch vor zwanzig oder dreißig Jahren! Als Belege sind hier Überblicksrezensionen wieder abgedruckt von „buchgesamelter Zeitungs-literatur“ (S. 254), von „Nachlesen“ (S. 269), in denen er die „Konfektion“ von den journalistischen Stilkünstlern (wie Cord Schnibben oder Christoph Dieckmann) scheidet. Nur am Rande: Erhard Schütz skizziert nebenbei in solchen Rezensionen auch eine Art „Theorie“ zu dem *message*-Projekt *Top Ten des Buchjournalismus*, so moniert er, dass es fatalerweise für die Reportageliteratur im Buchhandel zwischen Belletristik und Sachbuch kein „drittes“ Regal gibt. Ein mehrfach wiederkehrendes Thema gilt dem Zusammengang von *Stadt* und *Journalismus*, insbesondere *Feuilleton*. Die Kostproben vorzüglich am Beispiel Berlin überzeugen: „Was den literarischen Umgang mit Metropolen angeht, scheinen Journalisten jedenfalls die besseren Schriftsteller zu sein“ (S. 300) – auch das ein Forschungsprogramm. Er selbst hat das in einer Anthologie zu dokumentieren versucht (hg. zusammen mit Christian Jäger: *Glänzender Asphalt. Berlin im Feuilleton der Weimarer Republik*. Berlin 1994).

Das alles verdankt sich methodischen und theoretischen Selbstverständlichkeiten einer historisch sensiblen Literaturwissenschaft, von der zu lernen auch den Sozialwissenschaftlern heute nicht mehr obsolet sein sollte. Der Literaturwissenschaftler Schütz entdeckte und brachte seit Jahrzehnten auf den Begriff, was spätestens seit der von Egon Erwin Kisch herausgegebenen Anthologie *Klassiker des Journalismus* (1923) und den Arbeiten von Wilmont Haacke (1911- 2008) (bei aller fachpolitischen Problematik auch von ihm als „Nestor der Feuilleton-Forschung“ bezeichnet, S.278) zum kanonisierten Fachgegenstand gehören sollte – zumindest einer historisch sensiblen Kommunikationswissenschaft. Genug der Elogen. Obwohl also das Lesevergnügen groß ist, auch ob dem sprachschöpferischen Einfallsreichtum dieses Literaturwissenschaftlers, muss gerade dazu ein kritischer Schlenker angemerkt werden: seine stilistische Virtuosität verführt ihn zum Kalauer; sein stupendes Wissen zum bildungseitlen Pfauenrad und manchmal wünscht man sich auch noch die letzten Schlacken wissenschaftlichen Jargons aus dem Parlando seiner Sprache entfernt. Aber: Wie erfreulich wäre es, solche Charakteristika in der real existierenden Wissenschaftsprosa überhaupt zu begegnen!

Wolfgang R. Langenbucher, Wien/  
München

**WERNER TELESKO: *Das 19. Jahrhundert. Eine Epoche und ihre Medien.* Wien (u.a.): Böhlau 2010. 336 Seiten.**

Der Titel des Buchs könnte dazu verleiten, Skepsis am Gelingen anzumelden, verläuft doch die Entwicklung von Medien und die Bedeutung von Medien für die Leserschaft nicht innerhalb von „runden“ Jahreszahlen, durch die ein Jahrhundert markiert wird. Knallig wie er ist, mag er als Zugeständnis an Marketinginteressen des Verlags entstanden sein. Der Verfasser, Mitglied in der Kommission für Kulturwissenschaften und Theatergeschichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften nimmt also keinen Kunstgriff vor, wenn er bei seiner zeitlichen Kategorisierung gleich zu Beginn des ersten Kapitels von einem „langen“ Jahrhundert spricht, dessen Beginn mit der Französischen Revolution und dessen Ende mit dem Eingreifen der Vereinten Staaten in den Ersten Weltkrieg festgelegt werden kann.

Um einen umfassenden Überblick über alle Phänomenen des „langen“ 19. Jahrhunderts zu geben, bedürfte es gewiss mehrerer Bände. Dass Telesko das vorliegende Buch bloß als „Einführung“ vorstellt (S. 7), wird wohl seiner Bescheidenheit geschuldet sein. Denn es besitzt den Wert eines großen Werks, das immerhin alles hinter sich lässt, was bisher im deutschsprachigen Raum über die alten und neuen Medien der Schrift- und Bildkultur im Hinblick auf die politischen und gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen und deren Einfluss auf diese im 19. Jahrhundert geschrieben wurde. Sichtbar allein schon in den sorgfältig bestimmten und umsichtig gewählten Kapiteldimensionen: „Politische und soziale Grundlagen“, „Visuelle Strategien“, „Wissenskulturen“ sowie „Mensch und Wahrnehmung“. Somit wartet auf die Leserschaft keine provinziell anmutende, sich lediglich auf faktische, historische Veränderungen konzentrierende Mediengeschichte, sondern eine primär kulturgeschichtlich angelegte Kommunikationsgeschichte, in die (wie es sein soll) per se rezeptionsgeschichtliche Aspekte einfließen, erhellt etwa im Abschnitt „Der Monarch als Person ‚zum Angreifen‘“ (S. 65f.) ebenso wie in jenen Abschnitten, die sich auf Phänomene des Alltags beziehen.

Der weite Blick, den Telesko auf das „lange“ Jahrhundert richtet, fasziniert. Endlich werden die Ideen von Winfried B. Lerg, dem Begründer des Begriffs „Kommunikationsgeschichte“ (in den 70er Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts), aufgegriffen,

Manifestationen geschichtlicher Erinnerungen, wie es Denkmäler sind, zu Betrachtungsobjekten unseres Fachs erhoben (S. 137ff.). Dass im Vergleich zu dieser einprägsamen Ausfaltung die Darstellung „Zeitungen und Zeitschriften als die neuen Leitmedien“ sich mit drei Absätzen begnügt, die nicht einmal eine ganze Textseite füllen, wird jene vielleicht verstimmen, die beim Begriff „Medium“ nur an publizistische Medien denken, vieles anderes aber, das geladen ist mit kommunikativen Bedeutungen, nicht in ihren Erkenntnishorizont einbetten wollen. Mag auch sein, dass so manche ausschließlich zeitgeschichtlichen Phänomenen Zugewandte, keinen Zugang zum vorliegenden Buch finden können, ohne an dieser Stelle den vor rund 50 Jahren aufgekommenen Begriff „Zeitgeschichte“ im Hinblick auf heutige Gegenwart problematisieren zu können. Diesen sei insbesondere die Lektüre der Einleitung zu diesem Buch ans Herz gelegt, Neugier entfachend mit ihrer Überschrift „Geschichte als Gegenwart: Was bedeutet für uns heute das ‘lange’ Jahrhundert?“ Mag sein, dass Kundige der Mediengeschichte aus einigen Abschnitten im Kapitel „Textproduktion zwischen Philologie und Massenpresse“ primär nur Bestätigung ihres Wissens erfahren, ebenso wie solche aus der Kunstgeschichte aus dem Kapitel „Visuelle Strategien“. Aber die elegante wie profund gelungene Synthese, einschließlich der Betrachtung ökonomischer Bedingungen, lässt das Buch als Schlüsselwerk für die Kommunikationswissenschaft und die Kulturwissenschaft zugleich erscheinen oder als Scharnier zwischen beiden.

**Wolfgang Duchkowitsch, Wien**

**STEFANIE AVERBECK-LIETZ: *Kommunikationstheorien in Frankreich. Der epistemologische Diskurs der Sciences de l'information et de la communication (SIC) 1975 – 2005.* Berlin: Avinus Verlag 2010, 552 Seiten.**

Die 2007 fertiggestellte, seit 2010 in gedruckter Form vorliegende Habilitationsschrift von Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz füllt eine Lücke. Der Autorin, einer Kommunikationswissenschaftlerin mit „deutscher Perspektive“, ist es dank jährlicher längerer Frankreichaufenthalte zwischen 1999 (Postdoc DAAD-Stipendium) und 2005 gelungen, sich mit der „französischen Perspektive“ des Fachs nicht nur in Bibliotheken, sondern an Ort und Stelle, z.B. im renommierten *Institut français*



*de Presse* (Paris) vertraut zu machen. Hierbei kamen ihr nicht nur ihre Sprachkenntnisse zu Gute, sondern ebenfalls eine Reihe vorausgegangener eigener Publikationen.

Gleich anfangs sei betont, dass es sich bei dieser, in vier Kapitel gegliederten Untersuchung um den sehr begrüßenswerten Versuch einer sowohl institutionellen als auch theoretischen Gesamtchau handelt. Hierbei geht der Inhalt über den oben genannten Buchtitel weit hinaus. Tatsächlich macht sich die Autorin die Mühe, auch komparatistisch zu arbeiten. Bei jeder sich bietenden Gelegenheit werden Vertretern der „Sciences de l'information et de la communication“ Repräsentanten der wesentlich älteren deutschen Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (einst Zeitungswissenschaft) gegenübergestellt. „Bis dato“ hatten französische bzw. deutsche Kommunikationswissenschaftler, von Ausnahmen abgesehen, nicht zuletzt aus sprachlichen Gründen einander nur „marginal“ (S. 39, 51) oder sporadisch wahrgenommen bzw. wenig beachtet oder missverstanden. International bedeutende Koryphäen wie Roland Barthes, Claude Lévy-Strauss oder Pierre Bourdieu waren bekanntlich in anderen Disziplinen beheimatet.

Tatsächlich liegen Forschungsansätze oder -ergebnisse der einen wie der anderen Wissenschaft, sieht man von einzelnen Übersetzungen (die französische Übersetzung der „Schweigespirale“ lässt beispielsweise immer noch auf sich warten) oder „englischsprachigen Schnittmengen“ ab, bisher nur bruchstückweise vor: so etwa in den zweisprachigen Tagungsbänden der von der Rezensentin zwischen 1989 und 1998 an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München bzw. an der Universität Paris II mitveranstalteten deutsch-französischen Mediencolloquien oder in der Bestandsaufnahme einer Potsdamer Nachfolgekonferenz („Kommunikation – Medien – Gesellschaft“, 2001). Bei deutsch-französischen Vergleichen, Einflüssen bzw. Abgrenzungen lässt es Stefanie Averbeck jedoch nicht bewenden, sondern sie bezieht ebenfalls US-amerikanische Kommunikationswissenschaftler mit ein, die in Frankreich und/oder Deutschland rezipiert worden sind (z.B. George H. Mead).

Als Untersuchungsmaterial für die von ihr ausgewählten Selektionskriterien (1. übergreifende Reflektion von Theorien und Methoden, 2. Fach- und Theoriengeschichte) dienen der Autorin – neben der umfangreichen Fachliteratur – unveröffentlichte Magisterarbeiten, Vorträge, Internetquellen, Online-Publikationen sowie

mündliche Quellen wie Interviews. Im Einzelnen ausgewertet wurden einschlägige Fachzeitschriften (z.B. *Réseaux*) sowie die in Kap. 3 im Einzelnen untersuchten Fachbulletins (*La lettre d'inforcom*) der „Société française des sciences de l'information et de la communication“ (SFSIC) und deren Tagungsbände im zweijährigen Rhythmus.

Kapitel I und seine Unterkapitel behandeln die französischsprachige, nur in seltenen Fällen (z.B. Francis Balle, Armand Mattelart) grenzüberschreitende Fachhistoriografie und -systematik in einem internationalen Kontext. Zu Recht pocht Averbeck in diesem Zusammenhang auf die Berücksichtigung „nationaler Traditionen und unterschiedlicher Wissenschaftskulturen“. So führt beispielsweise die in Frankreich im Zentrum des Fachs angesiedelte (Medien-)semiotik in Deutschland nur eine Randexistenz. Interessant sind die von der Autorin vorgenommenen bzw. von ihr vorgestellten Begriffsbestimmungen der Fachepistemologie sowie des „Diskurses“ (in Anlehnung an den Soziologen und Anthropologen Ernest Manheim) und die Entwicklung eines „generellen Phasenmodells der Wissenschaftsentwicklung“.

Kapitel II – als Hauptteil (S. 151-327) – schildert im historisch-politisch-technologischen Kontext die Fach- und Ideengeschichte der erst 1975 als Volldisziplin institutionalisierten „Sciences de l'information et de la communication“ (SIC) einschließlich ihrer Vorläufer und ihrer Bezüge zu Nachbardisziplinen wie Linguistik, Soziologie oder Cultural Studies bzw. außeruniversitären Forschungseinrichtungen. Ein von der Autorin entwickeltes „Drei-Phasen-Modell“ sowie wissenschaftsbiografische Skizzen informieren die Leser über die Denkhorizonte und Theoriepräferenzen sowie die damit zusammenhängenden wissenschaftlichen Debatten der Gründungsväter (allen voran der Literatursoziologe Robert Escarpit, Universität Bordeaux), ihrer Schüler (1980 – ca. 1995) und „Enkel“. Im Zentrum der Theoriebildung steht hierbei die von französischen Sozio-Semiotologen und „Semio-Pragmatikern“ als Kritik an der US-amerikanischen Mass Communication Research zu verstehende Reflexion über massenmedial oder interpersonal vermittelte „soziale Kommunikation“.

Des Weiteren erhält man in Kapitel II Auskunft über die in Frankreich zentral gesteuerten universitären Karrieren sowohl der Professorenschaft als auch der ebenfalls verbeamteten „Maître de conférences“, über die Praxisorientierung der Lehre

und die seitens des Staates und der Universitäts-gremien anerkannten Forschungsdomänen der SIC.

Das III. Kapitel ist ganz der 1974 gegründeten, im Lauf der Jahre in Kommissionen bzw. Arbeitsgruppen untergliederten Fachgesellschaft SFSIC gewidmet. Hier zeichnet Stefanie Averbek den über Jahre hinweg geführten „epistemologischen Diskurs“ um die beiden Grundbegriffe „Informationswissenschaft“ (im Französischen bezogen auf die Bibliotheks- und Dokumentationswissenschaft) und „Kommunikationswissenschaft“ nach, wobei sich der „Kommunikationsbegriff“ der „Gründerväter“ von dem der „Schüler“ unterscheidet. Eine weitere generationengebundene Debatte betraf den Status der SIC als mono-, inter-, pluri-, oder transdisziplinäre Wissenschaft. Mit dem „zentralen“ Diskurs der SIC um den aus den Geisteswissenschaften stammenden „sozialen Konstruktivismus“, der mit dem deutschen „radikalen“ Konstruktivismus erkenntnistheoretisch nicht zu vereinbaren ist (Kapitel IV), gefolgt

von einer Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse und einem kurzen „Ausblick“ schließt diese Habilitationsschrift ab.

Die sehr informative und spannende Arbeit kann, trotz einzelner kleiner Flüchtigkeitsfehler (z.B. bei gewissen Jahreszahlen), als derzeit einziges Standardwerk seiner Art betrachtet werden. Infolge ihrer Dichte, ihrer zahlreichen, oft im Text oder in den Fußnoten zueinander in Beziehung gesetzten Forschernamen sowie ihrer häufigen französischen Zitate ist sie allerdings keine einfache Lektüre. Die eine oder andere Grafik hätte hier für Auflockerung gesorgt. Etwas irritierend wirkt das umfangreiche Literaturverzeichnis (S. 463-533) insofern, als zunächst die Vornamen der Autoren genannt werden, obwohl in den Anmerkungen jeweils nur die Nachnamen erscheinen. Als sehr nützlich erweisen sich das Abkürzungsverzeichnis sowie das Personen- und Sachregister.

**Ursula E. Koch, München/Paris**



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## JOURNALISTISCHE PERSÖNLICHKEIT

Fall und Aufstieg  
eines Phänomens.  
Wolfgang Duchkowitsch,  
Fritz Hausjell, Horst Pöttker,  
Bernd Semrad (Hrsg.)

ÖFFENTLICHKEIT UND GESCHICHTE · HERBERT VON HALEM VERLAG

WOLFGANG DUCHKOWITSCH / FRITZ HAUSJELL /  
HORST PÖTTKER / BERND SEMRAD (Hrsg.)

## Journalistische Persönlichkeit. Fall und Aufstieg eines Phänomens

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Anlässlich der Emeritierung von Wolfgang R. Langenbacher (Wien) wurde im Oktober 2006 den Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Journalismus, Person und Werk nachgespürt. Davon ausgehend kommen in diesem Sammelband Autorinnen und Autoren aus Wissenschaft und journalistischer Praxis zu Wort, um den Stellenwert von Persönlichkeit im Journalismus, den Werkcharakter von journalistischen Leistungen sowie deren Kanonisierung zu erörtern.

»Journalismus« wird in diesem Band als spezifische Kulturleistung verstanden.

Entgegen der herrschenden Lehre erlangen dann (wieder) Personen und ihre Biografie wissenschaftliches Interesse. Dabei gilt es auch journalistische Werke als solche (wieder) zu entdecken, die alles andere als tagesgebunden sind und die deshalb nicht einfach der Literatur (und ihrer Wissenschaft) zugeordnet werden sollten.

So mag das Postulat von Max Weber aus dem Jahre 1919 eingelöst werden, dass »eine wirklich gute journalistische Leistung mindestens so viel »Geist« beansprucht wie beispielsweise irgendeine Gelehrtenleistung«, damit unterschieden werden kann von den täglichen Mediendiensteleistungen – Journalismus stellt einen stabilen Eigenwert moderner Gesellschaften dar.

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