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Beyond Boundaries  
Transnational and Comparative  
Communication History**

**Comparing transnationally and  
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**80 Years of British and Dutch  
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## Editorial

Media communication transcending national and cultural borders is not a new phenomenon since the last decades of digitalization and globalization. Since their emergence mass media expanded beyond national borders, and technologies like letterpress, telegraph and later internet connected the world through international communication flows. Merely because transnational connectivity and interrelationships become increasingly apparent given the conditions of digital and online communication does not imply that they could not also be witnessed in the past either, nor does it imply that current phenomena could be adequately understood without their historical dimension. The concept of nation states as social entities' containers needs to be supplemented by approaches that are sensitive to the transboundary character of media content, media audiences, media production and ownership as well as to the subnational cultural cleavages now and in earlier times. Communication history could combine such sensitivity with an interest for the constitution of communication spaces, for change and persistence of communicative processes.

Dealing with comparative and transnational approaches offers such comprehensive perspectives. In a historical dimension they are promising because there have been demands to integrate theory into this research field for a long time and transnational and comparative approaches in communication history could help to raise new questions and to find new or complementary answers to existing research issues. Comparative studies allow us to identify relevant context factors and to analyze the commonalities and singularities of media phenomena within the respective unit of research. A combination of both research perspectives is also fruitful. A comparison and a concurrent analysis of the interconnections between the research units, contribute to a transnationally as well as a nationally focused communication history. The nation is and will remain an important unit for comparative research but it is not the exclusive category for comparisons.

This issue is dedicated to the reflection upon theory, the state of research as well as to methodical aspects of transnational and comparative perspectives in communication history.

How can communication and media history be understood beyond the context of nation and culture? Which analytical potential do transnational and comparative approaches have for the research into communication history? Where are their limits and to what extent can they be combined?

How did this issue of *medien&zeit* emerge? Its story began with the young scholars' workshop "Writing the Past beyond Boundaries?" (then still with a question mark) in June 2010 in Potsdam/Germany. This international workshop exactly dealt with the issues mentioned before. It was the first joined activity of *Nakoge*, the young scholars' platform of the *German Communication Studies Association* DGPK, and YECREA, the young scholars network of ECREA. The workshop was supported by the *Center for Research on Contemporary History Potsdam* and funded by *Fritz Thyssen Stiftung*.

The aim of this scholarly event was to bring together experienced scholars and young communication historians and, in this way, not only to create a platform for critical discussion on comparative and transboundary approaches but also to promote exchange on research projects carried out by the participants. After the workshop we decided to edit this issue of *medien&zeit* in order to capture at least some of the results which the vivid discussions and inspiring presentations had yielded. Our concept was to have theoretical foundations for communication history on the one hand, stimulating the reflection on theory in this research area. On the other hand, we intended to show on behalf of case studies covering various topics and approaches, how transnational and comparative communication history can be put into practice. This plan has led to the selection of authors who we will introduce below.

The kick-off is made by two programmatic articles contributed by two distinguished scholars who provided initial statements and mentoring at the workshop. Firstly, Andreas Hepp from the University of Bremen, presents his argument that writing the past beyond boundaries would benefit from leaving container thinking in comparative media and communication research. By overcoming the close link between comparisons and the nation as a container like conceptual-

lized entity as an automatic starting point would open new perspectives and allow to identify cultural patterns and their interrelation. In three steps Hepp firstly discusses the notion of the nation and argues that the concept was originally more open than it is usually applied. The second step is discussing the specificity of the research unit by emphasizing the concept of the “trans”. Finally Hepp showcases how to apply transnational and transcultural approaches in actual research and what it means to be doing such multi-perspective research on a practical level.

Doing transnational journalism history now and in the future is the topic of the second programmatic statement given by Marcel Broersma from Groningen University in the Netherlands. He argues that the mainly Anglo-American news and objectivity paradigm was widely considered the natural and desirable universal destination of journalistic development while more reflective, literary, opinion-orientated styles of journalism, that were historically dominant in the Netherlands and other European countries, were regarded as somehow deviant and backward. Instead of using the news paradigm as an unquestioned template for writing national journalism histories, Broersma suggests a comparative focus on the historical transformation of forms, styles and journalistic routines. Such focus would allow to identify and critically analyze the dialectics of exchange between global universals and national peculiarities in the development and diffusion of journalism cultures.

These stimulating ideas are followed by selected contributions by workshop participants who were invited to present reports on their personal PhD-research, reflected in the light of the theoretical foundations that were discussed in Potsdam. Heidi J. S. Tworek, from Harvard University, does so in her article *Peace through Truth*. Given the case of the third *Conference of Press Experts* in Madrid in 1933 she discusses how comparative or transnational history could be used to understand the press's role during the interwar period. More specifically she asks how the press and journalists' associations did fit into League of Nations' efforts towards disarmament and what their role in the interwar diplomatic framework was. Moreover, her article provides insight

into current historiographical debates on the virtues and vices of both comparative and transnational approaches to the history of the press. Frank Harbers and Bas den Herder, also from Groningen University, put into practice what Broersma, their supervisor, has conceptualized before: In their article, the changing forms of the newspaper are analyzed on the national, the transnational, and finally the diachronical level. Based on the analysis of two English and two Dutch newspapers selected in three samples representative for 1925, 1965 and 2005 they show that form and content of the newspapers underwent many changes, and that the styles of journalism manifest themselves transnationally, yet newspapers show national characteristics as well. Besides the universals in journalistic routines and forms associated with the ‘news paradigm’ there are national peculiarities to be identified.

To conclude, the Free University of Berlin's Simone Müller-Pohl explores aspects of *Weltcommunication* in the nineteenth century using the Atlantic telegraph connection as a case study. She firstly introduces the submarine telegraphs as a medium of communication which also served a bourgeois public sphere as carrier of world news. Communication “by Atlantic cable” presented itself as an elitist undertaking and – a thought also backed by other articles in this issue – a lengthy process of adaptation on “what is news?” was necessary before communication had caught up with the transcontinental, “weltweit” around the world potential of its technology. Thus stages of a globalization of communication can be marked and the possibility and attainability of a global public sphere are questioned.

We hope that this special issue of *medien&zeit* will help to stimulate a writing of the past beyond boundaries: Transnational, transcultural and transdisciplinary or in one term transboundary research. With this issue, we hopefully will contribute to take transboundary communication history out of its infancy and help to make it hit puberty,

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# Comparing transnationally and transculturally: Leaving Container Thinking

Andreas Hepp (IMKI, University of Bremen)

## Abstract

The main argument of the article is to overcome container thinking in historical and actual comparative media and communication research. For this a transcultural semantic of comparative research is conceptualised as well as its practical application.

## Introduction

My aim in this article is to outline a perspective of comparative media and communication research that departs from 'container thinking'. While we find a lot of theoretical as well as empirical arguments within social sciences and cultural studies for an approach that goes 'beyond' an understanding of cultural processes within 'territorial boundaries' of the nation state<sup>1</sup>, historical and actual comparative media and communication research remains quite closely linked to questions of 'the nation.' Approaches of overcoming such a narrow orientation are discussed increasingly<sup>2</sup>. However, they are only seldom reflected on a practical level.

This said, I want to develop a three-step argument. First I want to contextualise the concept of the 'nation' and argue that original research on this had been much more open than recent container thinking might imply. Based on this and using the concept of the 'trans' I want to outline an approach of research that takes the concept of the nation seriously without confusing all comparative questions of media research with questions of comparing nations. And finally, I conclude with some arguments on the 'doing' of this kind of research, that is: what does it mean in practical terms to compare transnationally and transculturally?

## Nation – or: the problem of the container

Within media and communication research in a historical as well as a current perspective the concept of the 'nation' is closely linked with Benedict Anderson's metaphor of the nation as an "imagined community." In his groundbreaking analysis of the constitution of the nation, Anderson repeatedly refers to mass media as important means of communication that played a crucial role in the historical articulation of this community. While this is an important point which is adopted in much (historical) media and communication research, another argument expressed by Anderson is very often overlooked. Interestingly, he argues at the beginning of his book that nations as *imagined* communities are no single phenomena:

"In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. [...] The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion of living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations."<sup>3</sup>

As this quote demonstrates, 'nations' are already in Anderson's perspective only *one form* of what we nowadays call "translocal community"<sup>4</sup>, i.e. communities that transgress the local and therefore

<sup>1</sup> Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity At Large*. Minneapolis: Minneapolis UP, 1996; Beck, Ulrich. *What is Globalization?* Translated By Patrick Camiller. London: Blackwell Publishers, 2000; Hannerz, Ulf. *Transnational Connections. Culture, People, Places*. London et al.: Routledge, 1996; Urry, John. *Global Complexity*. Cambridge et al.: Polity Press, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Thussu, Daya Kishan. *Internationalizing Media Studies*. London: Routledge, 2010

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1983. 6f

<sup>4</sup> Hepp, Andreas. "Transculturality as a Perspective: Researching Media Cultures Comparatively," *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 10 (2009): 12, accessed January 1, 2009 <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0901267>



rely at least partly on processes of technically mediated communication. Historically as well as in the present, we are confronted with various other forms of translocal communities than the nation. Like for the nation, territory can be constitutive for them, as it is the case for regions or associations of nations. Or they can be deterritorial, i.e. questions of the territory are not constitutive for them. Examples would be religious communities, political movements, diasporas or popular cultural communities.

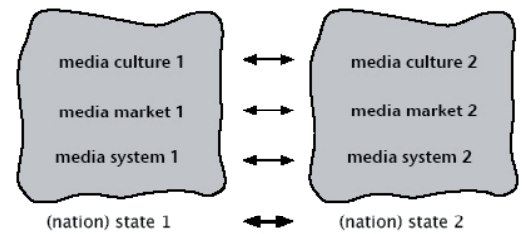
This said, we have to understand the nation as one very specific and historical articulation of such a translocal community relying on a certain media culture. Of course, the nation is a highly important translocal community as it can be understood as the foundation of the (democratic) modern state<sup>5</sup>. However, it remains only *one* possible form. Therefore we have to take the historical specificity of 'the nation' as a subject-matter of comparative research seriously without confusing this with a predetermined 'container' of comparison. Rather than this, two arguments are important: First, we have to focus comparatively and critically on *how nations as translocal communities and cultural thickenings are articulated by media communication* (not exclusively but also). Second, we have to focus comparatively and critically on *how other translocal communities and cultural thickenings are articulated by media communication* (in relation to nations but also independently). Because of these two arguments we have to reflect carefully the specificity of our research unit.

## Trans – or: the specificity of the unit

Any research that wants to analyse comparatively the interrelation between media communication, translocal community building and media cultures has to be very careful with the unit of analysis. This is where much recent research falls short as it still involves an implicit 'territorial essentialism', even as it tries to move towards rigorous international comparison. The nation understood as a community related to the territory of a state remains the principal reference point of comparative research, on the basis of which media systems, media markets and media cultures are theorised. We can call this an 'international and intercultural

approach' to comparative media research, which might be visualised as follows<sup>6</sup>:

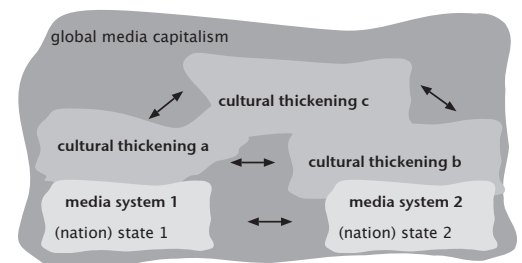
Figure 1: International and intercultural approach of comparative media research



The point is not to deny there are nation-state related aspects of media communication that must be discussed in a (territorialised) frame. The point is rather to note the tendency in comparative media research so far to essentialise the relation between state, (political) media system, media market and media culture into what we might call a binary comparative semantic: on the basis of certain criteria for identifying a 'media system', 'media market' or 'media culture', one nation-state is compared with another, and from here a wider set of comparisons between states is developed. If we focus on the particular questions of community building and media culture, this territorial essentialism is highly problematic since many historical and present media cultures are not *per se* bound in such national containers, and so are not necessarily available to be compared in this way.

At least for contemporary moments of media communication, the picture is much more complex than this binary model indicates. We need comparative semantics that capture the complexity of different translocal communities and founding cultural thickenings. *For the present* such a transcultural semantic can be visualised as follows:

Figure 2: Transcultural approach to comparative media research



<sup>5</sup> Thompson, John B. *The Media and Modernity. A Social Theory of the Media*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995

<sup>6</sup> Hepp, Andreas. *Transkulturelle Kommunikation*. Konstanz: UVK (UTB), 2006. 78-80

*should only focus* on forms, which are standardised ‘beyond’ or ‘across’ cultures. Rather, I borrow the term from Wolfgang Welsch<sup>7</sup>, who used it to indicate that in the contemporary era, important cultural phenomena cannot be broken down into dimensions of traditional cultures based in specific territories. Instead, contemporary cultural forms are increasingly communicated and generated across multiple national territories.

A present, transcultural comparative semantic takes the existence of global media capitalism as a starting point. Across different states, global media capitalism becomes a structuring force so that in different regions of the world media communication is increasingly considered as an ‘exchange of economic goods and not (only) as a communicative process aimed at better reciprocal understanding’<sup>8</sup>. Global media capitalism does not, however, standardise the articulation of meaning because of its ‘over-determination’<sup>9</sup>: the pressure to produce again and again new offers results in an oversupply of culturally open goods that rework standardised meanings. Quite often, global media capitalism is a source of cultural fragmentation, contestation and misunderstanding – not only between national cultures but also across their borders.

Within global media capitalism, political media systems are the most territorially related entities because the legitimacy of political decision-making is still to a high degree focused on the (nation) state. Nevertheless, as soon as questions of translocal community building are considered, cultural thickenings can either be broadly territorialised (as with national cultures, articulated with reference to a state and its territory) or they can transgress state boundaries, whether in diasporic cultures, popular cultures, social movements or religious belief communities. These communities are enacted through deterritorialised communicative spaces.

Such a ‘transcultural approach’ overcomes the

limits of an ‘international approach’ to comparison, but without excluding the nation and the state as a possible reference point. A ‘transcultural approach’ understands translocal communities and their underlying media cultures as the results of thickenings that occur within an increasingly global connectivity. Such a ‘comparative semantic’ considers the specificity of such thickenings and the complex interrelations between them, but can only do so by ridding itself definitively of the methodological nationalism of ‘container-based’ approaches to society, culture and media.

For sure, such a scheme of a transcultural approach of comparative media research is more focused on the present. However, we can also learn a lot from it for historical comparison. In its core, a transcultural scheme of comparison is historically more open for a comparative analysis as it looks comparatively at the same time for national moments of the articulation of culture and community as well as for moments that lie beyond such a national-territorial frame. In so doing, such an approach opens the space for comparing changing social forms without forgetting the special case of the nation.

## Doing – or: what does this mean in practical terms?

But how can we carry out such research in practice? Answering this question, I would like to suggest a three-step approach for such a comparative research on media cultures in a transcultural perspective<sup>10</sup>. While the described steps are interrelated with each other, it is, nevertheless, useful to perceive them as separate procedures. Analysing cultural patterns, making manifold comparisons and criticising multi-perspectively imply different foci of research and build a progression of analytical work.

<sup>7</sup> Welsch, Wolfgang. “Transculturality – the Changing Forms of Cultures Today.” In *The Contemporary Study of Culture*, ed. Bundesminister für Wissenschaft und Verkehr, and Internationales Forschungszentrum für Kulturwissenschaften. Wien: Turia & Kant, 1999.

<sup>8</sup> Herman, Edward S., and McChesney, Robert W. *The Global Media. The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism*. London: Cassell, 1997; David Hesmondhalgh. *The Cultural Industries*. Second Edition. London et al.: Sage, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Ang, Ien. *Living Room Wars. Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World*. London et al.: Routledge, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> For a more comprehensive outline of this approach see Hepp, Transculturality as a Perspective: Researching Media Cultures Comparatively; Couldry, Nick, and Hepp, Andreas. “Researching Media Cultures Comparatively.” In *Handbook of Comparative Communication Research*. Ed. Frank Esser, and Thomas Hanitzsch. New York: Routledge, 2010.



### Analysing cultural patterns

The reference points of research in a transcultural perspective – as in cultural analyses in general – are “cultural patterns.” But what precisely does “cultural pattern” mean? In answer to this, it is helpful to theorise media cultures as a thickening of the classificatory systems and discursive formations on which the production of meaning in everyday practices draws. Relating to the present discussion about praxeology in comparative cultural research<sup>11</sup>, this understanding integrates all three established discourses in the tradition of social constructivism: a mentalistic (emphasising the relevance of classificatory systems), a textual (emphasising the relevance of discursive formations) and a praxeological (emphasising the relevance of everyday meaning production through practices).

The idea behind this is to understand that everyday practices are central in “articulating culture”; however, additionally, that “culture” cannot be reduced to this. “Culture” is also present in discursive formations and classificatory systems people rely on in their everyday practices, in the most cases without any “discursive knowledge” in the sense of Anthony Giddens<sup>12</sup>. It should be noted that this differentiation is a heuristic one. Actor Network Theory

(ANT) demonstrates that “thinking” is based on (also material) knowledge practices<sup>13</sup>; discourse analysis has pointed to the fact that discourses are produced by practices, but they also produce them as they produce certain knowledge<sup>14</sup>, and practices themselves are formed by sedimented mental relevance structures, as social phenomenology has shown<sup>15</sup>.

The argument I want to make at this point is that

**The argument I want to make at this point is that a comparative research of media cultures should look for cultural patterns in all three perspectives, “patterns of thinking,” “patterns of discourse” and “patterns of practices” or “doing,” while reflecting at the same time on their interrelation.**

a comparative research of media cultures should look for cultural patterns in all three perspectives, “patterns of thinking,” “patterns of discourse” and “patterns of practices” or “doing,” while reflecting at the same time on their interrelation. Using the term “pattern” might be misleading if one relates it to something “static.” In contrast to this view, cultural analysis is also interested in patterns of the process. However, the term pattern tries to express the idea that a cultural analysis should not analyse just the single thinking, discourse or doing, but should typify, based on an analysis of different single phenomena, the typical “way” of thinking, discourse or doing in a certain cultural context. In other words, a cultural pattern is a specific “form” or “type” highlighted in cultural analyses.

In this sense, media cultures are analysed as a thickening of specific patterns of thinking, discourse and practice. This is the point where an additional aspect of thickening comes in. Many of the cultural patterns that are typified are not exclusive to the culture to be analysed. It is precisely at this point where the overall hybridity of all cultures manifests itself. However, within the articulation of certain connectivities of different patterns

there is a certain specificity of a media culture as a territorialised or deterritorialised thickening. At this point, the term thickening emphasises the specificity of the culture in the articulation of its totality of patterns as well as the openness of a culture in the sense of the in-exclusivity of many or most of its cultural patterns.

Having said this, any analysis of media cultures starts with analysing its specific cultural patterns.

<sup>11</sup> Reckwitz, Andreas. „Kulturelle Differenzen aus praxeologischer Perspektive. Kulturelle Globalisierung jenseits von Modernisierungstheorie und Kulturressentialismus.“ In *Kulturen vergleichen. Sozial- und kulturwissenschaftliche Grundlagen und Kontroverse*. Ed. Ilja Srubar, et al. Wiesbaden: VS, 2005. 96

<sup>12</sup> Giddens, Anthony. *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge et al: Polity Press, 1989

<sup>13</sup> Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory. Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies*. Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2007

<sup>14</sup> Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. USA: Random House Inc, 1994

<sup>15</sup> Schütz, Alfred. *Phenomenology of the Social World*. New York: Northwestern UP, 1967

And a highly practical tool for doing this is the coding process as outlined in much of the approaches of grounded theory and empirically based theory formation<sup>16</sup>: a coding that starts with finding concepts to analyse certain phenomena and then categorising them for naming certain cultural patterns found in different kinds of empirical data (interviews, media products, diaries, observation protocols etc.). As a certain everyday complexity of cultural patterns is likely to occur, a triangulation of different data collecting methods is highly recommendable for this.

### Comparing manifold

But how does the transcultural perspective enter into this kind of media culture research? This question is related to the way the comparison is undertaken within the research. A comparison from a transcultural perspective does not start within the binary semantics of national comparison (understanding each cultural pattern as an expression of national media culture), but develops a multi-faceted process of comparison. As Glaser and Strauss<sup>17</sup> have explained, the formation of a “grounded theory” is comparative in general: different cases of interviews, media products, diaries, observation protocols etc. are compared with each other to synthesise in an ongoing process the main categories for analysing the data across the different cases.

It is precisely this process that is also realised within transcultural media research; but without aggregating the data nationally from the beginning. The cases across the selected different cultural contexts are compared with each other in order to arrive at a category system that does not merely analyse national differences, but also transnational commonalities of cultural patterns. In this way a more complex analysis can be obtained, making it possible to open up access to media cultural thickenings beyond the national-territorial and to analyse them in more detail. In practice, this manifold comparison comprises of the following steps:

- First, data has to be structured in cases of social entities, as for example, individuals (combining different person-related data sources like interviews, media diaries etc.), organisations (combining different organisational related data sources like interviews with different persons, group discussion transcripts, observation protocols etc.) or similar entities.

- Second, the process of comparing these different cases transculturally follows by categorising different cultural patterns. The important point here is to be open to different cultural mappings; having a careful view on the question whether a certain pattern is, for example, national-specific, transculturally stable or characteristic of a deterritorial community, like, for example, a diaspora, a political or religious movement.

- Third, the results of this comparison are structured along the variety of the differently occurring cultural thickenings, for instance, either on a territorial level (region, nation) or on a deterritorial level (different kinds of deterritorialised translocal communities) – or at the level of patterns that are stable across them.

Such comparison makes it possible to analyse very different kinds of cultural thickenings beyond an essentialistic national frame. A certain cultural thickening then becomes accessible as an articulation of different patterns of thinking, discourse and practice.

### Criticising multi-perspectively

The described proceeding for researching media cultures in a transcultural perspective is explicitly understood as a critical approach: not just analysing and explaining certain cultural thickenings but additionally doing this in a critical manner. However, the researcher him- or herself is not neutral, but part of the cultural practice of doing transcultural media research<sup>18</sup>. So how can one take a critical perspective without just reproducing one’s own normative cultural frame in a self-centric way? There is no easy answer to this question. However, at least three basic principles for

<sup>16</sup> For example Glaser, Barney G., and Anselm L. Strauss. *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New Brunswick: AldineTransaction, 1999; Krotz, Friedrich. *Neue Theorien Entwickeln. Eine Einführung in Die Grounded Theory. Die Heuristische Sozialforschung Und Die Ethnographie Anhand Von Beispielen Aus Der Kommunikationsforschung*. Köln: Halem, 2005

<sup>17</sup> Glaser, Strauss. *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*.

<sup>18</sup> Rainer Winter, “Der Zu Bestimmende Charakter Von Kultur: Das Konzept Der Artikulation in Der Tradition Der Cultural Studies.” In *Kulturen Vergleichen. Sozial- Und Kulturwissenschaftliche Grundlagen Und Kontroverse*. Ed. Ilja Srubar, et al. Wiesbaden: VS, 2005. 279

reviewing comparative analysis may help to realise a multi-perspective critique.

- As a first principle, there is the necessity of focusing on the construction processes of cultural articulation. As emphasised above, within media cultures “the media” themselves are constructed by certain cultural patterns as part of the “centre.” In addition, further patterns of “centring” media cultures exist: for example, of centring the “national-territorial” in national media cultures, the “detritorial-religious” in transnational religious movements, the “global popular” in popular cultural communities and so on. The outlined non-essentialistic approach of analysing media cultures makes it possible to focus such implicit processes of “centring” as it does not set certain main variables at the beginning.

- The second principle is to focus on the relation of cultural patterns and questions of power. Emphasising “centring” aspects within construction processes of cultural articulation already provides a link to questions of power, as the building of a “cultural centre” is always a power force. But also beyond these “centring” aspects, patterns within media cultures can be related to power: certain cultural patterns open chances of hegemony or domination, others not. Consequently, the second principle means to reflect how far analysed cultural patterns are related to power relations within media cultures, but also how far they open or close certain spaces of agency in everyday life.

- A third principle is the integration of all this in a multi-perspectival description. Thus, when comparing transculturally different perspectives on thickenings of media cultures, one can analyse their processes of cultural articulation and power relations. Because of that, the aim of a multi-perspectival critique cannot be mono-semising this complexity. Moreover, an analytical description should make the different cultures in their power-related inconsistency accessible, especially when comparing them with each other.

As such, it is a highly risky undertaking – as Douglas Kellner<sup>19</sup> points out – to formulate more general approaches for analysing media cultures in comparative media and communication research because of their complexity. In this sense it would be a misunderstanding to consider the developed approach of researching media cultures in a transcultural perspective as the only possible procedure in this field. Other approaches emphasise other relevant aspects of investigating media cultures comparatively. Nevertheless, I want to argue that a transcultural perspective opens up a very productive methodological access, as it makes very different power-related processes of cultural articulation accessible in a critical manner – in a historical as well as actual orientation. My hope is that this article will stimulate others to carry out research in the same trajectory.

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<sup>19</sup> Kellner, Douglas: *Media Culture. Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern*. London/New York: Routledge, 1995. 3

# Transnational Journalism History

## Balancing Global Universals and National Peculiarities

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### Abstract

This article argues that an approach focused on the historical transformation of journalistic routines and textual forms makes it possible to overcome a confinement to national histories. This kind of study focuses on the transfer of norms, practices and forms, and their adaptation in national contexts. It has an eye for dissimilarities regarding the pace and content of transformations between and within countries. It emphasizes transnational contacts, networks and patterns and underlines intertwining national and transnational developments.

As a field of study, journalism history is institutionally and topically confined primarily to national boundaries. Media, journalism and press historians still predominantly study events and developments in a nation state framework without structurally considering international developments and cross-border influences. This holds true for studies restricted to the development of journalism in one country, like most press histories, as well as studies that take nations as units for comparative research, with two or more countries studied as separate cases and compared. The differences, and to a lesser extent the similarities, in the working routines or coverage of certain issues are usually highlighted as autonomous developments and ascribed to national peculiarities. The roots of this limited horizon might go back to the nineteenth century, when history emerged as a scholarly discipline in a close, even dialectic relation to the birth of modern nation states and the construction of national identities. Ever since, the nation seems to be the most natural level of analysis for historians.<sup>1</sup> Press and media history follow this general pattern in historiography by studying the media as national institutions inhe-

rent to national politics, laws and markets, and topically and socially geared towards national, regional or local communities. Most scholarship on press history departs from the normative assumption that journalism is defined in terms of its democratic function. Like historical research, the rise of the media landscape as-we-know-it is thus intertwined with the modern nation state.<sup>2</sup> The emergence of the globalization paradigm stimulated the use of comparative and transnational research in the more contemporary fields of media and journalism studies, but journalism history seems to have lacked a trigger of this kind. To a certain extent however, historical scholarship in general has an eye for transnational developments. A transnational turn occurred in the study of international relations, which initially emerged as a branch of political history in the 1970s. Notably the continuing process of European integration and the founding of transnational political and military organizations like the UN and NATO, causing a transfer of political decision-making authority to the supra-national level, led to transnational studies. Globalization stimulated more historical research on international dependence,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Michael G. Müller and Cornelius Torp, 'Conceptualising transnational spaces in history', *European Review of History - Revue Européenne d'Histoire* 16 (2009), 609-617.

<sup>2</sup> See for national press histories: Michael Emery, Edwin Emery and Nancy L. Roberts, *The Press and America. An Interpretive History of the Mass Media* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1997, 9<sup>th</sup> ed.); Kevin Williams, *Read all about it! A history of the British newspaper* (London: Routledge, 2009); Huub Wijffjes, *Journalistiek in Nederland 1850-*

*2000. Beroep, organisatie en cultuur* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2004); Els De Bens and Karin Raeymaeckers, *De pers in België. Het verhaal van de Belgische dagbladpers.*

*Gisteren, Vandaag en morgen* (Leuven: Lannoo Campus, 2007); Claude Bellanger et al. (eds), *Histoire Générale de la Presse Française* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969-1976, 5 vols); Klaus Bruhn Jensen ed., *DanskMedie historie*, 3 vols (Copenhagen: Samleren Forlag, 1996-1998); Henrik Bastiansen and Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Norsk Mediehistorie* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2008).

and post-colonialism and the diaspora stimulated the debate on cultural exchange.<sup>3</sup>

As no pan-European public sphere has emerged and the media continue to operate primarily at the national level, journalism history continues to study journalism as a resultant and producer of national culture. Even in the study of media systems, a field largely left to political communication scholars, the underlying assumption is that every nation has its own distinctive media culture only similar to other territorially-bound media cultures to a limited extent.<sup>4</sup> In their influential *Comparing Media Systems*, Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini draw a distinction between a liberal (Atlantic), a democratic corporatist (Northern European) and a polarized pluralist (Southern European) model. The countries in the various models are 'national variants' of these broader media systems.<sup>5</sup>

The dearth of comparative and transnational studies can be explained by historical methodology and a still dominant focus on institutions in journalism history. Firstly, historians often feel uncomfortable with the abstract theories and models needed to grasp developments that transcend territorial spaces. They usually work ideographically by focusing on singular, unique cases and emphasizing their specifics. As Peter Burke notes, scholars from the social sciences, interested in universal patterns and mechanisms, consider historians 'amateurish, myopic fact-collectors without system or method, the imprecision of their "data base" matched only by their incapacity to analyse it.' The other way around, historians believe social scientists 'state the obvious in a barbarous and abstract jargon, lack any sense of place and time, squeeze individuals without mercy into rigid categories, and to cap it all, describe these activities as "scientific"'.<sup>6</sup> However, comparative and transnational research presupposes categori-

zation, abstraction and generalization. Historians often feel the fine distinctions they consider important are lost in the process.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, the study of journalism history still largely focuses on the institutional, political and economic structures journalism grew in. Since these frameworks are mainly national, this obviously does not encourage comparative or transnational research. In a notorious 1974 article, American media scholar James Carey states that journalism history is 'something of an embarrassment'. He notes that press historians 'defined our craft too narrowly and too modestly' and advocates a cultural approach that would shed light on journalism, journalists and news processes. He suggests studying the emergence and development of journalistic practices and forms aiming to represent social reality at a given moment.<sup>8</sup> Carey's cry for action had some responses in recent decades, but the history of reporting still largely remains to be written. The same goes for comparative and transnational studies with a truly comprehensive and interwoven picture of international journalism history.

In this article, I argue that an approach focused on the historical transformation of journalistic routines and textual forms makes it possible to overcome a confinement to national histories. This kind of study focuses on the transfer of norms, practices and forms, and their adaptation in national contexts. It has an eye for dissimilarities regarding the pace and content of transformations between and within countries. It emphasizes transnational contacts, networks and patterns and underlines intertwining national and transnational developments. Below I define what transnational history is and argue that a transnational narrative is implicitly evident in journalism history. I conclude with some suggestions for future research on transnational journalism history.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Patricia Clavin, 'Time, Manner, Place: Writing Modern European History in Global, Transnational and International Contexts', *European History Quarterly* 40 (2010), 624-640; Akira Iriye, 'Transnational History', *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004), 211-222.

<sup>4</sup> Andreas Hepp and Nick Couldry, 'What should comparative media research be comparing? Towards a transcultural approach to 'media cultures'', in: D. K. Thussu (ed.), *Internationalizing Media Studies: Impediments and Imperatives* (London: Routledge, 2010), 32-47, 36; Cf. Henrik G. Bastiansen, 'Media History and the Study of Media Systems', *Media History* 14 (2008), 95-112.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems. Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 2004); Bastiansen, 'Media History', 103.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, 'Comparative History: Methods, Aims, Problems', in: D. Cohen and M. O'Connor, *Comparison and History. Europe in Cross-national Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 25.

<sup>8</sup> James Carey, 'The Problem of Journalism History', in: Eve Stryker Munson and Catherine A. Warren (eds), *James Carey: A Critical Reader* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 86-94; First published in: *Journalism History* 1/1 (1974), 3-5, 27.



## National, transnational and global journalism history

What is transnational journalism history, and what should it be? It is useful in this respect to distinguish three spatial levels of analysis. At the *national* level, research subjects are confined by territorial boundaries. National developments and national journalisms are studied individually. Not much attention is devoted to contact with other nations or cultures, and mutual interdependencies and influences are not taken into account. Change and innovation are mostly characterized as national peculiarities and ample research is conducted on international contacts or the transfer of foreign examples in professional networks. Most comparative research is conducted at this level. It considers and compares nations as more or less stable and isolated units. Since it indicates the study of interactions between various autonomous national actors, the prefix *inter* as in international or intercultural is bound to this analytical level as well.

At the *global* level, research subjects are deterritorialized. Research into global or globalized journalism is a recent novelty anticipating the globalization paradigm. As a result it mainly focuses on contemporary topics, but one could adopt a global approach to early modern or post-Cold War history as well. The eighteenth-century republic of letters, for example, was a deterritorialized space where an international audience came together, consumed information and discussed it in a common language. In addition to a global audience, global journalism also presupposes a universal global logic that traverses national boundaries and leads to a convergence of practices, forms and issues.<sup>9</sup>

*Transnational* journalism history works at the *meso*-level. It focuses on cross-national interaction, the movement of agents, ideas, innovations, norms and social and cultural practices across borders, and their consecutive incorporation and adaptation into national frameworks. It is

outward-looking, dynamic, emphasizing connectivity, heterogeneity and interdependence, and acknowledges that 'cultural forms are increasingly generated and communicated across various territories'.<sup>10</sup> By moving back and forth between the national and transnational level, journalism history emphasizes the dialectic nature of these movements. Although the importance and power of the nation as ongoing force in historical development is recognized, it is treated as 'one among a range of social phenomena to be studied, rather than the frame of the study itself'.<sup>11</sup> The continuous interplay and exchange between the national and transnational level and between processes of territorialization and deterritorialization as such is the subject of study.

Diffusion and transfer are concepts often used to study transnational exchange. Diffusion theory mainly focuses on 'the linear diffusion of a concrete product from the centre to the periphery' in the context of a continuous process of modernization.<sup>12</sup> Svernik Høyer and Horst Pöttker apply it in their account of the triumph of the Anglo-American news paradigm in Germany, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe 'as a component of the great historic process of modernization' in the twentieth century. Although diffusion theory assumes that innovation has ended when diffusion starts, Høyer stresses that diffusion is an interchange in which practice and ideas are adapted to national cultures.<sup>13</sup>

While diffusion seems to presuppose a more or less autonomous and even intangible process hard to pin down to specific moments and actors, transfer emphasizes the intentional use of foreign examples by national agents. It studies diachronic transformation processes in which ideas or practices 'invented' in one country are introduced, transmitted and applied in another. Usually there is only one sender and one recipient and to make the actual transfer clear, the national singularities of the two are sharply distinguished. Transfer studies have an eye for the mediation of knowledge through media and social networks. However,

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Reese, 'Theorizing a Globalized Journalism', in: Martin Löffelholz and David Weaver eds, *Global Journalism Research. Theories, Methods, Findings, Future* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 240-241; Cf. Thomas Hanitzsch, 'Deconstructing Journalism Culture. Toward a Universal Theory', *Communication Theory* 17 (2007), 367-385.

<sup>10</sup> Hepp and Couldry, 'What should comparative media research be comparing?', 40.

<sup>11</sup> Micol Seigel, 'Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn', *Radical Historical Review* 91 (2005), 62-90, 63.

<sup>12</sup> Henk te Velde, 'Political Transfer: An Introduction', *European Review of History – Revue Européenne d'Histoire* 12 (2005), 205-221.

<sup>13</sup> Svernik Høyer and Horst Pöttker (eds), *Diffusion of the News Paradigm 1850-2000* (Göteborg: Nordicom, 2005), 268.



they also run the risk of reducing complex dialectic processes of exchange and reciprocity to the rather straightforward transposition of concrete ideas and practices from one country to another. Transnational journalism history could benefit from the insights of diffusion and transfer studies. It might reveal that what is often called national journalism with distinctive national characteristics is actually the product of various international influences. However, it might be wise to avoid the linearity that transfer and diffusion studies embody and take the more complex hybridization of practices and ideas into account. Current journalism histories tend to ignore this and to interpret transnational exchanges in national terms. By doing so, they fail to explore the potentially fruitful option of researching the dialectics of exchange and making these processes manifest.

## The grand narrative of journalism history

Journalism history is still mainly written in national terms, but I argue that a transnational grand narrative implicitly underlies these national histories. Rooted in Anglo-American journalism and scholarship, this narrative is predetermined by predominantly Anglo-American notions. It views the historical development of journalism as an upward path to press freedom and a civil orientation as a watchdog of public as well as to professional autonomy and the implementation of professional routines and textual forms that are also part of the objectivity regime. This is usually viewed as the professionalization that took off in the late nineteenth century. The fact-centred Anglo-American news style, with formal conventions such as the inverted pyramid, headlines, specific textual genres, and practices such as interviewing and reporting, then became the dominant model for newspapers in democratic societies. This narrative considers the history of journalism a one-way road from advocacy journalism to *high modern* objective journalism, i.e. from views to news.<sup>14</sup> Modernization is a central concept in this analy-

tical framework, mapping the linear progress towards an autonomous profession that empowers citizens and facilitates democracy. In his 1974 article, James Carey calls this dominant paradigm the Whig interpretation of journalism history. Almost twenty years later, James Curran rephrases it as the liberal narrative of media history. He discerns five other narratives in British media history which, however, by criticizing the 'oldest and best established' paradigm, only seem to support and re-establish it.<sup>15</sup> This grand narrative seems omnipresent. In an influential article, media sociologist Jean Chalaby even contends that journalism is an Anglo-American invention.<sup>16</sup> This diminishes the existence and influence of other journalistic styles not centred on news facts and objectivity but on literature, reflection and opinion, which have long been very much alive in European journalism.

The grand narrative of journalism history gives scholars a straightforward model for interpreting the course of history. It is applied and assumed by many scholars, but almost never explicitly argued or explored. In a sense it almost resembles what Judge Potter Stewart said in a 1964 US Supreme Court verdict on pornography. What it is, is hard to define, 'but I know it when I see it...' Scholarship has a teleological as well as a normative focus. What journalism *is* hardly needs to be conceptualized or historicized. It is defined in terms of the liberal narrative and the Anglo-American news paradigm. The outcomes of journalism history are consequently sketched as inevitable and desirable. It has been turned into an almost universal pattern of journalism development whenever and wherever it takes place – a fixed template for national journalism histories.<sup>17</sup>

A dichotomy is created this way that cannot easily be bridged. It limits serious analyses of other styles and forms in their own right because they are excluded from the domain of *journalism* or judged according to the standards of the rising Anglo-American news paradigm instead of in its own terms. As a result, the history of journalism on the European continent is characterized as 'half-hearted' (Norway), 'belated' (Germany) or

<sup>14</sup> Marcel Broersma, 'Form, Style and Narrative Strategies. An Introduction', in: Marcel Broersma ed., *Form and Style in Journalism. European Newspapers and the Representation of News, 1880-2005* (Leuven, Paris and Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007), xi-xii; cf. John Nerone, 'Genres of Journalism History', *The Communication Review* 13 (2010), 15-26, 22; Daniel C. Hallin, 'The Passing of the "High Modernism" of American Journalism', *Journal of Communication* 42/3 (1992), 14-25.

<sup>15</sup> Carey, 'The problem of journalism history', 87-88; James Curran, *Media and Power* (London: Routledge, 2002), 4;

Cf. James Curran, 'Narratives of media history revisited', in: Michael Bailey ed., *Narrating Media History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-21.

<sup>16</sup> Jean Chalaby, 'Journalism as an Anglo-American Invention. A Comparison of the Development of French and Anglo-American Journalism, 1830s-1920s', *European Journal of Communication* 11 (1996), 303-326.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Mark Hampton, 'Renewing the liberal tradition. The press and public discussion in twentieth-century Britain', in: Bailey, *Narrating Media History*, 26-35.

‘controlled’ modernization (the Netherlands).<sup>18</sup> It would be more fruitful to focus on the interchange of forms, norms and practices between the ‘universal’ standards of the Anglo-American paradigm and the national traditions and peculiarities. By carefully studying the transfer of journalistic conventions and routines and examining the processes of cultural adaptation, media historians can prevent their research from being biased by the outcome of this process of ‘absorption of Anglo-American practice, style and form’ in journalism. Form and style are very useful analytical categories to study at a transnational level. Although the content of an article is unique and incidental, its form is more universal and refers to broader cultural discourses and accepted and widely-used news conventions and routines. The content of news items is bound to their national context, but forms and styles tend to travel internationally. They are intensively transferred from one country to another and adapted to national contexts. This process of cultural diffusion reveals how journalistic conventions and routines are influenced by the culture they function in. Journalism has to appeal to the needs of its audience, at any rate in countries where the press is commercially funded. This makes the study of form and style in journalism pre-eminently transnational and comparative. Comparative research can emphasize the national and cultural peculiarities of journalism and explain differences between the development of journalistic practices, conventions and routines in various countries.<sup>19</sup>

## Future directions for transnational journalism history

In conclusion I would like to suggest seven research themes to be explored by future transnational journalism history. All of them are related to what I consider the most fruitful approach: in line with James Carey’s plea for a history of reporting, in my opinion research should focus on the

<sup>18</sup> Svernik Høyer and John Nonseid, ‘The Half-hearted Modernisation of Norwegian Journalism’, in: Høyer and Pöttker (eds.), *The diffusion of the news paradigm*, 123-136; Jürgen Wilke, ‘Belated Modernization. Form and Style in German Journalism, 1880-1980’, in: Broersma (ed.), *Form and Style in Journalism*, 47-60; Huub Wijffjes, ‘Kontrollierte Modernisierung. Form und Verantwortung im Niederländischen Journalismus 1914-1960’, in: Michael Prinz (ed.),

transformation of routines and form conventions. The dialectics of exchange between different types of journalism in one country and between global universals and national peculiarities could thus be critically analyzed.

Media organizations and networks are an obvious first topic for studies of this kind. Very little research has been conducted on formal and informal networks in journalism. The history of international umbrella organizations for national journalists’ unions, press clubs and other professional associations, for example the ones that support press freedom world wide, could reveal concrete examples of the transfer of ideas and practices. The same goes for organizations of printers and informal networks of publishers. They arranged internships all across Europe for sons who wished to succeed their fathers as directors of family firms. It would be interesting to know what they learned in foreign companies and what kind of innovations they then applied at home.

Since they were inspirational breeding grounds for journalists from all across the globe, international media companies like press agencies, broadcasting unions or publishers would also be obvious cases for transnational journalism history.

Secondly, a great deal of research can be conducted into transnational public spheres. During the process of European integration, have there been any efforts for example to construct a pan-European public opinion to be formed by a European press corps in overarching media? A history of Brussels correspondents and the press policy of the European Committee and Parliament would be a tremendous contribution to transnational journalism history. A third topic could be the transnational audiences of radio and television broadcasts across national borders. Since they have to balance the journalistic standards of their home country with the expectations and needs of audiences in the countries they target with their programmes, the history of foreign branches of BBC or Radio Free Europe or others like them could provide important insights into the nature of journalism. In

*Gesellschaftlicher Wandel im Jahrhundert der Politik. Nordwestdeutschland in internationalen Vergleich 1920-1960* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2007), 175-196.

<sup>19</sup> Marcel Broersma, ‘Journalism as performative discourse. Why form and style matter’, in: Verica Rupar ed., *Journalism and Meaning-making: Reading the Newspaper* (Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 2010), 15-35.

line with the above, a fourth strand of research could focus on technology that facilitates transnational communication. Devices like the telegraph, the radio, the Internet and the cell phone each have their own rhetoric that affects news forms of presentation as well as options for the construction of transnational audiences.

At the level of routines, the transfer of norms and ethical standards and national differences in this respect could be a fifth field of study. What is stated in the various national codes of conduct and how does it relate to international agreements like the Code of Bordeaux or the Declaration of Tartu? It would be fascinating to read a study mapping the discussion on ethics at international assemblies of journalists. At the textual level, the study of forms and news flows opens up a sixth and seventh research theme. The coverage of international news events from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century could be studied. It is fascinating to track how newspapers copy each

other and how one or two 'master texts' on a certain event circulate throughout Europe or even worldwide and are adapted in national contexts. The same goes for images and photographs: how are identical images decoded in texts in various countries?

The formal and stylistic characteristics of news are also something that can be explored transnationally. This could enable us to study how journalism developed in the twentieth century from a mainly partisan institution into an independent profession that emphasizes its task as the fourth branch of government. This ideological transformation of journalism expresses itself in stylistic changes and the 'invention' of new journalistic forms. Studying the emergence and historical development of these conventions and the contexts they were used in from a transnational perspective can deepen our understanding of how journalism works.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. the contribution by Frank Harbers and Bas den Herder to this issue. Their paper presents some initial results of a large-scale content analysis of the formal and stylistic characteristics of nine newspapers in France, the UK and the Netherlands from 1880 to 2005. It is part of the NWO/VIDI research project 'Reporting at the

Boundaries of the Public Sphere. Form, Style and Strategy of European Journalism, 1880-2005' currently being carried out under my supervision at the University of Groningen. For more information see: [www.rug.nl/staff/m.j.broersma/projects](http://www.rug.nl/staff/m.j.broersma/projects).

# Peace through Truth?

## The Press and Moral Disarmament through the League of Nations

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### Abstract

The League of Nations Assembly passed a resolution in September 1931 to consult the press about the “spread of false information which may threaten to disturb the peace or the good understanding between nations.” By September 1932, 16 nations and two international associations of journalists had replied with suggestions for the Third Conference of Press Experts in Madrid in 1933. This article uses these proposals from journalists as a springboard to discuss how we can use comparative and transnational history to understand the press’s role during the interwar period. After analyzing the current methodological debates on comparative and transnational history, I address the uses of both for histories of the press. How can comparative or transnational history help us to investigate the press? How can scholars think about journalists’ associations and conceptualize their role within the interwar diplomatic framework? More specifically, how did the press fit into the League of Nations’ efforts towards disarmament? Ultimately, an investigation of the two methodologies shows that we cannot class the press neatly into national boxes, but rather have to recognize the messy networks that overlapped, crisscrossed, and intersected to create those apparently national press systems.

### Introduction

Communications history sometimes seems to be separated from other historical work by a methodological Grand Canyon. Communications history has increasingly emphasized the importance of quantitative, empirical work based on newspapers.<sup>1</sup> There is also another strand of more qualitative archival work, especially led by Jürgen Wilke on the history of press institutions.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, historians have until relatively recently rather neglected the study of the media.

In Germany and England, at least, interest has grown considerably in the last few years.<sup>3</sup> In the Anglo-American arena, on the other hand, historians have tended to be more interested in the institutional and technological background of the press such as the telegraph.<sup>4</sup> Driven by different questions about the media and different methodological backgrounds, the two groups have much to learn from each other. In this article, I will address historians’ methodological debates about the pitfalls and promises of comparative and transnational history and illustrate through

<sup>1</sup> For details of this transition, see Maria Löblich, *Die empirisch-sozialwissenschaftliche Wende in der Publikations- und Zeitungswissenschaft* (Köln: Von Halem, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Jürgen Wilke, *Presseanweisungen im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert: Erster Weltkrieg, Drittes Reich, DDR* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2007); Jürgen Wilke, *Grundzüge der Medien- und Kommunikationsgeschichte: Von den Anfängen bis ins 20. Jahrhundert* (Köln: Böhlau, 2000); *Pressepolitik und Propaganda: Historische Studien vom Vormärz bis zum Kalten Krieg* (Köln: Böhlau, 1997); Jürgen Wilke, *Telegraphenbüros und Nachrichten-agenturen in Deutschland: Untersuchungen zu ihrer Geschichte bis 1949* (München; New York: K.G. Saur, 1991). This builds on work begun by Koszyk. See Kurt Koszyk, *Deutsche Presse, 1914-1945*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1972); Kurt Koszyk, *Deutsche Pressepolitik im Ersten*

*Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1968).

<sup>3</sup> To cite some of the most prominent examples, Dominik Geppert, *Pressekriege: Öffentlichkeit und Diplomatie in den deutsch-britischen Beziehungen (1896-1912)*; Frank Bösch, *Öffentliche Geheimnisse: Skandale, Politik und Medien in Deutschland und Grossbritannien 1880-1914* (München: Oldenbourg, 2009), Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Daniel R. Headrick, *The invisible weapon: telecommunications and international politics, 1851-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Dwayne Roy Winseck and Robert M. Pike, *Communication and empire: media, markets, and globalization, 1860-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

examples how historians' approaches can inform work on the press.

The main example from my own research concerns journalism and the League of Nations. For the League of Nations, the press was critical not only in relaying information about the League around the world, but also as an instrument to promote peace. The press was seen as an arm of moral disarmament. Moral disarmament aimed to be the "soft power" equivalent to negotiations on material disarmament. It sought to change ideas about diplomacy and conflict resolution by promoting conditions for peace through intellectual cooperation and the press, along with various committees.

In the specific case I consider here, the League of Nations Assembly passed a resolution on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1931 on the cooperation of the press in the organization of peace. It asked the Secretary-General to consult with the press about the matter of the "spread of false information which may threaten to disturb the peace or the good understanding between nations." By September 1932, 16 nations and two international associations of journalists had replied with various suggestions in time for the third Conference of Press Experts in Madrid in 1933. This article will use these answers along with the debates about accurate news at the Conference of Press Experts as a springboard to discuss how we can apply approaches from comparative and transnational history to understand the press' role during the interwar period. How should scholars investigate conferences convened by and for the press? How can we evaluate journalists' associations and conceptualize their role within the interwar diplomatic framework? More specifically, how did the press fit into the League of Nations' efforts towards disarmament? Answers or debates on these questions cut to the core of understanding how journalists saw their role as transmitters of League international news and how the League relied on and nurtured journalists as their best method of reaching the public, whose opinion they cherished.

Over the past few decades, scholars have debated the virtues and vices of both comparative and transnational approaches to history; such conversations have often cut to the heart of the very aims of historical research. These discussions have interrogated the implicit biases, methods and results of scholarship and challenged historians to reconceptualize their objects of study both in

scope and scale. I aim to provide an overview of the main debates about comparative and transnational history, and then to reflect on the specific uses of both for the history of journalism and the press. This short survey of transnational and comparative history does not intend to pit the two approaches against each other. Indeed, as I hope to show in regards to the press, the most fruitful work combines both.

## The Case for Comparative and Transnational History

### Comparative History

John Stuart Mill's reflections on the vices and virtues of comparison in 1882 illustrate some of the core concerns of comparative history even today: investigations of similarities and differences, and attempts to use them logically to understand causal relationships. Mill suggested that there were two methods of comparison: the Method of Agreement and the Method of Disagreement.<sup>5</sup> The Method of Agreement tried to find common elements between phenomena, though he emphasized that this could only elicit laws and commonalities between phenomena, rather than discover causes. When there is more than one cause, the Method of Agreement can only identify that two cases have these influences in common, but cannot prove a causal relationship.

For Mill we can discover causes only through the Method of Difference, "the most perfect of the methods of experimental inquiry."<sup>6</sup> The Method of Difference tried to understand causes by looking for examples that are the same in all respects except the one under investigation. Yet he recognized that this ideal situation was impossible to apply to social phenomena, suggesting that we instead examine classes where a phenomenon is present in one and absent in the other, such as a country with free trade versus one with restrictive measures. Nevertheless, Mill concluded that neither of these methods is able to identify causes for trends and events. Rather, there are countless potential influences; even if a circumstance did not produce an effect in one instance, this does not mean that it cannot produce this effect under a different set of conditions. For Mill, "we can conclude that the effect is sometimes produced without it [a phenomenon]; but not that, when present, it does not contribute its share."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> J. S. Mill, "Two Methods of Comparison," in Amitai Etzioni and Frederic Dubow (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives: Theories and Methods* (Boston: Little, Brown,

1969), 205-213.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.



In the 1920s, Marc Bloch built on reflections by Durkheim and Mill, amongst others, to plead for the use of the comparative method in history.<sup>8</sup> For Bloch, writing in the aftermath of the destruction of World War I, comparative history was not just a means to extend our historical knowledge, but also served the political goal of developing a common scientific language amongst historians of different nationalities. According to Bloch, the first step in comparative history entailed the discovery of a viable geographical area of investigation. Indeed, in contrast to later historians' concentration on the nation as the basic unit of comparison, Bloch believed that comparative history "demands most insistently that we abandon obsolete topographical compartments in which we pretend to enclose social realities; they are quite unfit for the contents which we force into them."<sup>9</sup> Bloch hoped that the comparison of related societies, a method he favoured over universal comparisons, would allow historians above all to discover causes of differences and similarities in comparable societies. Bloch's comparative history bequeathed us no particular methodology. Yet it remained important for its appeal not only to use the comparative perspective, but also for its insistence upon questioning our units of analysis.<sup>10</sup> In the United States at least, in the 1960s and 1970s, comparison became a touchstone for understanding democracy and revolution for sociologists such as Theda Skocpol and political scientists concerned with comparisons of civilizations, principally Barrington Moore.<sup>11</sup> Mean-

while, comparison garnered renewed interest in the historical discipline in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Charles Maier's now classic *Recasting Bourgeois Europe* (first published in 1979) emphasized how comparison can lead us to ask new questions about the interwar years in Europe, particularly in demonstrating its potential for stability.<sup>12</sup> Other historians, such as Raymond Grew, argued that, "to call for comparison is to call for a kind of attitude – open, questioning, searching – and to suggest some practices that may nourish it."<sup>13</sup> As emphasized by later historians such as Jürgen Kocka and Gerhard Haupt, comparison highlights new problems, developments and questions, forces us to reflect more deeply on our explanatory models and research methodologies, and forces us to consider similarities and differences.<sup>14</sup> Yet comparison's calls for openness left historians in search of a methodology. Here German, French, and Anglo-American historiography have diverged in recent years. Comparative history has been criticized for reifying the nation as a category in the Anglo-American world and for failing to deal sufficiently with causality.<sup>15</sup> In France, transfer history, as espoused by Michel Espagne, emphasizes how transfers of knowledge across national boundaries create "national" cultures, while *histoire croisée*, propounded by Bénédicte Zimmermann and Michael Werner, argues that we have to historicize our methods and objects of analysis and understand how we as historians are also the product of "entangled history". Comparative history remains an extremely popular methodology

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of antecedents to Bloch's ideas on comparative history, see Maurice Aymard, "Histoire et comparaison," des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales École and Deutsches Historisches Institut (Paris, France) *Marc Bloch Aujourd'hui: Histoire Comparée & Sciences Sociales* (Paris: Editions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1990), 271-278.

<sup>9</sup> Marc Bloch, "Toward a Comparative History of European Societies" (1928), in Frederic Chapin Lane and Jelle C. Riemersma (eds.), *Enterprise and secular change; readings in economic history* (Homewood, Ill.: R.D. Irwin, 1953), 517. Other important early advocates of the comparative method are Henri Pirenne and Otto Hintze.

<sup>10</sup> For the heated discussion on Bloch's importance for comparative history, see Alette Olin Hill and Boyd H. Hill, "AHR Forum: Marc Bloch and Comparative History," *The American Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (October 1980): 828-857; Charles J. Halperin et. al, "AHR Forum: Comparative History in Theory and Practice: A Discussion," *The American Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (February 1982): 123-143; William H. Sewell and Sylvia L. Thrupp, "[Marc Bloch and Comparative History]: Comments," *The American Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (October 1980): 847-853; William H. Sewell, "Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History," *History and Theory* 6, no. 2 (1967): 208-218; Alette Olin Hill and Boyd H. Hill, "[Marc

Bloch and Comparative History]: Reply," *The American Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (October 1980): 854-857.

<sup>11</sup> Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy; Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). For a critique of sociological typologies, see Peter Baldwin, "Comparing and Generalizing: Why All History is Comparative, Yet No History is Sociology," in *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-22.

<sup>12</sup> Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade After World War I* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

<sup>13</sup> Raymond Grew, "The Case for Comparing Histories," *The American Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (October 1980): 776.

<sup>14</sup> "Historischer Vergleich: Methoden, Aufgaben, Probleme. Eine Einleitung," in Haupt and Kocka (eds.), *Geschichte und Vergleich: Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1996), 9-46.

<sup>15</sup> See Peter Baldwin's and Michael Miller's essays in *Comparison and History*, 1-22, 115-132.



in Germany, however, where it has been defended as an approach for a “more theoretically oriented, analytic type of history.”<sup>16</sup> Hartmut Kaelble’s introductory work to comparative history countered suggestions to comparative history’s amorphous methodology by suggesting a typology of comparisons to enable the historian to comprehend the particularities of the phenomena under investigation and to choose appropriate units of comparison.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, for Haupt and Kocka, comparison concerns itself with similarities and differences, rather than understanding change over time. To put it another way, comparison aims to understand synchronic situations, but cannot be used to explain diachronic developments. Comparison can illustrate snapshots while other approaches to history investigate how the negatives developed into those snapshots in the first place.

### Transnational History

The main response to criticisms of comparative history has been transnational history.<sup>18</sup> The history of the term “transnational” itself stretches back at least to a 1916 essay called “Transnational America” by Randolph Bourne, which called in a certain sense for a form of American cultural plurality.<sup>19</sup> Just as Chris Lorenz has emphasized the importance of politics for choosing comparisons, the rise of transnational history too was sparked by contemporary political events.<sup>20</sup> In Germany, much comparative historical research took its impetus from debates about the *Sonderweg*. For transnational history, the end of the Cold War and the resulting new geopolitical circumstances led historians to question the nation more than they had before. Especially in the last decade, “transnational” has become a byword for that openness to new approaches advocated by Raymond Grew for comparative history in 1980. To paint its various historical trends with broad brushstrokes, transnational history aims to understand phenomena passing across, undermining, and indeed

creating the nation-state. It searches for actors, organizations, and ideas that cross boundaries and constitute groups, networks and flows. Indeed, adherents of transnational history argue that we can only understand how the very nation itself was produced transnationally by examining how ideas about nation disseminated through Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>21</sup> The emergence in the mid-nineteenth century of liberal ideals of a unified Germany, for example, were greatly influenced by Mazzini in Italy, and in the later 1860s, nationally-minded Prussians especially looked to Cavour and Piedmont-Sardinia as a model for Prussia and Germany.

Transnational history seeks to address the main criticism leveled at comparison: that by concentrating on similarities and differences, it has obscured how societies have mutually influenced each other. It allows historians to focus on processes and diachronic developments, rather than single events that may elude constructive comparison in the first place. This approach pushes historians to remain receptive to other units of analysis than the nation and to understand contemporaries’ networks that sometimes spread in decidedly non-national directions. Transnational history questions traditional temporal and spatial divisions. As Patricia Clavin notes, it “allows us to consider the processes by which change is facilitated on a different timescale.”<sup>22</sup> Spatially, transnational history has come to encompass much work on colonialism and imperialism.<sup>23</sup> For Jürgen Osterhammel, transnational history has rediscovered the importance of geography in its attention to borders and territoriality.<sup>24</sup>

Despite its purported openness, however, transnational history has been criticized on a number of grounds. Firstly, it often presents too positive and progressive a picture, wherein the world advances teleologically towards ever more interconnection and transnational structures.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, its very openness can allow vagueness to creep

<sup>16</sup> Haupt and Kocka in *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>17</sup> Hartmut Kaelble, *Der historische Vergleich: Eine Einführung zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> Other responses to the perceived problems of comparative history have included *histoire croisée* and transfer history, though these approaches are transnational in their emphasis on transfer and entanglement across national boundaries. See Matthias Middell, “Kulturtransfer und historische Komparatistik. Thesen zu ihrem Verhältnis,” *Comparativ* 10, no. 1 (2000): 7–41.

<sup>19</sup> For the history of the term “transnational,” see Ian Tyrrell, “What is transnational history?,” 2008, <http://iantyrrell.wordpress.com/what-is-transnational-history/>; Patricia Clavin, “Defining Transnationalism,” *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (2005): 421–439.

<sup>20</sup> Chris Lorenz, “Comparative Historiography: Problems and Perspectives,” *History and Theory* 38, no. 1 (February 1999): 25–39.

<sup>21</sup> Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational nation: United States history in global perspective since 1789* (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Clavin, “Defining Transnationalism,” 428.

<sup>23</sup> For Germany, a key work is Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel, *Das Kaiserreich transnational: Deutschland in der Welt 1871–1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Jürgen Osterhammel, “Transnationale Gesellschaftsgeschichte: Erweiterung oder Alternative?,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 27, no. 3 (2001): 464–479.

<sup>25</sup> David Armitage, “Is There a Pre-History of Globalization?,” in *Comparison and History*, 165–176.

into works on transnational history. Finally, as Johannes Paulmann notes for cultural transfers, we can only understand the importance of a transfer by comparing, at least implicitly, our object's status, name and meaning in the culture whence it came.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Glenda Sluga argues that we have to understand how people at the time used comparison to create what have later been identified as transnational phenomena. For example, American, French and British concepts about nations critically influenced the composition of the nation-states created from the Habsburg Empire after World War I. Comparison by Central European elites at the time fuelled their desire for a nation-state to emulate Anglo-American political structures. Thus for Sluga, "conventional characterizations of the nature of nations are themselves the ideological products of the processes of comparison."<sup>27</sup> The development of national sentiment and later nationalism rely upon comparisons between one's own nation and another. Yet the ideological basis for these comparisons is very often trends and thoughts that have disseminated across the very borders of those nations that compare themselves.

### The Outlook for History of the Press

Both comparative and transnational history offer many fruitful approaches for the history of the press. Firstly, communications historians have long been aware of the importance of choosing commensurable units of analysis, particularly given their empirical bent. Secondly, comparative history has allowed historians of the press to contribute to our understanding about the influence of historical context and generational experience upon journalists.<sup>28</sup> Thirdly, as exemplified by Jean Chalaby, historians of the press have used comparison to demonstrate the thesis that modern journalism and news are an "Anglo-American invention."<sup>29</sup>

Yet these comparisons leave us with certain questions. In establishing the creation of norms and practices, how exactly did these enter specific national contexts? Who precisely were the agents of this change? For Chalaby, the French public became exposed to Anglo-American discourse

centered on facts through the launch of *Matin* in 1883 by American financiers. Transnational history gives historians the opportunity to investigate those categories of actors who agitated beyond national borders and sought to gain success through dissemination of particular norms and business practices.

As regards the press, the Anglo-American and French realms of news had in fact been intertwined in several ways since the mid-nineteenth century. Despite differences in concepts of news, the news agency cartel system meant that the French, British, and Germans at least had been consistently supplied with the others' news from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. This global arrangement complicates our ability to compare national press systems, for example, given their common suppliers for much news. The German Wolffs Telegraphisches Bureau (WTB), the French Agence Havas and British Reuters Telegram Company constituted the 'Big Three' modern news agencies from the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup> The 'Big Three' operated a formal global cartel on news collection from 1870 until around 1933, whereby they divided the global supply of news between them: each agency reported on its assigned sphere and supplied this news for free to the other two. News supply was a transnational affair from the start: the founders of the 'Big Three' had worked together at Agence Havas in 1848 and cooperated informally from the foundation of Reuters (1851) and the WTB (1849). Personal contacts were key to the three agencies' stranglehold on global news and continued to be vitally important during every renegotiation of the cartel contract. The cartel arrangement dominated the world of news agencies for sixty years, surviving World War I; it ended in 1933-34 when the Nazis merged the WTB and the Hugenberg-owned Telegraphen-Union, to create the Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro, and when the Associated Press forced Reuters to abandon cartel arrangements. Under the cartel, the WTB was responsible for Germany, its colonies, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Scandinavia and Russia. Agence Havas concerned itself with France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and South America, while Reuters gathered news from its empire and

<sup>26</sup> Johannes Paulmann, "Internationaler Vergleich und interkultureller Transfer: Zwei Forschungsansätze zur europäischen Geschichte des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts," *Historische Zeitschrift* 267, no. 3 (December 1998): 681.

<sup>27</sup> G. Sluga, "The Nation and the Comparative Imagination," in *Comparison and History*, 104.

<sup>28</sup> Simone Christine Ehmig, *Generationswechsel im deutschen Journalismus: Zum Einfluss historischer Ereignisse auf das journalistische Selbstverständnis* (Freiburg: K. Alber, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> Jean K. Chalaby, *The invention of journalism* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Macmillan Press; St. Martin's Press, 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Agence Havas was founded in 1832 as a translation agency, and in 1835, Charles Havas transformed it into what was the first modern news agency. Reuters was founded in 1851. Reuters and the WTB initially served as financial press agencies, especially the WTB, but soon expanded into other types of news.

North America.<sup>31</sup> Within its sphere, each agency negotiated contracts of news exchange with particular national and imperial news agencies.<sup>32</sup> These agencies' cooperation with particular national or imperial news agencies stifled competition within those countries, as other news agencies had little or no access to foreign news, and thus determined which news agencies within various countries were successful.

To complicate the picture yet further, these agencies sent their news through telegraphs cables often owned by the British before World War I and indeed, regulated through the International Telegraph Union (ITU). The ITU, founded in 1865, constitutes one of the first intergovernmental organizations and established agreements on

telegraph lines, tariffs and telegraphic systems.<sup>33</sup> The press thus became one of the first industries whose commodity, information, was partially governed internationally by the emergence of legislation through conventions and international conferences from the 1860s.

Other aspects of the press overlay the apparently national grid of newspapers. The establishment of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in 1926, for example, represented one effort to coordinate journalistic activity across national and imperial boundaries. When the League of Nations consulted governments prior to conferences on the press in 1927 and 1931, it also asked the IFJ for its opinion on various matters relating to the press. The IFJ thus held the same status for the League of Nations, at least, as governments.

Finally, languages, concerns, and styles often crossed national or imperial boundaries.<sup>34</sup> As Marcel Broersma has pointed out, forms and styles cross borders more readily than many had assumed.<sup>35</sup> By examining how forms and styles

became transnational, perhaps we can begin to understand *why* these might be more readily transferrable than content or institutional structures. For instance, who exactly was involved in the dissemination of forms and styles? Were particular organizations or events catalysts for these developments? The Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and later conferences at the League of Nations provided vital meeting points for journalists from much of the world, for example. These journalists and news agency reporters certainly compared their coverage to others, reflecting on their relative success or failure in disseminating news back home. Yet they were also influenced by methods and techniques from other countries from the number of telegrams sent a day to the type of reporting itself.

The different networks sketched above highlight new areas of research for historians of the press if we open our gaze beyond the comparative and the national. Transnational history involves a search for agents and networks beyond and across the nation; research can trace the active creation or destruction of those connections and their dissemination. It can encourage research of hitherto overlooked phenomena such as intergovernmental organizations and conferences, such as the League of Nations Press Conferences that I will discuss below. Yet the comparative shouldn't be left out in the cold. Journalists and governments often compared themselves to others and assessed their achievements in relation to others' successes. For the German government of World War I, for example, their lack of influence on neutral countries could only be explained by comparison to British agitations through Reuters in the pre-war period. Government press officials lamented by comparison their relative lack of news dissemination in South America and East Asia prior to World War I and blamed it for the hostility from these coun-

**Transnational history involves a search for agents and networks beyond and across the nation; research can trace the active creation or destruction of those connections and their dissemination.**

<sup>31</sup> The AP became a signatory on cartel treaties from 1900.

<sup>32</sup> Terhi Rantanen calls this the "bi-directional dependency" of global agencies, which were always dependent on news supply from smaller agencies within their spheres. Rantanen, "The Struggle for Control of Domestic News Markets," in Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Terhi Rantanen, *The globalization of news* (London: Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998). See also Esperança Bielsa, "The Pivotal Role of News Agencies in the Context of Globalization: a Historical Approach," *Global Networks* 8, no. 3 (2008): 347-366.

<sup>33</sup> For the history of the ITU, see Headrick, *The invisible weapon: telecommunications and international politics*,

1851-1945; Madeleine Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865: Eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Ordnung*, Geschichte kompakt. (Darmstadt: WBG, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009); Peter J. Hugill, *Global communications since 1844: geopolitics and technology* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

<sup>34</sup> For example, Polish was used in newspapers in its three partitions in Austria, Russia and Germany.

<sup>35</sup> Marcel Jeroen Broersma, *Form and style in journalism: European newspapers and the presentation of news, 1880-2005* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007).

tries during the war. Comparison with Britain spurred Germany to develop its wireless news networks and broadcast on the sea in the early post-war period; without understanding the urgency of these comparisons for officials at the time and the conclusions they drew from them, we gain an incomplete picture of motivations for the swift development of wireless and also for the German government to disseminate news for free to ships. Conversely, we can only understand the press baron, Lord Northcliffe's somewhat overblown reaction to discovering this news if we remember that for a man like Northcliffe, power of the press equaled political power. If German news spread further than British, then in comparison, British influence was under threat.<sup>36</sup> Comparison provides the means to assess these claims and to understand their validity for contemporaries. Finally, comparison stops historians from forgetting about the importance of the nation, as Susan Pedersen points out.<sup>37</sup> According to Charles S. Maier, a new history of the twentieth century needs to take into account its emphasis on territoriality, meaning the "properties, including power, provided by the control of a border political space."<sup>38</sup> This new periodization portrays the twentieth century as a century from the 1860s to 1960s/1970s, when control over a particular territory (and its resources) was the dominant concern. In our eagerness to find those who did not fit into state and territorial structures, we cannot neglect the paradigmatic status of the nation-state.

## The Fight against False Information

### The League of Nations and Journalists

In the Convention establishing the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Article VIII stated that the maintenance of peace required the reduction of armaments to the lowest point possible. Disarmament came to mean

not just the reduction of physical armaments, but also moral disarmament. Moral disarmament aimed to encourage international cooperation and understanding to ensure that war between nations could no longer be possible. The League's first committee, formed in 1919 upon the mandate from Article 23 (e) of the League Covenant, addressed communication and transport, indicating the central importance placed upon the press as a promoter of peace from the very start of the League's existence. In moral disarmament and intellectual cooperation, journalists played a key role in the dissemination of information and establishment of new discursive norms on peace, and truth in particular.

Older interpretations of the League of Nations have dismissed it as a body "with no teeth" that ultimately failed to prevent World War II and whose international record on issues such as mandates, was murky at best. Historians of Germany, for instance, have argued that Germany through the Weimar Republic only instrumentalized the League to attempt to revise the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>39</sup> Others have highlighted that even the "high" period of international cooperation after Locarno in 1925 and before the Great Depression in 1929 actually relied upon negotiations behind the scenes between Aristide Briand, Gustav Stresemann and Austin Chamberlain.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, more recent works have emphasized that Germany differentiated between the Versailles and Geneva systems, and took the framework of Geneva seriously, not simply pursuing revisionist aims.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, Susan Pedersen has emphasized that for all its failings, the League did matter: at Geneva, "internationalism was enacted, institutionalized, and performed."<sup>42</sup> She calls for further examination of the mechanisms of governance at the League of Nations to understand how it interacted with its various publics and how it laid the groundwork for many aspects of the UN and other organizations that still exist today, such as

<sup>36</sup> Heidi J. S. Evans, "The Path to Freedom? Transoceanic and German Wireless Telegraph, 1914-1922," *Historical Social Research* 35, no. 1 (2010): 209-236.

<sup>37</sup> Susan Pedersen, "Comparative History and Women's History: Explaining Convergence and Divergence," in *Comparison and History*, 71-84.

<sup>38</sup> Charles S. Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," *American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (June 2000): 808.

<sup>39</sup> Christoph M. Kimmich, *Germany and the League of Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). Carole Fink illustrates the somewhat cynical German attitude to minority protection treaties. Carole Fink, *Defending the*

*rights of others: the great powers, the Jews, and international minority protection, 1878-1938* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2004).

<sup>40</sup> Jon Jacobson, *Locarno diplomacy: Germany and the West, 1925-1929* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972); Peter Krüger, *Die Außenpolitik der Republik von Weimar* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985).

<sup>41</sup> Joachim Wintzer, *Deutschland und der Völkerbund 1918-1926* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006), 59.

<sup>42</sup> Susan Pedersen, "Back to the League of Nations: Review Essay," *American Historical Review* 112, no. 4 (October 2007): 1113.

the International Labour Organization.

More specifically, for my work on the press, public opinion took on a vastly increased importance in connection with the League of Nations after World War I. We can take as one key example Jan Smuts, who wrote the first outline of the League of Nations to be made public and subsequently published in early 1919. This pamphlet, *The League of Nations. A Practical Suggestion*, is the main reason that he is generally acknowledged as one of the fathers of the League of Nations. The pamphlet greatly influenced Wilson and became the basis for the draft Covenant of the League presented to the Plenary Session of the Peace Conference on February 14, 1919. In the aftermath of World War One, Smuts felt that international structures and laws had been totally transformed, warranting the creation of a very new kind of global order. He believed in "public opinion" as the ultimate judge and motivating force of these diplomatic undertakings. The formation of public opinion had in fact been Smuts's first aim in writing *Practical Suggestion*. He believed that the League could only be a success when it was supported by "a powerful international public opinion." Furthermore, "the enlightened public all over the world will have to be taught to think internationally, to look at public affairs, not merely from the sectional national point of view, but also from a broad human international point of view."<sup>43</sup> He was not the only one. Indeed, Susan Pedersen's articles on the League of Nations mandate system have emphasized just this point: for her, the mandate system is best conceived as a "discursive arena and not an administrative system."<sup>44</sup> What really mattered, Pedersen has argued, is that "League oversight proliferated information and publicity about the mandates and conferred legitimacy to those powers that complied with the system's formal requirements and professed to uphold its norms."<sup>45</sup>

Journalists and the press thus served several vital purposes in the League of Nations, although this has been somewhat neglected in the historiography. Firstly, they were key conveyors of moral disarmament and other developments at the League to their publics at home. Secondly, the growth in politicians' belief in public opinion meant that

journalists became more important than ever before in disseminating the information that would influence that public favourably. Thirdly, journalists vitally contributed to the discursive language of the League, such as the mandate system and its norms. They helped to establish for the League what Peter Haas calls an "epistemic community": a community of interest, based on the principle of inclusion, with a communal character, composed of individuals sharing the same location or organization.<sup>46</sup> Epistemic communities rely for their cohesion upon knowledge-based networks; these networks built and expanded upon journalists' connections with their newspapers and agencies, and the technological framework of telegraph, telephone, and, later, wireless. Yet the League also provided a space for the creation of this epistemic community: during conferences, journalists of different nationalities met and interacted, and began to develop a more cohesive (or more contested?) vision of what journalism was and what it could achieve for the League of Nations.

These points were not lost on League officials. The League placed great emphasis on public opinion and close cooperation between the League and journalists to supply the press with factual information about the League and conferences held under its auspices. Through its Information Section, the League effected what has been called "a revolutionary change in the relationship between diplomatic activities and the public."<sup>47</sup> It published a monthly summary of League activities along with pamphlets and brochures concerning subjects of particular interest to the public. Indeed, the Information Section was one of the largest sections with 12 members in 1920 and 19 in 1930; it was also the only section whose members were appointed to deal with their respective nationalities. Thus German nationals dealt with the German-speaking press for instance. The Information Section also organized and acted upon the proposal for the first independent conference of the League of Nations: a Conference of Press Experts in 1927. This was followed by a second conference in Copenhagen in 1932 and a final, third conference in Madrid in 1933. Both the preparation and execution of these conferences provide us with insights into the interaction bet-

<sup>43</sup> Jan Christiaan Smuts, *The League of Nations: a practical suggestion* (New York: The Nation Press, 1919), 31.

<sup>44</sup> Susan Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 32, no. 4 (December 2006): 581.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 560.

<sup>46</sup> Peter Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and

International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* 46, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 1-35.

<sup>47</sup> Anique H. M. van Ginneken, *Historical dictionary of the League of Nations* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 105.



ween the League of Nations and the press, the importance of conferences in establishing global practices and norms, and the press's vision of its mission and place within those norms and practices.

### Conferences at the League of Nations

After a proposal from the Chilean delegate in 1925, the League of Nations Assembly resolved to convene a Conference of Press Experts in 1927 to suggest detailed regulation of the press in matters from journalists' visas to facilitating newspaper transportation. A resolution on the conference by the Council in December 1927 stated that conferences should be convened as necessary to debate further issues as they arose. The next conference was called for 1932 in Copenhagen. Over and above conferences for the press, international conferences convened by governments were relatively recent phenomena, dating back to the mid-nineteenth century and proliferating rapidly after World War I. These conferences had few international legal precedents or procedural conventions to fall back on and thus the late 1920s onwards saw a spate of publications on conduct at international conferences. These works acknowledged that the League of Nations had become the "natural center for the coordinated action of the nations of the world in almost every field of international activity."<sup>48</sup>

Writing in 1929, Frederick Sherwood Dunn noted that "the international regulation of activities that do not coincide with the geographical boundaries of existing jurisdictions has made necessary the development of new types of collective action which can deal with interests and transactions from the standpoint of the whole public affected by them."<sup>49</sup> For the press, these issues included regulation of press rates, the removal of censorship, the provision of safe passage for journalists and ID cards recognizing their particular professional status. The press's concerns often overlapped with those of the conferences on communication and transit, and indeed, the Conference of Press Experts at Geneva in 1927 was part of a larger meeting of the Committee on Communication and Transit.<sup>50</sup> This commit-

tee had in fact paid the most attention to method and procedure during its conferences; as the first committee to be established, it often served as a model for other committees and technical organs at the League of Nations.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, at the time, H. R. G. Greaves called its format of a technical international committee "an invaluable means of invention," whose officials "at their best form a link between the national and the universal outlook."<sup>52</sup> Thus its approach to the constitution of conferences often functioned paradigmatically for future conferences held by the League. In particular, I will examine the League's appeal to 64 countries before the Conference of Press Experts in Madrid in 1933 to provide suggestions on how to prevent the "spread of false information which may threaten to disturb the peace or the good understanding between nations."<sup>53</sup>

### Comparing Concepts of Truth?

After the success of the Conference of Press Experts in Copenhagen in January 1932, the League Council called another conference for Madrid in 1933. At the Copenhagen conference, delegates had suggested that there might be more coordination between states in securing peace. The Council and Assembly eagerly seized on the opportunity to further their aim of moral disarmament through the press and sent a circular to 64 countries that reached over 130 press organizations. They received replies from 16 individual countries' organizations and two international journalists' organizations, including that of journalists accredited to the League of Nations. These replies demonstrate not only journalists' concern with the idea of "truth" and its connection to peace, but also practical concerns for us as historians about how to analyze terms and their comparability. As Marcel Broersma has pointed out, "journalism's claim to truth is the main feature of the journalism discourse"; striving for this truth has become "the basis for the social code shared by journalists and their reading audience."<sup>54</sup> Yet "true" and "false" are of course values whose exact meaning is somewhat blurry. Truth, like beauty, is somewhat in the eye of the beholder. The true can be the factually correct, the logically true, or

<sup>48</sup> Frederick Sherwood Dunn, *The practice and procedure of international conferences* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1929), 32. See also Norman Llewellyn Hill, *The public international conference; its function, organization and procedure* (Stanford University, California: Stanford University Press, 1929).

<sup>49</sup> Dunn, *The practice and procedure of international conferences*, 6.

<sup>50</sup> For more on the Communications and Transit Committee, see H. R. G. Greaves, *The League committees and*

*world order; a study of the permanent expert committees of the League of nations as an instrument of international government* (London: Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1931), 139-158.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 245f.

<sup>53</sup> Series of League of Nations Publication, General 1932, 7.

<sup>54</sup> Marcel Broersma, "The Unbearable Limitations of Journalism," *The International Communication Gazette* 72, no. 1 (2010): 25.



the politically true, to give three simple examples. As the replies to the League of Nations illustrate, journalists' associations interpreted the concepts of "true" and "false" information in very different ways with important consequences for our understanding of the nature of journalistic discourse in the interwar period.

To summarize the replies briefly, they came from associations in countries as far-flung as Honduras, Italy, and New Zealand. The IFJ encompassed most European national associations: this was the main reason that there were fewer replies numerically to this League request for information than there had been in 1927 on the protection of news.<sup>55</sup> The IFJ, founded in 1926, had begun to operate as the umbrella organization for German, French, and many Central and Eastern European national associations; its reply in 1932 demonstrates how it had cemented its status as the representative organ for multiple associations. Indeed, this function continued after World War Two up to the present day. The International Association of Journalists Accredited to the League of Nations unsurprisingly gave the fullest answer as the representative of journalists reporting on the League. The content of the answers varied from the British Empire Union's direct dismissal of the topic of false news to the International Association of Journalists Accredited to the League of Nations, which suggested detailed preventative and remedial measures to address false news.

In some ways, these replies offer an ideal opportunity to compare different national conceptions of false news. Yet we have to be careful to avoid equating what Bloch called "homonyms": terms that appeared to mean the same thing, but in fact indicated something different. Replies to the circular relied upon translation of the original circular into languages ranging from Polish to Swedish to Turkish, and then translating replies back into French and English, the official languages of the League. Translation, of course, always involves a degree of interpretation, and occasionally, the creation of new terms if they do not exist, as Lydia Liu shows for the translation of American legal texts into Chinese in the late nineteenth century.<sup>56</sup> One example for our purposes is the concept of *Recht*, *droit* or *dritto*, which in English can mean either "law" or "right". Over and above translation issues, the replies indicate that even those who spoke the same mother tongue interpreted

the adjective "false" very differently.

In this particular context, we can see from the replies from the International Federation of Journalists and the Australian Journalists' Association that they interpreted the meaning of "false news" very differently. For the Australians, false news meant "untruthful or sensational presentation of international news."<sup>57</sup> For the International Federation of Journalists, on the other hand, "false news" was an amorphous term, which could be subdivided into three categories. Firstly, journalists occasionally supplied incorrect news, which they had thought to be factually accurate. Secondly, there was tendentious news, whereby particular groups sought to use news for their own gains. Thirdly, false information entailed deliberate forgery or distortion of news. Given these divergent definitions, it comes as little surprise that the two Associations reached very different conclusions about future actions on the subject. The Australians called for daily dissemination of news through wireless and an international journal to serve as a form of watchdog for truthful international news. Meanwhile, the IFJ believed that journalists alone were qualified to judge which category a "false" news item fell into each time and that the only disciplinary authority was the International Journalists' Court of Honour that had been established at the Hague in 1931. In essence, the IFJ argued on the basis of prior misinterpretations of "false news" by other authors, that only journalists could judge their colleagues. Journalists should have "international cards" to identify them as professionals and only fellow professionals could judge how a journalist had sinned. This was a bold statement for internal regulation of a journalistic *habitus*, which contrasted with the Australians' belief that an international journal could serve as an external standard by which all readers could theoretically judge journalists.

Meanwhile, although it professed a polite willingness to help, the British Empire Union's reply clearly indicated that the very idea of a survey on "false news" almost constituted an insult. The Union equated "false news" with an "abuse of the freedom of the Press", somewhat akin to the more restrictive Australian definition. For the Union, however, public opinion would criticize any such news item so heavily that given the competition amongst various organs of the press, they would be loath to become repeat offenders.<sup>58</sup> The

<sup>55</sup> Papers and Conference Reports on the Conference of Press Experts, 1927, League of Nations Archive.

<sup>56</sup> See Lydia He Liu, *Tokens of exchange: the problem of translation in global circulations* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

<sup>57</sup> Series of League of Nations Publication, General 1932, 15, League of Nations Archive.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

market and public opinion were the preventative cures for any transgression of truth. Any other method would be “difficult to reconcile with British conceptions of the rights of free publication of news and free comment.”<sup>59</sup> In the British Empire Union’s interpretation, opinion and comment served as correctives to false facts.

By contrast, for the International Association of Journalists Accredited to the League of Nations, the freedom required to prevent false news extended far beyond freedom of the press to financial freedom from advertisers and publishers and freedom for journalists to act as eye-witnesses to breaking stories and diplomatic negotiations. This radical suggestion based itself on the observation that, “only in the newspaper do people anywhere still believe that they can get something for nothing – and that something is the most precious of things, the truth, and the truth almost instantaneously.”<sup>60</sup> As readers were unwilling to pay full price for the gathering of their news, advertisers and publishers aka businessmen had gained inordinate and inappropriate power over newspapers and their content, according to the Association. It suggested solutions ranging from expanding the wireless station at Geneva to provide more international news globally to establishing an impartial fact-finding body to check news to creating financial freedom for newspapers through taxes. For the Association, though, prevention was the only measure: legal actions on cases of false news could not be substantiated as they were not sufficiently based on facts. These proposals imputed to the League a power beyond its ability to remake radically the world of international news; this Association at least believed that the League was its best bet for transformation, rather than individual national governments.

Thus for those who perceived “false information” as a problem, the solutions varied greatly. The Association for the Journalists Accredited to the League of Nations presented the most radical solution with its call for full financial independence for newspapers; the IFJ suggested greater professionalization and regulation through ID cards for journalists issued by the League of Nations. This profession should then regulate itself through the International Court of Honour for Journalists. An International Court of Honour for Journalists had been established at the Hague in 1931 to deal with transgressive acts by journalists, though

it remained somewhat unclear as to what exactly constituted these acts. Nevertheless, the establishment of the Court is an important moment in attempts to develop a global ethos of journalism, underpinned by an honorary legal framework.

The most common call was for more openness by the League and for it to allow journalists more access to diplomatic proceedings, with the Sino-Japanese conflict of 1931 as their main example. In this conflict, after the Mukden Incident, Japan had taken over Manchuria from the Chinese in a brutal manner and was busy turning it into a colony of Japan named Manchukuo. Upon China’s request, the League of Nations investigated and attempted to arbitrate the dispute, but the official Lytton Report of October 1932 and subsequent League motion in February 1933 to condemn Japan as an aggressor merely culminated in a Japanese withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933. The Sino-Japanese conflict in 1931 certainly undermined the League’s legitimacy in dealing with conflicts.<sup>61</sup> Yet journalists had clearly not abandoned it before the publication of the Lytton Report, but rather felt that the solution was a return to the Wilsonian principle of more open diplomacy. Indeed, one might argue that the importance of the Sino-Japanese conflict for journalists lay not in how it sullied their view of the League’s efficacy in solving diplomatic disputes. Rather the replies indicate that the associations were disturbed by *how* the conflict was addressed over and above the final result. Writing that “correct news is the antidote for false news” and hence pleading for open access to League meetings, the IFJ’s attitude demonstrates that the League’s closed-door diplomacy had hollowed out the promises of openness created by its numerous conferences.<sup>62</sup> The League had asked journalists to inform it about how to prevent false information; for the IFJ, the League’s manner of diplomacy was one key reason for the increase in inaccuracy. The League’s legitimacy would soon be wholly dissolved through Japan’s and Germany’s withdrawal in October 1933 and the Hoare-Laval Pact in 1935; however, for journalists in 1932, the League had lost face not through the failure to resolve the Sino-Japanese conflict, but through forbidding journalists open access to negotiations. Journalists suggested that it was this closed diplomacy that had undermined public trust in the League’s operations

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>61</sup> See F. P. Walters, *A history of the League of*

*Nations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 13.

by preventing journalists from gaining access to accurate information. This had led to skewed reporting and, consequently, a decline in public faith in the League. Moreover, it demonstrated the divide between those writing and those making the news. The International Association for Journalists Accredited to the League of Nations felt that the League's policy on publicity during the conflict illustrated, "the profound difference between those who are concerned with the effect of news and ourselves, who are concerned with its accuracy."<sup>63</sup> At the very moment that the League sought opinions on its ability to propagate truth, it had already begun to alienate its own journalists' association through a retreat from the principle of openness upon which it had ostensibly been founded.

Yet the League could still function as a protagonist of improvements in the eyes of journalists in 1932, whether through a new agency to disseminate international news or a world journal. The replies generated by the League's questions figure it as a repository of discussion about concepts that lie at the basis of journalism and its purpose; those who wrote clearly still believed that the League could reform and change international news by following journalists' suggestions. The League thus pushed journalists to consider their values and professional desiderata in a very concrete manner. The suggestions foresaw the League as the instigator of greater professionalization through securing journalists' status; the International Court of Honour so prized by the IFJ modeled itself to a certain extent on the Permanent Court of International Justice founded by the League of Nations. According to Marcel Broersma, journalism's power derives from its persuasion of readers that it is relating the truth.<sup>64</sup> Still in 1932, the League's power derived from its persuasion of journalists that it could translate their concerns into real action. The myriad replies indicate that journalists credited the League with an influence, which the next few years would sadly prove to be overinflated. Yet the League had provided a discursive space for journalists to discuss and attempt to align their often conflicting and contradictory views on the basic principles of journalism, such as truth and falsity. These discussions, as I have outlined above, tell us not only about different national attitudes, but also about how associations such as the IFJ, and indeed,

the League, created the possibility of discussing these issues at all. The League itself and journalists' associations still believed in 1932 in the power of the press to effect political change and to modulate diplomatic paradigms in the name of truth. Though respondents had no unified vision of the meanings of "true" and "false", all except the Brit-ish Empire Union found the fight against falsity worthwhile and felt that the League of Nations had a vital role to play.

## Conclusion

Commentators on the League conceived of its work as transnational at the time. Charles Howard Ellis wrote in 1928 that, "the whole point about the League is that it is a deliberate attempt on the grand scale to organize the world for peace, and that means organizing on international or rather 'trans-national' lines."<sup>65</sup> Its two main tasks were to inform public opinion and enact the promises and League machinery pledged by governments in the Covenant of the League of Nations in 1919.

Work on moral disarmament and peace involved transnational committees and conferences. Additionally, the IFJ functioned from 1926 as a transnational association whereby members fleshed out their visions of journalism and compromised on their priorities. It influenced its member states' conceptions of the boundaries of journalists' actions and their core values. Meanwhile, the League of Nations Association of Journalists brought together even journalists from countries who were not members of the League of Nations. With a president in 1932 who was the Geneva correspondent for the *New York Times*, the Association represented a meeting point for journalists where they hammered out proposals for their vision of international news and its protection. Transnational history *precisely* alerts us to institutions such as the IFJ and events such as League of Nations' conferences that slip through the cracks of national organizations and state structures.

On the other hand, comparative history is essential in reminding us *not to forget* the nation, the ultimate unit of dividing up the world politically, culturally and economically from 1860s to 1960s. Despite cooperation under the auspices of the League, particularly on transportation and technology, most newspapers circulated within national boundaries. Comparative history exhorts

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>64</sup> Broersma, "The Unbearable Limitations of Journalism," 31.

<sup>65</sup> Charles Howard Ellis, *The origin, structure & working of the League of nations* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1928), 116.

us to understand similarities and differences and not to forget their importance for contemporaries in their actions and interpretations.

In attempting to understand journalists' visions of "true" and "false", using both comparative and transnational history is the only way to get at the crux of the problem. Comparative history provides the synchronic snapshot of various associations' views on the subject. Meanwhile, a more transnational approach enables us to see the emergence of common themes and encourages us to search for the networks that lie behind the dissemination of these views. Transnational history can suggest less conventional chronologies and causalities, often offering a more diachronic approach. It can help clarify how much of the press got to the point that it seemed worth considering the issue of false information internationally at all. In this case, we might start in 1926 and consider the key role of the IFJ and its meetings in creating a consensus on how to combat false information, at least amongst its members. The IFJ's call for

ID cards as proof of professional status represents a key moment in attempts to professionalize journalism, while the call for regulation through the International Court of Honour demonstrates the IFJ's preoccupation with creating global standards for journalism, though these might not have been enshrined in any particular law.

What does all this mean for history of the press? Historians of the press have to be alert to the similarities and differences between forms, styles and institutions. Comparison does provide many potential approaches for this research. Simultaneously, transnational history and cultural transfer can enhance our understanding of how concepts such as objectivity or styles such as the tabloid diffuse across borders. An investigation of the two methodologies shows that we cannot class the press neatly into national boxes, but rather that we must recognize the messy networks that overlapped, crisscrossed and intersected to create those apparently national press systems.

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# On the Spot

New Ways of Reporting in British and Dutch Newspaper Journalism, 1925 - 2005

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## Abstract

New, innovative ways of reporting changed newspaper form and content in Western Europe over the course of the twentieth century. In this article, the changing forms of the newspaper are analyzed on three distinct levels: the national, the transnational, and finally the diachronical level. Two British and two Dutch newspapers, subdivided in those adhering to the information model (The Times and NRC Handelsblad) and the story model (Daily Mirror and De Telegraaf), were subjected to a content analysis. Three samples representative for 1925, 1965 and 2005 were analyzed. Our results show that, in contrast with general assumptions by media historians, the new journalistic routines and forms associated with the 'news paradigm' were still far from established in 1925 and still greatly developed even between 1965 and 2005. Form and content of the newspapers underwent many changes, in the way they identified authors, mentioned sources, used different genres, or in their subjects of choice. A closer look at the developments shows that the styles of journalism manifest themselves transnationally, but that newspapers show national characteristics as well, especially in the Netherlands.

## 1.1 Introduction

From the end of the nineteenth century, journalism was subject to far-reaching changes in Western Europe and the United States. Gradually, a new set of journalistic routines and norms emerged. At the heart of these developments was the idea of a much more active news gathering. Journalists were no longer expected to piece together information from behind their desks, or write verbatim accounts of political debates and company meetings, but to go out into the streets to find the news and cover it. Instead of writing long analyses, opinionated pieces, or passively relaying information that was put forward on prearranged meetings and events, they were on the prowl for

newsworthy events, and tried to uncover the facts of the matter by talking to the people involved.<sup>1</sup> Traditional ideas about the very nature of news changed and the way in which it was presented to the public evolved as well. Between roughly 1880 and 1920 the layout, structure, and content of the newspaper were reconceptualized, which thoroughly changed the appearance and the content of newspapers. Scholars often regard these decades as a transition period in which European journalism shifted from an ideologically charged, reflective journalism to a more neutral, fact-based practice termed the 'news paradigm'.<sup>2</sup>

These new ideas about journalism were interwoven with institutional, political, and social developments occurring during that period such

<sup>1</sup> Jean Chalaby, "Journalism as an Anglo-American Invention. A Comparison of the Development of French and Anglo-American Journalism, 1830s-1920s," *European Journal of Communication* 11 (1996): 310-313.

<sup>2</sup> Svernik Hoyer, "The Idea of the Book. Introduction," in *Diffusion of the News Paradigm 1850-2000*, ed. Svernik Hoyer and Horst Pöttker (Göteborg: Nordicom,

2005), 9-16; Marcel Broersma, "Form, Style and Journalistic Strategies. An Introduction," in *Form and Style in Journalism. European Newspapers and the Representation of News, 1880-2005*, ed. Marcel Broersma (Leuven, Paris and Dudley: Peeters, 2007), xiv-xix.

as the rise of a commercial mass press, the legal incorporation of press freedom, the emergence of an affluent middle class with more spare time, and a gradual journalistic professionalization.<sup>3</sup> Although similar developments were present throughout the western world, the extent and impact of these changes differed between countries, and depended on the journalistic cultures that were there to begin with. Moreover, the stratification of the different press landscapes meant there existed differences in attitude towards these innovations within countries as well. These differences in attitude led to disparities in the nature and pace of the changes.<sup>4</sup>

The new routines and conventions that are introduced in the second half of the nineteenth century are embodied in particular by two new journalistic genres: the interview and the reportage. First, we have to make clear what we mean by 'genre', a concept that has been defined in various ways. We define genre as a textual form that structures a story by the use of certain writing conventions. Genres articulate a certain style of journalism and the way in which they are used provides insight into the underlying journalistic norms of a newspaper.<sup>5</sup> Since we see the reportage and the interview as the genres that best embody the routines associated with the news paradigm, it is important to make clear how we delineate these genres. Genres are not static, but rather dynamic concepts that can differ somewhat between countries and that evolve over time.<sup>6</sup> Because of the diachronic and comparative nature of our research, we have therefore chosen to use inclusive definitions that are not too narrowly defined. The reportage entails journalistic accounts that not only give a clear description of the event, but also convey the experience of the event vicariously. They employ several narrative techniques like tension

building, the use of *couleur locale*, or colloquial dialogue to accomplish this, but they never abandon their claim to truth.<sup>7</sup> The interview is a more straightforward genre and is defined here simply as the textual reflection of a conversation between a journalist and another person.<sup>8</sup>

It took a while though before the textual descendants of the new routines developed into well delineated genres. The interview and the reportage were considered synonymous until the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Gradually, the reportage and the interview started to denote textual forms instead of journalistic routines. Furthermore, these genres often met with cultural resistance, and were adapted to the journalistic norms that already existed.<sup>10</sup> As a result the reportage is double-faced, and can take on the form of a subjective and analytical account of an event seen through the eyes of the reporter, or an impartially told story in which many people are consulted and in which the perspective of the journalist is almost invisible. The introduction of the interview also shows how cultural factors influence the manifestation of a genre. In this case, the struggle takes place between the 'visit', and the 'interrogation'. In the 'visit' form, the interviewer has the low status of a visitor, only passively observing and relating what he sees and what he is told, whereas the 'interrogation' considers the interviewee almost as a suspect, that is to be questioned in order to find out the truth. The latter form is, obviously, closer connected to the new routines of reporting in which the journalist actively searches for news and pursues the people involved. The struggle between traditional reflective journalism and the conventions and routines of a more fact-based and neutral reporting practice is thus embodied within these genres.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News. A Social History of American Newspapers*. (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 88-106; Jean Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 32-48

<sup>4</sup> Broersma, "Form, Style and Journalistic Strategies", xv-xix; See also: Marcel Broersma, "Botsende stijlen. De Eerste Wereldoorlog en de Nederlandse journalistieke cultuur," *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis* 2 (1999): 40-68.

<sup>5</sup> Broersma, "Form, Style and Journalistic Strategies", xxv.

<sup>6</sup> Nick Lacy, *Narrative and Genre. Key Concepts in Media Studies* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 142-143.

<sup>7</sup> For a more elaborate discussion of the delineation of the reportage, see: Michael Haller, *Die Reportage. Ein Handbuch für Journalisten* (München: Verlag Ölschläger, 1987); M. Boucharenc, and J. Deluche *Littérature et reportage* (Limoges: Presses Universitaires de Limoges, 2001); M. Geisler, *Die literarische Reportage in Deutsch-*

*land. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen eines operativen Genres* (Königstein: Scriptor, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> For a more elaborate discussion of the delineation of the interview, see: Christopher Silvester, introduction to *The Penguin Book of Interviews. An Anthology from 1859 to the present day*, ed. Christopher Silvester (London: Viking, 1993), 1-48; Brian McNair "The interrogative moment. The British political interview," in *Journalism and Democracy. An evaluation of the political public sphere* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 84-104; Martin Kött, *Das Interview in der französischen Presse-Geschichte und Gegenwart einer journalistischen Textsorte* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Kött, *Das Interview in der französischen Presse*, 85-87.

<sup>10</sup> Broersma, "Form, Style and Journalistic Strategies", xvii-xix.



## 1.2 The news paradigm: an American straitjacket

Although the development of Western journalism in the long twentieth century has been a popular object of scholarly attention, the changes that took place in this period of time are analyzed from a perspective which too often neglects the journalistic diversity between and within European countries. In general, scholars situate the origins of the shift from a reflective to fact-based journalism in the United States, and argue the subsequent diffusion of these new norms, routines and forms in Europe.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, it is suggested that from this transition period onward, Western journalism is increasingly dominated by the new norms, routines and forms of a fact-based reporting that revolves around the ideal of detached neutrality, or even objectivity.<sup>12</sup>

This 'grand narrative' of journalism history is very useful as a broad outline of the journalistic development of Europe and North America. It points to important innovations in Western journalism practice on the level of norms, routines and forms. However, especially for European journalism history this grand narrative can become an overly rigid straitjacket that is modeled too strongly after the journalistic developments in the US, and is at risk of becoming both teleological and normative. By considering detached, fact-based journalism as the final phase of journalistic development, scholars risk adopting the dominant norms of the news paradigm as their own instead of analyzing them. Broersma advocates a more nuanced approach to (European) journalism history, in which more attention is devoted to the diversity between, but also the variety within journalistic cultures and discourses.<sup>13</sup> He argues for research into journalism history that analyzes historic developments in a comparative context, paying attention to national idiosyncrasies as well as phenomena that exceed national boundaries. Such research should not only be based on the historical expressions and statements of contemporary actors in the

journalistic domain, which often position themselves strategically and emphasize the innovations too much, but on a solid systematic analysis of the actual newspaper content.<sup>14</sup>

This critique of the grand narrative of journalism links up to the current debate on transnational research. Many scholars in the field of transnationalism point to the lack of nuanced comparative research. They all criticize the traditional emphasis on the nation as the obvious unit of analysis. Such an approach takes national uniformity for granted, and does not pay any attention to the possible diversity within a nation's culture, or to the possibility of a culture that crosses borders making it 'deterritorial'.<sup>15</sup> They argue for a multilevel research perspective that accounts for both national and transnational influences on historic developments – in our case European journalism history.<sup>16</sup> We think a multilevel research effort could be highly beneficial to journalism history research. Firstly, comparative research into journalism history is scarce – although recently it has gained momentum. Most journalism histories deal with a single country, and as a result they are unable to determine whether developments happen within national boundaries or take place on a transnational level. Secondly, most of the research that has attempted a comparative project adopted the nation as the obvious unit of comparison, without paying enough attention to internal plurality. Finally, as mentioned before, existing research often assumes a general development towards fact-based and neutral journalism, risking a teleological and normative perspective on journalistic development.

## 1.3 Towards a multilevel approach of comparative journalism history

With their influential work on media systems in the West, Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini have laid a foundation for research that is very well equipped to take into account national differences without adopting a teleological perspective on the

<sup>11</sup> Chalaby, "Journalism as an Anglo-American Invention", 304.

<sup>12</sup> Schudson, *Discovering the News*, 6-11, 158-159; Hoyer and Pottker, *Diffusion of the News Paradigm*, 12-13; Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism*, 128-133.

<sup>13</sup> Broersma, "Botsende stijlen", 41-42.

<sup>14</sup> Broersma, "Form, Style and Journalistic Strategies", x-xii

<sup>15</sup> Andreas Hepp, "Transculturality as a perspective: Researching Media Cultures Comparatively," *Forum: qualitative Social Research* 10 (2009), art. 26 accessed October 21, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. Patricia Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism," *Contemporary European History* 14 (2005): 421-440, Heinz-Gerhardt Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, "Comparative history: Methods, Aims, Problems," in *Comparison and history: Europe in cross-national perspective*, ed. D. Cohen et al. (New York, Routledge, 2004), 23-39, and Andreas Hepp, "Transculturality as a perspective: Researching Media Cultures Comparatively", art. 26.

development of European journalism. They have postulated three different media models, which can be used to classify the media systems of the different countries in Western Europe and North America. Hallin and Mancini expect that the differences pertaining to the institutional and political landscape, on which they have based their models, also have important implications for the discursive practices of journalism in the different countries.<sup>17</sup> Although the media models of Hallin and Mancini are an important step towards a more nuanced perspective on the diversity within Europe, their perspective is still quite broad. A more elaborate perspective on national pluriformity in relation to transnational developments is necessary to be able to accurately examine the complex dynamics of European journalism history. Broersma has proposed a solution to fill this void by providing a tentative categorization of different styles of journalism, which can coexist within one country but also operate on a transnational level. He discerns two styles of journalism that played an important role in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century journalism: the reflective and the news style. The first corresponds to a value-laden journalistic practice, whereas the second pertains to the conventions and routines of the news paradigm. The latter can again be subdivided in the information and the story model. The information model is typified by a fact-based way of reporting in an impartial and detached manner. The story model also focuses on facts, but integrates them in a more emotional account that tries to involve the reader.<sup>18</sup> By analyzing the diachronic development of these styles of journalism within countries and across countries, without seeing them as consecutive, a much more nuanced light can be shed on the dynamic development of the discursive formation and development of journalism as a result of both national and transnational influences.

## 1.4 Comparing the two-faced news style in Great Britain and the Netherlands

To be able to analyze the interplay between national and the transnational influences present within European journalism, we have conducted a quantitative content analysis of two constructed weeks<sup>19</sup> of newspaper material in 1925, 1965 and 2005 for two British newspapers, the *Daily Mirror* and *The Times*, and two Dutch newspapers, *De Telegraaf* and *NRC Handelsblad*. This sample method offers a very reliable representation of the year in question.<sup>20</sup>

Firstly, we examine the newspapers at three moments in time starting at the point that supposedly marks the end of the transition period. Analyzing the newspapers at these different moments in time shows both the general as well as the idiosyncratic developments the newspapers experience. Secondly, we analyze the newspapers on the level of the nation to see if a shared national journalistic culture exists. Great Britain and the Netherlands respectively represent the liberal media model and the democratic corporatist model, and are therefore both expected to be influenced by a specific national journalistic culture. Great Britain is a good representative of the liberal model, as it acquired press freedom at an early stage, and from that moment on the British press landscape is dominated by press barons, like Lord Northcliffe and his modern counterpart Rupert Murdoch.<sup>21</sup> The Dutch press landscape differs in important ways from its British counterpart. It fits in well with the democratic corporatist model, as up until the 1960s the Netherlands was a 'pillarized' society, which meant that every sociopolitical group (Catholics, Protestants, liberals) was represented by its own newspaper. However, from the end of the nineteenth century a commercial press had developed as well.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, we scrutinize these newspapers from a

<sup>17</sup> Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems. Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 246, 303.

<sup>18</sup> Broersma, "Form, Style and Journalistic Strategies", xiii-xvii.

<sup>19</sup> The two constructed weeks are selected by taking a Saturday in January, a Monday in February, a Friday in March, a Tuesday in April and so on. This way differences between weekdays and months are obviated, which results in a more representative sample.

<sup>20</sup> For more elaborate information about the representativity of this sampling method, see: Daniel Riffe, Charles F. Aust and Stephen R. Lacy, "The Effectiveness of Random Con-

secutive Day and Constructed Week Sampling in Newspaper Content Analysis" *Journalism Quarterly* 70 (1993): 133-139 and Stephen Lacy et al., "Sample Size for Newspaper Content Analysis in Multi-Year Studies," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 78: 836-845.

<sup>21</sup> Kevin Williams, *Get me a Murder a Day! A History of Mass Communication in Britain* (London: Arnold, 1998). 61-76, 227-233; Kevin Williams, *Read all about it! A History of the British newspaper* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 199-202, 208-215.

<sup>22</sup> Huub Wijffjes, *Journalistiek in Nederland, 1850-2000. Beroep, cultuur en organisatie* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2000), 18-20.

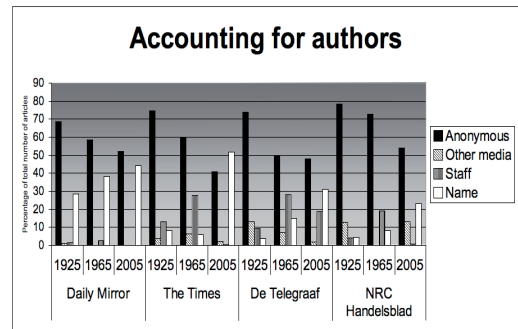
transnational perspective by comparing the information and the story model, represented respectively by *The Times* and *NRC Handelsblad*, and *De Telegraaf* and the *Daily Mirror*. We have chosen newspapers that resemble these styles of journalism as closely as possible, but their ideal typical nature makes a perfect fit impossible. Especially the position of *The Times* as a representative of the information model becomes problematic after 1981, as it was bought by media tycoon Rupert Murdoch who changed the editorial line into a direction that bore many resemblances to the story model.

The newspaper material has been measured and coded integrally – meaning all the newspaper articles in the sampled newspapers – for a fixed set of formal features such as genre, subject, and author of the articles. Additionally, we have also examined whether they contain direct quotes, sources, and pictures. We decided to concentrate on the formal aspects of newspapers because the choice for a specific set of formal features expresses the underlying discursive norms pertaining to the journalistic practice. In other words, comparing specific choices with regards to structure, style and layout of a newspaper provides insight in the different ways journalism might be conceived.<sup>23</sup> As a result we were able to map the diffusion of journalistic practices associated with the news paradigm. As we are interested in the dynamics of the development of European journalism on both a national and transnational level, we have focused on the genre of the interview and the reportage, for they fully capture the struggle of journalists in adopting and adapting new routines, and translating them into genres that can be integrated in the existing journalistic practice.

## 2.1 Increasing visibility of journalists

With changing journalistic routines, the position of the journalist evolved as well. The changing position of individual journalists is reflected in the increasing percentage of articles of which the author was identified by name of professional position. In 1925, the status of individual journalists was still rather low, with exceptions for a few well-known and well-paid reporters. This is reflected in editorial policy: the author of a newspaper article still remains anonymous in 70 to 80 per cent of articles in all four newspapers. Newspapers wanted to appear politically independent and

impartial, and let their own position take precedence over that of their individual reporters, who had not yet acquired a high professional status. With the rise of the commercial mass press and press freedom legally constituted, however, newspapers acquired a more autonomous position, as did their reporters. Journalists started to organize themselves as an occupational group and journalistic practice professionalized.<sup>24</sup> The anonymity of authors became less important to the newspapers, and from the perspective of the individual journalist, it could be beneficial to his or her career if people knew which pieces he or she had written.



The newspapers belonging to the story model are the most progressive in this respect. Moreover, they focused more on the personal status of the author by only mentioning his or her full name, rather than emphasizing the professional position of the author such as correspondent or editor, as both *The Times* and *NRC Handelsblad* did up until 1965. These results fit the difference in journalistic style, as the identity of the newspapers belonging to the information model revolves more around detachment, impartiality, and professionalism. *De Telegraaf* is a bit of an odd one out, as it not only mentions more author names, but also states the professional role of the author more often than *NRC Handelsblad*. This could indicate that up until 1965 a shared journalistic culture influenced the editorial strategy of Dutch newspapers.

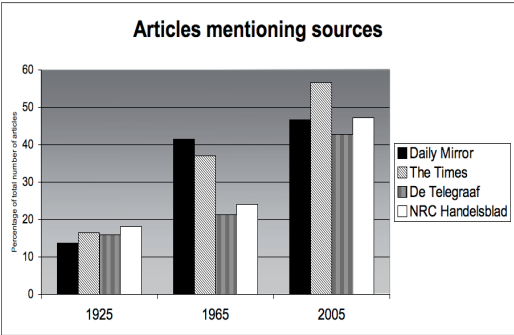
## 2.2 Interviewing and quoting sources

Before the advent of on-the-spot reporting, journalists were less actively engaged in questioning people to seek out the truth. Even when they did

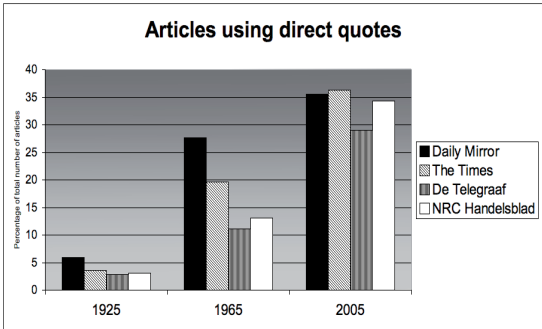
<sup>23</sup> Broersma, "Form, Style and Journalistic Strategies", xxiii-xxv.

<sup>24</sup> See e.g. Wijffes, *Journalistiek in Nederland*, 13-28, 47-53.

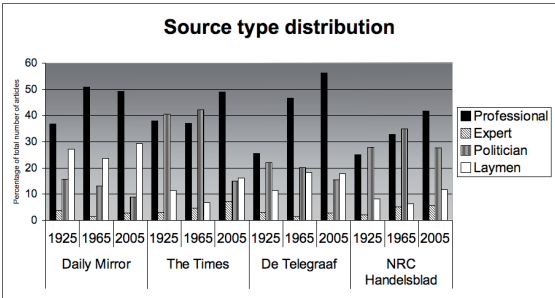
ask people for information, it was highly unusual to mention these sources let alone to quote them directly. New journalistic routines changed all this. Journalists started to mention and quote their sources more and more, and the routine of interviewing grew into the ‘fundamental act of journalism’.<sup>25</sup> By explicitly identifying his sources, journalists made their information-gathering process more transparent. They show their audience where they acquired their information, thereby increasing their credibility.



However, mentioning and quoting sources was far from ubiquitous in 1925. Only by 1965, the British newspapers had started to demonstrate their use of sources on a regular basis. Their Dutch counterparts lagged behind in this respect, which could indicate a difference in the pace with which the new reportorial routines were adopted. In 2005, the picture is more convergent: all newspapers are mentioning sources for almost half of all articles, with only *The Times* standing out a bit above the rest. The use of direct quotes shows a similar picture.



With the rise of the inquisitive on-the-spot reporter the kinds of sources that were consulted also changed. Politicians were consulted less and less, whereas everyday professionals and ordinary citizens got a stronger voice.



Our results show interesting similarities between the styles of journalism. Politicians are mentioned as a source more often in the information model. In 2005, this pattern is broken: the amount of political sources in *The Times* plunges. This result however can be explained by the changing proprietary and, with that, editorial strategy of *The Times*. No longer did the newspaper provide lengthy parliament reports, but instead the newspaper focused on ‘softer subjects’, as we will see in the paragraph on subjects. The story model newspapers use more laymen as their sources. Interestingly, a subcategory of laymen that we analyzed, the ‘vox populi’ (the proverbial ‘accidental passerby’ or ‘man in the street’) is confined to 2005 only, and thus seems to be a very recent journalistic invention. Finally, the differences between the Dutch newspapers are less divergent, again pointing in the direction of a shared journalistic culture

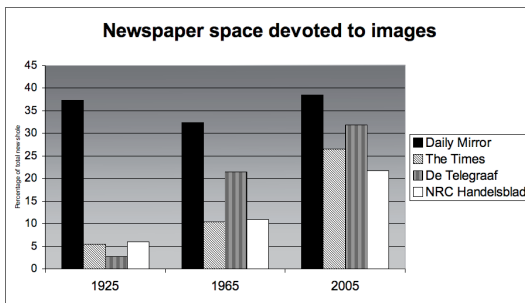
2.3 New ways of presenting the news

The new routines of reporting also impacted the way the news was presented to the public. This is also reflected in the visual style of the newspaper, which shows important differences between the styles of journalism. The *Daily Mirror* stands out in comparison to the other three newspapers. Images in this newspaper occupied up to a third of the available space throughout all three sample

<sup>25</sup> Schudson, *The power of news*, 72.  
<sup>26</sup> Alfred Harmsworth wrote in the first edition of the *Daily Mirror*: “Our illustrations are themselves ‘news’ ... Every day the camera and the artist’s pencil will produce for our readers the news of the day”, quoted from: David and Emily Seymour, *A Century of News: A Journey through*

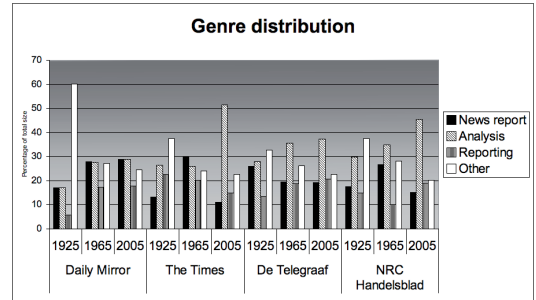
*History with the Daily Mirror* (London: Contender Books, 2003), 7.  
<sup>27</sup> S. Hoyer, “Rumours of Modernity: how New American Journalism spread to Europe,” in Marcel Broersma, *Form and Style in Journalism*, 30.

years. This reliance on images dates back to the Mirror's introduction in 1903. The large number of illustrations was a unique selling point at the time of its introduction. "Our illustrations are themselves news" as founder Alfred Harmsworth put it.<sup>26</sup> Technological changes had made it feasible to publish images from 1900 onwards.<sup>27</sup> It would therefore have been possible for other newspapers as well to rely on a visual style, but clearly they did not. The amount of images thus had more to do with the identity of the newspaper and the journalistic norms it embodied, than the availability of the technology, a conclusion Broersma also arrives at in his article on visual strategies in newspapers.<sup>28</sup>



In the other three newspapers, illustrations moved from 5 per cent or less in 1925 to around a quarter of the available space in 2005. In 1925, *De Telegraaf* used less visual content than *The Times* and *NRC Handelsblad*, but by 1965 the newspaper outdistanced both papers of record in its use of illustrations. In 2005, the distribution of illustrations had become more uniform than in the two preceding sample years, showing a convergence in the amount of illustrations used. Nevertheless, these results show that the story model newspapers are more visually oriented, with the only exception of the 1925 *Telegraaf*. This difference is not surprising if we consider that the story model newspapers are expected to have a strategy more aimed at the emotional involvement of a wide audience, which is better achieved by visual content.<sup>29</sup> The information model newspapers, as papers of record, attach greater importance to their intellectual status and remain more text-focused. In this case the differences between the newspapers thus seem to be based mainly on their journalistic style, rather than their nationality.

With the rise of on-the-spot reporting new genres came in vogue, whereas certain more traditional ways of presenting the news lost ground. The acceptance of new genres by the journalistic community could take some time and depended on the extent to which the new genre fitted in with the contemporary journalistic tradition. This is reflected in the results as we can see that the amount of analysis does not diminish at all. Even more interesting – and puzzling – are the differences between the styles of journalism with regards to reporting, for the amount of reporting diminishes in the information model.



Before we look closer at the results, it is important to make clear which genres we discern. We distinguish four main genres: news report, analysis, reporting, and other. With the broad category 'news report', we refer to an often short account of the main facts of a certain event, whereas 'reporting' refers to the report, the reportage, and the interview, representing a category of articles in which the reporting routines are directly accounted for in the text. The category analysis entails all the articles in which an event is analyzed or in which a cemented opinion is given. 'Other' is our rest category and contains isolated images, weather reports, and puzzles, for example.

If we look at the assumed national and transnational differences, we get a complex, but interesting picture. There exist interesting similarities between the *Daily Mirror* and *De Telegraaf*. For instance, both newspapers showed a fairly regular increase of the reporting genre. Furthermore, the amount of analysis in 1965 was higher than in 1925, but remained steady in 2005. There are also interesting similarities between *The Times* and *NRC Handelsblad*. In 2005, analysis spiked in both newspapers, and the pattern of the news

<sup>28</sup> Marcel Broersma, "Visual strategies. Dutch Newspaper Design between Text and Image, 1900-2000," in *Form and Style in Journalism. European Newspapers and the*

*Representation of News, 1880-2005*, ed. Marcel Broersma (Leuven, Paris and Dudley: Peeters, 2007), 196.

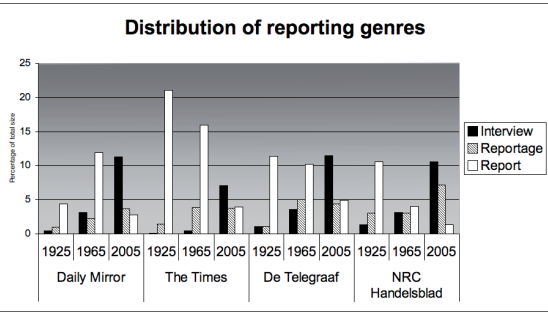
<sup>29</sup> Broersma, *Visual Strategies*, 177.



report is similar. With regards to reporting such correspondences seem to be absent at first sight. On a national level, we can see that the amount of analysis was higher in the Dutch newspapers than in their British counterparts; the exception being *The Times* in 2005, although this might be related to the take-over of the concern by Rupert Murdoch. Similar national equivalences cannot be found in the British newspapers.

2.4 The fading of the report

It seems puzzling that the amount of reporting diminished in the information model in a period that is said to be dominated by the routines of on-the-spot reporting. This is a good reason to take a closer look at the broad category of reporting. This category is made up of three genres: the report, the interview and the reportage. Although these genres all pertain to routines of reporting, there exist interesting differences between the report and the other two genres, that can explain these surprising results. The report<sup>30</sup> is a more traditional genre that embodies different journalistic norms and routines. It epitomizes a way of reporting, in which journalists primarily go to scheduled events such as political debates, annual shareholders meetings, or soccer matches, and write detailed chronological – and in case of meetings or debates sometimes almost verbatim – accounts of such events. This way the news was presented as mimetic as possible, with as little mediation of the journalist as possible.<sup>31</sup> The norms and routines embodied in the interview and reportage appoint a much more active role to journalists. They look for news, and try to uncover facts instead of relaying events in a more passive manner. Moreover, the role of the journalist in the process of shaping a story becomes much bigger.<sup>32</sup> It is therefore not surprising that the use of the report severely declined over time.



What catches the eye right away is the enormous popularity of the report in *The Times* of 1925, compared to the two new genres. This image also holds for the other newspapers, although the report is not used as much as in *The Times*. Only the *Daily Mirror* differs, as the newspaper has its peak of the report in 1965 instead of 1925. This disparity however can be at least partially attributed to the very large amount of isolated images in 1925, which limited the space for reports considerably. The interview and the reportage were clearly not embraced right away, as they were still in their infancy in 1925. Only by 2005 these genres had come into their own. It is striking that all four newspaper adopted the reportage earlier than the interview, but the interview ended up being the most popular of the two. This might have financial reasons, as the costs of a reportage are often very high. The *Daily Mirror*, *De Telegraaf*, and *NRC Handelsblad* devoted more than 10 percent of their space to the interview in 2005. Only *The Times* maintained its reluctant attitude towards the genre. This belated popularity of the interview can be explained by the long remaining hesitancy towards intruding in the (private) lives of the interviewees. The interview was for a long time – and based on our results even longer than often assumed – regarded as somewhat of a rude genre. On the other hand, this genre has always been popular with the audience. This might explain why by 2005 when such objections were gone, the use of the genre peaked.

These results cannot be explained very easily in terms of national or transnational differences and similarities. We only see some similarities on a national level with regards to the acceptance of the interview and the reportage. Regarding the information and the story model, it is hard to see meaningful parallels. One explanation for these unequivocal patterns could be the fact that in 1925 and 1965 there were not that many reportages and interviews, which decreases our sample size and could have led to more varied results.

2.5 Changes and differences in newspaper content

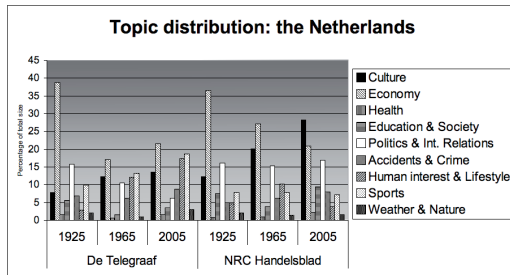
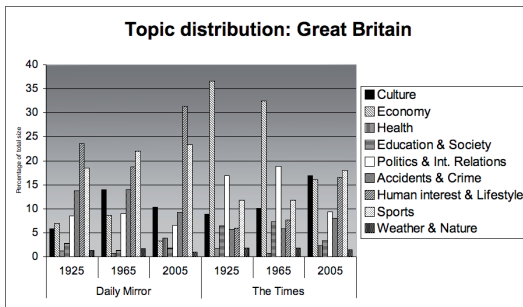
An important part of a newspaper's identity is reflected in the subjects that it does or does not write about. These choices are based on the audience that the newspaper wants to attract and on company, a detailed description of a trial or a political debate, but also a description of a soccer match.

<sup>30</sup> Different from a news report, which is an often short account of the main facts of a certain event, a report is a minute-like chronological description of an event. Like the almost verbatim reproduction of a board meeting of a

<sup>31</sup> Donald Matheson, "The Birth of News Discourse: Changes in News Language in British Newspapers, 1880-1930" *Media Culture Society* 22: 562-564.  
<sup>32</sup> Wijffes, *Journalistiek in Nederland*, 54-56.

the image and the reputation it wants to convey. With the emergence of the routines of on-the-spot reporting, newspaper identities changed and the topical emphases shifted.

On a transnational level, the similarities between the newspapers are evident. In spite of a general decrease, the newspapers of the information model pay more attention to politics, international relations, and economy throughout the whole period. The *Daily Mirror* and *De Telegraaf* have a different profile, and clearly focus more on human interest and lifestyle. The attention towards sports is more equally divided, but is still higher in the story model newspapers. Overall, sports were gaining editorial interest.

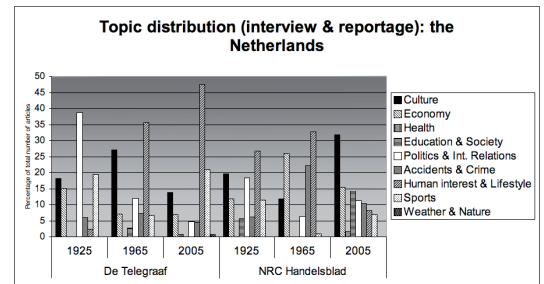
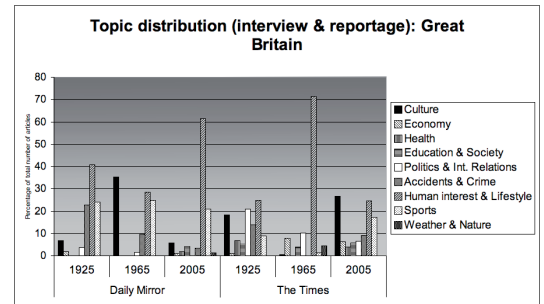


However, there also exist certain national particularities. The differences between the Dutch newspapers, although in many respects similar to those between their British counterparts, are not as strong. *De Telegraaf* devoted more attention to politics, international relations, and economics than the *Daily Mirror*. This can be ascribed to the less important role commercialism played in the Dutch journalistic culture, as a result of a subscription tradition and a persistent loyalty between the readership and a certain newspaper based on a shared ideological perspective.<sup>33</sup> Another striking development in this respect is the shift in content of *The Times* in 2005. Human interest,

lifestyle and sports all increased sharply, making *The Times* and the *Daily Mirror* more alike. However, this convergence cannot be attributed to an increasingly shared journalistic culture, but rather on specific occurrence: Rupert Murdoch's News International taking over the ownership in 1981, which led to a change in editorial strategy.

## 2.6 Content of reporting genres

Now that we have broadly delineated what topics newspapers wrote about, it is interesting to look at the reporting genres in particular. The three reporting genres we identified above illuminate the changes in content that accompanied the routines of on-the-spot reporting even more. With the decline of the report the diversity of the topics decreased as well. By 2005 the genre was almost solely dedicated to sports. The British newspapers also still used it to cover trials, and *NRC Handelsblad* still published reports on political debates. The focus of the interview and the reportage was more on human interest and lifestyle. The amount of attention devoted to it fluctuated within and between newspapers but it was a popular theme throughout the period.



Although the interview and the reportage have a strong focus on this topic, the by now familiar differences between styles of journalism and bet-

<sup>33</sup> Broersma, Botsende stijlen, 56.

ween countries can be found. The information and story model have a stronger focus on politics, international relations and economy, and human interest and lifestyle. These results are however not as unequivocal, which might be caused by the small number of interviews and reportages that were published in the two earlier sample years.

### 3. Conclusion

The general picture emerging from our results, ranging from the mentioning of sources, to the distribution of topics in newspapers, but especially the embrace of the interview and the reportage, show that the new forms associated with on-the-spot reporting have been implemented later than generally assumed. The transition period is claimed to have been between 1880 and 1920, but our results prove that throughout the twentieth century, journalism is still in the middle of a process of coming to terms with the new norms, routines and forms.

From our results, certain broad developments can be discerned, indicating a convergence of British and Dutch journalism over time. With the emergence of on-the-spot reporting the journalistic occupation professionalized, assigning a higher status to the individual journalists. Furthermore, the expansion of mentioning sources and the increasing use of direct quotes point to the general adoption of the new reporting routines. This development is also reflected in the decline of the report and the gradual embrace of the reportage and the interview.

The differences between the hypothesized two newspaper styles, the story model and the information model, are clearly reflected in our findings. They are best visible when looking at the subjects of the articles and the kind of sources they cite. The *Daily Mirror* and *De Telegraaf* positioned themselves as papers of the 'ordinary people'. They put forward the voice of the common citizen in their stories, and – as would be expected – paid more attention to human interest and lifestyle, traditionally seen as 'soft' subjects. *The Times* and *NRC Handelsblad*, on the other hand, emphasized the intellectual, professional, and serious character of their approach to news. This dichotomy is augmented by the more visually oriented style of the *Daily Mirror* and *De Telegraaf*.

On a national level, we also see intriguing results. The amount of analysis in *De Telegraaf* is much more similar to *NRC Handelsblad* than the *Mirror* is to *The Times*. The same goes for the attention that is paid to politics and international relations, and to economy. Finally, the use and development pattern of the reporting genres is much more alike in the Dutch newspapers than in the British. In general we can say that the differences between the British newspapers are much stronger than between their Dutch counterparts. These national similarities are the strongest in 1925, after which both newspapers seem to have diverged.

Thus, we see general developments, transnational equivalences, and, mostly in the Netherlands, national particularities. These results can be tentatively explained by an interplay of the differences in media system and journalistic culture, and the economic pressures on newspapers. Great Britain belongs to the liberal model, which means that the newspaper landscape is dominated by a commercial mass press and economic pressures are strong in comparison to the Netherlands. The newspapers had to compete with each other for readership and advertisement revenue. This also means that British newspapers have more room to move with regards to journalistic routines and forms. They were aware that they had to distinguish themselves from the other newspapers. All these factors might have added to the divergence of the newspapers. At the same time, it is often argued that economical competition leads to more uniformity. However, this process is strongest between newspapers that are alike and aim at the same audience. In this case, it seems to be less relevant, for if we take into account the different styles of journalism, it is likely that the newspapers wanted to emphasize their wholly different conception of journalism, which subsequently would lead to more divergence. In the Netherlands, with their loyal subscription audience, economic pressures were not as strong. Moreover, the strong reflective journalism tradition of the Netherlands with its democratic corporatist media model, made journalists much more reluctant to embrace the new norms and forms, which can explain the stronger similarities between the two Dutch newspapers.<sup>35</sup> More qualitative research into economical and cultural aspects of the production context of journalism is needed to validate these preliminary explanations.

The empirical approach of this paper has proven

<sup>35</sup> See also: Broersma, Botsende Stijlen, 56,64.

fruitful for critically testing broad notions about journalism and journalistic styles against what the newspapers really looked like and consisted of. Some of our findings are in line with existing ideas about the different newspaper styles and the broad developments of journalism throughout time, but at the same time, we have found strong proof for our claim that the development of European journalism is much more diverse and dyna-

mic than is generally assumed. The transnational resemblances between newspaper styles are especially interesting and suggest the existing of an international exchange of journalistic routines and styles. In the future, we hope to gain more insight in the situation by examining this qualitatively, allowing us to go into the dynamics of national and transnational developments more in-depth.

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# "By Atlantic Telegraph"

## A Study on Weltcommunication<sup>1</sup> in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Simone Müller-Pohl

### Abstract

The article explores aspects of Weltcommunication in the nineteenth century using the Atlantic telegraph connection as a case study. In a first step, it focuses on submarine telegraphs as a medium of communication, in a second step it deals with the telegraph as carriers of world news that fed a bourgeois public sphere. The article argues that communication "by Atlantic cable" presented itself as an elitist undertaking. Further on, considering the dispersion of world news a lengthy process of adaptation on "what is news?" was necessary before communication had caught up with its technology. Thus stages of a globalization of communication can be marked.

*"When the Atlantic Cable is completed, it is a fact, that a message will be received in America five hours before it leaves England."*<sup>2</sup>

With these words, an article in the British magazine *PUNCH* of 1866 expressed people's perplexity about a new timeliness which the successful completion of an Atlantic telegraph would inaugurate. News would not only be ever faster, as the submarine telegraph line eliminated the twelve days a mail steamer took from Europe to North America, but also ever newer. According to the above logic, events could even be reported about before they had actually happened. The fact that standard time zones would only be introduced in 1884 and universally adopted in 1929 as well as the novelty of experiencing simultaneity of times<sup>3</sup> explain the above confusion.<sup>4</sup> However, *PUNCH*'s statement clearly expresses a fascinati-

on with the speed by which messages could now be transmitted all around the globe. The majority of scholars working on telegraphy agrees that its importance, for a history of communication, lies in its capacity to dematerialize global information flows.<sup>5</sup> For the first time, the message was separated from its material messenger and could reach its destination at unprecedented speed. Undoubtedly, the telegraph thus also became "an essential component and motor of globalization in the middle of the nineteenth century".<sup>6</sup> In their ability to increasingly integrate the world through speedy communication, submarine telegraphs were basic to the development of world economy, *Weltpolitik*, and world news.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ernst Kapp coined the term *Weltcommunication* in 1877: Ernst Kapp, *Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Technik: Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Cultur aus neuen Gesichtspunkten* (Braunschweig, 1877), 100.

<sup>2</sup> *PUNCH*, "Something like a Telegraph," August 4, 1866.

<sup>3</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Sternstunden der Menschheit: Zwölf historische Miniaturen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1982). Zweig argues that the great importance of the electric telegraph is how it changed the worth of time, which allows the instantaneity and hence simultaneity of experience (dt. Instanter Erlebnisraum). Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Nathaniel Allen, "The Times They Are A-Changing: The Influence of Railroad Technology on the Adoption of Standard Time Zones in 1883," *The History Teacher* 33, no. 2 (2000). Carlene Stephens, "The Most Reliable Time": William Bond, the New England Railroads, and Time Awareness in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century America," *Technology and Culture* 30, no. 1 (1989).

<sup>5</sup> For an extensive study on the dematerialization of

telecommunication see: Roland Wenzlhuemer, "The Dematerialization of Telecommunication: Communication Centres and Peripheries in Europe and the World, 1850-1920," *Journal of Global History* 2 (2007). Hartmann in contrast argues that the change is rather one from communication as a movement of goods to telecommunication as a movement of information. Frank Hartmann, *Globale Medienkultur: Technik, Geschichte, Theorien*, UTB Medienwissenschaft 2723 (Wien: WUV, 2006), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Roland Wenzlhuemer, "Editorial: Telecommunication and Globalization in the Nineteenth Century," *Historical Social Research. Historische Sozialforschung* 35, no. 1 (2010): 9.

<sup>7</sup> Jorma Ahvenainen, "The Role of Telegraphs in the 19th Century Revolution of Communication," in *Kommunikationsrevolutionen: Die neuen Medien des 16. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Michael North, 73-80, Wirtschafts- und sozialhistorische Studien 3 (Köln: Böhlau, 1995), 74-9.



In this narrative of a communication revolution<sup>8</sup> that laid the groundwork for the development of media modernity<sup>9</sup>, submarine telegraphs play an essential role. Once the Atlantic cable had, after a lengthy period of trials, provided final proof of the feasibility of ocean telegraphs, the remaining nineteenth century witnessed a cable-hype: cables to India, Australia and South Africa, as well as others to China, Japan or Brazil followed the Atlantic connection.<sup>10</sup> By the late 1870s, virtually any place on globe could be reached via submarine cable – at least theoretically. As submarine telegraphs represented the technical “nerves of mankind”<sup>11</sup>, the world accelerated on its journey to becoming a global village.<sup>12</sup> At the time, this new kind of *Weltcommunication* served as the basis for a perspective, which had, influenced by European enlightenment<sup>13</sup>, fostered the ideology of world citizenship and cosmopolitanism.<sup>14</sup> This has morphed into the current historiographical perception of a larger global entity organized in a global media system.<sup>15</sup> Scholars have furthered this concept in treating submarine telegraphs as the *Victorian Internet*<sup>16</sup> or proclaiming the existence of a global public as the internal system of the arising *Weltpolitik*.

*litik*.<sup>17</sup> The term *Weltcommunication*, as it was coined by Ernst Kapp in 1877 and used by contemporaries of the telegraph age rather served as basis to a philosophy of technology, which attempted to encompass the emergence of new technologies which radically rendered the very experience of existence, than a theory of communication. For most, technology and media as means of global disclosure marked moments of liberation and emancipation from nature to culture.<sup>18</sup> To Kapp, submarine telegraphs represented the nerves of mankind, in form of an ever expanding network, and as such, Kapp being a true Hegelian, the innervation of the *Weltgeist*.<sup>19</sup>

In the following paper, I will explore aspects of *Weltcommunication* in the nineteenth century using the Atlantic telegraph connection as a case study.<sup>20</sup> The first part will focus on submarine telegraphs as a medium of active use for communication, the second on submarine telegraphs as carriers of news information that fed a bourgeois public sphere.<sup>21</sup> Only by looking at both, the active as well as the passive use of submarine telegraphy, can all aspects of *Weltcommunication* be ful-

Further see: Daniel C. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Pascal Griset and Daniel R. Headrick, “Submarine Telegraph Cables: Business and Politics, 1838-1939,” *Business history review* 75, no. 3 (2001).

<sup>8</sup> Michael North, ed., *Kommunikationsrevolutionen: Die neuen Medien des 16. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, Wirtschafts- und sozialhistorische Studien 3 (Köln: Böhlau, 1995). It was the sociologist Charles Horton Cooley, who probably first proposed the concept of a communication revolution initiated by electric telegraphy at the turn of the twentieth century. Charles H. Cooley, *Social organization: A study of the larger mind* (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1909). He agrees with his contemporaries, such as Charles Bright, probably one of the most eminent telegraph experts of his time who speaks of the “great revolution which submarine telegraphy has effected for the world's progress.” Charles Bright, *Submarine Telegraphs: Their History, Construction and Working* (London: C. Lockwood, 1898); Founded in part on Wünschendorff's *Traité de Télégraphie Sous-Marine* and Compiled from Authorative and Exclusive Sources, 169.

<sup>9</sup> John B. Thompson, *The media and modernity: A social theory of the media*, Repr. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Jorma Ahvenainen, “The Role of Telegraphs in the 19th Century Revolution of Communication,” in *Kommunikationsrevolutionen* (see note 7), 74.

<sup>11</sup> Hartmann, *Globale Medienkultur*, 10. Translation mine. For a thorough contemporary discussion on the above see: Kapp, *Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Technik*, 140ff.

<sup>12</sup> Marshall McLuhan and Bruce R. Powers, *The global village: Transformations in world life and media in the 21st century*, Communication and society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> For example Otfried Höffe (Hg.), “Immanuel Kant: Zum

ewigen Frieden,” (München: Oldenburg Akademie Verlag, 2010)

<sup>14</sup> This also explains why initially the submarine cables were seen as bringers of world peace.

<sup>15</sup> Hartmann, *Globale Medienkultur*; For Global Media System see: Robert M. Pike and Dwayne R. Winseck, “The Politics of Global Media Reform, 1907-1923,” *Media, Culture & Society* 26 (2004).

<sup>16</sup> Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet: The remarkable story of the telegraph and the nineteenth century's online pioneers* (London: Phoenix, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Cooley already speaks of a “mental whole of communication” Cooley, *Social organization*, Chapter 8.; Rudolf Stichweh, “The Genesis and Development of a Global Public Sphere: Revised version of a paper first published in *Development* 46, 2003, 26-29,” (2006).

<sup>18</sup> Yet, the idea that mankind reproduces its nature technologically while simultaneously exponentiating the very same is in the 20th century famously captured in McLuhan's work. See: McLuhan, Marshall, *Understanding Media. The Extension of Man*, repr. (London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Hartmann, *Globale Medienkultur*, 79-89.

<sup>20</sup> It is understood that the Atlantic communicational space represents only one piece of the puzzle in a coherent picture of an assumed global communicational space. Yet, as this paper will show, in the late 19th century the assumed globality of a twentieth century global media space was only developing out of these puzzle pieces. The term *Weltcommunication* rather refers to people's imaginary, which always thought in a global perspective even while only telegraphing via the Atlantic. After all, the Atlantic cables had only been the first part in “Puck's girdle around the globe”.

<sup>21</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*, Reprint. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

ly assessed. Communication “by Atlantic cable” presented itself as an elitist undertaking, steered through exorbitant high tariffs and based upon a philosophy of communication, which saw the demand for social exchange diminishing in relation to geographical distance. Telegrams’ intrinsic brevity and with it, the use of codes and ciphers enhanced the occurrence of failed communication on the transatlantic line. Lastly, it is important to highlight that not only in the transatlantic case was *Weltcommunication* mainly one of business matters (business matters being defined as commercial as well as political). The global implementation of communication through submarine telegraphy contained holes in its network<sup>22</sup> and it would be erroneous to consider the telegraph as a medium of mass communication. The second part of the paper will sketch the processes of adaptation, which were necessary before new imagined communities<sup>23</sup>, such as the “transatlantic brethren”<sup>24</sup>, could actually be translated as world news into print. As will be shown using examples from the British press, transatlantic news coverage via cable initially failed due to the inability on the British side to decode messages as “John van Buren is dead” properly. The message was fast, but it was not new. As a result, a discussion arose on ‘what is new(s)?’ It would take roughly fifteen years before an appropriate reference system had been developed and thus news had caught up with technology. Transferring these findings on *Weltcommunication* onto a history of globalization, the study can be used to mark stages within processes of global integration. It further shows that these processes were neither unidirectional, nor did they happen in the same way or at the same pace at the same time.

Submarine telegraphs represent by concept a transnational entity. Already with the idea of the very first submarine cable, it was obvious that this

invention would unquestionably expand beyond the nation state. Rivers, seas, and oceans, similarly to mountain ranges, had for centuries served as natural border lines. Even though in the 19th century borders – foremost in the United States and Africa – were made on the drawing table according to degrees of latitude, water lines remained popular characteristics of defined territoriality and belonging.<sup>25</sup> It lay therefore in the very nature of this kind of telegraphy to expand beyond its respective national territoriality by going sub-marine. The first true, i.e. commercially used submarine telegraph was run 1851 through the English Channel, connecting England and France.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, it is only productive to study submarine telegraphy, irrespective of scientific approach, from a transnational angle.<sup>27</sup> Predominantly, this study is based upon Anglo-American newspaper accounts, but also makes use of business papers and personal papers of relevant cable companies and cable agents.

## Making use of *Weltcommunication*

As already mentioned, the first true submarine cable was opened in 1851 connecting France with Great Britain. The success of this cable gave considerable impetus to the as yet infant business of submarine telegraphy. In the 1850s, several short submarine cables were laid in the Irish Sea, the English Channel or the Mediterranean.<sup>28</sup> However, the great submarine cable project many were brooding over was the Atlantic. The best-known story in this regard is that of the American Cyrus W. Field, the British engineer Charles Bright, the entrepreneur and financier John Pender and others. After a decade of struggle and many failed attempts, they brought the so-called Great Atlantic Cable project in 1866 to successful completion. Hereby, they initiated the submarine cable

<sup>22</sup> Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Geschichte der Globalisierung: Dimensionen, Prozesse, Epochen*, 4th ed., Beck’sche Reihe / Beck’sche Reihe 2320: C. H. Beck Wissen (München: Beck, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, Rev. and extended ed., 2. Ed. (London: Verso, 1991).

<sup>24</sup> Daily News, “A Cheap Ocean Telegraph,” May 2, 1874.

<sup>25</sup> See: Maier, Charles, “Consigning the Twentieth Century to History. Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era,” *American Historical Review* 3, no. 105 (2000): 807-831.

<sup>26</sup> E. A. Marland, “British and American Contributions to Electrical Communication,” *The British Journal for the*

*History of Science* 1, no. 1 (June 1962): 44.

<sup>27</sup> For a comparative approach to the use of the electric telegraph in Germany and the United States see: Ursula Lehmkuhl, “Producing and Consuming Knowledge: Comparative Perspectives on the Development and Usage of the Telegraph in Nineteenth-century Germany and America,” in *Atlantic communications: The media in American and German history from the seventeenth to the twentieth century*, ed. Norbert Finzsch and Ursula Lehmkuhl, 171–9, Germany and the United States of America. The Krefeld Historical Symposia (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Bright, *Submarine Telegraphs*, 6–15.

age and with it, the global implementation of communication.<sup>29</sup>

According to the great density of newspaper accounts accompanying the transatlantic cable projects, people of the time were well aware of the technical progress which happened before their very eyes as well as its implications for economy, politics and communication on a world scale.<sup>30</sup> Not surprisingly then, a large number of people wanted to be among the first to use the new tool for Weltcommunication. As the British *Daily News* reported, “[m]any applications for priority of messages ha[d] been telegraphed to the managing director from London, and the chief capitals of commerce”.<sup>31</sup> This first submarine enthusiasm resulted in a number of extraordinarily long and hence expensive telegrams, which showed how little people were yet used to the new medium and probably also how many understood it as a faster version of the letter. Among the first to make extensive use of the Atlantic cable was Emperor Maximilian of Mexico and his wife Charlotte. As the *Birmingham Daily Post* reported “[a] dispatch of 478 words in cipher” had passed over the Atlantic Telegraph between them. The cost of transmission was over 5,000 dollars.<sup>32</sup> As a sort of communicational sensation, such telegraphic records continued to make headlines. Soon after the opening of the transatlantic cable, it was reported that a single message had been transmitted by the Atlantic telegraph, “the cost of which was £800”. Considering the then current tariff, the telegram must have “consisted of 800 words, containing 4,000 letters.”<sup>33</sup> This record was soon beaten by a dispatch from the United States Government to the American minister at Paris in December of 1866, which “consisted of more than 4,000 words and occupied ten hours in transmission”. Its cost had been over £2,000 and it was the “longest message yet transmitted through the Atlantic Telegraph”.<sup>34</sup> In a first frenzy of technical enthusiasm during

the summer of 1866, a relatively large number of such telegrams extraordinaire were sent across the Atlantic. Simultaneously, they were publicized in a combination of celebrating as well as promoting the communicational innovation.

Yet, telegrams like the above remained the exception over the years. Rather, the transatlantic communicational space soon played itself out as one where time, (i.e. brevity) and money ruled. Soon after the establishment of transatlantic telegraph traffic in 1866, it became clear that its use was absolutely exclusive, bestowing the benefits of instantaneous communication only upon those “who can pay”.<sup>35</sup> Tariffs started out at £20 for twenty words and were then reduced to £5 for ten words plus the costs for each additional word according to destination. (This move also paid tribute to the fact that people rather tended to send telegrams shorter than twenty words.) In 1867, the Anglo-American Company tried a word rate of £1 for the traffic on their 1866 and 1865 Atlantic cables, but it was not until 1872 that Mr. Henry Weaver, then traffic manager of the above cable company, first instituted a regular word rate system of four shilling per word.<sup>36</sup> Due to such rates, the transatlantic telegraph did not set out as a medium of social communication. As *The Era* pointed out 1869 “[m]any a friendly message would be sent if it could be managed for a sovereign [sic], but when we come to Two Pounds for name and address only people recollect that a letter is delivered in nine or ten days”.<sup>37</sup> Soon, it had become clear that submarine telegraphy would certainly not supplant ordinary mail.

Almost an explosive multiplication of submarine telegraphs throughout the entire world followed the success of the first transatlantic cable. Regarding the Atlantic, France was put in direct telegraphic communication with the United States by a cable from Brest to Cape Cod in 1869. In

<sup>29</sup> There are several works on the 1866 cable: Gillian Cookson, *The Cable: The Wire that changed the world* (Strout: Tempus publishing, 2003); Bern Dibner, *The Atlantic cable*, Blaisdell paperback books in the history of science (New York: Blaisdell Publishing, 1966); Vary T. Coates and Bernard S. Finn, *A retrospective technology assessment: Submarine telegraphy - the transatlantic cable of 1866*, ed. Program of Policy Studies in Science and Technology. (San Francisco: San Francisco Press, 1979); John S. Gordon, *A thread across the ocean: The heroic story of the transatlantic cable* (New York, NY: Walker, 2002); Chester G. Hearn, *Circuits in the sea: The men, the ships, and the Atlantic cable* (Westport,

Conn.: Praeger, 2004).

<sup>30</sup> Hartmann, *Globale Medienkultur*, 73.

<sup>31</sup> *Daily News*, “The Atlantic Telegraph Expedition,” July 21, 1866.

<sup>32</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, “Atlantic Telegraph,” October 8, 1866.

<sup>33</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, “Miscellaneous,” August 9, 1866.

<sup>34</sup> *The Belfast News-Letter*, December 13, 1866.

<sup>35</sup> Jacob Brett, Mr. Jacob Brett Papers Vol. 2, UK0108 SC MSS 008/2, IEE, 146.

<sup>36</sup> Bright, *Submarine Telegraphs*, 143f.

<sup>37</sup> *The Era*, “Topics of the Week,” July 18, 1869.

the 1870s, several more transatlantic submarine telegraphs were paid out and even more were to come. By the turn of the century, the trans-Atlantic route was served by thirteen cables making the Atlantic the communication space with the highest telegraph density as well as the most contested telegraph market. After it had outgrown its technical infancy, ocean telegraphy was a prestigious and profitable field; company after company attempted to enter the submarine business on the Atlantic. However, until 1883 all of them, La Société du Câble Transatlantique Française (1869), the Direct United States Cable Company (1874), La Compagnie Française du Télégraphe de Paris à New York (1879) as well as the American Telegraph Company (1882) were forced to enter into a business arrangement, the so-called *cable pool*, with the Anglo-American Telegraph Company. The Anglo-American had laid the very first transatlantic cable and since then, held a firm monopoly on the Atlantic market.<sup>38</sup> Every time a new competitor entered the field, hopes were roused that charges for telegraphing could be reduced. Such hopes were not irrational, as all new cable companies claimed to hold the object of “cheapening telegraphic intercourse with our transatlantic brethren,” as could be read in a statement by the Direct United States Cable Company in 1874.<sup>39</sup> Fierce price wars in the 1870s and early 1880s were the result of the competition. All initially led to substantial price reductions before each new company capitulated before the Anglo-American, joined its pool and charges were raised once more. In 1883 the American mining tycoon John W. Mackay together with James Gordon Bennett Jr. owner of the *New York Herald*, set up the Commercial Cable Company, which was to finally break the Anglo-American’s monopoly. In the following price war, tariffs dropped by 50 per cent and more. By 1887, the Commercial Cable Company held 50 per cent of the telegraph traffic and both Companies entered an agreement.<sup>40</sup> In 1888, the shilling rate, i.e. 1 shilling per word, was adopted and remained the standard for the following decades.<sup>41</sup> Despite the fact that it was an

enormous reduction from initially £1 per word in 1866 (breaking down the £20/20 words tariff to a one word tariff) to 1 shilling per word in 1888, this was in no way a social tariff. The average income of a Newfoundland fisherman, the anchor place of the Atlantic cable, varied from £70 to £90 a year. In 1909, Henniker Heaton, British M.P., journalist and one of the most ardent supporters of a penny-post system for the British Imperial telegraphs, pointed out that the cable rate of one word still ranged from one day’s to six day’s wages of a farm laborer.<sup>42</sup> This placed telegraphic communication across the Atlantic out of reach for most. Through a system of high rates, Atlantic cable companies closed off communication per submarine telegraph as a mere elitist undertaking. The Atlantic cables were “a golden bridge, to be used by the possessors of gold only, an expensive luxury that but few can enjoy”.<sup>43</sup> Consequentially, it established a two class system of communication in which “those with long purses, and engaged in large transactions” were in possession of intelligence from the opposite sides of the ocean “twelve days in advance of their neighbours [sic]”.<sup>44</sup>

At this point, let us consider the communication theory which backed the above tariff policy. In the mid-1870s, the British *Daily News* led a discussion on the demand for long-distance communication and hence the need for a social tariff. It revealed the cable companies’ understanding of *Weltcommunication* and thus the motives behind their price policy. In an open letter, James Anderson, among others manager of the Anglo-American Telegraph Company, attempted to quash all suggestions concerning a social tariff. He claimed that it was unprofitable and asserted that there would not be enough demand for telegraphs across the Atlantic to make a penny post worth it:

*I affirm that they [the Americans] are just like Englishmen in that respect, and that neither country possesses a sufficient number of persons ready to spend 1s [shilling] per word upon messages which are not commercial, or of serious*

<sup>38</sup> www.atlantic-cable.com; Pike and Winseck, “The Politics of Global Media Reform, 1907-1923”.

<sup>39</sup> *Daily News*, “A Cheap Ocean Telegraph”.

<sup>40</sup> Griset and Headrick, “Submarine Telegraph Cables: Business and Politics, 1838-1939”: 556.

<sup>41</sup> Bright, *Submarine Telegraphs*, 143f.

<sup>42</sup> Letter by Mr. Brassey to the Editor of the Hastings News on his trip to Newfoundland, September 2, 1872, Cyrus Field Papers, Box 3/2 Mr. Brassey’s letters, writings, New

York Public Library, Manuscript Division; Henniker Heaton J., “The Cable Telegraph System of the World,” *The ARENA* 38, no. 214 (September 1907): 226-229, 228, Fleming Papers – Telegraphy and Submarine Cables, Folder 51, National Archives Canada.

<sup>43</sup> S. A. Goddard, “The Atlantic Telegraph: To the Editor of the Daily Post,” *Birmingham Daily Post*, August 2, 1866.

<sup>44</sup> S. A. Goddard, “The Atlantic Telegraph: To the Editor of the Daily Post,” *Birmingham Daily Post*, August 2, 1866.



*importance. I assert that people separated by a great distance do not either write or telegraph frequently to each other, and, as a rule, the greater the distance, and the longer the period of separation, the less frequent would the interchange of communication become. One shilling per word would not be a social tariff low enough to encourage travellers to bother their friends with anything but the most important affairs, and if they had important affairs to communicate they would not be deterred by 4s per word.*<sup>45</sup>

Anderson's argumentation that the demand for social communication lessened in proportion to distance was hotly contested. Over the following days, various responses to Anderson's claim could be read in the *Daily News*. Some called Anderson a "veritable Balaam"<sup>46</sup> – i.e. a wicked man, who was only interested in his company's revenues; others actually challenged his theory of communication. Both had their point. Considering the first reply, it is true that submarine telegraphy was a business of great (initial set-up) expenses, but also – once the business was running – of great profits. Of greater interest at this point is the reply concerning Anderson's theory of communication. Distance, so the reader agreed, did play a role in social communication. However it was distance created by time, i.e. the days and weeks it took a letter to arrive at its destination thus rendering all information to be outdated, and not distance created by geographical space; the latter, so the common assumption, could easily be "annihilated" by a telegram.<sup>47</sup> It was thus only "pure assumption on the part of Sir James Anderson that people separated by a great distance do not care either to write

or telegraph to each other frequently" – rather it was the great expense connected with transatlantic telegrams which hindered traffic.<sup>48</sup> While this person had a point in his argumentation, he made the mistake of equating a letter with a telegram and presuming that speed would automatically create news, two aspects which will be discussed further in the paper. Undoubtedly, economic motives influenced the cable companies' tariff policy: each new competitor was after all considered to be "ruinous competition".<sup>49</sup> Yet, the tariff system was also based on a communication model, as introduced by Anderson in the above letter, which postulated that "[t]he social element which justifies the penny postage and one shilling or six penny telegrams within the limits of a State does not exist outside these limits and cannot be created".<sup>50</sup> This conception was mirrored in the routes submarine cables took. The new *Weltcommunication* was based upon geopolitical structures of economic and political interests. As Hartmann points out, in the nineteenth century, nobody would have invested in a telegraph cable from Great Britain to India to foster intercultural understanding.<sup>51</sup>

Communication trans-Atlantic was, aside from its engrained elitism, also characterized by reduction through brevity caused by the exorbitant tariffs described above "The wordier a message and the greater the distance, the higher the charge," was the basic rule for (transatlantic) telegraphy.<sup>52</sup> The pressure to be cost-efficient hence led to the fact that telegrams became ever shorter and eventually led to the development of the so-called *Telegrammstil*, which left out anything that was redundant or not essential for the message. Additionally, codes and cyphers were used and codebooks developed for the different industries and purposes. As Wil-

<sup>45</sup> *Daily News*, "Telegraph Companies and Charges," February 17, 1873.

<sup>46</sup> *Daily News*, "to the Editor of the Daily News," February 19, 1873.

<sup>47</sup> John R. Isaac, *Laying the Atlantic Telegraph from Ship to Shore. A Series of Sketches drawn on the spot by John R. Isaac*, London 1858, 2nd edition A brief notice of the Atlantic Telegraph Cable, 1858, MS Gen 1752/5/2/1, Glasgow University. For a thorough study on the context of space and media see Regine Buschauer, *Mobile Räume: Medien- und diskursgeschichtliche Studien zur Telekommunikation*, MedienAnalysen 9 (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verl., 2010).

<sup>48</sup> *Daily News*, "Telegraph Companies and Charges," February 18, 1873.

<sup>49</sup> Gillian Cookson, "„Ruinous Competition“: The French Atlantic Telegraph of 1869," *Entreprises et Histoire* December, no. 23 (1999).

<sup>50</sup> *Daily News*, "Telegraph Companies and Charges" Even

Henniker Heaton, ardent supporter of a penny post had to admit that it not necessarily worked to bind nations closer as the Irish example had shown: "...and as for the cheap postage binding the Empire together, it was ridiculous, for had we not a penny post to Ireland, from which country we were nevertheless shortly to be separated? I will not deny that there is wit in the Irish argument." J. H. Heaton, *The Postal and Telegraphic Communication of the Empire: A Paper read before the Royal Colonial Institute on Tuesday, March 13, 1888* (London, 1888), 3.

<sup>51</sup> Hartmann, *Globale Medienkultur*, 63.

<sup>52</sup> Jürgen Wilke, "The Telegraph and Transatlantic Communication Relations," in *Atlantic communications: The media in American and German history from the seveneenth to the twentieth century*, ed. Norbert Finzsch and Ursula Lehmkuhl, 107–34, Germany and the United States of America. The Krefeld Historical Symposia (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 119.



ke has shown for the case of Germany, ten per cent of all telegrams transmitted within Germany since the late 1870s contained less than five words. For telegrams leaving Germany, up to a third did not contain more than five words. 66 to 75 per cent of all foreign telegrams contained up to twenty words. Only one out of ten telegrams was longer than twenty words.<sup>53</sup> Thanks to the annual reports of the Atlantic telegraph companies, detailed numbers can also be given for the Atlantic cables. In 1877 for example transatlantic messages had an average of 11.4 words according to the Anglo-American Telegraph Company's statistics.<sup>54</sup>

Using this average of 11.4 words as an example, one further has to consider that this also contained information on sender, receiver and destination which reduced the actual content of the message even further. Such enforced brevity had several effects on the message itself, at points rendering its content unintelligible.<sup>55</sup> As early as 1884, an article in the American magazine *Electrical World* pointed at how universally ocean telegraphy had changed communication. The technology's great expense "has a tendency to cause customers to use their ingenuity in condensing their despatches [sic] into as brief a space as possible". The effect of which was that "it is not uncommon to see messages from correspondents asking for more definite instructions or information, as the former abbreviated message was unintelligible". Such failed communication is vividly documented in the correspondence of Lady Emma Pender, wife of Sir John Pender, the submarine cable mogul of the time controlling with his Eastern and

Associated Companies 4/5 of the world's ocean cables.<sup>56</sup> With her daughter Marion's marriage to William Des Voeux, an official of the British colonial office, Lady Pender developed the habit of corresponding via telegram, oftentimes using the transatlantic connection. Each of the telegrams, however, was accompanied by an extensive and oftentimes explanatory letter.<sup>57</sup> One of the most common misunderstandings was the phrase "All well" – which came to mean all or nothing in their correspondence. The phrase failed to express any nuances. Upon their daughter's departure from a visit in England back to her husband in the colonial service, Sir Pender struggled in a telegram with the very expression "all well" as the following letter from Lady Pender exemplifies:

*Your Father telegraphed your departure to William. He wished to tell him somehow that you were well but far from strong. This however considered might alarm so at last he left the message ending with "All well". This does not strengthen my faith in telegrams.*<sup>58</sup>

In order to fit as much content into as little telegraphic space as possible, people adopted highly creative methods. Aside from the usage of shortened spelling, such as "immediatly" instead of "immediately", the usage of foreign languages was common. As the *Electrical World* reports, oftentimes two or three words were run together in a foreign language for the benefit of brevity. (The knowledge of German compounds must have been high among early telegraphers.) Yet these so called "evasions" helped little "to carry the message unquestioned out of the originating coun-

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> However, as the report continues, "owing to the high rate per word charged for these messages, resort to the code system is much more general and the messages are consequently shorter than would probably be the case in European telegraphy with a low rate per word." [S. 13f] General Post Office, International Telegraph Convention, London 1879. Proposition of German Administration, Receiver and Accountant General's observation, November 27, 1877, POST 30/361, Part I, BT Archives, 13–4.

<sup>55</sup> William Maver, "Ocean Telegraphy: extract from the Electrical World [American]," *The Telegraphist. A Monthly Journal for Postal, Telephone and Railway Telegraph Clerks* 2, June (1884): 87.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Boyce, "Imperial Dreams and National Realities: Britain, Canada and the Struggle for a Pacific Telegraph Cable, 1879-1902," *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 460 (2000): 40.

<sup>57</sup> Two examples are the following letters by Emma Pender: "A telegram from William [her son in law] with the good

news of „All Well“ but there are congratulations which I do not understand." Emma Pender, Emma Pender to her daughter, 7. Mai 1877 cont., May 7, 1877, DOC/ETC/5/95, Porthcurno Cable and Wireless Archive in *Papers Lady Emma Pender; Letters 1874-1878 Vol I: Box: Pender Papers Correspondence*, ed. o.A. (Porthcurno: Cable and Wireless Archive, 1874-1878).

"You will understand Mr. Pender's telegram by the letters already with you. No wonder it puzzled you." Emma Pender, Emma Pender to her son in Law William, 13. June 1877 cont., June 13, 1877, DOC/ETC/5/95, Porthcurno Cable and Wireless Archive in *Papers Lady Emma Pender; Letters 1874-1878 Vol I: Box: Pender Papers Correspondence*, ed. o.A. (Porthcurno: Cable and Wireless Archive, 1874-1878).

<sup>58</sup> Emma Pender, Emma Pender to her daughter Marion, February, 18 1877, cont., February 18, 1877, DOC/ETC/5/95, Porthcurno Cable and Wireless Archive in *Papers Lady Emma Pender; Letters 1874-1878 Vol I: Box: Pender Papers Correspondence*, ed. o.A. (Porthcurno: Cable and Wireless Archive, 1874-1878).

try”.<sup>59</sup> Once the evasion was noticed, extra toll was collected. For reasons of secrecy, but also of brevity, users of the telegraph soon came to use ciphers and codes. These were developed to meet the needs of particular industries or user groups. Sometimes the cable company also developed its own code system, which it provided for the telegraphing public.<sup>60</sup> Early on, wealthy transatlantic travellers and tourists were identified as possible cable users. Already in 1880 a Mr. Palmer edited his first *European Travelers and Telegraph Code book*; a second edition followed in 1884. In 1887 Golder Dwight published his *Official Cable Code and General Information for European Tourists including French and German Phrases with English pronunciation*.<sup>61</sup> With the use of a cable code, travellers could send “almost any information they wish (at a comparatively small expense) to friends at home” as advising them of their safe arrival, their state of health, what sort of voyage they had or where they intended to go first.<sup>62</sup> The usage of codes not only made messages safer and shorter, but also more exclusive. It further bound receiver and sender to the same tool, i.e. the same code book, as messages had to be decoded before they could unveil their content. This made the community one could talk to even smaller. Even a Lady Pender was at a loss facing a coded telegram by her son in law. Although she could read it, she could not make out its content. Communication trans-Atlantic had failed again:

*Your telegram with some code words came yesterday evening & John [Sir John Pender] being in the country we are unable to decipher it. However that is not at all an uncommon occurrence I believe when cipher is used.*

*Kingdoms have suffered from lost or absent keys as well as humble people.*<sup>63</sup>

It is unconceivable that Lady Pender would truly have to worry about either the telegram’s expenses or its length, yet ironically she complains about the very same. The conclusion could be that Sir Pender was so extremely fond of saving money or rather that Lady Pender obeyed the unwritten rules of communication that the medium of telegraphy had put on her. The correspondence of Lord Mayo and the Countess of Mayo can be used as another example to argue in favor of the latter. Upon the opening of the submarine telegraph connection from Britain to India, Sir John Pender gave an evening party. For entertainment of the guests, a telegraph station was put up at the house, where everybody present could telegraph all around the world free of charge. Lady Mayo made use of the opportunity and sent an extensive, letter-like telegram to her husband in India. The reply of whom was in absolute obedience with the law of brevity, containing only a couple of words in the sense of “all well”.<sup>64</sup> One approach to the story of Lady Mayo would be through concepts of gender theory, but I would strengthen the argument that it is rather a case of frequency of use, (which certainly is proportionate to gender). The telegraph established itself as a medium of short message and formed its users accordingly. Even those who could afford otherwise did not use the submarine telegraph as a means of extensive social communication, but of business correspondence.

In conclusion, transatlantic telegraphic communication did not bring people closer together but

<sup>59</sup> Maver, “Ocean Telegraphy”: 87–8.

<sup>60</sup> Albert B. Chandler, *A New Code, or Cipher specially designed for Important private correspondence by Telegraph. Applicable as well to Correspondence by Mail* (Washington D.C., 1869)., Slater Robert, *Telegraphic Code to Ensure Secrecy in the Transmission of Telegrams. By Robert Slater, Secretary of the Société du Cable Transatlantique Française, Limited: Second Edition* (London, 1897).

<sup>61</sup> Dwight Golder, *Official Cable Code and General Information for European Tourists including French and German Phrases with English pronunciation* (New York, 1887); Anglo-American Telegraphic Code and Cypher Co., *The Anglo-American Telegraphic Code to Cheapen Telegraphy and to furnish a complete Cypher. Adapted to use in general correspondence; included business, social political and all other sources of correspondence* (New York, 1891); Palmer, *Palmer’s European Travelers and Telegraph Code* (18807).

<sup>62</sup> Golder, *Official Cable Code and General Information for*

*European Tourists including French and German Phrases with English pronunciation*. Golder argued that with his code book a traveller could condense as many as 36 words in one. As for example “Dare” meant: “Arrived at Queenstown to-day. Not feeling well, as I was sea-sick most of the time during the voyage. I shall remain here at the Queen’s Hotel for a day or two before going on to London.” Sending this message would cost nine dollars, by using the code only, p. 111.

<sup>63</sup> Emma Pender, Letter to her Daughter, April 10, 1887 in *Papers Lady Emma Pender; Letters 1874-1878 Vol. I: Box: Pender Papers Correspondence*, ed. o.A. (Porthcurno: Cable and Wireless Archive, 1874-1878). In his work David P. Nickles has shown how ocean telegraphy oftentimes hindered rather than helped international diplomacy. David P. Nickles, *Under the wire: How the telegraph changed diplomacy*, Harvard historical studies 144 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2003).

<sup>64</sup> *Illustrated London News*, “A Telegraphic Evening Party,” July 2, 1870.

only markets. On an individual basis, the letter remained the dominant means of social communication and as several scholars have already highlighted, it were mainly commerce and politics which benefited from a globe spanning submarine telegraph network.<sup>65</sup> Upon the completion of the first Atlantic cable in 1866, the *Belfast News-Letter* enthusiastically exclaimed how it now became possible “within a few brief minutes, not merely to telegraph from London to New York, but, by a process of easy re-transmission, the gold digger [sic] at California may, if he wishes, communicate within an hour or two with a Parsee merchant in Bombay”.<sup>66</sup> This statement has to be re-read critically. The stress of the above certainly has to be on merchant as well as *gold* [less on digger]. As has been shown above, (submarine) telegraphy had been created from the start as a communicational tool of exclusivity. Exorbitantly high tariffs hindered social messages as much as lengthy correspondence. The “girdle around the globe”<sup>67</sup> created through the submarine telegraphs did not resemble a Victorian internet as postulated by Standage.<sup>68</sup> Rather, the submarine telegraphs further highlighted the distinction between those within and those outside of the developing “global village”.

## The News newer – but what is new(s)?

It would however be erroneous to assume that submarine telegraphy had no influence on a globalizing world apart from facilitating the means for world politics and world markets. It also created world news and thus reached many (not all) of those outside the inner circle of active submarine telegraph users described above. From the beginning of land telegraphy, newspapers and news agencies benefited from the new technology as it helped to spread information more rapidly. Across the Western world, various news agencies, such as Reuters, Havas or Wolff's Telegraphisches Bureau

(WTB) were set up. In 1869 these three established a news cartel, through the so-called ring circle agreement, dividing the news world among them.<sup>69</sup> From the beginning, the transatlantic news market was of greatest interest to news makers. The second Atlantic cable of 1869 was predominantly a creation of Julius Reuter.<sup>70</sup> As costs for obtaining transatlantic news had risen from an average of £67 (\$ 515) per month in 1865 to £424 (\$ 2,862) per month in 1867, backed by the French government, Reuter founded together with Baron Émil d'Erlanger the so-called French Cable Company, La Société du Câble transatlantique Française. After a first and relatively short price war, the new company adopted the Anglo American Telegraph Company's tariffs. In 1873, France sold the telegraph company to Pender's Anglo-American.<sup>71</sup> Transatlantic news was back in the hands of the cable entrepreneurs. Almost two decades later, another news maker attempted to establish his own news cable across the cable – this time with great success. In 1883, James Gordon Bennett Jr., owner of the *New York Herald*, incorporated together with John W. Mackay, a silver mining tycoon from the American mid-West, the Commercial Cable Company. As mentioned earlier on, the Commercial Co. managed to break the Atlantic cable pool's monopoly on submarine traffic in the Atlantic and by 1887, controlled 50 per cent of it. While one partner's interest in owning a transatlantic cable was allegedly roused by his wife's exorbitant cable bills, the other's clearly lay in the cheap transmittance of news from all around the globe.<sup>72</sup> Submarine telegraphs were essential to Bennett's understanding of doing business as he ran his newspapers, the *New York Herald* as well as the *Paris Herald*, from wherever he happened to be. His executives “were required to sit at the end of a cable which connected with Bennett wherever he happened to be, and a never ending stream of editors and reporters was kept shuttling back and forth across the ocean at his command”.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Jürgen Wilke, “The Telegraph and Transatlantic Communication Relations,” in *Atlantic communications: The media in American and German history from the seventeenth to the twentieth century*, ed. Norbert Finzsch and Ursula Lehmkuhl, 107–34, Germany and the United States of America. The Krefeld Historical Symposia (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 119; 130.

<sup>66</sup> *The Belfast News-Letter*, “The Belfast News-Letter,” July 28, 1866.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Standage, *The Victorian Internet*.

<sup>69</sup> Dwayne R. Winseck and Robert M. Pike, *Communication and empire: Media, markets, and globalization, 1860*

- 1930, American encounters - global interactions (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 5.

<sup>70</sup> Kenneth R. Haigh and Edward Wilshaw, *Cables and submarine cables* (London: Coles, 1968), 316.

<sup>71</sup> Jill Hills, *The struggle for control of global communication: The formative century. The history of communication* (Urbana, Illinois u.a.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2002), 34.

<sup>72</sup> Don C. Seitz, *The James Gordon Bennetts. Father and Son Proprietor of the New York Herald*. (New York, 1974) 363.

<sup>73</sup> Al Laney, *Paris Herald: The Incredible Newspaper* (New York: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1947), 17.

Undoubtedly, submarine telegraphy did heavily influence the making of (transatlantic) news. It made the news newer than ever before. Yet, what is often left out in narratives on how telegraphy *revolutionized* global news covering is the following: What is new(s)? This becomes particularly clear in the transatlantic setting. From the beginning, news obtained through the submarine cables were for decades marked as “By Atlantic Cable” or “By Atlantic Telegraph” which makes it fairly easy for the scholar of today to get a feel for the kind of information that was transmitted via cable.<sup>74</sup> These transatlantic telegraph news reports tell the story of a lengthy process of adaptation and of negotiation. Particularly in the beginning, it oftentimes remained obscure as to what would actually be new and news to the reading public on the other side of the Atlantic.

As Wilke has shown for the case of telegraphic news reports in the *Nationale Zeitung* in Germany, stock quotes became the first telegraphic news to be noticed by the public. They were soon complemented by other news, such as political reports.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, news that was transmitted “By Atlantic Telegraph” mainly contained business information, such as the price of gold and cotton or the arrival of steam and trading ships at major ports. In between political news, such as information on elections or the Franco-Prussian War, were also run along the cable. It was these very telegrams containing political information that were under heavy dispute. In the 1860s, various newspapers, particularly in Great Britain, voiced their disappointment about the kind of more general information that was being sent across the Atlantic – it was “neither very new nor very important”.<sup>76</sup> Already the first political intelligence proved to be disappointing and did not make the front page. As the *Caledonian Mercury* reported, the British public was merely told about the adjournment of the American Congress – a fact “which will no doubt be read with curiosity [sic], though it contains

little to reward perusal”.<sup>77</sup> Patience on the side of the British news editors was running thin by the late fall of 1866 when the *Birmingham Daily Post* published the following angry article:

*Whoever determines what news shall be sent by the Atlantic Telegraph deserves, in the opinion of the Spectator, a whipping for his stupidity. We have never yet heard how the Ohio and other elections, except the Pennsylvanian, which took place on the 9th, turned out; and then on Thursday, we receive such a scrap as this, in addition to the price of gold, etc. „Mr. John Van Buren is dead,“ What on earth does any one [sic] care about that? There was a President once called Martin van Buren, who was an able disciple of Jackson's and perhaps this is a son. We regret very much his (or any other man's) possible premature decease, but it is not instructive tidings. Why can't the Atlantic telegraph report what people want to know, and not what they don't want to know.*<sup>78</sup>

Following these press reports, it seemed as if the Atlantic telegraph connection was good for nothing but the transmittance of commercial information. All it was reporting apart from numbers, figures and shipping tables, had either been considered “unimportant” or “practically worthless”.<sup>79</sup> Its advantage for the general public had hence “not [been] particularly obvious”.<sup>80</sup> What had happened in 1866 was that two continents had been put into instantaneous communication that had, said in exaggerated terms, nothing to communicate – yet. The distance of twelve days via mail steamer as well as a history of Anglo-American tensions aroused during the American Civil War had separated the former mother country and colony further than a transatlantic telegraph cable could easily bridge in an instant. Upon the laying of a first transatlantic cable in 1858 (which failed after a mere few weeks), the London *Times* boasted:

*in American and German history from the seventeenth to the twentieth century*, ed. Norbert Finzsch and Ursula Lehmkuhl, 107–34, Germany and the United States of America. The Krefeld Historical Symposia (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 120.

<sup>74</sup> Once competing transatlantic cable companies had been established they marked their cablegrams accordingly, as for example “By French Atlantic Cable”, “By Direct United States Cable” or “By Commercial Cable Company”. The New York Herald for example printed European news by cable for example as “Special despatches [sic] from London”. Soon after its establishment the medium even became the messenger. It was not uncommon that one would read “the Atlantic Telegraph reports” or “According to the Atlantic telegraph” in the headings of Anglo-American newspapers. Some even referred to the *Atlantic Telegraph* as a journal, i.e. a news maker, in itself.

<sup>75</sup> Jürgen Wilke, “The Telegraph and Transatlantic Communication Relations,” in *Atlantic communications: The media*

<sup>76</sup> *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* etc, “Occasional Notes,” October 24, 1866.

<sup>77</sup> *The Caledonian Mercury*, “Topics of the day,” August 1, 1866.

<sup>78</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, “Miscellaneous,” October 22, 1866.

<sup>79</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, “Wanted, an editor for the Atlantic Telegraph,” November 10, 1866.

<sup>80</sup> *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* etc, “Occasional Notes”



*For the purposes of mutual communication and good understanding the Atlantic is dried up, and we become in wish as in reality one country [...] The Atlantic Telegraph has half undone the Declaration of 1776 and has made us once again, in spite of ourselves, one people.*<sup>81</sup>

However, this imaginary community of Anglo-American brethren<sup>82</sup> existed only as a rhetoric figure and could during the 1860s not yet be realized in news print. This becomes particularly clear in the following statement by the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

*There appears still to be something queer about the news received through the Atlantic Telegraph. In this morning's Times we have, for instance – America (by Atlantic Telegraph) General Sheridan has re-established martial law at New Orleans. But not a word is said about the price of Gold at New York, surely as important a fact to the commercial world of Europe as the re-establishment of martial law at New Orleans can be to the Americans.*<sup>83</sup>

While British merchants worried about the receipt of trading information, they understood little about the great significance that the establishment of martial law in New Orleans truly had for America. The telegram referred to one of

the most brutal incidents in America's post-Civil War era, namely the New Orleans Race Riot of 1866. With the compliance of local civilian authorities and police, white southerners had attacked a gathering of Radical Republicans, mainly African-American war veterans, who were angered by the enactment of Black codes in Louisiana. 35 blacks were killed and more than 100 wounded. As a result, the riot convinced public opinion in the North of the necessity of firmer measures to govern the South during Reconstruction. In the following elections, the Republicans won in a landslide and an appropriate Reconstruction bill was enacted in 1867.<sup>84</sup> As further sources show, it would take a couple of years before the gap between the Anglo-American "brethren" was filled with enough knowledge and empathy for transatlantic communication *via cable* to work.<sup>85</sup>

One of the greatest challenges surely lay in the telegram's brevity. Just as these short messages had puzzled Lady Emma Pender and her family, news dispatches puzzled their receiver on the other side of the ocean. More than once, a full account of events conveyed by a letter via steamer had to explain the content of a telegram received twelve days earlier.<sup>86</sup> This surely changed how people read newspapers and in the end how news was made<sup>87</sup>, but it also supports the above thesis: news makers in Great Britain as yet knew

<sup>81</sup> *Times*, August 8, 1858.

<sup>82</sup> The image of the transatlantic brethren was very common in news reports' interpretation of the benefits of the Atlantic cable. E.g.: Baker & Godwin, *The laying of the cable---John and Jonathan joining hands* (New York: Baker & Godwin Printers Printing House, 1858). Another image was that the Old World and the New had been joined in marriage: E.g. *Glasgow Herald*, "Monday Morning, July 30," July 30, 1866.

<sup>83</sup> *The Pall Mall Gazette*, "Occasional Notes," August 9, 1866.

<sup>84</sup> „New Orleans Race Riot.“ Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 16 Oct. 2010 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/411927/New-Orleans-Race-Riot>>. The literature refers to the New Orleans Riot as "An Absolute Massacre". See: James G. Hollandsworth, *An absolute massacre: The New Orleans race riot of July 30, 1866* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2001).

<sup>85</sup> If this was already the case for the Anglo-American brethren it was even more so for the United States and Germany. As Wilke has pointed out, until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century news from the United States remained rare in German newspapers. Generally, transatlantic news service in Germany was not very extensive. Jürgen Wilke, "The Telegraph and Transatlantic Communication Relations," in *Atlantic communications: The media in American and German history from the seventeenth to the twentieth century*, ed. Norbert Finsch and Ursula Lehmkuhl, 107–34, Germany and the United States of America. The Krefeld Historical Symposia (Oxford: Berg, 2004). In contrast to the above *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Irish Belfast*

*News Letter* reported: "By Atlantic Telegraph we learn that quiet has been restored in New Orleans. It seems to have been a very serious affair, and thirty-one negroes and one white man were killed in it." *Belfast News-Letter*, "Saturday, Aug. 4, 1866," August 4, 1866.

<sup>86</sup> See for example the following extract from the *Pall Mall Gazette*: "We had already heard by the Atlantic Telegraph that riots were imminent at Baltimore. Some little further light is thrown upon the matter by the intelligence brought by the Asia." *The Pall Mall Gazette*, "Summary of this morning's news," November 5, 1866. or similarly the following two news reports on an address to Congress by the American President Johnson. *The Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, "Foreign Intelligence," December 7, 1866.; *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, "Dublin: Monday Dec. 17, 1866," December 17, 1866.

<sup>87</sup> See the following article by the *Pall Mall Gazette*. "The existence of the Atlantic Telegraph certainly lessens the interest of the impeachment trial. The bald statements sent through the cable keep the English reader continually in advance of any real information, and when he has read in one column of the newspaper that the case for the prosecution has closed, it is difficult to fix his attention upon those preliminary details which appear in another column. Except to persons interested in the rate of exchange the Atlantic Telegraph, so far as it has to do with public interest, has hitherto been simply a nuisance." *The Aberdeen Journal*, "The Atlantic Telegraph a Nuisance," April 22, 1867.



too little about the United States to be able to decode a telegram reporting John van Buren's death properly. After all, he was indeed the son of the former President Martin van Buren and known to many of the European high society.<sup>88</sup> A common Anglo-American news code first had to be developed and adapted.

Over the following years the British and American public grew closer in and through their news coverage. The transatlantic telegraph provided necessary information and fostered empathy. The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 exemplifies one milestone in the process of adaptation. This time not only the human tragedy, but also the event's national and international significance – after all, Chicago was one of the main trading centers in the United States – were properly decoded from telegrams reaching Great Britain via Atlantic cable. From October 8-10 1871, a fire raged in the city of Chicago, which almost completely destroyed it. According to a news dispatch of Reuters, assumptions were that 50,000 people were rendered homeless and about 12,000 buildings burned. The loss was estimated to exceed \$150,000,000.<sup>89</sup> Simultaneous to news report about the fire, various articles encouraged the establishment of “noble contributions” from England “for the comfort of these sufferers” who were after all “knit close to us [i.e. the English] by the ties of race and language”.<sup>90</sup> Only three days later, the *Birmingham Daily Post* reported on a public meeting convened by the Mayor for the purpose of raising an aid fund for the people of Chicago.<sup>91</sup>

Despite the fact that aid was still mainly organized along transatlantic trading routes, news coverage on the fire and subsequent relief actions provides proof that on the British side, interest had shifted from solely stock information to more general information, including catastrophes, on the United States. The United States and Great Britain had come one step closer.

The death of the American president James A. Garfield vividly exemplifies how close the process of adaptation would actually bring the two in their news coverage. Oftentimes Garfield is compared directly to Abraham Lincoln. Both American Presidents were assassinated, one in 1865, the other in 1881. Generally, their example is used to highlight the speed of news provided through the Atlantic cables. While it took two weeks in 1865 before anyone in Europe learned about Lincoln's violent death, it was a question of hours or even minutes in 1881. However, it is not only an issue of speed, but also of density of news coverage. James A. Garfield was shot July 2, 1881, but survived badly injured. He died eleven weeks later on September 19, 1881. During these eleven weeks, the President's health status was meticulously reported about in the British Press by Atlantic telegraph. People in Great Britain learned about the President's temperature, his pulse, what and how often he ate and how he slept during the night.<sup>92</sup> They were virtually at the President's death bed.

President Garfield's death not only highlights the density of transatlantic news coverage, but also

<sup>88</sup> John van Buren (1810-1866) was indeed the second son of the former American President Martin van Buren. He had been quite a popular figure as lawyer and politician in the U.S. For some time, he had also lived in Great Britain, where he had been very popular with the British and European High Society. After a dance with Queen Victoria, the American Press started to call him “Prince John”. “John Van Buren.” *Dictionary of American Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936. *Gale Biography In Context*. Web. 17 Oct. 2010. <http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/bic1/ReferenceDetailsPage/ReferenceDetailsWindow?displayGroupName=K12-Reference&prodId=BIC1&action=e&windowstate=normal&catId=&documentId=GALE%7CBT2310001639&mode=view&userGroupName=nypl&jsid=fd5d89bf50f7fe280aa3b3327c9c4b1>.

<sup>89</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, “Latest News,” October 10, 1871. Today, historians estimate that the fire caused almost \$200,000,000 in damage, rendered about one third of the city's population (about 100,000 people) homeless and virtually leveled 2,100 acres. John J. Pauly, “The Great Chicago Fire as a National Event,” *American Quarterly* 36, no. 5 (1984): 669.

<sup>90</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, “News of the Day,” October 11,

1871.

<sup>91</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, “The Great Fire at Chicago,” October 13, 1871. Also the Liverpool American Chamber of Commerce as well as the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce had set up aid funds. *Birmingham Daily Post*, “The Fire at Chicago,” October 13, 1871.

<sup>92</sup> For example see the following press reports: “Washington, August 13, Evening. President Garfield slept poorly during the first part of the night, but better towards the morning. He was somewhat feverish this morning, the pulse being 104. The continuance of the high pulse caused some uneasiness. Dr. Bliss thinks it was owing to a slight retention of pus in the lower track of the wound. The physicians, however, feel no alarm. The fever decreased during the day, and the patient's pulse this evening is 99. The President's condition is considered favourable [sic] by Dr. Hamilton.” “Washington, August 14, Evening. President Garfield has passed a comfortable day, and the attending surgeons are of the opinion that his present favourable [sic] condition will continue, and that the next few days will show a marked improvement. The President's pulse this evening was 96.” *Daily News*, “President Garfield,” August 15, 1881.

marks the end point of a mainly British process of adaptation. By 1881, the state of knowledge and empathy, basic to successful transatlantic communication had caught up with the state of technology. An adequate reference system had been developed. Thereafter, as the 1880s and 1890s show, demand for even speedier news and messages was high. It was not uncommon that it could happen that the dispatch of a message and the receipt of its answer took place within the space of ten minutes.<sup>93</sup> In particular, James Gordon Bennett with his Commercial Cable Company used the argument of speed as a promotion tool for his Atlantic cables. According to the *New York Herald*, the Cable Company's record for transmittance between New York and London lay at two-and a half minutes in 1885.<sup>94</sup> Basic to this had been the further development of submarine telegraphy. By the 1880s, most Atlantic cables were duplexed, which meant that now two messages could be sent simultaneously from opposite sides of the cable. This enlarged the cables' capacity tremendously.<sup>95</sup> In the two decades leading up to the twentieth century, several events, in the most common sense of the word, were staged to prove the wonders of telegraphic speed. One of its highlights was probably an interview conducted across the Atlantic by cable in 1888. One of the interview partners sat in Canada, the other in London.<sup>96</sup> In the late 1890s the obsession with the technology's speed was carried even further, when British and U.S. American chess clubs conducted matches by Atlantic telegraph. As a sort of commercial campaign, messages were transmitted by the Commercial Cable Co.<sup>97</sup> Both events served, as the *Pall Mall Gazette* pointed out, as a "striking manifestation

of the extent to which time and space have been annihilated by the electric telegraph"<sup>98</sup>, but also, one is inclined to add, as a manifestation of speed as a regained prerequisite for transatlantic communication. Speedy transmission of information was increasingly taken for granted and complaints about messages being outdated could be heard.<sup>99</sup> As has been shown, transatlantic communication via telegraph in the form of news coverage was subjected to a lengthy process of adaptation questioning protagonists' attempt to answer the implicit question: What is new(s)? It took more than a decade before the transatlantic gap which had been bridged technologically in 1866 was filled with appropriate knowledge, empathy and interest for the other side. This was essential for the proper decoding of messages of extreme brevity. Only in the 1880s had potential users caught up with the technology they had been provided with and only then could they truly enjoy the benefits of instantaneous news coverage. The period described above represents perfectly the transition from the innovation of submarine telegraphy to technology in use, as theorized by David Edgerton.<sup>100</sup> The case that has just been made, however, further uncovers processes of increasingly dense networks of communication, hence globalization. Lastly, it must be stressed that these processes of adaptation varied according to setting. As Wilke has calculated, news coverage on the United States in Germany was never very extensive until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1881 and 1913, telegrams from America only accounted for two to five per cent of all international telegrams in Germany.<sup>101</sup> The "special relationship" between Great Britain and the United States certainly played an

<sup>93</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, "General News," December 29, 1885.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Bright, *Submarine Telegraphs*, 121–3. The first application of Duplex telegraphy to a submarine cable was in 1873. This was carried out by Mr. J. B. Sterns on a section of the Anglo-American Atlantic cable going from New foundland to Cape Breton. In 1878 the Direct United States Cable Company's Atlantic cable was successfully duplexed by Muirhead and Taylor. This allowed a speed of sixteen words per minute. *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *The Pall Mall Gazette*, "Telegraphing Extraordinary," January 23, 1888.

<sup>97</sup> *Daily News*, "Chess by Cable - London v. New York," March 14, 1896.; *Glasgow Herald*, "The Cable Chess Match - Great Britain v. United States. The Trophy won back." February 15, 1897. These Anglo-American Chess Matches had first been carried out in 1895. Telegrams were transmitted by the Commercial Cable Co, which used the games as another means of promotion. Large numbers of moves were actually transmitted within three minutes from each other, the distance of the players being 3.483 miles. *The Newcastle Courant* etc, "The

Game of Chess,"; A. J. Gillam, *Great Britain vs. America Cable Matches 1895-1901* (1997).

<sup>98</sup> *The Pall Mall Gazette*, "Telegraphing Extraordinary"

<sup>99</sup> Oftentimes delays were caused by cable breakages. This was the case in 1873 when the shipwreck of the *City of Washington* was not known in Liverpool until three days after the disaster. *The Leeds Mercury*, "Wreck of an Inman Steamer," July 9, 1873.

<sup>100</sup> David Edgerton, "From Innovation to Use: ten eclectic theses on the historiography of technology," *History and Technology* 16 (1999).

<sup>101</sup> Jürgen Wilke, "The Telegraph and Transatlantic Communication Relations," in *Atlantic communications: The media in American and German history from the seven teenth to the twentieth century*, ed. Norbert Finzsch and Ursula Lehmkuhl, 107–34, Germany and the United States of America. The Krefeld Historical Symposia (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 113. Amelia Bonea is working on how the *Times of India* reports "World News" in India. E.g. Amelia Bonea, "The Medium and its Message. Reporting the Austro-Prussian War in the Times of India," *Historical Social Research. Historische Sozialforschung* 35, no. 1 (2010).

important part in the way the processes outlined above played out. Many scholars actually date the beginning of the so called Anglo-American Special Relationship to the mid-19th century.<sup>102</sup>

Yet even if the story were to be retold from the U.S. American point of view, its timeline would be slightly different. These processes of adaptation and negotiation occurred more intensely in Great Britain than in the United States, where Europe and particularly Great Britain had been the major point of reference. The evaluation of each other's importance was thus uneven.<sup>103</sup> In American newspapers aside from the usual stock quotations, particularly information on Europe's wars or the movements of its royalty made front page as "From Europe by Atlantic Cable" or "Europe – Latest by Atlantic cable".<sup>104</sup> Generally, there seems to have been less of a tendency to decode telegrams incorrectly as the American reference system with regards to Europe seems to have had a larger vocabulary. Yet there were also critical voices, such as Henry David Thoreau. He was highly skeptical of the benefits of an Atlantic telegraph connection:

*We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate. We are eager to tunnel under the Atlantic and bring the old world some weeks nearer to the new, but perchance the first news that will leak through into the broad, flapping American ear will be that the Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough.*<sup>105</sup>

My future work will analyze the stages of adaptation from the U.S. American side. Thus far, we can already hypothesize that there were various speeds of communicational integration and adaptation of news in a globalizing world. Yet, as the study of Gordon Winder has outlined, the processes of integration do not result in one global public, but rather publics. Each of these shapes and adapts so-called global media events, such as the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 according to dynamics of its own locality.<sup>106</sup>

## Conclusion

In people's imagination, submarine telegraphs, such as the Atlantic cables, did indeed establish *Weltcommunication*. They broadened people's imaginary beyond the borders of their local or national community. After all, had not time and space been annihilated, had not the Atlantic dried up and had they not become one people? Yet, the imaginary global, which the submarine telegraphs provided, still remained an empty image for some time. Only slowly did the world integrate and become more interlinked along the communicational paths that a submarine telegraph network provided. Yet this network was based upon political and commercial considerations. This integration contained processes of adaptation and the negotiation of common codes. Yet, these processes were neither unidirectional, nor did they happen simultaneously in a consistent pattern. The imaginary *Weltcommunication* still contained many holes and provided clear distinctions between those inside and outside of its system along the lines of class or gender. It based its communicational practice upon the understanding of time as

<sup>102</sup> Ursula Lehmkuhl, "Creating Anglo-American Friendship: The Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Social Construction of the „Special Relationship“, in *From Enmity to Friendship: Anglo-American Relations in the 19th and 20th Century*, ed. Ursula Lehmkuhl and Gustav Schmidt, 28–52, Schriftenreihe des Arbeitskreises Deutsche Eng-land-Forschung 53 (Augsburg 2005).

<sup>103</sup> This is a phenomenon easily explained by the fact that North America had from its point of "discovery" been predominantly settled by Europeans. In particular, the late nineteenth century further saw great waves of immigration.

<sup>104</sup> *Daily National Intelligencer*, "Europe Latest by Atlantic

Cable," November 28, 1866; *The Daily News and Herald*, "From Europe By Atlantic Cable," November 05, 1866. Interesting is the high coverage of the Fenian movement, which is probably owed to the high number of Irish immigrants in the U.S.

<sup>105</sup> Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1854 (reprint 1971)), 52.

<sup>106</sup> Gordon M. Winder, "Imagining World Citizenship in the Networked Newspaper: La Nación Reports the Assassination at Sarajevo, 1914," *Historical Social Research. Historische Sozialforschung* 35, no. 1 (2010).

money and provided a theory of communication which considered the demand of social intercourse beyond the national as unimaginable. In

the late nineteenth century, submarine telegraphs had provided the means for *Weltcommunication*, yet were not meant for the world to communicate.

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## Rezensionen

CHRISTOPH JACKE: *Einführung in Populäre Musik und Medien*. Reihe Populäre Kultur und Medien Band 1. Münster: LIT Verlag 2009, 361 Seiten.

Ein „wildernd-systematisierender Streifzug durch die vielseitigen Popmusik-Welten (Pop und Wissenschaft, Pop und Erinnern, Pop und Journalismus, Pop und Stars, Pop und Kritik etc.)“ soll dieser Band sein, einer, „der teilnehmend beobachtend erklärt, warum wir aus der Popmusik und ihren zumeist medialen Kontexten etwas über unsere Gesellschaft, Kultur und Medien lernen können - im Idealfall mit Vergnügen.“ Soweit die programmatische Selbstbehauptung, auf dem Klappentext des Buches, von Christoph Jacke, der mit diesem Buch in das einführt, was mittlerweile den definierten Kern seiner Professur für *Theorie, Ästhetik und Geschichte der Populären Musik im Studiengang Populäre Musik und Medien* im Fach Musik der Universität Paderborn ausmacht. Jacke besetzt damit inzwischen auch institutionell sichtbar ein Forschungsfeld, das im deutschsprachigen Raum immer noch am Anfang steht und sich gleichzeitig auch immer noch dagegen verwehren muss als Befassung mit Phänomenen der Devianz oder parawissenschaftliche Hobbypflege, missverstanden, belächelt oder diffamiert zu werden. Und auch wenn sich deutschsprachige Forschungstraditionen, speziell auch der Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft bislang wenig damit befassen (wollten): Popkultur und Popmusik sind von prägender und umfassender, dauerpräsender Relevanz und Wirklichkeitswirksamkeit in unseren gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Kommunikationen als Anlass, Gegenstand, Kontextualisierungshilfe, Referenzschema, Grenzmarkierung, oder Emotionskanalisierung präsent. Popmusik und Medien stehen auch heute, wo MTV mit Musik beinahe nur noch dem Namen nach zu tun hat, in einer innigen symbiotischen Beziehung. Egal ob wir dabei an auf Pop spezialisierte Zeitschriften, Magazine, Fernsehkanäle, Radiosender, Internetplattformen oder etwa wie bei „myspace“ an Social Network Sites denken. Egal ob es um Musikvideoclips in vielseitigen Thematisierungszusammenhängen zwischen der beispielgebenden Rolle für Filmästhetik oder der Reproduktion von Stereotypen, um Hip-Hop

Videos als Embolien geballten Sexismus‘, oder als „user generated content“, als Würdigung und Tribut an die Künstler im Web 2.0 oder um Stars der Popmusik und ihre Thematisierung in Celebrity- und Societyformaten, spricht als *leute heute* zwischen Schminktipp, Schwangerschaften und Drogensumpf geht. Gleich ob es um Pop und Popmusik als Formgeber und Identitätsstifter, um Musiker und Musikerinnen als Rolemodels von Heranwachsenden und als Imitationsgrundlage in Castingshows oder aber die untrennbar mit Musik verbundenen gesellschaftlichen, oftmals jugendkulturellen Verweigerungshaltungen von Rock und Punk bis Techno geht. Egal ob als Vehikel für emotionale Transportation oder hymnische Attributierung und Erinnerungsnukleus von Gesellschafts- und Medienereignissen – vom *Wind of Change* der *Scorpions* bis *Enya* und 9/11, ob es um Popmusik und Popmusiker als Träger von Protest und gesellschaftlichem oder generationellem Unbehagen oder um die Heavy Metal Platten im Kinderzimmer eines jugendlichen Amokläufers geht. Gleich ob als kalkuliert positiver Assoziationsgenerator im Werbespot oder als Beschallung in der Shopping Mall und im Stadion – Popmusik und Medien beeinflussen einander in vielfältiger Weise und Wechselwirkung.

Christoph Jacke unternimmt in diesem Buch nun den Versuch zumindest einige dieser vielfältigen Möglichkeiten der medienkulturwissenschaftlichen sowohl theoretischen, empirischen wie und auch besonders historischen Befassung mit Popkultur und deren Kernzone Populäre Musik systematisch zu bündeln, Forschungsperspektiven und Fragepotentiale, Wissensbestände und Defizite (denen mit einem Forderungskatalog begegnet wird) zu identifizieren und in 16 Kapiteln vorzustellen. Dabei entpuppt sich Jackes Einführungsband zusätzlich auch bald als eine umfassende Werkschau des Autors, die irgendwo in der Schnittmenge zwischen Best-of-, B-Sides and Rarities- und Remix-Album liegt. Unter den 16 Kapiteln finden sich einige bislang unveröffentlichte Abschnitte (so die Einleitung und perspektivische Rahmung des Buches, das Kapitel zum Verhältnis *Pop und Wissenschaft*, sowie *Fazit und Wiederholung: Pop und was jetzt?*) sowie



überarbeitete, neu abgemischte und erweiterte Versionen von früheren, teils nicht mehr erhältlichen Publikationen. Durch diese Arbeitsweise der veränderten, erweiterten – idealerweise verbesserten – „Wiederholung“ werden zugleich, ob bewusst so angelegt oder nicht, zwei zentrale inhaltliche Positionen Jackes umgesetzt, transparent gemacht und durch Gebrauch bestätigt. Das ist einerseits die umsichtige Überzeugung, dass Pop immer aus Pop entsteht, eine auf Dauer gestellte Zitationsmaschine ist und sich durch Wiederkehr recyclerter Loops nicht nur wiederholt sondern neu erfindet, weiterentwickelt und mutiert, oder wie es dem Vorwort des Buches vorangestellt mit einem einleitenden Thomas Bernhard Zitat (aus „Gehen“, 1971) bzw. dem Zitat dieses Zitats durch die Belgrader Popliteratin Barbi Markovics (in „Ausgehen“, 2009) gesagt wird, „Im Grunde ist alles, was gesagt wird, zitiert“ (S. 12). Was ist, dient als Rohstoff für das was wird, und das was war, wird in dem was ist erinnert und verarbeitet. Der Ausgang dabei: oftmals unvorhersehbar und ungewiss. Dies teilt sich der im Buch diskutierte Gegenstand *Pop* mit den Ritualen und Produktionsweisen der sozial-kulturellen Beobachtungsinstanz Wissenschaft, mit deren Argumentations- und Fragerepertoire er dabei beobachtet wird. Andererseits, als zweite Position und als Ausdruck des Selbstverständnisses des Autors zu lesen, zeigen die angegebenen ursprünglichen Publikationsorte, dass sich Jacke sehr lebendig zwischen streng akademisch wissenschaftlichen Befassungen mit Popkultur und Popmusik und einer Auseinandersetzung, die selbst als Pop bzw. auf Plattformen des populären Popdiskurses stattgefunden hat, bewegt. Beides begreift er, als notwendige, ja, mithin durchaus gleichberechtigte Elemente des größeren Diskurses über Pop, Popkultur und Gesellschaft und konfrontiert sie bewusst, wo dies produktiv möglich ist. Es kommt nicht von ungefähr, dass Jacke in der Autorenbiographie als Professor wie auch als Popmusikjournalist vorgestellt wird.

Wie aber ist der Band nun aufgebaut? Nicht chronologisch, da eine solche epochengerichtete Einteilung den vielgestaltigen Phänomen, die hier angesprochen werden müssen auch nie gerecht werden könnte, sondern durch unterschiedliche themenbezogene Verdichtungen, die je unterschiedliche Perspektiven und Ansatzpunkte greifbar machen sollen.

Nach dem einleitenden Kapitel, mit den Untersektionen *Pop und Lagerfeuer* sowie *Pop und Ge-*

*schichtsschreibung* (Geschichte von Pop, so hält er darin fest kann immer nur als Geschichten geschrieben werden, was gleichsam als notwendiger Plural wie auch als Verweis auf den Erzählcharakter solcher Geschichten gelesen werden kann), wendet sich Jacke dem, wie zuvor bereits angedeutet, oft schwierigen Verhältnis von *Pop und Wissenschaft* zu. Neben aktuellen Forschungsströmungen und möglichen Forschungsperspektiven (anhand des Beispiels der Band „Nirvana“ dekliniert) wird hier ein Forderungskatalog formuliert, demnach sich Forschung zur Populären Musik und Popkultur künftig um *Internationalisierung, Institutionalisierung, Transdisziplinierung, Praxisorientierung und behutsame Empirisierung bemühen sowie Technologisierung/Medialisierung und Emotionalisierung/Involvement* berücksichtigen sollte (S. 34-37). So einsichtig diese Forderungen sind, ist gewiss besonders die Institutionalisierung eine schwierig umzusetzende Vorgabe, jene Bereiche, die sich aus der autonomen Wahl von Kooperationspartnern, Orientierungen und Forschungsfokus ergeben, hingegen werden partiell auch heute schon gelebt. *Pop und Universität* (unter anderem mit Überlegungen zu creative industries), *Pop, Musik und Digitalisierung* (Fragen zu Produktion, Distribution und Rezeption von Musik unter Bedingungen der digitalen Reproduzierbarkeit), Pop und das Reden über Pop (woran sich der stilistische Hybridcharakter des Buches erkennen lässt, denn hier ist drin was draufsteht und Christoph Jacke redet mit dem Musiker und Autor Thomas Meinecke über Pop) und Pop und das Schreiben über Pop (mit interessanten Differenzierungen zwischen Popjournalismus und Journalismus über Pop) bilden weitere Kapitel. Ebenso finden sich Abschnitte zu Musikvideos (*Pop und bewegte Bilder*), zum Verhältnis von *Pop und Stars* (nicht denkbar ohne Anti-Stars) und zu *Pop und Orten* (beispielhaft an den Interaktionsfeldern Musikclub und Fußballstadion diskutiert). Am Beispiel von Grunge und unter dem Titel *Quiet is the New Loud* (als charmant vergnügliche Idee wird diesem Kapitel unter „Hörbar zum Artikel“ eine gefällige Playlist mit genretypischen Empfehlungen von Bonnie ‚Prince‘ Billie, Magnolia Electric Co., Songs: Ohia oder Will Oldham angefügt) werden exemplarisch zwei Felder der Popmusik und mögliche Zugangspunkte zu deren Erforschung geboten. Mit einem besonderen Resultat der Produktivkraft des Pop befasst sich der Abschnitt der *Pop, Medien und Kritik* der eben auch das Berufsfeld des journalistischen Popmusikkritikers und das Genre der Plattenrezension hervorbringt. „Die CD-Kritik“ schreibt Jacke unter dem Schlagwort

*Kritikindustrie*, „wird die Gesellschaft eben nicht verändern aber den Geschmack der Einzelnen und den Kontostand von anderen“ (S. 228). Für eine Besprechung in *medien&zeit* von besonderem Interesse ist Jackes Kapitel zu *Pop und Erinnerung*. Die Grunddisposition der Überlegungen wird dabei in einem Zitat der amerikanischen Kommunikationswissenschaftlerin Maita Sturken konzentriert, das besagt, dass im Lauf der Geschichte die meist verbreiteten Zuschreibung an die Erinnerung jene war, dass sie sich in der Krise befinde. Eine auch heute gerne und breit verwendete Floskel. Jacke hingegen bringt ein, dass „Pop eine sehr eigene Art hat, Vergangenheit zu thematisieren, in der Gegenwart produktiv zu nutzen (...) die sich von elaborierten geschichtswissenschaftlichen Diskursen deutlich unterscheiden – und offenbar auch von den Vorstellungen mancher Theoretiker eines kulturellen Gedächtnisses, wie gesellschaftliches Gedächtnis und Erinnerung aussehen sollte“ (S.83). Unter Bemühung von SJ Schmidts Ansatz der *Geschichten&Diskurse* beschreibt Jacke ein alternatives Konzept von Gedächtnis und Erinnerung, in dem Erinnerung weniger vergangenheitsbezogen als vielmehr als je „topaktuell“ anzusehende Prozesse in der Gegenwart begriffen wird und Erinnerung somit zum Gegenwartsphänomen wird. „Erinnerungen werden dabei als reflexive Thematisierung von Gedächtnis verstanden, also von gesellschaftlichen Voraussetzungen zusammenhängen. So kommt weder Pop ohne Erinnerung (an seine eigenen Voraussetzungen) aus, noch kann Erinnerung ihre auch populärkulturellen Voraussetzungen negieren.“

Als „Bonustrack“ des Bandes schließlich folgt ein – in wohl sicher kommenden künftigen Auflagen je aktualisierbarer – Anhang mit Servicecharakter. Darin hat Jacke eine Auswahl an Literatur in Form von Handbüchern und Lexika zu Pop, Rock sowie Musik und Medien gelistet. Dazu gibt es eine wohlsortierte Zusammenschau weiterführender Publikationen zur *Popkulturforschung allgemein*, zur *Popmusikforschung allgemein* sowie *Popmusikgeschichten*. Eine Auflistung ausgewählter, internationaler einschlägig relevanter Fachzeitschriften und Publikationsreihen, Forschungszentren und Fachgesellschaften sowie auch internationale Studiengänge, die mit der Erforschung des Wechselverhältnisses von Pop, Popmusik, Medien und Gesellschaft zu tun haben.

Was also leistet diese Einführung von Christoph Jacke? Die einfachste und doch verdienstvollste Aufgabe, die sie erfüllen kann, ist, dass es tatsäch-

lich heranhört, an ein Forschungsfeld, das man nicht final umgrenzen, abstecken, bestimmen kann. Das Buch führt mitten hinein in das „Vorläufig so“ einer dauerhaft unfertigen Erforschung des Pop. Es ist dabei ein auch als Lektüre vernünftiger Streifzug, durch die weiten Möglichkeitsfelder der Forschung zu *Populärer Musik und Medien*, die Christoph Jacke in diesem Buch aufmacht, umreißt und markiert. Der angeschlossene Serviceteil mag zugleich einen Ausgangspunkt für das Nachverfolgen dieser einführenden Markierungen sein – mit den Rillen die Jacke zieht, werden die Abtastnadeln der historisch ausgerichteten wie auch gegenwartsbezogenen und auf die Zukunft hin orientierten Popmusik(kultur)-forschung reichlich zu tun finden.

Christian Schwarzenegger, Aachen

NANETTE RIßLER-PIPKA / MICHAEL LOMMEL / JUSTYNA CEMPEL (HRSG.): *Der Surrealismus in der Mediengesellschaft – zwischen Kunst und Kommerz.* (= Medienumbrüche, 42) Bielefeld: transcript Verlag 2010, 274 Seiten.

Am Ende der 1950er Jahre, als André Breton noch internationale Surrealismus-Ausstellungen organisierte und Salvador Dalí sich bereits einem Renaissance-Mystizismus verschrieb, beerdigte das kleine, aber bald immens einflussreiche medienkritische Kollektiv der Situationistischen Internationale um Cheftheoretiker Guy Debord den Surrealismus verbal: Dieser sei längst von der Kulturindustrie vereinnahmt („récupération“) und banalisiert worden, sein Versuch die Trennung von Politik und Kunst aufzuheben gescheitert. Ein Scheitern, das auch in diesem Sammelband retrospektiv wie im Heute festgemacht wird.

Das kulturwissenschaftliche Forschungskolleg „Medienumbrüche“ der Universität Siegen widmete sich in einem Teilprojekt dem Surrealismus und fokussierte dabei insbesondere auf dessen intermediales Prinzip, welches einer Überschreitung der Grenzen zwischen Alltag, Kunst, Medien und Epochen dienen sollte. Die Schwerpunkte dieser dreizehn hierin publizierten Einzelstudien, die von Lehrstuhl- und Nachwuchskräften der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften im deutschsprachigen Raum erarbeitet wurden, liegen in der Literatur und im Film bzw. Musikvideo. Mit-Herausgeber Michael Lommel, der die Graphic Novels des australischen Künstlers Shaun Tan

(*The Arrival*) analysiert, konstatiert zu Recht, dass aus der Kultur- die Kreativindustrie wurde, die den Surrealismus abermals rekuperierend weiter kommerzialisiert und den Typ des „Avantgardephilisters“ (S. 27) hervorbrachte. Diese Gesellschafter einer entzauberten Popkultur können als Sinnbild gelten für die Absorption des Subversionspotenzials und den folgenden Transfer in einen „Schöner Leben“-Ästhetizismus. Die von den Surrealisten erstrebte Denormalisierung sei auch dadurch zum Scheitern verurteilt, so Diskurstheoretiker Jürgen Link, der den Komplex des „passante“ und der „random walks“ in André Bretons Texten und David Lynchs Filmen konzipiert erforscht. Die Filme Jan Švankmajers (z.B. *Punch and Judy*) und Michel Gondrys (*Science of Sleep*) hingegen analysiert Mitherausgeberin und Intermedialitäts-Forscherin Reißler-Pipka. Mittels einer etwas knappen, prognostisch möglicherweise vorschnellen Argumentation, wonach die bürgerlich-kapitalistische Scheinwelt selbst so multi- bzw. surreal sei, dass es keine (noch nicht erfundene) Verfremdung der Realität mehr geben könne, behauptet sie, dass die historisch-politische Richtung des Surrealismus perspektivisch nicht mehr aufginge, sich dessen Erbe aber auf seine Ästhetik reduziert nutzen ließe. Enttäuschung und Täuschung, diese Tradition findet sich auch in den zeitgenössischen, von der Digitalisierung der Kommunikations- und Medientechnologien geprägten Künsten immer stärker wieder. In der Medienkunst können etwa Puppen, wie sie die Surrealisten als konzeptuelle Bildmotive verwendeten, in Figuren von digital konstruierbaren Cyborgs wiederkehren, stellt Sigrid Schade fest und untersucht diese Puppenkonstruktionen unter anderem im Werk Cindy Shermans und Inez van Lamsweerde. Der surrealistischen Intermedialität und dem „Rauschgift BILD“ (S. 185) ist Gerhard Wild in seinem historisch äußerst präzisen wie textuell tiefeschürfenden Beitrag innert der portugiesischen Literatur auf der Spur und fördert dabei u.a. die Methodik der Klischeemasierung zutage. Susanne Klengel leistet Ähnliches am Beispiel der mexikanischen Avantgardeliteratur-Strömung Infrealismus, die zu Beginn der 1970er Jahre formiert wurde. Dieser Gruppierung – und damit auch sich – hatte Roberto Bolaño als Mitbegründer in seinem Roman *Die wilden Detektive* ein Denkmal gesetzt, dessen Relektüre nach Klengels Analyse lohnt. Volker Roloff widmet sich der Verbindung surrealistischer Verfahren und Erzählformen durch lateinamerikanische Autoren wie Carlos Fuentes, der werkimmanent die Opposition von Realität und Imagination in

der Mediengesellschaft der 1960er aufhob, oder Julio Cortázar bzw. Alejo Carpentier. Das Aufbrechen symbolischer Ordnungen und starrer Codes verortet Monika Schmitz-Emans sowohl in den Bildern von Max Ernst und René Magritte als auch in den parodistischen Ratgeberbüchern von Ror Wolf, die dieser unter dem Pseudonym Raoul Tranchirer seit 1983 verfasst und die auf inhaltlicher wie kompositorischer Ebene an Ernst und Magritte erinnern. Komparatistisch etwas schablonenhaft dagegen gerät Kirsten von Hagens Bemühen, Albert Ostermeiers Roman *Zephyr* (2008) in den Film *Swimming Pool* (2004) von François Ozon einzupassen. Der Siegener Anglist Eckart Voigts-Virchow schwimmt nicht im Vagen, sondern konstatiert apodiktisch: Spätestens „in den netzbasierten Bildermaschinen [ist] das surrealistische Projekt gescheitert, weil allerorten die Ausstellung des Ausgestoßenen und Tabuisierten domestiziert wird.“ (S. 212) Zwar gebe es eine bezüglich des semiotischen Materials medial-generische Affinität zwischen Surrealismus und Popmusikvideos, jedoch sei ersterer mit der medienkulturellen Verfasstheit letzterer als Werbeprodukte der Musikindustrie unvereinbar. Auch das Video *Rubber Johnny*, welches Chris Cunningham für den Elektropunkmusiker *Aphex Twin* produziert hatte und das der Autor mit Hans Bellmers Studien deformierter Körper vergleicht, bestürzt auf YouTube nicht mehr. Die überprüfbaren Realitätsbezüge seien in den Bilderfluten des Internet ebenso abhanden gekommen wie die Möglichkeiten eines irreleitenden Schocks, auch da unsere Schaulust längst habitualisiert wurde. Ist also ein heutiger kultursurrealistischer Akt bloß das gestische Zitat der Rebellion, das seine Zeichen verkauft? Angesichts des medial wie auch politisch diskursiven Hypes um Creative Industries, die eine – im Unterschied zu den Situationisten profitable – Zweckentfremdung des Subversionspotenzials traditioneller Künste betreiben, könnte man dies bejahen. Belegbar wird dies aber auch durch eine Werbeindustrie, die mittels Guerilla-Marketing in öffentlichen Räumen kommerziell orientierte Irreführung betreibt, oder durch Pop-Superstar Madonna, die sich – wie Gregor Schuhnen nachweist – als „postmoderne Meisterin des Zitats“ (S. 224) für ihre skandalöse Inszenierung als Jesus am Kreuz (*Confessions Tour*, 2006) der mystischen Bildwerke Salvador Dalís bediente.

In Summe stellt dieser Forschungskolleg-Band eine auf künstlerische Retrospektiven aufbauende breite Potenzialanalyse dar, der möglicherweise – das Projekt ist noch am Laufen – weitere fol-

gen werden. Als Desiderate bleiben: Quer durch die Beiträge, wie auch bereits im Titel, wird der Anspruch erhoben, surrealistische Diskurse in der Mediengesellschaft zu analysieren. Daher wirkt es Erklärkraft vergeudend, warum für eine theoretisch breiter fundierte Erfassung derselben keine genuin kommunikationswissenschaftliche Position an Bord geholt wurde. Auch ein kulturalistisch versierter Politologe hätte dem ansonsten einen breiten Horizont aufspannenden Band durchaus gut getan, um eine mögliche politische Sprengkraft des Surrealismus im Heute zu ergründen und Rißler-Pipkas Postulat ins Wanken zu bringen: „Die Revolution und der Surrealismus scheinen längst begraben.“ (S. 260)

Roland Steiner, Wien

FRANK BÖSCH / PATRICK SCHMIDT (HRSG.): *Medialisierte Ereignisse. Performanz, Inszenierung und Medien seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt / New York: Campus Verlag 2010, 282 Seiten.

Vor dem Spagat zwischen verschiedenen Wissenschaftsdisziplinen wird oft gewarnt. Frank Bösch und Patrick Schmidt versuchen sich in ihrem knapp 280 starken Band an eben so einem Wagnis: Die zehn Beiträge sind aus einer Tagung vom DFG-Graduiertenkolleg „*Transnationale Medienereignisse von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*“ entstanden und arbeiten sich chronologisch vom Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zur Etablierung des Farbfernsehens vor. Die Autorinnen und Autoren führen u.a. Ansätze aus der Geschichtswissenschaft, der Theaterwissenschaft sowie den Kulturwissenschaften mit der Medienwissenschaft und der Kommunikationswissenschaft zusammen.

Der Beitrag von Frank Bösch fungiert sowohl als Einleitung, als auch als theoretischer Vorbau. Und als wüsste der Herausgeber auf welch gefährliches Terrain er sich aus der Sicht so mancher klassischen Wissenschaft begibt, wird von Anfang an die Nähe von (historischen) Ereignissen zu ihrer medialen Vermittlung unterstrichen. Mit dem Hinweis auf 9/11, den Fall der Berliner Mauer sowie den Tod von Papst Johannes Paul II. verdeutlicht Bösch die Aktualität des Phänomens der Ereignisse. Derartige Geschehnisse erweisen sich zwar als einmalig, allerdings ergänzt Bösch, dass sie „dennoch in Strukturen eingebettet“ (S. 8) sind. Er argumentiert, dass sie „trotz aller Zufälligkeiten“ (ebd.) auch konstruiert werden

– und dahinter eine Intention liegt. Die Entwicklung der Kommunikation in der Neuzeit habe, so Bösch, das Aufkommen von Ereignissen gefördert.

Mit dem Begriff der Performativität geht er daran, das komplizierte Verhältnis zwischen Medien und Ereignissen zu entwirren: „*Zu den Grundgedanken der Performativitäts- bzw. Performanzforschung zählt, dass die Bedeutung von Dingen, Körpern oder Sachverhalten nicht feststeht, sondern erst im Vollzug durch Handlungen zwischen den Aufführenden, dem Publikum und dem Setting austariert werden.*“ (S. 11). Die Forschungsinteressen hinter den Beiträgen, erklärt Bösch, konzentrierten sich dabei auf drei Fragen: Wie Medien durch die Vorberichterstattung Ereignisse mitstrukturieren, wie die Präsenz der Medien das Geschehen während demselben beeinflussen und, drittens, wie durch die mediale Vermittlung und Speicherung eine neue Form der Vergleichbarkeit entsteht: ein Vergleichen, bei dem das vom Publikum Erwartete, wie es in den Medien angekündigt wurde, der eigentlichen Erfahrung gegenübergestellt wird.

In Patrick Schmidts Beitrag über die Schaustellung von Menschen mit Behinderung im 18. Jahrhundert wird deutlich, wie mächtig schon damals die Konstruktion medialer Wirklichkeiten war. Anhand von Zeitungsberichten, Schaustellerzetteln und Werbeanzeigen zeigt Bösch wie sehr der Akt der Bloßstellung, aber auch die grundsätzliche Definition von „normal“ versus „abnormal“ medial beeinflusst waren. Selbst vom Ablauf des Geschehens hatten die Schaulustigen schon vorab eine (medial beeinflusste) Ahnung: „*Eine ‚Körpersensation‘, die nicht darstellte und nicht leistete, was die Werbetexte angekündigt hatten, dürfte dem Schausteller den Zorn des Publikums eingetragen haben.*“ (S. 61)

Auch Susann Traberts Auseinandersetzung mit den ersten Ballonfahrten macht deutlich, wie Zuseher und Berichterstattung die Performance „evaluierten“. Etwa, wenn das Unternehmen nicht gelang: „Die Narration der Performance transformierte sich von der Heldengeschichte zur Betrügergeschichte.“ (S. 96) Durch die mediale Vor- und Nachbereitung werden die Ereignisse gleichsam geschichtlich verankert: „Die Performances selbst unterliegen [...] Prozessen der Narrativierung, Ikonisierung und Topoisierung und damit der Historisierung.“ (S. 81) Dazu veranschaulicht Trabert, wie gewinnbringend ein breiteres Medienverständnis sein kann: Denn die Ballone wurden in Szene gesetzt, sei es durch Ver-



zierung mit Flaggen und königlichen Insignien oder durch symbolhafte Mitführung von Wappentieren: „Damit wurde die Ballonmaschine selbst zum Medium.“ (S. 86)

Rolf Reichardt widmet sich in *„Körper-Bilder: Performative Revolutionsgrafik in Frankreich (1789-1848)“* inszenierten und ikonisierten Ereignissen bzw. Persönlichkeiten: der Spottprozession „Das Begräbnis der Aristokratie“, einem in der Bischofskirche Notre Dame gefeierten säkularen „Fest der Vernunft“ sowie der historisch aufgeladenen Figur der Marseillaise. Als weibliche Verkörperung der Prinzipien der Republik wurde diese nicht zuletzt durch eine Theaterschauspielerin, aber auch durch vervielfältigte Abbildungen als Identifikationsfigur verwendet. Reichardts Fazit: „Performative Politik hat in Revolutionszeiten Hochkonjunktur.“ (S. 130)

Die nächsten Beiträge durchleuchten jeweils ein Ereignis genauer und setzen dieses dabei in spezifische Kontexte. Thorsten Gudewitz analysiert die Feiern zum 100. Geburtstag Friedrich Schillers 1859 in Berlin, Hamburg und St. Louis in Hinblick auf ihr Potential, die nationale (deutsche) Gemeinschaft zu stärken. Er folgert: *„Erst durch die mediale Vernetzung der Feiernden konnte die nationale Ebene glaubhaft und plausibel in die verschiedenen lokalen oder regionalen Festkontexte einbezogen werden [...]“* (S. 158) Auch Gegenreaktionen zu den Feierlichkeiten oder zur nationalen Bewegung gingen den Weg der Medien.

Meike Hölscher und Jan Rupp erkennen in *„Empire on Parade: Queen Victorias Thronjubiläen“* ebendiese als „eine klassische ‚invention of tradition‘“ (S. 160). Reinszeniert wurde etwa, indem das Empire stärker mit der Königin verknüpft wurde. Andere Deutungen von diesen Ereignissen, zum Beispiel durch ausländische Journalisten, offenbaren, wie sehr Erinnerungen durch „Erinnerungsperformances“ (S. 178) konstruiert und dementprechend gedeutet werden können.

Wie Rezipienten auf das Medienereignis einwirken können, zeigt Kai Nowak. Unter dem von Ikonoklasmus hergeleiteten Begriff „Kinemaklasmus“ gibt er einen historischen Abriss von Protestaktionen in Kinos. Urheber waren meist politische Gruppen, denen die Macht fehlte, die Aufführung zu verhindern. Ziel der Aktionen war die Vorführungssituation im Kino sowie das Medium selbst (etwa durch Präparation der Leinwand): Nazis torpedierten etwa vor ihrer Macht-

übernahme die Vorführung von Antikriegsfilmen durch Zwischenrufe, Stinkbomben oder weiße Mäuse.

Anhand des Todes von Papst Pius XII. spielt René Schlott durch, wie ein traditionelles Ritual sich aufgrund der Entwicklung der Kommunikation verändert: „Die intendierten Ritualabweichungen [...] können als Reaktionen des Vatikans auf die zunehmende Medialisierung der Gesellschaft gedeutet werden.“ (S. 222). Gelang es dem Kirchenstaat in mancher Hinsicht, den Übergang zwischen zwei Pontifikaten für das Fernsehen in Szene zu setzen, war man nicht immer Herr der Lage: Pressebilder von einem „sterblich“ wirkenden „irdischen“ Papst gelangten in internationale Zeitungen und gerieten zu einer für die katholische Kirche unerwünschten „Performanz der Sterblichkeit“ (ebd.)

Die letzten zwei Beiträge fokussieren ebenso auf die Herausforderungen und Möglichkeiten des Fernsehens als bestimmende Vermittlungsform des 20. Jahrhunderts. Kathrin Fahlenbrach argumentiert, dass die mitunter auf körperliche Performanz fokussierende 68er-Bewegung nur mithilfe dieses Mediums funktionieren konnte – selbst wenn ihre Protagonisten eigentlich gegen die „Mainstream-Medien“ opponierten. Die Journalisten verhalfen den 68ern nicht nur zu mehr Öffentlichkeit sowie mehr Gemeinschaftssinn, sondern radikalisierten diese; etwa anhand von inszenierten Nackt-Fotoshootings in Kommunen, die mehr als den (braveren) Alltag festhielten. Der Drang nach mehr Spektakel machte aus den Berichterstatern Mitgestalter, die so entstandenen Images prägten wiederum die Bewegung.

Eva Maria Modrey setzt mit *„Das Publikum und die Medien: Die Eröffnungsfeier der Olympischen Spiele 1972“* den Schlusspunkt. Auch sie legt dar, wie Riten neuen Umständen angepasst werden können. Bei München 72 geht es dabei auf der einen Seite um die ersten Olympischen „Fernsehspiele“; auf der anderen Seite darum, der Welt in der Zeit nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg ein „neues Deutschland“ zu präsentieren. Und es wird noch einmal auf die vielschichtige Rolle der verschiedenen Akteure verwiesen: Sportler und Zuschauer, körperlich-präsent vor Ort; das Fernsehen, das das Event verändert; und die Zuseher vor den Apparaten, die sich das Geschehen (auf unterschiedlicher Art und Weise) aneigneten.

Die an mehreren Stellen im Buch angesprochene



Bedeutung der körperlichen Präsenz bei Medienereignissen offenbart eine kleine Schwäche des Bandes: Einige Überlegungen werden über das gesamte Buch hinweg immer wieder gestiftet. Beschäftigt man sich mit mehreren Texten, wiederholt sich die eine oder andere zu oft. Andererseits: Forschungsinteressen und Ziel des Gesamtwerkes sind klar vorgegeben, es wurde ein roter Faden gezogen, durch den man sich in der Zeitreise vorbei an den so unterschiedlichen Ereignissen nie verirrt.

Nach dem erklärenden Einstieg liefern die darauffolgenden Beiträge sehr schönes Anschauungsmaterial, Fallbeispiele und Theorie greifen dabei immer ineinander. Die einzelnen Texte bestechen durch Tiefgang. Man spürt zudem, dass die Autorinnen und Autoren Fachexpertisen aus anderen Disziplinen mitbringen. Ohne Zweifel gelingt es, diese Hintergründe mit dem Blick auf die Medien zu kombinieren.

Die Befunde legen dar, welche Bedeutung die mediale Vermittlung nicht nur vor Jahren oder Jahrzehnten, sondern gar schon vor Jahrhunderten hatte; und wie sehr schon anno dazumal, lange vor 9/11 und „Wir sind Papst!“ ein Script hinter Ereignissen stand.

So ist das oben angesprochene Wagnis des transdisziplinären Ansatzes mehr als gelungen. Das Ergebnis kann gar als eine Aufforderung gesehen werden. Eine Aufforderung zu mehr Mut zu derartigen Wagnis.

**Richard Solder, Wien**

**BERNHARD PÖRKSEN / WOLFGANG KRISCHKE (HRSG.):** *Die Casting-Gesellschaft. Die Sucht nach Aufmerksamkeit und das Tribunal der Medien* (= edition medienpraxis, 8) Köln: Herbert von Halem Verlag 2010, 346 Seiten.

Nach vier Publikationen, die ebenfalls aus Lehrforschungsprojekten entstanden sind, edieren der Medienwissenschaftler Bernhard Pörksen und der freie Journalist Wolfgang Krischke nun einen Interview-Sammelband zur medialen Inszenierung der narzisstischen Selbstdarstellungskultur. 20 Studentinnen und fünf Studenten verschiedenster Studienrichtungen der Universität Tübingen konnte Pörksen für eine „Projektarbeit unter Marktbedingungen“ (S. 11) gewinnen, in der über eine „investigative Medienforschung“ (S. 345) die These untersucht werden sollte, „dass wir auf dem Weg in eine Casting-Gesellschaft sind, in der

Image und Ich unauflösbar verschmelzen.“ (S. 8) Nachdem die Studierenden (v.a. der Medienwissenschaft) ein Semester lang Interviewtrainings genossen hatten, befragten sie TV-Manager, Journalisten und Internetexperten, PR-Fachleute und Politiker, Medienwissenschaftler und -kritiker sowie Opfer und Profiteure der Fernsehcasting-shows (*Deutschland sucht den Superstar*, *Germany's next Topmodel* usw.) vorwiegend aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum. Die Herausgeber rahmen die so entstandenen 26 Interviews mit einer kompakten wie klugen Einführung in Selbst- und mediale Fremdsinszenierung, demokratisierte Prominenz, televisionäre Zeitgeistausformungen und Realitätskonzepte in Zeiten allgegenwärtigen Werbens um öffentliche Aufmerksamkeit. Mehr als 30 Jahre nach Andy Warhols Prophezeiung des für alle geltenden fünfzehnminütigen Berühmtseins scheint Georg Francks Entwurf einer Aufmerksamkeitsökonomie zu einem kampfreichen Terrain geworden zu sein, in dem neben Information „Intimität, Vulgarität oder Stupidität gegen Publizität“ (S. 15) und selbstreferenzielle Medienprominenz getauscht werden. Sein heißt dann in erster Linie mediales Stattfinden. Auf dem via Castingshows verkürzten Weg zu einer für das Berühmtsein beachteten Medienprominenz ohne besondere Leistung und Kompetenz erfahren die Drehbücher gehorchenden Selbstdarsteller „die Schadenfreude, den latenten Sadismus und die sozialdarwinistischen Sentiments eines Publikums, für das ‚Opfer‘ ein Schimpfwort ist.“ (S. 23)

Der „medialen Selektionsideologie“ (S. 23) einer Show wie *Deutschland sucht den Superstar* (DSDS), die basierend auf dem britischen Original *Pop Idol* 2002 von RTL lizenziert worden war, unterwarfen sich bis dato immerhin 180.000 Bewerber. In ihr, so die 8000 Namen verzeichnende Casting-Agenturbesitzerin Imke Arntjen, sei der pure Kapitalismus zu sehen, „der Mensch als Ware und gleichzeitig als Konsument.“ (S. 39) Doch nicht jeder kann Ware werden; so würden Prekariatsfamilien, Lesben oder schlecht Deutsch sprechende Migranten gar nicht erst zu einem Casting geladen. Den Boom der Scripted-Reality-Formate erklärt sie damit, dass Zuschauern, die ähnlich Drogensüchtigen immer stärkere Dosen verlangen, die Realität nicht mehr genüge und die Formate außerdem preiswert herzustellen seien. Während unbekannte Schauspieler zumindest 400 Euro pro Tag bekämen, erhielten Statisten einen Stundenlohn von fünf Euro - doch Deutschland sei „nach über zwanzig Jahren Privatfernsehen fast durchgecastet“, denn „auch die

Dummen merken langsam, wie der Hase läuft.“ (S. 42) Natascha Birkhahn etwa stand mit ihrer Familie gleich für drei Reality-Shows vor der Kamera. Im Interview erläutert sie, dass neben den Aufwandsentschädigungen – bei *Frauentausch* auf RTL II hätte es 1000 Euro gegeben – erhoffte familientherapeutische Hilfestellungen eine Rolle spielten, die *Super Nanny* ihnen aber nicht helfen konnte. Geholfen werden hingegen konnte Jade Goody bei ihrem Wunsch, „als der bekannteste Reality-TV-Star der Welt zu sterben.“ (S. 88) Ihr PR-Berater Max Clifford zeigte das Sterben der an Krebs erkrankten Big Brother-Teilnehmerin in Nahaufnahme und redet seinen Beweggrund Macht auch heute noch edel, denn: „Sie musste sich nicht schämen.“ (S. 85)

Die fehlende Scham führt Komödiantin Anke Engelke, die bei der missglückten ZDF-Casting-show *Ich kann Kanzler!* als Jurorin fungierte, auf das gesellschaftliche Phänomen der Selbstüberschätzung zurück, die Fremd- und Selbstbild verschieben würde. Da solche Shows auch aus dem Prinzip ‚Schadenfreude‘ Gewinn schlagen, wären zumindest hinsichtlich des Teilnehmerlebens nach der Show Pädagogen vonnöten. Effektiver freilich könnte die Implementierung einer Medienbildung als Schulfach sein, die nicht bei einer technikzentrierten Medienkunde aufhört, sondern mediale Dispositive, Inszenierungen und Narrative beleuchtet und die von Sascha Lobo geforderte ‚Online-Erziehung‘ inkludiert. Seinem eigenen Blogging-Kosmos verhaftet spricht er von einer „breiten gesellschaftlichen Akzeptanz der digitalen Persönlichkeitsbildung“ (S. 200). Das Spiel mit der Identitätsinszenierung und Wirkungsmanipulation ist nicht neu, durch die Digitalisierung und Virtualisierung aber könne das Real-Ich dem digitalen angepasst oder eine rein virtuelle Persönlichkeit aufgebaut werden – angesichts dieser hypertrophen Euphorie über den „Aufbau der digitalen Gesellschaft“ (S. 204) stellt sich die Frage: Cui bono? Auch widerspricht sich der Internet-Experte, wenn er die „Entwicklung künstlicher Figuren und Welten“ gutheißt und gleichzeitig es für problematisch empfindet, die eigene „Lebenswelt und seine innere Emotionalität auf etwas aufzubauen, das medial inszeniert ist“ (S. 203). Er prognostiziert ein Echtzeit-Internet, in dem innert der Social Media mit ihren Statusmeldungen auch semi- wie automatische, also absichtslose Kommunikationen hinzukommen – wie sozial wäre dieser Raum, und wie manipulationsanfällig? Manipuliert wird auch bei *Germany's next Topmodel*, abgesehen davon, dass bloß ein

Viertel des gedrehten Materials gesendet werde, wie Teilnehmerin Fiona Erdmann erkannte. Zu jedem Möchtegernmodel, das auf Bildrechte und Gagentile verzichten muss, gebe es eine situativ auf diese abgestellte Geschichte und eine Rolle, die hernach jedoch negativ, weil überladend wirken auf den Sinn des um Perfektsein bemühten Modelgeschäfts, nämlich Kleidung zu verkaufen. Eine noch stringendere Präformierung üben die Produzenten der PRO7-Castingshow *Popstars* aus, die Namen, Musikrichtung, Bandzusammensetzung und Bühnenauftritt vorher festlegen, erzählt einer der Sieger, Markus Grimm (*Nu Pagadi*): „Damit dann am Ende auch die gewünschten Kandidaten zu den Gewinnern der Show gehören, werden die Fernsehzuschauer so beeinflusst, dass sie die Band genau so zusammenvoten, wie es sich das Produktionsteam wünscht.“ (S. 139) Während bei DSDS Bloßstellungen Quoten erbrächten, seien es in dieser Show die „Schicksalsgeschichten“, welche die Zuschauer unterhalten und der Produktionsfirma Geld einbringen – der Sieger hingegen sei „am Ende der unglückliche Verlierer“ (144f.).

Auch Michael Jürgs, ehemaliger *Stern*-Chefredakteur und Medienkolumnist der *Süddeutschen*, geht hart ins Gericht mit den Sendeverantwortlichen: Diese „Gärtner der Seichtgebiete“ (S. 171) würden die Zuseher verblöden und eine „geistige Unterschicht“ (S. 164) erzeugen, die in Castingshows Ersatz für Aufmerksamkeit und Bestätigung suchen, die sie im privaten Umfeld nicht mehr erleben. „Wirklichkeits- und Ratgebersurrogate“ (S. 169) wie Die Super Nanny oder Raus aus den Schulden dagegen seien (inszenierte) Symptome für gesellschaftliche Probleme, deren Aufklärung jedoch eines kritischen Fernsehjournalismus im Sinne echter Dokumentationen bedarf. RTL-Unterhaltungschef Tom Sängers freilich hebt an diesem doku-fiktionalen Hybrid-Genre die rezeptiven Vergleichswünschen zu pass kommende Besonderheit hervor, „Nähe und Subjektivität des Dokumentarischen mit neuen dramaturgischen Möglichkeiten“ (S. 250) zu verknüpfen. Soziale Orientierung als eine der Funktionen von Massenmedien nennt auch SAT.1-Geschäftsführer Roger Schawinski als Beweggrund für die Entwicklung eines Formats wie *Kampf um Deine Frau!*, dessen Erkenntnisgewinn die Tugend einer Beziehungsrettung gewesen sei. Eine Gruppentherapie für Machos, die jedoch nicht die Gunst der Zuseherinnen fanden, dient als argumentatives Feigenblatt für Krawall, den Schawinski als „Methode zur Erzeugung von Aufmerksamkeit“

schön spricht, die Kandidaten der DSDS-Konkurrenz – Helmut Thoma nennt sie „Dekoration“ (S. 320) – aber als „billiges, williges Sendematerial“ (S. 262) bezeichnet. Der Voyeurismus bei Big Brother sei heute Normalität, die Grenzen würden immer weiter gezogen. Während die ehemalige *Big Brother*-Moderatorin Miriam Pielhau ihren einstigen Redaktionskollegen im Umgang mit den Teilnehmern noch „viel moralisches Gespür“ (S. 226) attestiert und die Show „menschenfreundlicher“ (S. 229) als etwa *Bauer sucht Frau* nennt, mahnt Oliver Kalkofe die Ehrlichkeit ein, „wenn Entscheider ein Programm produzieren würden, das ihnen selbst gefällt.“ (S. 179) Diese Programmbestimmungen aber, so Tom Sänger, seien zur Hälfte reine Bauchentscheidungen (was angesichts der Profitmaxime von Europas größtem Privatfernsehkonzern schwer vorstellbar erscheint). Derart wird in vielen Interviews gewissermaßen eine Schuldfrage verhandelt, die in unserer Mediendemokratie nicht allein an einem Beteiligtenektor festzumachen, gar zu beantworten ist. Intimsphäre als Marktgut, das Verächtlichmachen psychisch Auffälliger, familiäre Nöte und erzieherische Inkompetenz als Unterhaltungsformate seien „Teil der medialen Gesamtverrohung“ (S. 271), konstatiert der Medienanwalt Christian Schertz, der auch Opfer der Castingshows vertrat, ohne die Teilnehmer generell zu exkulpieren. Und die Politik als Regulativ?

Angela Merkels Politik sei selbst ein „Casten von Themen“ (S. 187), meint Dirk Kurbjuweit, um aber die jungen Menschen zu erreichen, müssten Politiker – geht es nach PR-Berater Klaus-Peter Schmidt-Deguelle – etwa in *Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten* auftreten. Westerwelles Besuch im *Big Brother*-Container wird unisono kritisiert wie Heide

Simonis Teilnahme an der Tanzshow *Let's dance*, welche diese selbst jedoch mit einem karitativen Zweck begründet. Boulevardisierung, „inszenierte Authentizität“ (Bolz, S. 75) oder „authentische öffentliche Privatheit“ (Groebel, S. 154)? Der Medienpsychologe Jo Groebel befürwortet desgleichen für die Wissenschaft, „Erkenntnisse in relevante gesellschaftspolitische Bereiche hineinzubringen“, auch auf die Gefahr hin selbst Teil des selbstreferenziellen Prominenzsystems zu werden und „öfter auch Triviales zu sagen.“ (S. 160) Dem widerspricht Norbert Bolz diametral: „Wer eine wissenschaftliche Karriere machen will, der sollte sich tunlichst von den Massenmedien fernhalten.“ (S. 70) Es führe „zur Ausbildung von Gefälligkeitswissenschaftlern“ (ebd.), die proaktiv medienopportunistisch agierten. Und doch weiß Georg Franck: „Die Aufmerksamkeit anderer Menschen ist etwas, von dem wir einfach nicht genug bekommen können.“ (S. 128)

Dem studentischen Team um Pörksen und Krishke ist mittels klug fundierter, mitunter etwas zu journalistischer Fragen und austarierter Interviewpartner ein erhellender Einblick in eine dräuende Casting-Gesellschaft gelungen, der zeigt, dass eine diskursive Kompetition durchaus vergnüglichen Mehrwert erbringen kann, der medienethische Zugänge nicht verschließen muss. Denn die „Mentalität des Instant-Erfolgs“ (S. 28) der Showsternen und Aufmerksamkeitsaspiranten spiegelt die Entwicklung einer bisweilen zwangsflexiblen Arbeitswelt mit ihren Prekariaten und Kompetenzentwertungen gut wider. Auch in dieser scheint die Menschenwürde kein unveräußerliches Gut mehr zu sein.

Roland Steiner, Wien

## CfP Issue 3/2011: What is Communication History? European Answers

This special issue aims to assemble statements and articles (3000 – 6000 words) focusing on two aspects: firstly on the actual state of Communication History in the authors' respective national settings and cultural areas, secondly on their efforts to foster European perspectives, e.g. by doing collaborative research or by engaging with European issues. Thereby we want to explore whether there is a common core in terms of theories used, methods applied and research topics in focus. Thus we intend to lay a foundation for mapping the field of Communication History in Europe. This mapping of structures, interconnections, shared points of reference and common spaces of understanding should help to identify whether a European Communication History exists or whether we are primarily faced with multiple National Communication Histories with occasional references to Europe or certain parts of it.

### Questions to be addressed include but are not limited to topics like:

- What does or should Communication History mean? In how far does historical communication research differ from research on contemporary communication processes or research on history in general? How should an understanding of Communication History be defined with respect to media change towards the digital?
- To what end are we doing Communication History? Who is doing Communication History in terms of disciplinary backgrounds and what is driving the field of research? What role do certain fields of communication history play like the history of (media) technology, the history of media institutions, the history of the public sphere or the history of mediated interpersonal communication? How is the field of communication history related to the academic disciplines of history, communication studies and media studies?
- What paradigms, ideas and methodologies are present and deployed in historical communication research? Are there mega-trends, meta-narratives or big intellectual themes to be identified in Communication History across Europe?
- What could be considered European about European Communication History? What concepts of Europe are referred to and what differentiations are made between Communication History in Europe, Communication History of Europe, and other ways of contextualizing Euro-

pean Communication History?

- How does European communication historiography differ from international or global communication historiographies?
- To what extent could Communication History be uncoupled from frameworks of the nation-state? Is overcoming national histories becoming necessary?
- How similar and how different are the institutional settings of researchers who work in the field of Communication History? What is the status of Communication History as an academic research area?
- Does the trans-boundary character of broadcasting and digital communication affect the field of Communication History? Does it foster transnational academic collaborations and a rethinking of (national) research interests?

Authors who would like to contribute to the special issue of *medien&zeit* should first submit an extended abstract (in English, max. 800 words) by *January 15, 2011*. Editors will review these proposals within two weeks of receipt. Authors whose proposals are accepted will be asked to submit full papers (in English, 3000 – 6000 words) by *May 15, 2011*. Papers must be original, and should not be published or be under review in other journals. All papers are peer-reviewed.

Abstracts should be submitted electronically via email as Microsoft Word or PDF attachments and should include a cover sheet containing corresponding author's name, paper title, affiliation and email address.

### Submissions should be sent to [c.schwarzenegger@isk.rwth-aachen.de](mailto:c.schwarzenegger@isk.rwth-aachen.de).

For any further information concerning the CfP and the special issue feel free to contact either of the three guest editors:

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## Jour fixe der Analyse und Kritik im Rathaus

Seit über 23 Jahren sind die Wiener Vorlesungen das wissenschaftlich fundierte Dialogforum der Stadt Wien. Exzellente WissenschaftlerInnen legen zu den großen aktuellen Problemen ihre Befunde, eröffnen neue Perspektiven, stellen Überlegungen an, wie theoretisch fundierte Einsichten in eine für Bürgerinnen und Bürger soziale und qualitätvolle Praxis gesetzt werden können.

Die Programmatik dieses umfassenden Bildungsprojektes der Stadt Wien mit langem Atem lautet:

- Aufklärung statt Vernebelung
- Differenzierung statt Vereinfachung
- Analyse statt Infotainment
- Utopien statt Fortschreibung
- Tiefenschärfe statt Oberflächenpolitik
- Widerspruch statt Anpassung
- Auseinandersetzung statt Belehrung

*Bild: Hubert Christian Ehalt, Wissenschaftsreferent der Stadt Wien mit dem Soziologen Pierre Bourdieu*



Die Wiener Vorlesungen waren und sind ein Projekt der permanenten intellektuellen Neupositionierung und Innovation. Ihre Programmplanung spiegelt die Postulate der Aufklärung am Stand des 21. Jahrhunderts. Die Themen haben die großen politischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Veränderungen der letzten 20 Jahre analysiert, kommentiert und kritisiert: das Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts, den Prozess der europäischen Integration, die Entwicklungen einer sich globalisierenden Welt, die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit der jüngeren Vergangenheit, die Entwicklungen von Alltag und Kunst, die Darstellung der faszinierenden Welten innovativer und exzellenter wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse. Seit 23 Jahren kommen Woche für Woche oft über 1000 Zuhörerinnen und Zuhörer zu wissenschaftlich fundierten Analysen zur politischen, gesellschaftlichen und geistigen Situation der Zeit.

Bei weit über 1000 Veranstaltungen waren bis jetzt an die 4000 Vortragende aus allen Kontinenten der Welt im Wiener Rathaus, um ihren Befund und ihre Analyse vorzutragen. Über 500.000 Hörerinnen und Hörer haben mit den berühmtesten Denkerinnen und Denkern diskutiert. Allein die Liste der Namen von Marie Albu-Jahoda über Michail Gorbatschow, Marion Dönhoff, Niklas Luhmann, Pierre Bourdieu bis Jeremy Rifkin und Richard Sennett füllt ein Buch. Weit über 200 Bücher in 9 Buchreihen dokumentieren die Ergebnisse dieser Vortragsreihe.

Hubert Christian Ehalt, Wissenschaftsreferent der Stadt Wien und Universitätsprofessor, Mastermind der Wiener Vorlesungen, hat mit seinem kleinen engagierten Team mit Kreativität und langem Atem die Wiener Vorlesungen zu einem Schneeballsystem der Aufklärung und zu einem intellektuellen Netz, das von Wien aus die Welt umspannt, gemacht.

*„Die Wiener Vorlesungen durchleuchten und analysieren Problemsituationen. Sie sind Observatorien des Flusses gesellschaftlicher Veränderungen. Sie disponieren zu einer kritischen Sicht auf Geschichte und Gegenwart und leisten damit eine kontinuierliche und nachhaltige Bildungsarbeit zur Stärkung der Hauptqualifikation demokratischer Gesellschaften: Kritikfähigkeit und die Bereitschaft, zu den wichtigen Fragen Stellung zu nehmen.“ (Hubert Christian Ehalt)*

[www.wienvorlesungen.at](http://www.wienvorlesungen.at)

## Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (MA 8)

Das Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv verwahrt und sammelt, erhält und erschließt, bearbeitet und präsentiert Urkunden, Akten, Handschriften, Druckschriften, Pläne und Fotos aus und über Wien. Die über 45.000 Regalmeter an Beständen bewahren Kostbarkeiten wie das Testament Ludwig van Beethovens, die Verlassenschaftsabhandlung Wolfgang Amadeus Mozarts oder die Pläne Otto Wagners zur Umgestaltung von Wien. Diese Archivalien dokumentieren aber nicht nur die Erinnerung an herausragende Persönlichkeiten, Leistungen und politische Ereignisse. Sie ermöglichen auch den Zugang zur Geschichte als kontinuierliche Abfolge unzähliger Einzelschicksale und alltäglicher Geschehnisse. Seit dem Mittelalter werden damit Grundlagen für die Sicherung rechtlicher Angelegenheiten sowie historischen Wissens geboten.

Als Archiv der Behörden Wiens spiegelt sich im verwahrten Schriftgut das Verwaltungshandeln der Stadt wider. Besonders die Massenakten des 20. Jahrhunderts bergen noch ungehobene Schätze und harren ihrer Auswertung. Personenbezogene Unterlagen sind aus datenschutzrechtlichen Gründen nur im Rahmen von wissenschaftlicher Forschung zugänglich.

Einen Überblick über die Bestände des Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchivs bietet das Wiener Archivinformationssystem ([www.wais.wien.at](http://www.wais.wien.at)). Hier werden die historisch gewachsenen Strukturen des Archivs dargestellt und die Bestände überblicksmäßig beschrieben.



# NEUERSCHEINUNG



Klaus Arnold, Markus Behmer, Bernd Semrad (Hg.)

## Kommunikationsgeschichte

Positionen und Werkzeuge.  
Ein diskursives Hand- und Lehrbuch

LIT

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Bernd Semrad (Hg.):

## Kommunikationsgeschichte. Positionen und Werkzeuge. Ein diskursives Hand- und Lehrbuch.

(= Kommunikationsgeschichte Band 26.)

Münster: LIT 2008.

Was sind die Ziele historischer Kommunikationsforschung? Über welche Theorien wird in der Kommunikationsgeschichte diskutiert? Welche Methoden eignen sich für die Erforschung historischer Fragestellungen?

Das Lehr- und Handbuch informiert über den aktuellen theoretischen Diskurs und die zentralen Werkzeuge, die zur historischen Erforschung der öffentlichen Kommunikation und der Fachgeschichte herangezogen werden können. Der thematische Bogen spannt sich von der Kulturwissenschaft und Systemtheorie über Biographismus und Genderforschung bis hin zu quantitativen und qualitativen Analyseverfahren. Mit Beiträgen von Horst Pöttker, Rainer Gries, Kurt Imhof, Klaus Arnold, Rudolf Stöber, Wolfram Peiser, Wolfgang R. Langenbucher, Susanne Kinnebrock, Edgar Lersch, Jürgen Wilke, Markus Behmer, Christoph Classen, Michael Meyen, Hans Bohrmann, Josef Seethaler, Maria Löblich und Stefanie Auerbeck.

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