

English Abstracts

Kurt Imhof: Media society and medialization (Mediengesellschaft und Medialisierung), pp. 191–215

The interplay between theoretical developments and empirical insights in the controversial discussion about the concepts of society in sociological theory, as well as in the field of medialization research, has led to the crystallization of a core theory building, which opens up the object-focused orientation of communication science on mass media. In doing so, the terms defining media society and medialization, as well as the examination of the public, play an important role whereas the social theoretical debate about concepts of society establish and orientate this claim of recognition. It becomes evident that the instruments of perception used in communications studies take on important responsibilities in the social scientific analysis of society. This article traces this process of crystallization and develops a proposal for composure of concepts of media society and medialization.

Keywords: Media society, medialization, public sphere, differentiation

Martin Emmer / Angelika Fütting / Gerhard Vowe: Who communicates about political topics, and how? An empirical based typology of individual political communication (Wer kommuniziert wie über politische Themen? Eine empirisch basierte Typologie individueller politischer Kommunikation), pp. 216–236

This essay contains an empirical based typology of individual political communication in Germany. By using a cluster analysis individuals are grouped according to certain criteria, in order to guarantee that the political communication of individuals within one group is as similar as possible and as different as possible in contrast to other groups. The basis for the cluster analysis is a nationwide representative data set from 2003, that explicitly describes the political communication among the population – ranging from political media use (e.g. television news), to the interpersonal communication about political topics, and participatory political communication (e.g. participation in the collections of signatures). Five types were identified: the “passive mainstreamer” (largest group with 43% of the population), the “selfish stakeholder”, the “convenient modern”, the “traditionally committed”, and the “organized extroverted” (smallest group with 9%). The group labels highlight the particular communication profile of the different types of groups. These typologies can serve beyond their descriptive function, to further clarify the relevant phenomena of theoretical and political communication, such as “knowledge gap”, “digital divide” or the “disenchantment with politics.”

Keywords: Typology, political communication, structure of society, secondary analysis, internet, participation, interpersonal communication, media use, cluster analysis

Nikolaus Jakob: Power and responsibility of communication in Cicero. A historic contribution to the discourse of ethics in communications science (Macht und Verantwortung der Kommunikation bei Cicero. Ein historischer Beitrag zum Ethikdiskurs in der Kommunikationswissenschaft), pp. 237–257

The Roman politician and philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.) acquired his fame particularly due to his achievements as a speaker and theorist of rhetoric. The focus of this article is Cicero's thoughts about power and responsibility of communication. After a short introduction to the origins of antique communication and the general framework of societal communication in the Roman republic, Cicero's communication ethical thoughts will follow. It proposes to show which ethical demands Cicero has formulated to prevent abuse of communicative power. On the basis of his theoretical rhetoric scriptures, this paper is an initial step which elaborates the meaning Cicero ascribes to communication in (antique) society. Additionally, the degree of clout Cicero is attesting it. As well, the communication ethical consequences arising from the role of the speaker and the role of rhetoric itself in contemporary society. Furthermore, Cicero's communicative ethical thoughts are being reflected against the background of today's communicative ethical discourse in media and communication science. In addition, the paper will examine what contribution Cicero could be undertaking to enrich this discourse.

Keywords: Cicero, media ethics, communications ethics, media history, communications history, rhetoric

Henk Erik Meier: The regulatory crisis of public service broadcasting (Die Regulierungskrise des öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunks), pp. 258–287

The regulation of German public service broadcasting currently faces a severe crisis. This article discusses the causes, the process and the results of this regulatory crisis. The public service broadcasting corporations blame the Länder for damaging the German public service broadcasting model to satisfy local political interests of individual Länder. In a similar manner, the European Commission is criticised for pursuing a neo-liberal approach in broadcasting regulation. In contrast, this article draws on concepts from political science research on the dynamics of regulatory regimes (historical institutionalism, principal agent approach) and considers the current crisis to be the result of an accumulation of regulatory malfunctions. These deficits have caused a creeping political legitimacy crisis of public service broadcasting which has recently escalated due to a conjunction of several factors. However, considerable barriers for institutional change have discouraged a groundbreaking institutional reform. Nonetheless, recent proposals for the reform of the licence fee procedure are likely to result in a suspension of programme autonomy as the so far dominating regulatory principle.

Keywords: Regulation, Media Law, Media Politics, public service broadcasting, licence fees, licence fees procedure, programme autonomy, historical institutionalism, principal agent approach

Maren Hartmann: The cultural critic as Flaneur. Walter Benjamin, the Passage and the new (media-) technologies (Der Kulturkritiker als Flaneur. Walter Benjamin, die Passage und die neuen [Medien-] Technologien), pp. 288–307

This article refers to a well-known but hard to allocate theorist and it characterises him as a classical thinker of media and communication studies: Walter Benjamin. The starting point for this article is the notion that Benjamin's reception in the media and communication studies is primarily formed by the reference to a single text – the essay „Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit (The Artwork in the Era

of its Technological Reproducibility)”. Following this reference, the article also initiates discussion with this particular essay, lead by the question of its topicality and the classification of the essay in relation to Benjamin’s complete works. Further on, the article explores another aspect of his work, the Passagenwerk for media and communication science. This work, Passagenwerk, according to the hypothesis of this article, recovers highly up to date structural and textual connection points. This article highlights this relation and thus broadens the spectrum of the Benjamin-reflexions in communication studies.

Keywords: Media theory, Benjamin, Passagenwerk