English Abstracts

Marc Mölders: The Janus Face of Enlightenment and Control. Irritation Design: The Case of ProPublica (Das Janusgesicht der Aufklärung und der Lenkung. Irritationsgestaltung: Der Fall ProPublica), pp. 3-17

The Janus face of enlightenment and control is a remarkable passage within Habermas' 'Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere' (1962). He mainly claims that the rise of modern mass media has led to an age of manipulative or staged publicity. In this passage, however, Habermas refers to an intriguing ambivalence. He argues that publicity could, in principle, work in both directions, i.e. towards control as well as enlightenment but professionalised media have specialized in control. However, no published revelation is suitable for exerting control, and neither is enlightenment happening automatically. From a systems theoretical perspective, this seems to be obvious; for focal systems are conceived of as operationally closed. The term 'irritation' takes the autonomy of social systems into account whilst suspecting to attract a system's idiosyncrasy. The concept of 'irritation design' attaches the assumption that information can be designed with regard to trigger irritations within a focal system. By introducing the investigative journalism newsroom *ProPublica*, the claim is substantiated that irritations can be designed along the three meaning dimensions (Luhmann), the fact(ual), temporal, and social dimension - in both directions, control as well as enlightenment.

Keywords: control, enlightenment, investigative journalism, irritation, ProPublica, publicity

Julia Metag: Vox populi – the Voice of the People. Communication and Opinion Formation Processes on Local and National Political Issues (Die Stimme des Volkes. Kommunikations- und Meinungsbildungsprozesse bei lokal- und bundespolitischen Entscheidungen), pp. 18-43

Direct democratic ballots are often controversial. It is argued that citizens are manipulated in their opinion formation, that they might not be informed about the issue at stake sufficiently, and that they can successfully be mobilised to participate in a ballot. Direct democracy only exists at local and state level in Germany, rather than on a national scale. Such diverse uses of direct democracy at local and national levels are often based on the assumption that opinion formation and communication processes regarding local and national issues differ somewhat. Hence, this study investigates to what extent media effects and reception processes differ in local and national public spheres. Drawing on data from a survey (n=1014) of German citizens' opinions on local and national issues, I analyse how the effects on people's opinions about these issues differ, and how citizens' competence and their willingness to participate in a ballot can be discerned. The results demonstrate that citizens' opinion about local and national issues is very much predisposed. At a local level, media use and interpersonal communication correlates higher competence, while the level of media use supports the willingness to participate in a ballot on national issues some more. The results are discussed in relation to direct democratic decision-making.

Keywords: opinion formation, participation, direct democracy, local communication

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Rinaldo Kühne / Katharina Sommer / Patrick Weber: Cognitive and Emotional Framing Effects on Attitudes. Reflections on the Relevance of the Identification of Distinct Mediation Processes and an Empirical Investigation (Kognitive und emotionale Framing-Effekte auf Einstellungen. Überlegungen zur Relevanz der Untersuchung von Mediationsprozessen und eine empirische Überprüfung), pp. 44-61

Research on the effects of media news frames on attitudes has identified a series of cognitive mediation processes. However, these processes cannot fully explain framing effects on attitudes. Recent findings indicate that emotional responses may serve as additional mediators of the effects that news frames have on attitudes. However, so far there are no studies that simultaneously test cognitive and emotional framing processes, indicating that emotional effects still exist, even if cognitive processes are controlled. This paper first discusses why the identification and distinction of cognitive and emotional mediation processes is relevant. Cognitive and emotional effects of a responsibility frame on the preference for punitive measures are then investigated in an online-experiment. The results corroborate our assumptions: the effect of the responsibility frame was mediated by anger and cognitive beliefs.

Keywords: framing-effects, persuasion, mediation processes, emotions

Alexandra Sowka / Christoph Klimmt / Dorothée Hefner / Fenja Mergel / Daniel Possler: Measuring Media Literacy. An Empirical Test Instrument for the Critical Appraisal Skills of Media Use within the Target Group of Adolescents (Die Messung von Medienkompetenz. Ein Testverfahren für die Dimension „Medienkritikfähigkeit" und die Zielgruppe „Jugendliche"), pp. 62-82

Media literacy is considered a key qualification in the current information, knowledge and media era. However, despite the social and individual relevance attributed to media literacy, there is a surprisingly small number of empirical research projects dealing with the investigation of this concept. This paper fills that research gap. We present an empirical instrument for the standardised measurement of critical skills in media use, i.e. one of the key aspects of media literacy. The instrument consists of test items that objectively measure the skills of adolescents in dealing with media content critically. The items were tested in two studies. The results suggest that the test is methodologically and operatively qualified for defining the level of media-related appraisal skills of young people. A validation study with a student sample supplements this. We discuss further developmental steps and possibilities for the implementation of the devised instrument.

Keywords: methods, test instrument, critical media use, media literacy, adolescents

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