

English Abstracts

Markus Schäfer / Thorsten Eschmann: The Coverage of Football Referees: On the Perception by Referees, and on the Influence of this on Referees in Germany (Alles Pfeifen!? Wahrnehmung und Einfluss der Medienberichterstattung über Fußball-Schiedsrichter durch und auf Fußball-Schiedsrichter in Deutschland), pp. 3-26

Referees are some of the most central protagonists in football. Their decisions can (co-)decide the course of a match. However, refereeing decisions often have to be made in rather ambiguous situations within a match. Hence, external influences seem of great importance to the decision-making of football officials. We assume that referees perceive the mass media as an influential force and, like other sportspeople, might adapt to a certain media logic. Drawing on previous findings relating to reciprocal effects of the media coverage on athletes, judges and public prosecutors alike, we claim that the coverage of football referees could be a critical factor impacting on their decision-making. Our study comprises quantitative online survey of active football referees in Germany (n=1,290). We ask if and to what extent the officials consume football and referee related media content, how they perceive the reporting about themselves and their colleagues, and how this influences them and their decision-making. The results show that referees turn to the media intensively; seeking both information on other football officials and on themselves and their own matches. Participants generally perceived the reporting on referees as negative, yet influential. Our findings indicate that this perception can, indeed, impact on the behaviour of referees.

Keywords: perceived media influence; media consumption; mediatization; reciprocal effects; online survey; referee; football

Nayla Fawzi / Magdalena Obermaier: Discontent – Distrust – Disapproval. A Theoretical Exploration of the Construct of Media Disenchantment (Unzufriedenheit – Misstrauen – Ablehnung journalistischer Medien. Eine theoretische Annäherung an das Konstrukt Medienverdrossenheit), pp. 27-44

The phrase media disenchantment (Medienverdrossenheit) has been omnipresent in the public discourse and the scientific community in Germany for several years. So far, however, there is a lack of definition and theoretical analysis. We would like to work towards preventing the term from becoming a buzzword, and thus, no useful social science category. Hence, in this paper we aim to contribute to the discussion by theoretically elaborating on the idea of media disenchantment and presenting a definition. Our reflections are based on both the theoretical considerations of political disenchantment and on the concept of political support. Drawing on existing concepts within communication studies, our analysis shows that media disenchantment can be understood as a three-dimensional construct. This includes satisfaction with the performance of the media (specific support), trust in the media (diffuse-specific support), and approval of the legitimacy of the media (diffuse-specific support). These three types of support can relate to the media system, to the media as an institution, and to the actors, i.e. journalists. We review these issues critically and provide an outlook for future research.

Keywords: media disenchantment, trust in media, political support, media performance, media functions, legitimacy of the media

Benjamin P. Lange / Stefanie Kouros / Frank Schwab: Nicely said - Language Proficiency in News Texts. An Empirical Study of Verbal Proficiency in the News of German television broadcasters ARD, ZDF, SAT.1, and RTL (Schön gesagt! Aspekte der Gewandtheit der Nachrichtensprache: Ein empirischer Vergleich der sprachlichen Gewandtheit der Nachrichtensendungen von ARD, ZDF, SAT.1 und RTL), pp. 45-62

Previous research on language proficiency in the media have, so far, pursued the question of the language levels (hereafter: verbal proficiency) in television news comparing public and private broadcasts, for instance. However, there is a gap regarding up-to-date research that uses an elaborate operationalisation of verbal proficiency, employs an established software for computer-based text analysis and opts for a quantitative-empirical approach including the calculation of effect sizes (in order to quantify the difference between various broadcasters and programmes). Hence, we aimed to close this gap by analysing transcriptions of the main news programmes broadcast by ARD, ZDF, SAT.1, and RTL (seven news programmes per channel). The findings show that public broadcast news contained more complex words and, even more so, more complex (i.e. longer) sentences. Private broadcast news, by contrast, were characterised by a larger number of words within a comparable time span thus exhibiting faster speaking. Private news also contained a larger variety of words. In terms of sentence length, we detected a small difference only between the public broadcasters ARD and ZDF. The evidence also suggests that in terms of word complexity, noticeably higher values could be detected in ARD news than in the news of all other stations. The highest number of words was used by RTL; while SAT.1 was excelling regarding the percentage of word variation. Effect sizes were mostly moderate, partly even large.

Keywords: television news, verbal proficiency, eloquence, language level, quantitative computer-based text analysis

Birte Fährnich / Cornelius Puschmann / Lars Rinsdorf: Enjoying Bright Prospects: On the Prospects of Digitalisation for Publishing Communication Research in Germany. A Contribution to the Ongoing Discussion (Gute Aussichten! Chancen der Digitalisierung für das Publikationswesen in der Kommunikationswissenschaft – ein Diskussionsbeitrag), pp. 63-76

The realm of science communications has been impacted greatly by the general digitalisation of our daily lives. In this paper, we focus on the prospects of this trend to German communication science. We address the power of digitalisation and discuss how it could be utilized in an appropriate way while supporting innovative approaches in the field. We focus on new publication formats such as open access, open data, and alternative metrics for measuring changes in the interface between scholarly and public communication. Aiming to encourage scholars to rethink assumptions about scientific publications, this paper highlights the benefits of digitalisation for the professional debate in communication science in Germany.

Keywords: science communication, digitalisation, scientific journals, publication formats, open access, alternative metrics

Michael Meyen: On the Normative Power of Communication Studies. A Plea for a Reflection Break in Humanities, and a Reply to Schindler et al.'s Thoughts regarding 'where does Media Hostility come from and where does it go' in M&K 3/2018. (Die Definitionsmacht der Kommunikationswissenschaft. Ein Plädoyer für eine „wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Besinnungspause“ und eine Replik auf „Woher kommt und wozu führt Medienfeindlichkeit?“ in M&K 3/2018), pp. 77-87

In this paper, I discuss the role of Communication Research in the struggle for normative power, using the example of Schindler et al.'s article in M&K 3/2018 ('where does Media Hostility come from and where does it go'). Drawing on works of Ulrich Beck, Nick Couldry, John Dewey, Michel Foucault, Geoffroy de Lagasniere and Chantal Mouffe, I demand to rethink the existing tendency to focus on theories of average range and elaborated means of (often psychological) data analysis, grounded in the tradition of the field. My plea is for my fellow scholars to relocate their questions within the realm of society, while generally considering the role of Social Sciences, its tasks and its functions.

Keywords: communication research, discourse theory, power relations of definition, self-understanding of science