

Abstracts

Patrick Zoll: Tinfoil Hat Media Criticism: Guardian or Gravedigger of Democracy? A Plea for a New Realism in Media Criticism

The battle cry “lying press” has been recently reverberating through the media landscape. The accusation connected to this designation is no longer limited to a single text, image or video, but instead very basically to the credibility of that which is being presented and reported by the leading media. In a generalized and often seemingly irrational manner, journalism’s claim to the truth is being questioned and a manipulative power interest insinuated. How can and should one respond to these and other conspiracy theory charges? In order to appropriately and effectively deal with such challenges to credibility, it is necessary to differentiate between two types of conspiracy theories with distinct rationality potentials, whose emergence are closely linked to the evolution and radicalization of a post-modern critique of knowledge. This analysis leads to a new realism through which a normative framing of media criticism becomes possible, helping to distinguish where and which media criticism is justified.

Tanja Thomas/Elke Grittmann/Fabian Virchow: Credibility as the Subject of Media Criticism. Findings of a Study Concerning Media Coverage of the NSU Murder Series

The article deals with “credibility” as the subject of media (self)criticism in processes of journalistic interpretational output. Based on the selected results of a study, which looks back at the media coverage of the murders committed during the years 2000 – 2007 by the so-called “national socialist underground”, various dimensions of journalistic credibility are examined. The study is based on a detailed discourse analysis of articles by the German and Turkish-language press, a study of media (self)criticism on the basis of selected articles from professional journals and interviews with journalists. It provides evidence, that the attributions of the credibility have led to problematical patterns of interpretation.

Elisabeth Walser: Twitter – A Platform Without Morals? An Analysis of the Crisis-Coverage of the Boston Marathon Bombings on the Microblogging Platform Twitter

Crisis reporting significantly defines our worldview. Images of bombing attacks, terrorist assassinations and blood-covered victims, whose private spheres are thereby violated, also belong to the publication practices of a number of classic media. These violations of boundaries are surpassed by citizen journalists of the social media;

in this the microblogging platform Twitter plays a significant role. In a study conducted in 2014 concerning the Boston Marathon Bombing, 2020 Tweets were analyzed according to the characteristics of sensationalist coverage these discussions on the Twitter platform exhibited and to what degree they were in agreement with the ethical policies of crisis reporting.

Michael Litschka: Media Capability as a Politico-Economical Concept. Theoretical Basics and Possible Applications

The theoretical concept of media capabilities is an extension of the constructs employed in the communication sciences and media economics concerning media competence and media consumption. In the neo-classically influenced media economics, these appear to be based on utilitarian (at least theoretical benefit/value/use) influenced approaches, respectively implicitly assume these. It is argued, that this understanding has repercussions regarding further normative questions, in particular regarding the concept of justice in a pluralistic and mass-medially controlled society. To this end, the “capability approach” of Amartya Sen is employed, which provides a politico-economical understanding that can serve media politics as a basis for reflection.

Arne Freya Zillich/Kathrin Friederike Müller/ Christina Schumann / Stephanie Geise: Values in Reception and Impact Research. Exploration of this Field of Research

Reception and impact studies have always been characterized by explicit and implicit normative assumptions which postulate – depending on the historical phase – a passive audience or an active, creative recipient. However, the values and norms of this research field have not been analyzed systematically so far. In order to accomplish this, a literature review of national and international journal articles on values and norms in audience and reception studies from 1993 until 2011 was conducted. The results show that reception and impact studies address multiple normative references to media effects in the context of research on children’s and adolescents’ media use, on the construction of cultural values and norms, on (socio-) political issues and on new, interactive media. They also illustrate that a definitional and theoretical debate on the constructs “values” and “norms” hardly exists to date.