English Abstracts

Carsten Wünsch / Cordula Nitsch / Christiane Eilders: Early Evening Political Cultivation. A Prolonged-Exposure Experiment on the Impact of the TV-Series 'Lindenstrasse' (Politische Kultivierung am Vorabend. Ein prolonged-exposure-Experiment zur Wirkung der Fernsehserie „Lindenstraße"), pp. 176-196

This paper examines the impact of fictional TV-series with regard to politically relevant perceptions, attitudes and behavioural intentions of the audience. In order to explain the political impact of fictional entertainment, we draw on insights from the realm of cultivation research. In cultivation research, the reception of entertainment is assumed to have long-term effects on consumers, however, this has only rarely been linked with images of political reality. Filling this gap, we also draw on political communication approaches. Even though such approaches commonly do not consider fictional contents, they are useful with regard to explaining political effects. We discuss those approaches from a cultivation theory perspective and view them in relation to cultivation effects of a first, second and third order. Conducting a prolonged-exposure experiment on the reception of the German TV-series 'Lindenstrasse', we examine whether fictional content influences politically relevant ideas, attitudes and behavioral intentions of the audience. Our two sample groups were asked to watch four episodes of 'Lindenstrasse' that varied in quantity of political content. The results confirm our assumptions regarding first and third order effects. However, in terms of second order effects, the findings show a varied picture. Generally, the mode of reception and political interest proved to be significant moderating variables as both treatment groups showed cultivation effects, yet the quantity of political content cannot be considered a precondition for political effects.

Key words: political mediation, fictional entertainment, cultivation, agenda setting, spiral of silence, political cynicism, prolonged-exposure experiment

Peter Gentzel / Erik Koenen: Modern Worlds of Communication: from „Paperfloods" to the „Mediation of Everything". A Contribution to the Disciplinary and Cognitive Identity of the Scientific Research Field of „Mediated Communication" (Moderne Kommunikationswelten: von den „papiernen Fluten" zur „Mediation of Everything". Ein Beitrag zur disziplinär-kognitiven Identität des kommunikationswissenschaftlichen Forschungsfelds „mediatisierte Kommunikation"), pp. 197-217

The article is interested in the cultural sociological dimension of the disciplinary and cognitive identity of communication science. We focus on the research field of 'mediatized communication' and the mediatization theory of Friedrich Krotz. We show that early concepts of this approach can be found in the years around 1900 regarding the 'cultural value of the press' (Kulturbedeutung der Presse). We draw on a four-dimensional heuristical pattern that utilises mediatisation theory in order to evaluate disciplinary accents and aims as well as conceptual and theoretical frameworks of explanatory approaches and sketches for understanding 'mediatized communication phenomena'. In doing so, we emphasise the disciplinary traditions of cultural sociological thoughts and concepts within communication science. Furthermore, we link these ideas to the theory of social practices in order to highlight the potentials of this currently widely discussed, yet fresh cultural and sociological perspective for modern communication research.

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Key words: communication theory, cultural sociology, mediatization, meditization theory, theory of social practices, German newspaper research, mediatized communication practices

Patrick Weber: News Factors & User Generated Content. The Impact of News Values on User Comments on News Websites' Political Coverage (Nachrichtenfaktoren & User Generated Content. Die Bedeutung von Nachrichtenfaktoren für Kommentierungen der politischen Berichterstattung auf Nachrichtenwebsites), pp. 218-239

Posting comments on news websites is currently one of the most popular forms of user participation and content generation. The research presented here focuses on the influence of features of journalistic content (news factors) and media conditions on such user participation. Drawing on data from an online content analysis of political coverage of three different news websites, we show that the level of openness to user participation affects the number of user comments per news item. Moreover, we reveal that the news factor 'damage' affects the amount of user comments in national and international news. Other news factors primarily affect user participation in national news coverage. In sum, the results indicate that the 'chain of communication' Galtung and Ruge (1965) proposed in their Theory of Newsworthiness can be extended to selective media participation.

Key words: news factors, user-generated content, commentary, participatory journalism, talk back, theory of newsworthiness, user comments, media participation

Heiner Meulemann: The Mental Costs of Leisure Activities and the Developmental Capabilities of Television Supply. Why Televisions Remains the Most Popular Leisure Activity in Germany, even after the Rise of the Internet (Die psychischen Kosten von Freizeitaktivitäten und die Entfaltungschancen des Fernsehangebots. Warum das Fernsehen in Deutschland auch nach dem Aufkommen des Internets die beliebteste Freizeitaktivität bleibt), pp. 240-261

If the most popular everyday leisure activities involve only little mental efforts, then television ought to be the most popular leisure activity. This paper confirms this hypothesis through classifying leisure activities in reception, appropriation, sociability, and participation categories. Moreover, if daily leisure activities become more popular the more potential they show for development, then television should remain the most popular one. This hypothesis is confirmed by comparing daily leisure opportunities' potential for absorption and differentiation. Drawing on population surveys in Germany from the years 1997-2009, I examine both of these hypotheses. The surveys I used are replicated each year and generate data about the stated preference, the assumed preference and the estimated frequency of consumption. For each of the three categories, both hypotheses can be confirmed. Even if the Internet emerges as a new daily leisure activity that continuously increases in popularity and relies on a supply of high developmental potential, television remains the most popular daily leisure activity.

Key words: media consumption, television viewing, Internet use, development hypothesis

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Siegfried Weischenberg: Max Weber: 'Reality Scientist' and Disputatious Spirit (Max Weber: „Wirklichkeitswissenschaftler" und streitbarer Geist), pp. 262-285

The media became the most important research topic at the First German Sociological Congress in October 1910. Max Weber was, at that time, „accountant" (secretary) of the German Sociological Association (GSA), which was founded in the previous year. Weber presented his annual report at the congress; a detailed description of an „enquiry of the press" (Presse-Enquête). This rather sophisticated study was supposed to be conducted by the GSA to prove the sociologists' expertise in the area of empirical research. However, the project collapsed during the initial stage, and after its failure the topic disappeared from the discipline's agenda for decades. The thereafter founded „science of the press" (Zeitungswissenschaft) seemed unambitious both theoretically and empirically for a long time; quite the contrary to Weber's vision. Indeed, Max Weber's relevance for the discipline has been neglected and the renowned scholar has not been considered a classic in communication science. Nevertheless, in the following 100 years his ideas inspired many communication scholars, although with a notable time lag. Weber's influence can be seen in studies aimed to answer the research questions he initially posed in his enquiry of the press, and in the use of some of his categories and key terms, and in the works of the three social critics who referred to him abundantly and made an appearance as media theoreticians or at least media critics: Jürgen Habermas, Niklas Luhmann and Pierre Bourdieu.

Key words: empirical research on media and journalism, history of the subject, research about Max Weber, social and communication theories, enquiry of the press

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