

editors

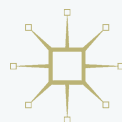
Caja Thimm

Mario Anastasiadis

Jessica Einspänner-Pflock

MEDIA LOGIC(S) REVISITED

Modelling the
Interplay between
Media Institutions,
Media Technology
and Societal Change



Transforming Communications – Studies
in Cross-Media Research

Series Editors
Uwe Hasebrink
Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research
University of Hamburg
Germany

Andreas Hepp
ZeMKI, University of Bremen
Germany

We live in times that are characterised by a multiplicity of media: Traditional media like television, radio and newspapers remain important, but have all undergone fundamental change in the wake of digitalization.

New media have been emerging with an increasing speed: Internet platforms, mobile media and the many different software-based communication media we are recently confronted with as ‘apps’. This process is experiencing yet another boost from the ongoing and increasingly fast sequence of technological media innovations. In our modern social world, communication processes take place across a variety of media. As a consequence, we can no longer explain the influences of media by focusing on any one single medium, its content and possible effects. In order to explain how media changes are related to transformations in culture and society we have to take into account the cross-media character of communications.

In view of this, the book series ‘Transforming Communications’ is dedicated to cross-media communication research. It aims to support all kinds of research that are interested in processes of communication taking place across different kinds of media and that subsequently make media’s transformative potential accessible. With this profile, the series addresses a wide range of different areas of study: media production, representation and appropriation as well as media technologies and their use, all from a current as well as a historical perspective. The series ‘Transforming Communications’ lends itself to different kinds of publication within a wide range of theoretical and methodological backgrounds. The idea is to stimulate academic engagement in cross-media issues by supporting the publication of rigorous scholarly work, text books, and thematically-focused volumes, whether theoretically or empirically oriented.

More information about this series at
<http://www.springer.com/series/15351>

Caja Thimm · Mario Anastasiadis
Jessica Einspänner-Pflock
Editors

Media Logic(s) Revisited

Modelling the Interplay between Media
Institutions, Media Technology
and Societal Change

palgrave
macmillan

Editors

Caja Thimm
Department of Media Studies
University of Bonn
Bonn, Germany

Jessica Einspänner-Pflock
Department of Media Studies
University of Bonn
Bonn, Germany

Mario Anastasiadis
Department of Media Studies
University of Bonn
Bonn, Germany

Transforming Communications – Studies in Cross-Media Research
ISBN 978-3-319-65755-4 ISBN 978-3-319-65756-1 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65756-1>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017951533

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2018, corrected publication 2018

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover design by Fatima Jamadar

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer International Publishing AG part of Springer Nature
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

The original version of the book was revised: Final corrections have been incorporated. The erratum to the book is available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65756-1_14

CONTENTS

1	Media Logic or Media Logics? An Introduction to the Field	1
	Caja Thimm, Mario Anastasiadis and Jessica Einspänner-Pflock	
Part I Theorizing Media Logics		
2	The Media Syndrome and Reflexive Mediation	11
	David L. Altheide	
3	Media Logic and the Mediatization Approach: A Good Partnership, a Mésalliance, or a Misunderstanding?	41
	Friedrich Krotz	
4	The Logics of the Media and the Mediatized Conditions of Social Interaction	63
	Stig Hjarvard	
5	Mediatization as Structural Couplings: Adapting to Media Logic(s)	85
	Mikkel Fugl Eskjær	

6	Media Technology and Media Logic(s): The Media Grammar Approach Caja Thimm	111
7	Media Logic as (Inter)Action Logic—Interaction Interdependency as an Integrative Meta-Perspective Katrin Döveling and Charlotte Knorr	133
Part II Media Logic in Context: Politics, Journalism, Institutions		
8	On the Media Logic of the State Jens Schröter	159
9	Media Logic Revisited. The Concept of Social Media Logic as Alternative Framework to Study Politicians' Usage of Social Media During Election Times Evelien D'heer	173
10	Perceived Media Logic: A Point of Reference for Mediatization Daniel Nölleke and Andreas M. Scheu	195
11	News Media Logic 2.0—Assessing Commercial News Media Logic in Cross-Temporal and Cross-Channel Analysis Maria Karidi	217
12	New(s) Challenges!—Old Patterns? Structural Transformation and TV News in a Mediatized World Mirco Liefke	239
13	Algorithms and Digital Media: Measurement and Control in the Mathematical Projection of the Real Tales Tomaz	265

Erratum to: Media Logic(s) Revisited	E1
Caja Thimm, Mario Anastasiadis and Jessica Einspänner-Pflock	
Index	287

EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

About the Editors

Caja Thimm, Ph.D. is Professor for Media Studies and Intermediality at the University of Bonn, Germany and Head of the project “Deliberation on the Net” which is part of the DFG priority program “Mediatized Worlds” (funded by the German Science Foundation). She is also currently the speaker for the Collaborative Research Program “Digital Society” (2017–2022). Her main research interests are online communication theory, social media, organizational, and political communication online.

Mario Anastasiadis, Ph.D. is scientific coordinator of the Graduate School “Digital Society” at the University of Bonn, Department of Media Studies, and research associate in the project “Deliberation on the Net,” which is part of the DFG priority program “Mediatized Worlds” (funded by the German Science Foundation). His main research interests are online communication theory, social media, political communication, and popular culture online.

Jessica Einspänner-Pflock, Ph.D. is a researcher and lecturer in the field of digital communication, i.e. political communication in social media and online privacy. She has published on the subject of Twitter in election campaigns, online PR, and adolescents’ sense of privacy in the digital world. Jessica received her Ph.D. from the University of Bonn, Germany, in 2015 in the area of Media Studies.

Contributors

David L. Altheide, Ph.D. is Emeritus Regents' Professor on the faculty of Justice and Social Inquiry in the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University, where he taught for 37 years. His work has focused on the role of mass media and information technology in social control. His most recent books are *The Media Syndrome* (Routledge 2016), *Media Edge: Media Logic and Social Reality* (Lang, 2014), *Qualitative Media Analysis* (2nd edition, Sage, 2012), and *Terror Post 9/11 and the Media* (Lang, 2009). Dr. Altheide received the Cooley Award three times, given to the outstanding book in symbolic interaction, from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction: In 2007 for *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear* (2006); in 2004 for *Creating Fear: News and the Construction of Crisis* (2002); and in 1986 for *Media Power* (1985). Dr. Altheide received the 2005 George Herbert Mead Award for lifetime contributions from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, and the society's Mentor Achievement Award in 2007. He was selected as a Fulbright Specialist in 2011.

Evelien D'heer is a researcher working at the department of Communication Sciences at Ghent University in Belgium (iMinds – MICT). Her research focuses on the impact of social media on the relation between politicians, mass media, and citizens. In addition, she is interested in the conceptual understanding of social media and the usage of social media as a method for social-scientific research.

Katrin Döveling, Prof., Dr. Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt, Institut für Medien- und Kommunikationswissenschaft. Research interests include online communication, media reception and effects, media theories, media sociology, media psychology, and international research.

Mikkel Fugl Eskjær Associate Professor at the Department of Communication, Aalborg University, Copenhagen Campus. Research areas include environmental communication, international communication, and mediatization theory. He has published empirical and theoretical articles on mediatization (*MedieKultur, Nordicom Information*) and is co-editor (with Stig Hjarvard and Mette Mortensen) of *The Dynamics of Mediatized Conflicts*, (NY, Peter Lang, 2015).

Stig Hjarvard, Ph.D. is Professor of Media Studies at the Department of Media, Cognition and Communication, University of Copenhagen. His research interests include mediatization theory, news and journalism, media history, media and globalization, media and religion, and digital book publishing. He is chief editor of the journal *Northern Lights* (Intellect Press) and chair of the ECREA Section on Mediatization. Stig Hjarvard is a prominent proponent of the institutional perspective on mediatization and he has written and edited numerous books, including *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (Routledge, 2013) and *The Dynamics of Mediatized Conflicts* (co-edited with Mette Mortensen and Mikkel Eskjær; Peter Lang, 2015).

Maria Karidi is a post-doctoral research associate at the Department of Communication Studies and Media Research at the University of Munich. Her research focuses on media reality constructions (including both media logic research and discourse theory), as well as comparative perspectives on media systems and media freedom around the world.

Charlotte Knorr, M.A. is a research assistant at the Institute for Communication and Media Research, Department for Empirical Research on Communication and Media, University of Leipzig, Germany. In her research she focusses on the theory of online communication processes, especially in the context of Issue Attention Cycles and Media Framing in the face of (socio-semantic) network and linguistic discourse analysis.

Friedrich Krotz, Dr., phil., habil. is Emeritus Professor in Communication and Media at the University of Bremen in Germany. He currently works as a Senior Fellow at the newly founded Centre for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS) at Bochum, also in Germany. He works on the fields of Mediatization research, media sociology, methodology, and theories of communication and the media. In recent years, he was the founder and coordinator of the priority programme “Mediatized worlds”, financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG) (cf. www.mediatizedworlds.net). Currently, he is writing books about the results of this work and about communication in the upcoming mediatized world.

Mirco Liefke is a researcher at the Institute of Sociology at Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany and assistant to Thomas Scheffer, full Professor for Sociology with an emphasis on Interpretative Social Research. He studied sociology, theatre-, film- and media studies and law and is currently working on a Ph.D. project about ethnography of a major German TV channel's newsroom. Other fields of interest are influences of social media on the coverage of international conflicts, the mediatized fabrication of political positions, and journalism facing another structural change of the public sphere.

Daniel Nölleke, Dr., phil. studied communication science, politics, and history at the University of Münster. He completed his studies in 2005 (MA) with a final thesis "Former athletes as experts in sports coverage on television". After that, he started working as a teaching and research assistant at the department of communication at the University of Münster. From 2009 to 2011, he carried out a research project on "Dealing with scientific evidences in media coverage," which was funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). In 2012, he finished his dissertation entitled "Experts in Journalism". Research interests include: Mediatization of Social Fields, Perceptions of the -Logic and Influences of Journalism, Science Communication, Sports Communication.

Andreas M. Scheu, Dr., phil., Ph.D. in communication studies at the University of Munich (2010). He coordinated a research project on the mediatization of science policy (funding: German Ministry of Education and Research, 2010–2013). He was a research assistant at the Department of Communication of the University of Münster (2013–2016); managing editor of the ICA affiliate journal *Studies in Communication | Media* (since 2014); and head of a comparative research project on the mediatization of organizations in health, law, politics, and science (funding: German Research Foundation, since 2016). Research interests include: Mediatization, science communication, history and theories of communication studies, and qualitative methodology.

Jens Schröter, Prof., Dr., phil., habil. has been chair for media studies at the University of Bonn since 2015. From 2008 to 2015, he was professor for multimedial systems at the University of Siegen. He

was director of the graduate school “Locating Media” in Siegen from 2008 to 2012 and has been a member of the DFG-graduate research center “Locating Media” at the University of Siegen since 2012. He was (together with Prof. Dr. Lorenz Engell, Weimar) director of the research project “TV Series as Reflection and Projection of Change” from 2010 to 2014. He is a speaker of the research project (VW foundation; together with Dr. Stefan Meretz, Hanno Pahl, and Manuel Scholz-Wäckerle) “Society after Money” that started in 2016.

His main research topics are: Theory and history of digital media, theory and history of photography, theory and history of three-dimensional images, intermediality, copy protection, media theory in discussion with the critique of value, and TV series.

Tales Tomaz is an assistant professor on Media and Communications at the São Paulo Adventist University. He has a Ph.D. in Media and Communication Studies from the University of São Paulo. His research deals with technology, alterity, and communication in Martin Heidegger. In 2015 he was granted a scholarship from CAPES (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel, from Brazil) and DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) for a year as visitor researcher in the Martin-Heidegger-Institut at the Bergische University of Wuppertal (Germany). His latest work is the text “Alterity and Technology: Implications of Heidegger’s Phenomenology,” in the book *The Changing Faces of Alterity* (edited by David Gunkel, Ciro Marcondes Filho and Dieter Mersch, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 4.1	The reciprocal relationship between mediatization and mediation	66
Fig. 4.2	Media as part of an inter-institutional system: Broadcasting as an institutionalized practice influenced by the logics of other institutions, the family, the market, the nation-state, and politics	73
Fig. 4.3	Mediatization as interaction between media logics and the logics of other social and cultural domains	74
Fig. 5.1	Structural coupling between media system and social system	94
Fig. 6.1	Functional operator model of twitter	128
Fig. 7.1	Interaction interdependency	139
Fig. 7.2	Interaction interdependency as key in media logics	145
Fig. 8.1	The CIE 1931, 2° observer chromaticity diagram showing the color gamut of a <i>color copier</i> , standard <i>RGB</i> and the gamut of the combination of a HeNe laser (633 nm), an Argon laser (514 nm), and a HeCd laser (442 nm)	166
Fig. 8.2	Example of <i>Photoshop</i> refusing to carry out the command	170
Fig. 9.1	A continuum from mass news media logic to social media logic	175
Fig. 11.1	Comparing commercial News media logic characteristics over time and between offline and online channels	228
Fig. 11.2	Comparing News topic over time and between offline and online channels	230

Fig. 11.3	Comparing journalistic style over time and between offline and online channels	231
Fig. 12.1	News Program. Scan of the original schedule, collected during fieldwork in the news room	248
Fig. 12.2	First news report concerning OSCE incident in. Scan of the original AFP news feed, collected during fieldwork in the news room	248
Fig. 12.3	Organization of category devices in partly overlapping word fields	254
Fig. 12.4	Russia Today	259
Fig. 12.5	Financial Times	260

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	The logics of the media expressed in a general sociological vocabulary and understood as the totality of institutional rules and resources, including both cultural and societal aspects of rules and resources	71
Table 4.2	Mediatized conditions of interaction: Media dynamics following three dimensions or metaphors of media: Amplification, framing and performative agency, and co-structuring	78
Table 7.1	Media logics. Perspectives, issues, and focal points	142
Table 10.1	Analytical categories and the systematization of media logic for secondary data analysis	204
Table 10.2	Sample of organizations and interviewees	205
Table 12.1	Categorization of group A	250
Table 12.2	Categorization of group B	251



CHAPTER 1

Media Logic or Media Logics? An Introduction to the Field

*Caja Thimm, Mario Anastasiadis and Jessica
Einspänner-Pflock*

In 1979, David Altheide and Robert Snow developed the concept of *media logic*. Originally following the idea of creating a theoretical framework to better understand mass media formats and the media's impact on institutions and social behavior, the focus was on the mass media system of television, radio, and newspapers and its power to influence and even transform society. Although the authors primarily concentrated on the functionalities and implications of media logic in the political sphere, their overall objective was an analysis on how “social institutions are infused with media considerations” (Altheide, 2011, 122). From a critical perspective on mass media, their main argument was about an “underlying media logic that dominates our increasingly mediated (or mediatized)

C. Thimm (✉) · M. Anastasiadis · J. Einspänner-Pflock
Department of Media Studies, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
e-mail: thimm@uni-bonn.de

M. Anastasiadis
e-mail: anastasiadis@uni-bonn.de

J. Einspänner-Pflock
e-mail: jep@uni-bonn.de

© The Author(s) 2018
C. Thimm et al. (eds.), *Media Logic(s) Revisited*,
Transforming Communications – Studies in Cross-Media Research,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65756-1_1

social order” (ibid., 119). In this sense the original media logic concept can be understood as a term for media-infused formal and informal rules entailing multiple transformations in the social world. On that basis, the interrelation of technology, institutions, actors, and formats of media was at the core of media logic and its formative impact on society.

As the media landscape as such has changed dramatically since the early days of research on media logic, the concept has become an important approach in communication and media studies and has just recently evoked new research activities. Its strength lies in the combined assessment of theorizing and empirically analyzing the features of media and media formats in their consequences for both individual and institutional contexts. For this reason, a large part of research resting on the media logic framework addresses the core question if, and how far, different societal fields change due to the formal and informal rules of a media logic, which also can set the direction of social behavior and perceptions.

While the more traditional perspective focuses on the influence of media institutions and the respective media logic on other systems and societal fields, a socio-constructivist approach discusses the role media logic plays for social interaction, media appropriation, and media usage. On both levels, extensive theoretical and empirical research deals with the interplay between media and other social domains, such as politics (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014; Klinger & Svensson, 2015; Landerer, 2013; Meyen, Thieroff, & Strenger, 2014), culture (Siapera, 2010), journalism (Dahlgren, 1996; Korthagen, 2016), or sports (Duncan & Brummett, 1987). In European communication science, the media logics approach is also being discussed within the framework of *mediatization* (Krotz & Hepp, 2011; Hepp, 2012; Couldry & Hepp, 2013). In this respect, media are regarded as ‘modifiers of communication’ (Krotz & Hepp, 2011, 137), while the model of media logics is seen as a concept which helps to understand how mediatization processes come into place.

1.1 MEDIA LOGICS IN A DIGITIZED WORLD: A NEW PLURALITY OF LOGICS

The advent of new technologies, the rise of the networked media, and a constant emergence of new media applications and platforms call for a reconsideration of the media logic concept. Nowadays, in an increasingly digitized, globalized, and networked world, powerful media structures and technologies influence people’s daily routines in many respects. Digital media have become embedded into many human activities.

This multifaceted media environment calls for a new and critical reflection on the media logic approach in order to include the paradigm shift from curated media to user-generated media content, just to name one of the most decisive parameters of technology change. In an era of technology as “disruption,” we need to ask more precisely where these disruptions occur and how the subsequent changes can be described. Regarding the present media landscape, we can see the integration of media in various social contexts and an increasing complexity of the resulting consequences. So more than ever, this development calls for critical reflections on the idea of a single mass media logic. One major challenge, both for theoretical and empirical perspectives on the concept, is to reflect on the diversity of several media logics at play instead of focusing on one single, mass media-related logic. Overall, a variety of (partly overlapping) media logics seem to be in effect—especially against the backdrop of digitalization and the “power of the internet.”

The ubiquity of the internet and networked media does not only influence people’s communicative practices in their private and professional lives, but media environments themselves are changed, transformed, and further developed by their appropriation in various social and cultural contexts: Human actions redefine and reconfigure the media themselves, another unprecedented technological development. Particularly, social media pose questions as to what the formal and informal rules of digital media formats will develop into (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). While the internet can empower users to connect with peers and engage as critical consumers or politically active citizens, they also, to some extent, change the media environment by means of their individual actions and interests. At the same time digital media can have critical implications for the formation of a public sphere, as discussed in the course of the filter bubble (Pariser, 2011) or echo chamber effects (Sunstein, 2001; Vaccari, 2012). Furthermore, the internet brings the logics of algorithms and filters into play (Klinger & Svensson, 2015), which are mainly programmed and controlled by commercial organizations and institutions.

Not only the growing importance of platform and networked media, but also the partial loss of relevance of curated mass media content in favor of personalized content, calls for a reflection. The challenge is to describe more precisely what and how the media logic concept can contribute to the understanding of mediatization processes with numerous media technologies, formats and actors blending into one another. Remodeling, adapting, and maybe deepening the concept media logic for the digital age consequently poses an important challenge, in order

to better understand the interplay between media and media related institutions. Hence, one of the aims must be a better understanding of mediated social control means in a digital environment of ubiquitous connectivity, all-embracing digital networks and more and more fragmented forms of media usage.

This challenge was taken up by the contributors of this book, who all reflect on the concept of media logics from their specific perspective. Some employ a very critical position; others regard in more detail how the concept should be developed and changed in order to grasp the new role that digital networked media play in people's lives all over the globe.

1.2 CONTENT OF THE BOOK

The volume presents findings from the conference "Media Logic(s) Revisited: Modeling the Interplay between Media Institutions, Media Technology and Societal Change," which took place at the University of Bonn (Germany, Department of Media Studies) in September 2015. Researchers from various disciplines, such as media and communication studies, sociology, political science, and philosophy provide insights into their theoretical and empirical perspectives on the media logic approach. Consequently, the aim of the book is to contribute to the ongoing debate about media logic in the light of current developments at the intersection of traditional media, digital media, and its different forms of appropriation.

The first part of the book focuses on theoretical perspectives on media logic. After having conceptually refined his original approach of media logic, **David L. Altheide** opens the discussion in part one of the book by presenting the concept of the *Media Syndrome*. He emphasizes the prevalence of media logic in our social life and argues that global political events today become mediated and are shaped by media formats. By that, they are a resource for another level of mediated experience, through which our sense of reality is altered as we become oriented to the mediated.

The strong influence of the media logic concept especially applies to the context of mediatization related research because it draws attention to the actual modalities by which a certain social domain becomes mediatized. In Chap. 3, **Friedrich Krotz** draws a theoretical line between media logic and mediatization by discussing and systematically analyzing the relation between both approaches. In this course, he

argues that both approaches share some similarities, but are very different regarding their conceptual starting points and facets of media. The media logic approach originally focused on the influence of TV on the mediation of political communication, which is one of communication studies' most central concerns, while the mediatization approach focuses on media change and its consequences for everyday life, culture, and society in a much broader sense. Even though Krotz emphasizes how helpful the media logic approach can be to analyze how TV and mass media transform political communication, he also raises the question whether and how far the term logic might be misleading.

From an institutionalist perspective on mediatization, **Stig Hjarvard** discusses in Chap. 4 how various forms of media logics contribute to social interaction and how the logics of social network media can be conceptualized as a part of mediatization allowing a further integration of system world and life world. He underscores his position by an empirical analysis of social network media and their role in face-to-face interactions.

In Chap. 5, **Mikkel Fugl Eskjær** proposes a re-interpretation of the concepts of media logic and mediatization based on systems theory. His focus in particular is on the notion of structural coupling. It is argued that mediatization as structural coupling allows for a plurality of media logics. This is also being applied to a case study of the mediatization of six Scandinavian NGOs. On the basis of six in-depth interviews with communication directors of Danish NGOs it is discussed in what ways organizations adjust to media demands or rather strategically integrate media logics into their communication plans.

Caja Thimm discusses in Chap. 6 the interconnectedness of technology, user behavior, and culture based on a critical assessment of the concept of "technological determinism." She redefines the concept of media logic within the context of interactive media and offers a systematic approach for the analysis of media logic and media usage. Thimm's concept of "media grammar" is based on the idea that media form their own grammar in a specific environment with their own affordances that relate to certain usage patterns. By drawing on the example of Twitter, it is shown that an approach to new media logics needs to take into consideration users' creative appropriations of technology. Thimm thus concludes that the pragmatics of technology can be seen as a baseline in order to understand the character of the digital society.

In Chap. 7, **Katrin Döveling and Charlotte Knorr** focus on a meta-analysis perspective on media logic. They discuss how the interdependencies between different systems and corresponding structures, logics, and actors, can be conceptualized and which theoretical and empirical consequences result. Further developing the concept of media logic, a systematic approach is conceptualized which outlines the interdependencies of producers, users, and consumers as networked transactions in a network society. The chapter elaborates different concepts of media logics focusing on interactivity as a central category to integrate various media logics perspectives.

The second part of the book deals with theoretical as well as empirical approaches to media logics in different societal contexts such as institutions, politics, and news media. Firstly, **Jens Schröter** emphasizes in Chap. 8 the importance of the concept of mediality for analyzing media logics. According to Schröter, one should not conceptualize media as a system of its own, as proposed by a systems theoretical perspective, in which mass media form a subsystem of society. Rather, it has to be taken into account that all institutions are fundamentally based on media infrastructures. The chapter draws on the example of nations, their medial infrastructure of identity documents, and the historical development of defense policy as the media monopoly of the state.

In Chap. 9, **Evelien D'heer** conceptualizes social media logics as network media logic by empirically analyzing politicians' presentations on social media platforms in the run-up to the 2014 federal elections in Belgium. Drawing on an analysis of 19 electoral candidates' Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as on in-depth interviews with them, she finds that politicians not only adapt their messages to appeal to journalists but also try to negotiate between online popularity and the presentation of their political views. This means that the presentation of a more "human" self and dialogue with citizens is balanced with the instrumental usage of social media in favor of politicians' candidacy.

In Chap. 10, **Daniel Nölleke and Andreas M. Scheu** introduce and discuss the concept of perceived media logic against the background of mediatization theory. The authors argue that, in order to analyze mediatization as a facet of social change, it is necessary to focus on peoples' perceptions of what constitutes media logic. After developing their theoretical perspective of mediatization as a pull process, the chapter demonstrates, based on qualitative data gathered in 36 in-depth interviews with experts from politics, science, and health, how various perceptions of media logic are in effect.

Chapter 11 deals with the question of news media logic and its different characteristics. **Maria Karidi** examines the development of media reality constructions as they appear over time, as well as between online and offline channels. Based on theoretical concepts of actor–structure dynamics and drawing from a quantitative content analysis of German newspapers and TV programs, as well as online news websites, Karidi finds that German news media tend to be more commercially oriented in 2014 compared to 1984–1989 as they integrate more aspects of conflicts, celebrities, scandals, negativity, and personalization within their reportage. The author concludes that the altered (media) structures and constellations might have significant consequences for the opinion-forming process in Germany.

Based on the theoretical background of the structural change of the public media sphere, **Mirco Liefke** in Chap. 12 analyzes German TV news coverage during the Ukraine conflict in 2013–2014 arguing that mass media’s monopoly of coverage has begun to sway and its inherent logic has changed and adopts to new circumstances. He demonstrates how established mass media face new challenges caused by an ongoing structural change of the public sphere by applying Harvey Sack’s apparatus of *Membership Categorization Analysis* (MCA) to the analysis of TV news coverage.

In Chap. 13, **Tales Tomaz** uses a techno-philosophical approach to discuss digital media logics. It is argued that not only our comprehension of human life nowadays has been simplified to algorithmic processes due to the emergence of big data but that algorithms are becoming “the real”. The discussion draws on a review of Heidegger’s and other philosophers’ work on the logic of the being and the logic of the real, both based on the mathematical. Main argument of the author is the idea that the mathematical is at the core of Western thought.

In the course of these thirteen chapters various theoretical and empirical perspectives on media logic are being discussed, showing that the concept is a vital part of media and communication research.

REFERENCES

- Altheide, D. L. (2011). Media logic and social power. *Empedocles: European Journal for the Philosophy of Communication*, 3(2), 119–136.
- Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2013). Conceptualizing mediatization: Context, traditions. *Arguments. Communication Theory*, 23, 191–202.

- Dahlgren, P. (1996). Media logic in cyberspace: Repositioning journalism and its publics. *Javnost – The Public, Journal of the European Institute for Communication and Culture*, 3(3), 59–71.
- Duncan, M. C., & Brummett, B. (1987). The mediation of spectator sport. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 58(2), 168–177.
- Esser, F., & Strömback, J. (2014). *Mediatization of politics: Understanding the transformation of Western democracies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hepp, A. (2012). Mediatization and the ‘molding force’ of the media. *Communications*, 37, 1–28.
- Klinger, U., & Svensson, J. (2015). The emergence of network media logic in political communication: A theoretical approach. *New Media & Society*, 17(8), 1241–1257.
- Korthagen, I. (2016). *Science, Journalism and Media Logic*. Rathenau Institute.
- Krotz, F., & Hepp, A. (2011). A concretization of mediatization: How mediatization works and why ‘mediatized worlds’ are a helpful concept for empirical mediatization research. *Empedocles: European Journal for the Philosophy of Communication*, 3(2), 137–152.
- Landerer, N. (2013). Rethinking the logics: A conceptual framework for the mediatization of politics. *Communication Theory*, 23(3), 239–258.
- Meyen, M., Thieroff, M., & Strenger, S. (2014). Mass media logic and the mediatization of politics. *Journalism Studies*, 15(3), 271–288.
- Pariser, E. (2011). *The filter bubble. What the internet is hiding from you*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Siapera, E. (2010). *Cultural diversity and global media. The mediation of difference*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Sunstein, C. (2001). *Echo chambers. Bush v. Gore. Impeachment and beyond*. Princeton University Press.
- Vaccari, C. (2012). From echo chamber to persuasive device? Rethinking the role of the Internet in campaigns. *New Media & Society*, 15(1), 109–127.
- Van Dijck, J., & Poell, T. (2013). Understanding social media logic. *Media and Communication*, 1(1), 2–14.

PART I

Theorizing Media Logics



The Media Syndrome and Reflexive Mediation

David L. Altheide

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Contemporary life has been transformed by the media and its embedded logic, rhythms, and content. We are caught in a perpetual and rapidly evolving media wave breaking toward the edge, a vortex that is guiding and defining our experiences and changing how we think of ourselves and others. It is a crisis of order and meaning fueled by media logic, expansive information visual technology, and fear that has taken us to the edge of what is familiar and is eroding trust and social order. During an appearance on a US “fake news show,” *The Daily Show* (July 21, 2015), President Obama got serious about the role of the media in our time:

I think that what is understated is the balkanization, the splintering of the media generally, so it is hard for us to get one conversation, you’ve got folks who are constantly looking for facts to enforce their existing point of view as opposed to having a common conversation, and I think that one of the things we have to think about is how do we join in a common conversation about something other than the Super Bowl. (cc.com)

D.L. Altheide (✉)
Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, USA
e-mail: David.Altheide@asu.edu

© The Author(s) 2018
C. Thimm et al. (eds.), *Media Logic(s) Revisited*,
Transforming Communications – Studies in Cross-Media Research,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65756-1_2

Increasingly, we are not just programmed, but are a program—or at least parts of one or more—and guide and evaluate our social performances in popular culture terms and criteria, most of which, reflect the mass media as well as social media. I call this the “media syndrome”: *The media syndrome (MS) refers to the prevalence of media logic, communication formats, and media content in social life. The media syndrome might include individual personas and identities, social issues, and political actions that are modeled on media personalities and characters that are situated in entertainment oriented public and popular culture scenarios that are depicted and constituted through media logic, including information technology and communication formats* (Altheide, 2016). The cumulative impact of more than fifty years of massive communicative changes is that our media have become more instant, visual, and personal. This is a change in our world, and it has fundamentally changed the global order. Modern living is situated in mediated contexts of communicated experience that conveys emotionally-charged meanings of relationships, contested desirability, personal and social crises, and conventional narratives. Consider individual identities: A Twitter app, “Live On,” promises that “When your heart stops beating, you’ll keep tweeting” (liveson.org).

The app operates by mining one’s tweets and then applying an algorithm. It is not only individuals who can gain immortality through the media syndrome, but entire countries, like Kosovo, can gain legitimacy, if not official existence, through digital communication formats. Despite Kosovo’s five-year struggle for independence, neither the United Nations nor the European Union would recognize its sovereignty. But Facebook did when its software permitted users to identify themselves as citizens of Kosovo. Deputy Prime Minister, Petrit Selimi, stated, “Being recognized on the soccer pitch and online has far greater resonance than some back room in Brussels.” And Kosovo is not alone: other regions seeking independence and recognition, such as Catalonia and the Basque region in Spain, and Palestine, have their own Facebook domain names:

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, lauded the move, through a spokesman, telling Wafa, the Palestinian news agency, that Google ‘put Palestine on the Internet map, making it a geographical reality.’ (Bilefsky, 2013)

Social realities are bound up with the communication order operating at the time. Events are defined culturally through a process of symbolic

construction, including putting parameters or brackets around various actions, decisions, policies, that constitute an “event.” But more importantly for our purposes, events are given meaning through symbolic communication to audiences, who, in turn, interpret and selectively edit certain features, aspects, and nuances of the event. Consider a few examples.

In November 2014, the Sony Corporation was hacked by an organization “Guardians of Peace,” a North Korean pseudonym, which revealed internal emails, released trailers of movies in production, and threatened more damage and even violence if a comedic movie, “The Interview,” about a plot by the CIA and a journalism team to assassinate the President of North Korea, was shown. One character stated, “It’s the first rule of journalism: give the people what they want.” Sony pulled the movie from theaters, despite President Obama’s caution against giving into international censorship and blackmail. The movie was shown a few days later to large audiences, including a substantial Video On Demand audience.

Popular culture entertainment logic has sustained the Discovery Investigation Network as it slides into low-budget reenactments of horrific crimes slathered in sexual goo, a kind of “murder porn,” being shown in 100 million homes in 157 countries. Such programming builds on the popularity of a host of crime shows in the USA, such as NCIS, CSI, Law and Order, etc., but at a fraction of the cost. So weird is the audience receptivity to murder porn, that a Southpark episode had its miscreants concerned about parental viewing: “the vile and despicable trash that our parents are watching on cable television.” The network president claimed that this brand is well on its way: “if we can be a place where viewers can consistently know that regardless of the hours, regardless of the day, that they will always be able to flip to this network and know that they are going to get a story of the mystery, crime, suspense genre.” (Emily Steel, January. 4, 2015).

Horrific diseases in other countries are seldom seen on American news reports, but Ebola was different. Devastatingly lethal in several west African countries (e.g., Liberia, Sierra Leone), Ebola had claimed only one US citizen, whose symptoms were misdiagnosed during a visit to an emergency room, and who was sent home. But this got a lot of media play. Despite clear statements that it could only be transmitted through exchange of bodily fluids, hundreds of images of dead Africans led some politicians to quarantine US medical workers, who returned

from treating patients abroad. Ebola virtually disappeared from US news reports by the end of November 2014, despite its expansion in West Africa.

Analysis of the coverage of Ebola and other problems suggests that more information has produced little understanding. While the emphasis is on American culture, the arguments about entertainment and the implosion of our information order seem to be globally appropriate. We have a lot of news, but little understanding of the world and each other. Indeed, I suggest that our social condition reflects our media condition. I argue that this is because of the organization, structure, and use of the mass media and media logic. Information technology has greatly changed, but so has the culture that embraces and reflects it. The foundation of media logic, mediation, and mediatization has taken center stage. As communication scholar Marian Adolf stated:

Society, then, exists mainly as a mediatized representation or itself (if it ever was something else)...it is the media that offer us new ways and means and new spaces and temporalities of communicating. We cannot theorize mediatization without the media, and a notion of what is they are doing to communication action. (Adolf, 2013, 160–161)

The mass media and the information technologies and formats that transport and emphasize images, sounds, narratives, and meanings are crucial components of this meaning-making process. The mediation process involves the construction and use of media logic to provide order and meaning in the mass communication process that will be anticipated, understood, and shared by various audiences. As many scholars have noted, “effective communication” is a bit circular, where the messengers—such as journalists or policy makers—take into account the audience members’ awareness, familiarity, sophistication, and preferences for certain kinds of messages over certain media. The trick, then, is essentially to give the audience a wholesome batch of what they expect, along with sprinklings of something new—the “newsworthy” event in question. And once the new combinations are set forth, widely accepted, and even institutionalized in future practices for journalists, on the one hand, and audiences, on the other hand, they basically become a kind of a gateway for how later events and issues will be set forth. Increasingly, certain events funneled through media logic (new technologies and formats) become gateways to other mediated events. Thus, communication and meanings become reflexive.