SU
SO

COMMUNICATION AS THE INTERSECTION OF THE OLD AND THE NEW

THE INTELLECTUAL WORK OF THE 2018 EUROPEAN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION DOCTORAL SUMMER SCHOOL

Edited by Maria Francesca Murru, Fausto Colombo, Laura Peja, Simone Tosoni, Richard Kilborn, Risto Kunelius, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Leif Kramp, Nico Carpentier

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Introduction: Communication as the intersection of the old and the new

Maria Francesca Murru, Laura Peja, Simone Tosoni, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Nico Carpentier

1. About the book

This book, the fourteenth in the Researching and Teaching Communication Book Series launched in 2006, stems from the communal intellectual work of the lecturers, the students and the alumni of the 2018 edition of the European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School (SuSo).

The book gives an account of the work done at the summer school, and in particular of the plurality of research interests and analytical perspectives that the SuSo community values as its main asset. The European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School is run by a consortium of 20 European universities, and brings together PhD students coming every year from more than 30 different European and extra-European institutions. It therefore represents an arena where different disciplinary traditions and methodological backgrounds in media studies can get in touch, debate and cooperate to advance our understanding of media systems and communication processes. The reader can get an insight of the richness and variety of the different perspectives in dialogue within SuSo from the second part of the book, dedicated – as it is customary in this book series – to the PhD projects' abstracts of the students participating to the summer school. Altogether, these abstracts represent a good sample of the ongoing research of the next generation of media scholars, and an overview of the current trends in media and communication studies.

Seven among the students (Xu Chen, Timo Harjuniemi, Alyona Khaptsova, Ludmila Lupinacci, Ruben Vandenplas, Ondrej Pekacek, Piia Tammpuu) have been selected to develop their research into a full paper: together with four lecturers' chapters, one chapter from one of the founding members of SuSo (Nico Carpentier with Vaia Doudaki) and with two chapters from SuSo's alumni (Edgard Eeckman, Fatma Nazlı Köksal & Fatoş Adiloğlu) selected through an open call, their works compose the first part of the book, divided in four thematic sections.

This diversity of origins, locations, positions and experiences produces a complex and broad mixture of themes and topics, which - we would like to argue - is also characteristic of the field of Communication and Media Studies as a whole. Obviously, this complicates the book editors' task, who have a position the different contributions in a more or less coherent and convincing structure. At the same time, the editing process also offers an opportunity to reflect about the field of study, not moving into a lament about diversity and lack of coherence, but appreciating the complexity, thoroughness and broad span of what Communication and Media studies scholars do. What was especially apparent in this year's cluster of contributions is that our field of study integrates a wide variety of media technologies (ranging from old to new), demonstrating that contemporary societies are not characterized by the replacement of technologies, but by the always unique articulations, integrations and intersections of old and new. The four sections of the book address these intersections in similarly diverse ways.

The first thematic section is dedicated to theories and concepts. The first chapter, by **Kari Karppinen**, discusses different types of normative theories and their uses in media and communication research. Arguing that communication research cannot escape normative and political considerations, the contribution explains why the question is not whether we need normative theory, but what kinds of normative approaches and what kinds of engagements with normative theory are most useful for Media and Communication research and for what purposes. **Alyona Khaptsova and Ruben Vandenplas** review the research findings on media selection processes, connecting them to the structure-agency debate. Rooting their argument within the current processes of media convergence and algorithmic proliferation, the chapter strives to move away from approaching the relation between structure and agency as a linear process, or a dichotomy, opting instead for describing the interrelation of both concepts as a circular process. In the next chapter we find a conceptual discussion, by **Ondrej Pekacek**, triggered by the growing emergence of Czech alternative media, which posits as a substantial challenge to the prevailing research paradigm that has considered the proliferation of alternative media as a positive development for democracy. Besides examining structural factors of this conjuncture, particularly the role of public distrust of mainstream media and the increased levels of media concentration, the chapter discusses two alternative paradigms - the Alternative Media Anti-Systemness Matrix (AMAM) and the Populist Political Communication – and their capacity of gathering additional insights to the distinction between the ideological orientations of the Czech alternative media outlets. The concept of liveness and its current state in media and communications research is examined by **Ludmila Lupinacci** in the third chapter. Starting from the understanding of liveness as a context-contingent and continuously evolving term, her chapter maps the core definitions attributed to the concept

in the academic sphere, and addresses the potential shortcomings of the available conceptualizations in characterizing the communicative practices that unfold in the present-day culture of connectivity. In the last chapter of this section, **Timo Harjuniemi** argues that the way journalism dealt with the financial crisis of 2008-9 and with the euro crisis challenges us to rethink our common-sense notions about journalism's democratic role. By building on the lessons learned from the economic crisis, the chapter argues that the populist upheaval against institutions of liberal democracy – unleashed by the crisis and the politics of austerity – inevitably manifests itself also as a crisis of professional journalism.

The second section of the book deals the social construction of reality. The discursive construction of the homeless subject position in the Greek street paper *shedia* is the focus of the contribution by **Vaia Doudaki and Nico Carpentier**. By deploying discourse theory, a theoretical framework that is rooted in political philosophy, the chapter illuminates the discursive-political struggles that can be found in *shedia* and attempts to dislocate it by offering an alternative, counter-hegemonic discourse, centred around three nodal points: the home, agency and citizenship. **Magnus Andersson** explores the spatial turn and its implication for media studies, with a particular focus on the inter-relationship between media and place. The main argument of the chapter is that media are complex structures that may both strengthen and weaken boundaries of places. Communication geography is not only positioned as a recent supplement to the large family of Media Studies, but it is presented also as an opportunity to construct new interdisciplinary bridges. Finally, the chapter by **Piia Tammpuu** examines the concept of "virtual residency", as a novel kind of state-related status and affiliation, by focusing on the case of Estonian e-residency, which is a government-supported transnational digital identity scheme. The findings suggest that digitally enabled transnationalism and digital nomadism appear as the two major perspectives from which one's self-identity, as an Estonian e-resident, are constructed.

In the third section of the book, we focus on a significant theoretical field of Communication and Media Studies, namely mediatization. **Karsten D. Wolf and Konstanze Wegmann** open the section, with a contribution to the methodological discourse of Media and Communication Studies. Mediatization serves as a frame for arguing why new methods for analysing relations between media and society are needed; Situational Analysis is then proposed as a method for the reconstruction of communicative figurations. The second chapter of the section, by **Michael Skey**, engages with some of the key arguments used by the main proponents and critics of the mediatization approach. By providing a number of examples culled from the engagements with football fans, watching, discussing and playing football, as well as interviews with football journalists in East Africa, the paper tries to plot a course between the two opposing poles, using insights from the more grounded approach-

es to mediatisation, whilst avoiding some of the more extravagant claims about the media's all-encompassing role as both an institution and influence.

In the last section of the book, three chapters move into particular components of social life, with a focus on health and sociability. Drawing on data from 23 interviews from an ongoing project about Australia-based Chinese people's engagement with the dating apps Tinder and Tantan, the contribution by **Xu Chen** examines if and how young Chinese people's current attitudes towards dating and marriage are shaped by the use of these dating applications. While dating apps have the potential to reconfigure young Chinese people's attitudes to dating, the study shows that the role of dating apps in this process mainly functions as reinforcement and acceleration, without fundamentally changing users' dating attitudes. The second chapter, by **Fatma Nazlı Köksal and Fatoş Adiloğlu**, presents an inquiry to trace and track the visual weight in health communication with the aim to contribute to fostering further research in what is sculpted as the "visual health communication" field. Web health information and patient-GP (general practitioner) relationship is the focus of the contribution by **Edgard Eeckman**. By applying a mixed-method research approach, the study presented in this chapter shows that the Web has the potential to narrow but not to bridge the information and knowledge gap between patient and GP, which thus causes the patient-GP power balance to remain asymmetric.

2.   The background of the European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School

The summer school was established in the early 1990s by a consortium of ten (Western) European universities, initiated by the Universities of Stendhal-Grenoble III (Grenoble, France) and Westminster (UK). From then on, these participating universities have organised annual summer schools for PhD students in the field of media and communication studies, lasting for one or two weeks and taking place in a wide range of locations, including Grenoble, Lund, Barcelona, London, Helsinki, Tartu, and Ljubljana. In 2016, the Summer School moved to the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, where it took place also in 2017 and 2018. In 2018, it was organised from 8th to 17th July.

Including the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan (IT), 20 universities participate in the consortium: Ankara Üniversitesi (TR), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ES), Universitetet I Bergen – UiB (NO), Universität Bremen (DE), Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem – ELTE, Budapest (HU), Helsingin Yliopisto (FI), Univerzita Karlova, Prague (CZ), Univerza v Ljubljani (SI), London School of Economics & Political Science - LSE (UK), Loughborough University (UK),

Lunds Universitet (SE), Roskilde Universitet (DK), Université Stendhal-Grenoble III (FR), University of Stirling (UK), Tampereen Yliopisto (FI), Tartu Ülikool (EE), Vrije Universiteit Brussel - VUB (BE), Vytauto Didžiojo Universitetas – VMU, Kaunas (LT), and University of Westminster (UK). In 2018, the affiliated partner of the Summer School was again the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA). ECREA supported participation to the summer school also with the award of two grants for students.

The central goals of the summer school are:

a.   to provide innovative mutual support for doctoral studies in the field of media and communication, with additional support of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA),

b.   to stimulate bilateral and multilateral cooperation between consortium partner universities in the areas of doctoral studies, teaching and research,

c.   to provide a forum for critical dialogue between academics on the cultural and technological challenges posed by media globalisation and convergence, focusing on socio-political as well as the cultural implications of these challenges,

d.   to promote a respectful but critical dialogue between academic researchers and representatives of civilian society, the media industry and government institutions.

The summer school follows a number of principles: student-orientedness is the most important one. The PhD projects of the participating students are at the centre of the summer school, and its main aim is to enhance the academic quality of each individual project. In contrast to many other summer schools, the main task of the instructional staff is not to lecture, but to provide support to the participants in their PhD trajectories.

The summer school provides this support through structured, high-quality and multi-voiced feedback on the work of each individual PhD student, combined with numerous opportunities for informal dialogues. The feedback consists of a series of extensively elaborated analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the PhD projects, which allow PhD students to structurally improve the quality of their academic work. Although the feedback is provided by experts in the field of media and communication studies, these authoritative voices never become authoritarian, and the autonomy of the participants is never ignored. Moreover, feedback is always multi-voiced: different lecturers and participants contribute to the analysis of each individual PhD project, enhancing the richness of the feedback and allowing a diversity of perspectives to become articulated.

The summer school combines a constructive-supportive nature with a critical perspective. During the feedback sessions, the evaluation consists of a balanced overview of the qualities and problems of a doctoral research and publication project, in combination with the options that can be used to overcome these problems. Moreover, the workshops and the lectures are intended to support the future academic careers of the participants by allowing them to acquire necessary academic and self-management skills. The atmosphere of the summer school is fundamentally non-competitive, as the talents of all participants are acknowledged, and participants and lecturers act as peers, cherishing academic collegiality and collaborative work.

The summer school also expresses the utmost respect for academic diversity. It recognizes the existence of a plurality of schools, approaches, theories, paradigms, methods, and cultures in academia, which makes it predestined for conversation and dialogue, and not for conversion and conflict. Its commitment to diversity in approaches can only be made possible through an equally strong commitment to academic rigueur, thoroughness, responsibility, honesty and quality.

Finally, the summer school aims at stimulating connectedness. First of all, it looks for building long-term academic networks, enabling future collaborations at an international/European level. The need for intellectual exchanges in academia and the importance of transcending frontiers are widely recognized. The summer school cultivates also a deep respect for the localized context in which it operates, at the urban and national level of the hosting city, avoiding disconnections with civil society, business and the state.

In order to realise these principles, the 2018 SuSo was based on a combination of lectures, training workshops, student-workshops and working visits.

The core format of the summer school is based on the so-called feedback-workshops, which are oriented towards providing the doctoral students with the structured, high-quality and multi-voiced feedback mentioned above. For this purpose, the following specific procedure was used:

After their application is approved, the participating doctoral students upload their 10-page papers onto the intranet of the summer school website. On the basis of the papers, the doctoral students are then divided into three groups ('flows'), and each student is attributed a lecturer-respondent and a fellow participant-respondent. Moreover, a so-called 'flow-manager' (a member of the academic summer school staff) is also attributed to each of the flows. These flow-managers coordinate the activities of the feedback-workshop flows for the duration of the summer school.

During the feedback-workshops, each doctoral student presents his or her project, which is then commented upon by the fellow participant-respondent, the lecturer-respondent and the flow-manager, and finally discussed by all participants. At the end of the series of feedback-workshops, a joint workshop is organised,

where the diversity of paradigmatic, theoretical and methodological approaches is discussed, combined with the intellectual lessons given at the summer school.

In addition, the training workshops are a crucial pedagogical tool. These workshops provide the doctoral students with practical training on issues related to making posters, publishing, abstract-writing, comparative research, literature review, oral presentation skills, communication of scientific topics to lay audiences, interactive teaching to larger groups, interrogating sources, and creative online writing. They are combined with a number of lectures related to specific contents, focusing on set theories or concepts. Finally, the customary field excursions give the participants more insights into the hosting country's media structures, politics, cultures and histories.

3.   The scholars involved in the summer school

In 2018, 26 doctoral students participated in the European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School. All of their abstracts, and a selection of six chapters based on their work, are included in this book.

The blue flow was joined by Hilde Sakariassen, Gloria Ooko, Monika Meilutyte, Boris Mance, Wefwafwa Allan, Ilari Kellokoski, Alba Mendoza, Xu Chen, and Timo Harjuniemi.

The yellow flow consisted of Ruben Vandenplas, Konstanze Wegmann, Metzeri Sanchez Meza, Alyona Khaptsova, Valériane Mistiaen, Piia Tammpuu, Marie Lyne Mangilli Doucé, Ida Roivainen, and Karolina Szpyrko.

The green flow grouped Ondrej Pekacek, Ludmila Lupinacci Amaral, Sebastian Cochinescu, Valentina Turrini, Zerina Catovic, Jinxixi Lyu, Kemal Güleç, and Sini (Saila Marian) Kaipainen.

The summer school hosted 15 lecturers from the partner universities from all over Europe: Karsten D. Wolf, Burcu Sümer, Montse Bonet Bagant, Richard Kilborn, Irena Reifová, Ike Picone, Kari Karppinen, Fausto Colombo, Risto Kunelius, Norbert Wildermuth, Magnus Andersson, Ilija Tomanić Trivundža, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Simone Tosoni, and Michael Skey.

In addition to the activities of the summer school lecturers and workshops, the programme included a lecture by Federica Setti, Chief Research Officer of GroupM Italy, the world's largest advertising media company.

This year, Fausto Colombo and Simone Tosoni were the local directors of the Summer School, and Maria Francesca Murru and Laura Peja were the local organisers. The local team was supported by the international director Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt. In addition, François Heinderyckx acted as the ECREA liaison.

4.   Assessment and perspectives

The evaluation was conducted in the form of a workshop including a half-standard-ized, anonymous survey. All participants completed an evaluation form to rate, and comment on, the lectures and workshops held during the two weeks of the summer school. Additionally, the participants formed four evaluation groups and discussed feedback on: lectures, workshops and student-workshops; individual discussions with lecturers, discussions and networking opportunities with other students; the scheduling of the programme, composition of the programme; accommodation, food and coffee (during breaks), social activities; website, pre-summer school com-munication, the Summer School book, and the flow-managers/summer school staff.

   The evaluation generated positive feedback and constructive suggestions for further improving some of the conceptual and scheduling aspects for future summer schools. The reputation, experience and teaching qualities of the lecturers present at the summer school 2018 as well as their approachability was appreciated by the participants.

   The overall positive and encouraging feedback was complemented by nu-merous comments on the social network platforms that were used together with the summer school website as discussion spaces and networking tools. Thanks are here due to the social media editor of this year's edition: Federica Cavaletti.

5.   Final acknowledgments

The summer school is supported by a wide range of individuals and institutions. The consortium partners and the ECREA all provided invaluable support to this long-standing initiative. Over the past years, lecturers and flow managers have invested a lot of energy in lecturing and providing support. The doctoral students themselves have shown a tremendous eagerness, which can only be admired and applauded.

   The success of the SuSo 2018 has been possible thanks to the organizational and financial support of many institutions. The organizers want to express their gratitude to: the Department of Communication and Performing Arts of Università Cattolica; Almed – Graduate School in Media, Communication and Performing Arts and his director Mariagrazia Fanchi; Lifelong learning office and Educatt – Student Services of the same university; Sky Italy.

   With its diverse sections and chapters this edited volume shows that the pro-foundly changing social and cultural environment poses new challenges to media scholars. The continuous effort to analyse these transformations should be com-bined with the attempt to gain a deeper understanding of what is ahead of us in

its variety and entirety. This is what the Summer School proves year after year: strong European media and communication research is about diversity and creativeness, and about cooperation and networking, especially among young scholars who contribute fresh inquiries to the research discourse. This is what makes the summer school a unique learning and networking experience, bringing together the less experienced and the more experienced from all over the world to promote a constructive dialogue by which new research horizons emerge.