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Editorial

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Dear Reader,

This issue of *Studies in Communication Sciences* (SComS) brings you a general section, two thematic sections – one on political communication and one on storytelling and journalism – as well as news about changes in the editorial team. Geographically, the different contributions in this issue cover China, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. Two studies use a comparative design and two focus on different aspects of online communication. Taken together, the contributions in this volume are evidence of the work and the engagement of a vibrant research community, and they also show that *SComS* adds a distinct European voice to the communication research community, while retaining a cosmopolitan attitude.

The general section opens with Hua Pang's article, which provides a detailed breakdown of the uses and gratifications of social media platforms in mainland China (QQ, WeChat and Weibo). Based on an online questionnaire answered by a sample of 258 university students with an average age of 23, the analysis shows that respondents make extensive use of social media platforms (41% said they visit their social media more than nine times per day). The analysis also reveals several aspects of the gratification users obtain, including the need to maintain relationships, and amusement purposes. Pang's study offers insights into digital forms of sociability tied to social aspects in mainland China.

Daniela Marcantonio's study on the role of gestures in intercultural communication takes a comparative approach, contrasting Italy and Germany, and shows that gestures are deeply interwoven into everyday communication practices and are, as such, emblematic of the corresponding cultural context. At the same time, peo-

ple who have moved to another cultural setting (Italians who live in Germany and vice versa) use gestures to underline and express specific concepts regardless of the surrounding context. Intercultural contact thus expands the speakers' repertoire, and while gestures always refer to the cultural context, they are not determined by it.

Jörg Räwel examines contact list communication on the Internet employing a systems theoretical perspective. From this viewpoint, social media platforms such as Facebook, business and employment services such as LinkedIn, or online dating websites are designed in such a way to reduce the problem of double contingency. In other words, these applications facilitate the initiation of communicative interaction between users, because they reduce the risks involved in taking the first step that are characteristic of face-to-face communication. But as Räwel points out, this comes at a price. Examining the communicative interaction on dating websites, he shows that these platforms impede the stabilisation of interaction patterns as they are designed merely to initiate non-committal contacts.

This issue also includes two thematic sections. The first thematic section includes four articles that address current and important topics in political communication. The digitalisation of politics has profound consequences for the political process, it offers new communicative possibilities to political and civil society actors, challenges the role and status of journalists and the media as gatekeepers, multiplies the complexity of the communicative environment and reconfigures the relationships between citizens and political institutions. These transformations are liable to highlight and accelerate the social changes that have led to a declining trust of citizens in politics as a means to



effectively process questions of common concern, to pose the question of how citizens are able to make informed decisions on increasingly intricate issues. Moreover, these transformations challenge journalists to redefine their roles against the rapidly changing demands of audiences and markets.

Against this background, the four articles in this section examine different aspects of the political process and they can be read as calls to accommodate conceptually new forms of political communication and to re-examine the roles of actors, their relationships and the contexts in which they are located.

The first article follows precisely this line of thought: Marco Kovic, Adrian Rauchfleisch, Marc Sele and Christian Caspar argue that the digital transformation of political processes has led political actors to use fake grassroots efforts that mimic the online behaviour of regular citizens in order to mobilise for their cause. Extending Chadwick's (2007) analysis of digital repertoires and organisational hybridity in the digital age, Kovic et al. show how political actors have come to embrace digital technologies less for their deliberative potential and more for the pursuit of their strategic ends. Because of the far-reaching implications of digital astroturfing for the political process, not least as witnessed during the 2016 US presidential election and the Brexit referendum, the authors also discuss possible countermeasures that could be implemented by social media platforms and that might be able to create more transparency with regard to the identities of their users.

The second article asks whether the use of legacy media as a means of staying informed has a negative (media malaise hypothesis) or positive (virtuous circle hypothesis) effect on people's trust in government. Drawing on a series of studies carried out in 2016 on a sample of 1 115 German respondents, Frank Marcinkowski and Christopher Starke endorse the latter hypothesis (Norris, 2000). Furthermore, their results show that the more respondents use media to access political information, the more they trust the national govern-

ment. Marcinkowski and Starke's article helps the reader understand the role legacy media play in citizens' trust in government and how that role functions. It also reminds us that politicians can increase or lessen citizens' trust in government by the way they behave.

Laurent Bernhard's article tackles another important question in political communication: what is the effect of voters' socio-economic status on how well they know the topics they are asked to vote on? The author assumes that the discriminatory effects of socio-economic status on understanding disappear when propositions of low-issue complexity are at stake. To test his hypothesis, the author carried out an empirical analysis of panel survey data on three votes at the federal level that took place in Switzerland between 2006 and 2008 on the topics of asylum, naturalisation and corporate tax. The analysis results suggest that voters' level of knowledge of the topics is not always dependent on their level of education.

In the final article in this section, Filip Dingerkus, Annik Dubied, Guido Keel, Vittoria Sacco and Vinzenz Wyss re-examine an enduringly popular research subject: journalists. Their research demonstrates that there is no typical journalist in Switzerland. Based on a study carried out in 2015 involving 909 respondents, they paint a picture of Swiss journalism in the context of a media sector undergoing profound changes (see Meier, 2017). Compared to 2008, the year of the previous study, the number of journalists has further decreased, although it now includes more women, and the sector is generally marked by a higher level of qualifications. The study's results are particularly striking when we compare the journalists' answers to questions on the perception of their role in society and on their job satisfaction across the different linguistic regions where they work.

The second thematic section is presented in the guest editors' introduction by Daniel Perrin and Marta Zampa (pp. 133–134). It presents four articles that address the relationship between journalism and storytelling and are authored by Gilles

Merminod; Karl Renner; Marta Zampa and Daniel Perrin; and Wibke Weber, Martin Engebretsen, and Helen Kennedy.

We wrap things up with news about changes in the editorial team. We warmly welcome on board Katharina Lobinger from the Università della Svizzera Italiana (USI), who is taking over from Lorenzo Cantoni. She is already fully involved in all editorial activities and we are happy to have her, as *SComS* can only profit from her enthusiasm, knowledge and professionalism.

The last words of this editorial are reserved for Lorenzo Cantoni, who served twice as an editor of the journal, from 2003 to 2006 and from 2013 to 2018. During this time, Lorenzo has played a great part in developing *SComS* into what it is today: in his first spell he guided the editorial process of *SComS*, when it was still exclusively a journal of USI, up until its merger with *Medienwissenschaft Schweiz*, the journal of the Swiss Association of Communication and Media Researchers at the time. In his second spell, up to this year, he was instrumental in seeing through the transition process that has seen *SComS* become a platinum open access journal. But Lorenzo is not only the longest-serving editor of *SComS*, he has also contributed several editorials and articles to the journal. We are grateful for the time he has invested in the journal and our meetings, for his expertise, initiative and his dedication to help put *SComS* on a track where it can progress and prosper. True to his spirit, he remains connected to the journal and will be guest-editing a thematic section on fashion communication in a future issue. It is thus less a goodbye than it is an *arrive-derci*, and all that is left for us to say in the meantime is “Thank you, Lorenzo!”

SComS

General Section

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Understanding domestic social media use among Chinese college students under the framework of uses and gratifications

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Abstract

Although China has the world's largest population of social media users, little is known what drives Chinese users to adopt the country's leading media platforms, like QQ, WeChat, and Weibo, and what gratifications are satisfied by using these fastest-growing sites. In light of the literature on the uses and gratifications theory, the study explored the essential pattern of computer-mediated communication phenomena and interaction behaviors in Mainland China. In this exploratory study, 258 college students from Chinese universities were asked about their uses and gratifications of these social media sites. The factor analysis reveals five key dimensions relating to gratifications obtained from social media are identified: relationship maintenance, amusement, style, information seeking and sociability. Moreover, a hierarchical OLS regression analysis shows that there is a positive relationship between frequency of social media use and the needs of relationship maintenance and amusement. Furthermore, among the five socio-psychological values, the social related factor is revealed to be significantly and positively linked with spending time on the social media.

Keywords

Social media, uses and gratifications, gratifications sought, gratifications obtained, college students, China

1 Introduction

Over the past five years, the online phenomenon of social media has become increasingly prevalent in Chinese people's daily life. According to government data from the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), there were approximately 659 million Chinese SNS users by the end of June 2015 (CNNIC, 2015). Recent research has also shown that almost 98% of Internet users and 48% of the total Chinese population have at least one social media account (Verot, 2016). Thus it can be seen that although the Chinese government strongly controls and censors Internet activities, many citizens nevertheless extensively use these novel technologies. The blocking of global networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in Mainland China has led to the flourishing of domestic social media platforms dominated by the top three players consisting of QQ, Weibo, and WeChat (Linkfluence, 2016). Dominating today's media-centered lifestyle, these local favourite social

networking applications are substantially transforming the way in which Chinese people communicate, share news as well as maintain relationships with one another (Cheng, Liang, & Leung, 2015; Leung, 2013; Zhang & Pentina, 2012; Zhong, 2014).

Social networking sites (SNSs) are web-based services that offer unprecedented opportunities for users to conveniently browse, post, and comment on diversified content by mutual interests (Choi, 2016; Kammerl & Kramer, 2016; Lin, Hsu, Chen, & Fang, 2017). Uses and gratifications (U&G) research have begun to investigate what the underlying structure of motivates, use behavior and psychological satisfaction regarding the use of new communication tools. Much effort and research have adopted this framework to determine a broad range of psychological motives driving the utilization of different online websites, including Youtube, MySpace and Facebook (Malik, Dhir, & Nieminen, 2016; Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017; Ruehl & Ingenhoff, 2015). However, this line of studies overemphasizing the gratification



sought behind the use of social media, neglecting of the investigation of users' gratification obtained practice in the use of these emerging new media. Moreover, scholarly research addressing psychological motivations and use patterns of social media have been predominately conducted in the western countries (Ifinedo, 2016; Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017; Quinn, 2016).

Unfortunately, to date, little research has examined these issues for domestic social media platforms in Mainland China (Ji, 2017). Furthermore, prior studies have showed that research on Chinese social media motivations and use patterns is still in the early stage, currently, the issue remains theoretically underdeveloped and empirically unexplored (Ji, 2017). Given the rapid rise of these local social media technologies and their potential use in many fields such as political policy, civic participation, and business in the Chinese society, the fundamental questions warrant research: Why and how people actively employ these technologies? Furthermore, are they fulfilled by the satisfy the certain social or psychological needs through the medium? These intriguing questions are extremely important to today's online media researchers, practitioners as well as policy-makers.

Hence, the objective of the exploratory study is to address the aforementioned shortcomings in the past research by applying the U&G theory to examine the gratifications that young people seek and the gratifications received from the ongoing use of the top three popular social networks – QQ, WeChat, and Weibo in a given social setting. In line with Rosengren's framework of the U&G approach (Rosengren, 1974), the research not only reports on the more personal psychological factors but also elaborates on the societal environment and media use structures. According to Rosengren, certain communication needs, individual differences, as well as contextual societal factors can combine to result in different perceived motivations for media use (Rosengren, 1974). This also supports the notion that the explanatory potential of the proposed research model needs embracing the ques-

tion of the etiology components of media use motivations (Vorderer, Steen, & Chan, 2006). Thus, this article may not only foster a better understanding of domestic social media phenomenon and its far-reaching implications in the context of China, but provide insights into how people incorporate the three emerging technologies into their daily lives.

2 Understanding social media use in Mainland China

Nowadays, China has the largest and fast-developing active virtual space in the world, with a staggering of more than 500 million projected users until 2018 (Statista, 2015).

QQ, WeChat and Weibo are regarded as the leading social networking websites in China, now with 850 million, 600 million and 287 million active monthly users respectively (Linkfluence, 2016). QQ as one of the most popular instant messaging platforms, which constitutes the largest online community in Mainland China, bundled with different services such as online gaming, shopping, microblogging, group chatting and social networking (Huang, Kim, & Kim, 2013). Weibo is a Twitter-like microblogging platform that enables individuals to publicly post short tweets or messages within 140 characters to friends' webpages immediately, ensuring timely updates of the current activities, ideas, and state in real time (Hu, Marchiori, Kalbaska, & Cantoni, 2014; Sullivan, 2014; Zhang & Pentina, 2012). WeChat is a form of mobile messaging app that provides users with a convenient way to exchange text and voice messages, to share ideas and location quickly (Gan, 2017).

Social media use has a special relevance for university students, who are mostly heavy users of the favorite communication service (Zhong, 2014). Previous studies have also indicated that educated youth adults especially students feels more comfortable with the Internet than do the elderly, hence they would prefer to be online consumers and users of different channels of social networking sites

(Ku, Chu, & Tseng, 2013; Leung, 2013; Ragnedda, 2015). More recently, a vast volume of literature have shown that the student cohort is dedicated, engaged, and highly motivated to spend time and energy in sharing information, listening to music, uploading images, building a circle of friends and chatting online through specific social media services (Chen & Chan, 2017; Pang, 2016; Zhong, 2014).

Moreover, research into social media usage patterns suggested that most of the college students are using MySpace and Facebook for an indispensable component of their everyday lives for reasons such as developing new friendships as well as re-connecting with old friends (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). Wang, Tchernev, and Solloway (2012) found similar results, indicating that four main motivations for social media use included emotional expression, cognition, social maintenance, and habitual diversion. In a study of 597 respondents, Ku, Chu, and Tseng (2013) discovered four general gratifications among the computer-mediated communication technologies, consisting of social maintenance, information exchange, amusement, and style. Based on an online survey, Ruehl and Ingenhoff (2015) applied a combined perspective of uses and gratifications (U&G) and social cognitive theory (SCT) to assess individuals' motives for brand page usage on Facebook, indicating that consumption behavior could be driven by activity, self-reactive-novel as well as monetary incentives. Later, Gan and Wang (2015) revealed that three patterns of gratifications were obtained from using both microblog and WeChat: content gratification, social gratification and hedonic gratification. In addition, they found that content gratification plays the most salient role in using microblog, while social gratification is the most important for WeChat usage. Although what motivates users to adopt social media and how the gratifications affect the practices through social media are crucial research subjects (Gan & Wang, 2015; Leung, 2013; Quinn, 2016), prior published studies assessing the effects of these local social media platforms on in-

dividual's behaviour in the Chinese society is scarce at best (Gan & Wang, 2015). The aims of the current investigation are mainly to determine the social-psychological origins for college students to use these domestic social media, and to identify the gratifications they obtained from the media usage.

3 Uses and gratifications theory

U&G, is one of the most established theories to explain the questions of "how" and "why" individuals actively choose specific media to gratify a variety of needs. As Katz suggested that U&G theory is a useful approach in media research to understand the social and psychological origins of motives that affect people's purposely choose particular types of media (Katz, 1959). The key assumptions of the theory are on what individual do with the communication media instead of the influence of the specific media on the individual. It asserts that varied media compete for audiences' attention, and that users play an active role in selecting the medium that satisfies their distinctive types of needs, such as seeking out information, keeping emotional bonds, as well as chasing status (Valkenburg, Peter, & Walther, 2016). A considerable amount of the prior research on U&G has paid attention to television (Nabi, Stitt, Halford, & Finnerty, 2006), newspaper (Lin, Salwen, & Abdulla, 2005) and other patterns of conventional media (Albarran et al., 2007). With the dynamic growth and popularization of new media technique, a large number of important studies from the U&G perspective have appeared recently (Choi, 2016; Gan & Wang, 2015; Jers, 2014; Verot, 2016). This theory is especially well-suited to unpacking social media platforms, which offer the potential for both mass and interpersonal communication (Lin, Hsu, Chen, & Fang, 2017).

This study provides an empirical foundation for understanding what prompts social-network site users to adopt the new media platforms and what types of psychological needs these are offering. As Ha and James pointed that an essential dis-

tinguishing nature of emerging media is interactivity, which enables users to offer information response to a source or communication from other users (Ha & James, 1998). Similarly, Ruggiero identifies that concepts to be considered in the new media age, such as activity and interactivity, the essence and the characteristic of the online audience and asynchronies need to be reviewed (Ruggiero, 2000). As far as the nature of online communication is concerned, the differences become blur between consumer and producer, which has led to the use of the concept “prosumer” to explain users who are simultaneously involved in both production and consumption of content (Ku, Chu, & Tseng, 2013; Ritzer, 2010). This allows users control the message and its utilization, making it significant to measure the received gratifications through the media in the computer-mediated communication environment (Choi, 2016). As such, the internet and more specifically social media constitute newer media forms and new spread way, with their own defining characteristics in different countries, which are ripe for examination with the theoretic support of U&G theory.

3.1 Gratifications sought on social media use

In recent years, the theory of U&G has been reformulated to stress comparisons between the gratifications sought from a particular medium with gratifications obtained. Gratifications obtained refers to those different patterns of motives that individual’s actual experience with the particular medium. However, gratifications sought means those particular gratifications that individual initially hope to get from a particular media before they have adopted the technology (Malik, Dhir, & Nieminen, 2016). Palmgreen, Wenner, and Rayburn (1980) argued that while individuals purposely use media to meet certain types of needs, their needs are not always satisfied. Consumers tend to seek from using a special media that can offer the general and specific gratifications when a medium cannot fulfil their sought-after gratifications. This implies that Gratifica-

tion obtained might predict the degree of users’ satisfaction or dissatisfaction that their experience from using a certain medium (Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1980). Therefore, it’s important to also realize the gap between those two different dimensions of gratifications so that researchers have a clear idea of the analysis of how different consumers use various media applications in their daily life.

Considering social media is a novel social phenomenon in Mainland China, there is a distinct lack of empirical research in the gratifications or benefits of starting using the peculiar medium (Leung, 2013; Zhong, 2014). Meanwhile, only a few documents examined both gratifications obtained and motivations for using social media (Gan & Wang, 2015; Pang, 2016; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). An examination of the motivations for using social media is necessary due to it would shed light into what factors impact widely adoption (Lin et al., 2017; Xiong & Lv, 2013). Thus, this study proposes: what types of gratifications do individuals expect to get from a medium before using it? Are there one or multiple factors that drive them to embrace with such new media and tools? Thus, to address this important void in the literature, the first research question is proposed in the following:

- › RQ1: How does the U&G framework explain college students’ local social media (especially QQ, WeChat and Weibo) adoption in Mainland China?

3.2 Gratifications obtained from social media use

Instead of only paying attention to the gratifications that people expect to receive from social media, this research applies the theory of uses and gratifications (U&G) to comprehend the dimensions of gratifications that are obtained from their adoption of the services. As early as 1974, Blumler and Katz suggested that the majority of studies pay attention on gratifications obtained due to it helps us to understand what drives continued adoption of the media technologies (Blumler & Katz, 1974). Numerous researchers have adopted U&G

framework to unpack the motivations for using of diversified social media platforms. Regarding IM usage, for instance, five gratifications sought are discovered, such as amusement, connection maintenance, freer expression, social interaction (Lo & Leung, 2009). In terms of microblog adoption, Zhang and Pentina revealed that Chinese people seek several primary needs such as career development, feelings vent, information, citizenship behavior, social bonding, visibility, self-expression as well as keeping interaction (Zhang & Pentina, 2012).

For using WeChat, Lien and Cao found individuals who have greater needs for recreation, information, and sociality are more willing to use WeChat. Furthermore, these three factors positively impact users' attitudes and trust (Lien & Cao, 2014). Similarly, Li, Wang, Lu, Wang, and Zhu (2016) also revealed, for Chinese college WeChat users to use WeChat is mainly used to communicate and maintain the relationship between friends. Although these studies provided the preliminary explanation of the various and complex nature of gratifications that individuals obtain from using SNSs, only very few investigations have systematically analyzed the particular gratifications obtained from social media in the context of China (Wu, Shi, & Yan, 2013). Therefore, based on the existing literature, the study attempts to probe the gratifications students get from using social media:

- › RQ2: How do the different constructs extracted from the principal components factor analysis explain college students' domestic social media satisfaction in Mainland China?

3.3 The association between the gratifications obtained and social media use

Gratifications obtained are deemed as a crucial predictor of people's media use habits (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). As Palmgreen and Rayburn suggested that when a certain media satisfies the expected needs, this may result in the constant employ of the media (Palmgreen & Ray-

burn, 1979). In a study of Facebook, Joinson revealed that gender, view friends' photos, and frequency of state updates might predict the number of users logging in the platform. Instead, age, as well as scores on the content gratification scale might predict the time spent on the website (Joinson, 2008). Wang, Tchernev, and Solloway (2012) found that social media use would significantly enhance emotional and cognitive aspects of gratifications, especially when these requirements are higher. In line with the study, Leung (2013) also revealed that people who use Facebook and blogs to satisfy their social and affection needs tend to spend more time using them. Recently, Khan (2017) found that specific social media behaviors such as commenting and uploading could be strongly predicted by social interaction need, while sharing through the technology being strongly predicted by informational need. Hence, in order to continue this line of studies, the following hypothesis was formulated:

- › RQ3: What is the relationship between the gratifications obtained and social media use?

4 Methodology: Online survey

4.1 Sampling

An online survey was undertaken at a Lanzhou university in Northwestern China in June and August 2016. The use of the university student sample is determined to be appropriate for the present study as they constitute the largest group of social media users (Gan, 2017). Students were invited to fill in an online questionnaire hosted on www.sojump.com about their use of three leading social media platforms in China including QQ, WeChat, and Weibo. Sojump is a very famous professional online survey and evaluation platform that provides humanized services consisting of online questionnaire design, data collection, custom reporting, and statistical analysis in China. Meanwhile, they were assured of anonymity and participation was entirely voluntary. The language was

in Chinese and a total of 258 participants completed the online survey. When the non-users of social media were eliminated, the sample was reduced to 229. The study removed nonusers (11.2%) because the work presently concentrates on the gratifications derived from the utilization of social media. Of the sample, males comprised 67 percent of the sample and females 33 percent. Their average age was 23 years. The majority of them logged on to social media platforms more than five times every day (n = 153, 66.8%) and spent more than two hours on social media daily (n = 171, 74.6%). In addition, the average monthly household income for the total sample in this study was about RMB 4500. In terms of education, 50.8% of the students holding the master degree, followed by 39.2% with the bachelor degree, 3.5% with the junior college degree and 6.5% doctoral degree.

4.2 Constructs and measures

The questionnaire was composed of ten questions concerning the use of social media, gratifications sought, gratifications obtained, and demographic characteristics. It took the participants on average 15 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. In order to ensure maximum response from these Chinese students, the questionnaire was translated into Chinese language by back translation method.

Social media behavior. Adopting past measures on social media use (Cheng, Liang, & Leung, 2015; Gan & Wang, 2015), this measure includes two self-reported assessments of social media behaviour, which were both treated as dependent variables in the regression models. The first test was used to examine the frequency of students' social media uses on an 8-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 = 1–2 times to 5 = more than nine times per day. The second assessment asked students how long they spent on social media each day on an 8-point scale ranging from 1 = 0–3 hours to 5 = more than 12 hours a day (see Table 1). In addition, to get an evaluation of students' social media uses experience, they were asked to report how long they had been adopting social media.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants (N = 229)

Demographic Characteristics	%
Gender	
Male	67.2
Female	32.8
Age	
Under 20	4.8
20–25	59.8
26–31	24.0
Above 31	11.4
Education	
College	1.7
Bachelor	53.3
Master	38.4
Doctoral	6.6
Income	
Below 3 000 RMB	29.3
3 000–6 000 RMB	41.0
6 001–9 000 RMB	14.8
9 001–12 000 RMB	7.4
More than 12 001 RMB	7.4
Frequency use of social media	
1–2 times	14.8
3–4 times	18.3
5–6 times	16.2
7–8 times	9.6
More than 9 times	41.0
Time spend on social media	
0–3 hours	75.5
3–6 hours	16.6
6–9 hours	5.2
9–12 hours	1.9
More than 12 hours	0.9

Gratifications sought. To assess motivations or reasons why college students use social media, the study measured gratifications sought by using the scale of gratifications sought propounded by Quan-Haase and Young (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). The items are fit within the present research due to Instant Messaging and Facebook are mainly used for social needs, hence, similar gratifications sought are expected to drive students' social media use in China. The scale totally consisted of 11 relevant statements, which comprised a variety of motivations that survey respondents could select from. Respondents were required to report whether they use social

networking sites for these reasons on yes or no scale with “1”=yes and “0”=no (see Table 2).

Table 2: Gratifications sought in percentages (N = 229)

Individual Items	% of Yes responses
Friend suggested it	45.8
Everyone I know is on social media	90.3
Help others keep in touch with me	96.5
Find classmates	80.0
Received a promotional e-mail	55.0
Get to know more people	43.2
Network in general	82.0
Find course information	73.3
Find dates	22.2
Find people with mutual interests	44.5
Find jobs	24.4

Note. Percentage of sample in the questionnaire who responded “yes” to the item.

Gratifications obtained. Gratifications obtained assessed the range of benefits people received from their use of social media sites. Based on Ku, Chu, and Tseng’s (2013) study, the study adopted 26 items to assess respondents’ motivations for using social media the respondents were asked, “I use social media to...?” and they could rate each statement on a five-point response scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Table 3 shows wording, means, as well as standard deviations for each of the item. The items used by Ku, Chu, and Tseng are suitable for the current research because, the elements employed in this study resulted from integrating statements from prior literature indicated main gratifications from adopting the new media technologies (Lo & Leung, 2009; Wang, Tchernev, Solloway, 2012). *Control measures* Demographic attributes of study participants were measured by age, gender, overall monthly family income and education level. Background information was gathered for each student to offer an overview of demographic characteristics in the analysis.

4.3 Data analysis

The data analysis was performed by using SPSS 20.0. Firstly, a descriptive analysis was performed on the data to examine the psychological incentives of using social media. Secondly, a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to gauge the types of gratifications obtained from social media usage. Based on the findings of the factor loadings in the study, items means, standard deviations (SD), and the standardised Cronbach’s alpha, were computed for every factor. Thirdly, ordinary least squares regression analyses were run to test the association between gratifications obtained and students’ social media usage behaviors.

5 Results

5.1 Social media use

In the survey, 41% stated visiting their social media more than nine times per day. 14.8% respondents launch their social media account at least once or twice per day, 18.3% use it at least three or four times a day, 16.2% update it at least five or six times a day, and 9.6% update it seven or eight times per day. The data shows that the participants use social media extensively, logging into their accounts to send messages, browse photos, check the recent status of their friends, as well as get interesting content on upcoming social issues. Regarding spending time on social media, on an average day, the study found that approximately three-quarters of student spent 0–3 hours and more than a quarter of student spent more than three hours on these sites. Besides, data showed also that a majority of the students (86.0%) had been using social networking sites over two years ($M=4.79, SD=0.59$).

5.2 Gratifications-sought for using social media

Of participants surveyed, 96.5 percent of them claimed that their main gratifications for using social media were that “help others keep in touch with me” (see Table 2). This result is consistent with the

Table 3: Factor analysis for social media gratifications

I use social media...	M	SD	Factors				
			1	2	3	4	5
Relationship maintenance							
To tell friends and family I am all right	3.64	0.900	0.738	0.118	0.099	0.130	0.100
To let others know I care for them	3.61	0.875	0.739	0.088	0.145	0.207	0.186
To keep in contact with family and friends	4.03	0.802	0.794	0.160	-0.057	0.117	0.048
To feel closer to my family and friends	3.71	0.891	0.810	0.213	0.153	0.174	0.023
To improve the relationship with my family and friends	3.62	0.828	0.715	0.127	0.243	0.207	0.087
To organize social events	3.87	0.778	0.650	0.197	0.052	0.087	0.215
To keep in contact with people I have no time to meet	4.03	0.688	0.728	0.149	0.005	0.057	0.174
To interact with my family and friends easily	4.06	0.629	0.757	0.238	0.060	0.015	0.100
Amusement							
Because it is entertaining for me	3.73	0.781	0.173	0.666	0.018	0.228	0.378
Because it is pleasant	3.74	0.732	0.285	0.813	0.072	0.167	0.212
Because it relaxes me	3.78	0.736	0.316	0.803	0.132	0.243	0.142
To have fun	3.65	0.790	0.225	0.791	0.193	0.231	0.200
To enjoy the pleasure of contacting people	3.71	0.759	0.431	0.588	0.161	0.215	0.145
Style							
To feel that I am a grown-up person	3.26	0.828	0.361	0.271	0.526	0.160	0.092
As a status symbol	2.69	0.984	0.145	0.032	0.861	0.065	0.078
To look stylish	2.76	0.977	0.031	0.093	0.891	0.173	0.197
To look fashionable	2.75	0.948	0.025	0.107	0.892	0.169	0.213
Information seeking							
To find out new information for myself	3.55	0.855	0.226	0.172	0.306	0.727	0.093
To obtain useful information	3.60	0.824	0.211	0.230	0.216	0.823	0.153
To obtain helpful information	3.68	0.800	0.201	0.182	0.182	0.867	0.093
To acquire information in an inexpensive way	3.78	0.798	0.121	0.326	-0.036	0.679	0.250
Sociability							
To meet new acquaintances	3.42	0.863	0.210	0.099	0.349	0.220	0.605
To be less inhibited chatting with strangers	3.19	0.966	0.107	0.089	0.420	0.166	0.514
To allow people to find me easily	3.43	0.879	0.270	0.136	0.168	0.186	0.623
To relieve boredom by contacting people	3.53	0.891	0.062	0.250	0.043	0.060	0.779
To joke with friends	3.55	0.819	0.159	0.230	0.106	0.047	0.811
Eigenvalue			10.271	2.874	2.027	1.653	1.153
% of variance			20.459	13.134	12.815	11.606	11.137
Cronbach's alpha			0.909	0.907	0.878	0.884	0.810

previous literature, which also argued that majority of people use the virtual communities in order to obtain timely communication and keep the connection with each other (Ifinedo, 2016). Once a person has logged in a social media account, he or she may feel a need to interact with their friends through it and hence recommend it to other people. This also confirms the previous virtual community studies in the diffusion of innovations tradition, indicating that information regarding an

innovation frequently comes via personal social networks such as family members, friends, or colleagues (Rogers, 2010). The second need chosen frequently by 90.3% was “everyone I know is on social media.” Considering that students tapped these social media sites to meet some new friends and decrease social inhibitions (Pang, 2016), social media is very popular among students and its adoption leads to a need to be part of the group. Conversely, not using social media like others would imply

being excluded from the circle of friends and acquaintances. The third statement students selected most often (82.0%) was “network in general.” The item followed by “find classmates” with 80.0%. These two statements indicate a requirement for social connectivity that enables young people to stay loosely connected with their friends and family members and to become the member of the larger social media community. However, only 22.2% of users make use of social media to search for potential dates. Table 2 displays that other motivations were selected much less often by students as reasons for using social media.

5.3 Gratifications obtained from social media use

When exploring gratifications obtained from using social media, six factors were determined with the eigenvalues greater than 1.0, explaining 69.15% of the variance completely (see Table 3). Factor 1, relationship maintenance, consists of eight items measuring how social media provides a venue for the formation and maintenance of the connection with others (eigenvalue=10.271, variance explained=20.459%).

Factor 2, pastime, consists of five items, all of which were related to college students' use of social media as a mean for receive entertainment ends such as relaxing, having fun and getting enjoyment. The eigenvalue is 2.874, and the factor explains 13.134% of the corresponding percentages of variance. The mean for major of these statements was high, representing users' key gratifications with respect to social media use. Two significant motivations were “because it relaxes me” ($M=3.78$, $SD=0.736$) and “because it is pleasant” ($M=3.74$, $SD=0.732$), indicating how university students perceive social media as a vehicle to seek to relax and enjoy themselves.

Ranked as the third factor, style (eigenvalue=2.027, variance explained=12.815%) concludes three items assessing the extent to which social media enables users to look really fashionable and stylish. Factor 4, information

seeking (eigenvalue=1.653, variance explained=11.606%), consists of four items measuring the extent to which users would like to know what's happening to the latest issues and events. The high mean implies that for individuals, being in the “social know” is vital due to social information is necessary to become a member of the peer group. The last construct considered was the sociability entertainment motivation (eigenvalue=1.153, variance explained=11.137%), which contains three items that tests the students' willingness to utilize social media to get to know new people and reduce social inhibitions and boredom.

5.4 Gratifications obtained and social media use

How are gratifications obtained and social media use associated with each other? Two ordinary least squares regression models test were conducted to systematically examine the connection between the five gratification factors and social media usage (see Table 4). The first model consisted of the frequency of social media use and the second model included the time spend on social media as the dependent variable. As shown in Table 4, regression model 1 reveals that there are significant correlations between education and the frequency of social media usage. The lower grade students tend to log onto the services more frequently in a day. It is possible that the job pressure of senior students was higher than that of junior students in the university (Vromen, Loader, Xenos, & Bailo, 2016). In this model, when controlling for the influence of the population variables, the study finds that both relationship maintenance ($\beta=0.159$, $p<0.05$) and amusement ($\beta=0.131$, $p<0.05$) are positively associated with the frequency of social media use. This model makes up 6.0% of the variance in the frequency of social media use in model 1.

The second regression model indicates no relationship of demographics variable with students' spending time on social media. After gender, age, education and income were controlled in the model, sociability ($\beta=0.193$, $p<0.01$) are posi-

tively associated with time spent on social media. Therefore, the student spent more time on social media per session are mainly to fulfil their sociability needs. However, it is interesting to notice that style ($\beta = -0.131$, $p < 0.05$) are negatively associated with time spent on social media. The independent variables demonstrate an entire of 6.0% of the variance in updating profiles. Thus it can be seen that the gratifications obtained factor explain more variance in the profile updates than the frequency of social media use.

Table 4: Regression analysis of social media use (N = 229)

Variables	Frequency of social media use β	Time spend on social media β
Demographics		
Age	0.022	0.064
Gender(male)	0.079	-0.149
Education	-0.179*	0.056
Income	-0.090	0.123
Gratifications		
Relationship maintenance	0.159*	0.105
Amusement	0.131*	0.035
Style	-0.054	-0.131*
Information seeking	0.070	-0.079
Sociability	0.109	0.193**
Adjusted R ²	0.060**	0.060**

Note. OLS=ordinary least squares. Table depicts standardized coefficients from regression models 1 and 2. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

6 Conclusions and discussion

6.1 Major findings

The rapid development of social media has attracted tremendous academic attention, leading to the widespread investigations concentrating on the uses and possible implications of those new technologies. However, much of the research to date only paid attention to social media sites in western countries, neglecting to investigate the widespread domestic social media use among university students in Asian countries. Thus, the present study attempts to fill this void by applying the

uses and gratifications framework to explore both the behaviors of gratifications sought and gratifications obtained in the use of leading local social media technologies among college student in the Chinese society. It is expected that the exploratory work not only brings new insight to the U&G framework, but also offers first-hand information on the status of domestic social media use in Mainland China.

Firstly, the results identify students' the underlying types of gratifications that are sought from using social media. Among them, "everyone I know is on social media," "help others keep in touch with me," and "network in general" rank as the principal motives that drive students' choice of local technologies. The findings indicate that the main socio-psychological needs for adopting domestic social media are to get instant communication as well as maintain interaction with the peer network. These findings are consistent with similar research by Quan-Haase and Young that found the peer network not only provides a series of content relevant with the innovation, but also generates social pressure for the adolescent to adopt (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). The empirical work confirms that individuals are seeking for more convenient and high-efficient communication ways to keep connections with others via a variety of media, especially when these media is much easier to get and operate (Cheng, Liang, & Leung, 2015). The result also reinforces Phua, Jin, and Kim's (2017) quantitative study that revealed social innovations might diffuse through people's social bonds with one another.

Secondly, factor analysis successfully generated the five-factor structure of the gratifications obtained among social media users. For the exploratory procedures, the study selected principal component analysis instead of maximum-likelihood factor analysis, not only because the hypotheses were themselves exploratory, but also because the aim of study was to identify a few possible coherent constructs that best reflected the various meaningful dimensions of motivations. As some scholar suggested that principal com-

ponent analysis could obtain the most information content about the specific substrates tested in the research, thereby, the results from it would offer a best-case scenario for the linear combination metric (Shankarraman, Davis-Gorman, Copeland, Caplan, & McDonagh, 2012). Results show that students are motivated by relationship maintenance needs, the purpose for amusement, chasing style, seeking information, and sociability needs. This result may reflect individuals are mainly motivated to utilize social media services for the purpose of seeking relationship maintenance and entertainment, thereafter for their inner social and psychological needs. Leung also found the same finding and further suggested that social networking applications are ideal platforms for people to keep a large network base of superficial connections, such as virtual friends through the computer-mediated technologies (Leung, 2013). The entertainment need is the second discovered gratification among the uses and gratifications test. This result is also supported by related research (Cheng, Liang, & Leung, 2015; Ifinedo, 2016; Zhong, 2014). Given that social media is a multimedia tool, using the service to read useful information as well as playing online games, may be more attractive for young adults when pursuing amusement than traditional medium. Moreover, consistent with previous investigations (Cheng, Liang, & Leung, 2015), this study finds that style is an integral and indispensable factor of social media usage in Chinese society.

Thirdly, this study investigated gratification predictors for the frequency of social media use and the time spent in it. When the study controlled demographic variables, social media usage is predicted by relationship maintenance and amusement. The findings indicate that those with high desire to stay in touch with friends and enjoy the entertainment online tend to use social media more often. These findings echo the work by Fu's group who discovered that people who actively use social media because of inbred psychological incentives to keep the connection with distant and closed friends

that they can satisfy their needs (Fu, Wu, & Cho, 2017). Meanwhile, this empirical results also support the general view that through the social media usage process, the young adult cohort has the opportunity to socialize with their friends, and be entertained (Choi, 2016; Leung, 2013; Lien & Cao, 2014).

6.2 Implications for research and practice

Results of the current study provide both academic and practical implications. First, the present research makes theoretical contributions to existing literature on U&G (Choi, 2016; Ji, 2017; Vromen et al., 2016) by adopting the U&G approach to explore the psychological incentives and domestic social media behaviors among university students in the Chinese setting. Second, this article identifies five key gratifications behind the use of these web-based technologies, and further indicates social media use could be strongly predicted by certain psychological incentives such as social interaction and amusement. Third, this research offers a wealth of information in guiding relevant practitioners in developing ideal social media strategies where social networking sites are crucial components of the media market (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Moreover, appropriately considering the determined gratifications while generating future related functions and uses, social media services practitioners can make the social media platforms more attractive for users.

6.3 Limitations and future work direction

In explaining the findings of the current research, one must focus on some limitations of the exploratory research that offers directions for future studies. Firstly, due to the relatively modest sample size in the research recruited through online, so the results cannot be generalized to the larger population of social media users. Meanwhile, this study examines social media users' motivations, use behaviors in the Chinese context, hence the findings may not be generalized to social media users in other settings. Secondly,

the study respondents were mostly young users of domestic social media such like QQ, WeChat, and Weibo. Care must be taken when applying the results to other patterns of social media platforms that target different populations of users. Thirdly, due to the cross-sectional nature of the present research, it thus may limit causality among the various variables of theoretical interest (Ran, Yamamoto, & Xu, 2016). Although the research assumed that media use behaviors would lead to satisfying respondents' psychological needs, the opposite directionality is equally plausible. It is likely that people who deem they enable to meet their gratifications by using the new services, they are likely to access the media more often (Fu, Wu, & Cho, 2017). To draw such precise causal inferences, a longitudinal analysis is needed in the near future. Lastly, future studies should also focus on other media usage behaviors, and the role of distinct gratifications in impacting individuals' usage patterns.

Despite the limitations, this research originally offers a much-needed investigation of gratifications sought, gratifications obtained and domestic social media use behaviors among Chinese university students based on the uses and gratifications framework. This paper demonstrates the significance and valuable of uses and gratifications theory to social media studies in Asian countries. The results further suggest that the rapid rise of domestic social media technologies in contemporary China have in many ways afforded young people more opportunities to connect the social life and satisfy a wide range of needs that were impossible a decade before. Therefore, it is expected that the current research could trigger both theorizing and empirical studies on the new media technologies in the current media environment.

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Deutsche und italienische Embleme in interkultureller Alltagskommunikation

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Abstract

Gesten, als Besonderheit der menschlichen Kommunikation, haben Wissenschaftler unterschiedlicher Disziplinen immer wieder interessiert. Zahlreich sind die Studien in den Kommunikationswissenschaften, die sich mit dieser Thematik beschäftigen und die die Gestik als Teil des kommunikativen Aktes sehen. Inwiefern sind Gesten kommunikativ und kulturbezogen? Verändert sich die Gestik in interkultureller Alltagskommunikation? Ausgangspunkt der Untersuchung ist, dass Gesten häufig als ein Kulturphänomen einem Sprachumfeld zugeordnet werden. Damit stellt sich die Frage, ob die Gestik bei einem Kulturwechsel neu erlernt wird, lediglich transferiert wird oder ob aus unterschiedlichen Gesten im interkulturellen Bereich neue Gesten entstehen und vor allem, wie die Menschen, die zwischen den Kulturen leben, mit Gesten umgehen. Die zentrale These dieser Arbeit besagt, dass Gesten zwar in einer Kultur zusammen mit der Sprache erlernt werden, aber nicht ausschliesslich Bestandteil dieser Kultur sind. Nach einer umfangreichen empirischen Untersuchung, die die Variabilität und Adaption von Gesten im interkulturellen Spannungsfeld anhand von Menschen zeigt, die ihre ursprüngliche Kultur verlassen haben und sich in einer für sie neuen Kultur aufhalten, wird die These begründet: Die Übertragung von Gesten ist möglich und findet im interkulturellen Bereich auch statt. Sowohl die empirische Untersuchung in diesem interkulturellen Bereich als auch die vorgestellte theoretische Ausarbeitung sind vom Ansatz und der Umsetzung her neuartig.

Keywords

Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Semiotik, Gesten, Multimodalität, nonverbale Kommunikation

1 Einführung in die Gestik

Zahlreiche Studien haben gezeigt, wie bereits 1989 von Hans J. Vermeer formuliert, dass «nonverbale Kommunikation etwa 70% aller Kommunikation ausmacht; sie ist vielfach wichtiger als die verbale» (Vermeer, 1989, S. 172). Tatsächlich, wenn zwei oder mehr Leute sich unterhalten, fließen auch extraverbale, parasprachliche und ebenso nonverbale Elemente ein (vgl. Birdwhistell, 1975; Posner, 1985). Unser Körper wird dadurch zum symbolischen Referenten für das Individuum und für die Gesellschaft. Dabei entwickelt die Person eine kinetische und proxemische Kompetenz, welche die Kontextualisierungsfähigkeit des Subjektes und den Kontextualisierungsinhalt der Nachricht in der Kollektivität repräsentiert. So können wir die Welt erkunden, in der Welt agieren und

handeln, indem wir die ganze Struktur unseres Körpers aktivieren und damit sowohl Sender als auch Empfänger von Botschaften werden.

In diesem alltäglichen Kommunikationsfluss werden alle Möglichkeiten verwendet, die uns unser Körper zur Verfügung stellt, von verbalen bis zu nonverbalen Elementen. Diese letzte Form der Kommunikation mit Hinblick auf die Gestik hat unterschiedliche Disziplinen interessiert, die aus verschiedenen Perspektiven das Phänomen betrachtet und zahlreiche Klassifizierungen geliefert haben.

Während redegleitende Gesten, die zur Unterstützung des Gesprochenen dienen, eine mehr oder weniger universelle Form aufweisen, scheinen dagegen Embleme (nach der Terminologie von Efron, 1941, 1972; Ekman & Friesen, 1969,



1972) – bedeutungstragende Gesten, wie die OK-Geste – ein Kulturspezifikum zu sein. Deshalb stimmen Psychologen, Soziologen, Anthropologen und Linguisten darin überein, dass die Gestik genauso wie die Sprache erlernt wird.

Man kann also sagen, dass die Embleme als Kulturspezifikum im Zusammenhang mit einem gewissen Sprachregister innerhalb einer bestimmten Kultur gelernt werden, also kulturbezogen sind (Morris et al., 1979; Kendon, 2004b; Efron, 1972; Ekman & Friesen, 1969; Meo-Zilio & Mejía, 1980; Saitz & Cervenka, 1972).

Aber inwiefern ist diese Art von Gesten kulturbezogen? Werden sie immer wieder vom kulturellen Sprachregister hervorgerufen? Wie wird die multimodale Alltagskommunikation im interkulturellen Bereich organisiert?

Embleme besitzen eine gewisse Autonomie in der Sprache (Ekman & Friesen, 1972; Kendon, 1980, 1992, 2004b; Poggi, 2002) und reflektieren immer ein Konzept (Kendon, 1980). Somit können wir davon ausgehen, dass sie nicht vom Sprachregister der Kultur, in der sie erlernt wurden, abhängig sind. Warum Gesten nicht über die Grenzen der Sprachgemeinschaft hinausgehen, erklären Morris et al. (1979) mit Kultur- und Sprachbarrieren. Im Gegensatz dazu wird hier gezeigt, dass Embleme leicht in eine andere Sprachkultur transferierbar sind.

2 Überblick

Unser tägliches Leben ist voller Rituale, die unseren Tagesrhythmus bestimmen (wie aufstehen, sich waschen, frühstücken, arbeiten gehen, usw.). Als denkende, agierende und handelnde Wesen senden und empfangen wir ständig Signale und gleichzeitig setzen, produzieren und deuten wir Zeichen.

Jeden Tag interagieren wir mit Menschen, Gegenständen und Symbolen. Wir tun alles mit grösser Selbstverständlichkeit, ohne zu realisieren, wie diese Handlungen uns als kommunikative und gesellschaftliche Wesen in Anspruch nehmen.

Gemäss Watzlawick, Beavin und Jackson (1996, S. 53) ist es unmöglich, nicht zu kommunizieren. Menschen sind immer in einen Kommunikationsfluss involviert, der unsere Weltanschauung, unsere Persönlichkeit und unser Wertesystem prägt und beeinflusst.

Seit der Antike hat die Körpersprache Redner, Philosophen und Rhetoriker beschäftigt und die körperlichen Aspekte der Kommunikation finden sich bereits in der antiken Rhetorik, wo dann vor allem Gestik, Mimik und Körperhaltung eine Rolle spielten (hierzu Göttert, 1991; Maier-Eichhorn, 1989; zusammenfassende Darstellungen finden sich bei Müller, 1998, S. 25 ff.; Hübler 2001, S. 121 ff.; Kühn, 2002, S. 22 ff.).

Eine wichtige Wende in der Erforschung der nonverbalen Kommunikation im heutigen Sinne wurde mit der Arbeit von C. Darwin (1872) über den Vergleich der Ausdrucksweise von Emotionen, die sich im menschlichen und tierischen Gesicht zeigen, erreicht.

Eine erste ausführliche Auseinandersetzung mit diesem Problembereich stellt die vergleichende Arbeit von Efron (1941, 1972) dar, der die Gestik von osteuropäischen Juden und süditalienischen Einwanderern in unterschiedlichen Stadtteilen von New York City untersuchte. Aufbauend auf dieser Arbeit entwickelten vor allem Ekman und Friesen (1969) ein funktionales Klassifikationssystem von Gesten, das bis heute in der Gestikforschung verwendet wird. In diesen Studien zeigen sich klare kulturelle Unterschiede im jeweils betrachteten nonverbalen Verhalten, also der Mimik, der Gestik und der Distanzregulierung. Gleichwohl wird deutlich, dass es für alle diese Bereiche auch gleichsam anthropologische Grundlagen gibt, die für alle Menschen universell gelten, die aber in der jeweiligen Kultur unterschiedlich modifiziert und spezifiziert werden (Argyle, 1975; Scherer, 1979; Key, 1977; Ekman, 1985; Scherer & Ekman, 1985; Siegman & Feldstein, 1987; Burgoon et al., 1996). Dies wird vor allem in dem kulturvergleichenden Forschungsprogramm von Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1970, 1973, 1984; Eibl-Eibesfeldt et al., 1989) und von Morris (1967, 1977,

1994; Morris et al., 1979) deutlich. Solche Resultate lassen vermuten, dass diese Art nonverbaler Urkommunikation sich dann durch kognitive Metaphorisierungs- und Metonymisierungsprozesse an ein Territorium und eine Gesellschaft kulturell gebunden ist. Daraus lässt sich folgern, dass die nonverbale Kommunikation die Basis des heutigen menschlichen Handelns ist. Unsere gestikulierende Interaktion kann also wie ein Kontinuum (Kendon, 1988; McNeill, 1992) der Hand- und Armbewegungen gesehen werden, was eine enge Beziehung zwischen dem Gesprochenen, der Körperbewegung und dem kognitiven Netzwerk des Gehirns impliziert. Eben diese letzte Implikation hat zahlreiche Psychologen dazu bewogen, Untersuchungen zu starten, welche die Gestikforschung geprägt haben.

Die Gestikforscher setzen somit ihren Schwerpunkt auf die redebegleitende Gestikulation und deren Verbindung zur Sprache, während Embleme fast nur ethnographisch untersucht werden.

Andere Untersuchungen haben das Gestenrepertoire zweier Kulturen miteinander verglichen und dabei Unterschiede festgestellt. In vielen psychologischen Studien (Petitto, 1986, 2000; Petitto et al., 2001; Bates et al., 1977, 1979, 1989; Clark, 1978; Bruner, 1975) wurde die Ontogenese der Gesten bei Kindern betrachtet. Dadurch konnten einige Fragen von semiotischem Interesse beantwortet werden, andere Fragen sind jedoch offengeblieben.

3 Merkmale der Embleme

Die Gestik ist in den letzten fünfzig Jahren intensiv studiert worden. Obwohl die Untersuchungen aus verschiedenen Bereichen kommen, sind sie sich alle in einem Punkt einig: Einige Gesten sind autonom und kulturell bedingt.

Wie schon erwähnt, wurden diese Gesten ursprünglich von Efron (1941, 1972) als “representing either a visual or a logical object by means of a pictorial or non-pictorial form, which has no morphological relationship to the thing represented” (Efron, 1972, S. 96) beschrieben

und als «Embleme» gekennzeichnet. Dieser Begriff wurde danach von Ekman und Friesen (1972) schärfer definiert:

Emblems are those nonverbal acts which have a direct verbal translation usually consisting of a word or two, or a phrase, for which this precise meaning is known by most or all members of a group, class, subculture or culture, which are most often deliberately used with the conscious intent to send a particular message to other persons (Ekman & Friesen, 1972, S. 357).

Mit dieser Definition heben die Autoren drei wichtige Aspekte der emblematischen Gesten hervor: Ihre direkte sprachliche Übersetzung, sowie ihre kulturkodierte Bedeutung und ihre Intention zur Kommunikation.

Insofern ersetzen Embleme die sprachliche Äusserung, sie sind autonom, kulturbezogen, konventionell, gesellschaftlich und kommunikativ. Man kann also sagen, dass Embleme eine visuelle Metapher sind, die in einer stark kodierten Form ein universelles Basiskonzept ausdrückt, das es ihnen erlaubt, aus den Grenzen der Kultur, in die sie eingebettet sind, herauszutreten. Daraus ergibt sich die der Arbeit zugrundeliegende These: «Gesten sind kulturbezogen, jedoch nicht kulturgebunden.»

In den meisten Arbeiten werden Embleme innerhalb einer Kultur aufgelistet, abgebildet, gedeutet und beschrieben (vgl. Marcantonio, 2008, 2016 für eine Liste der ethnographischen Arbeiten). Eine sehr gute ethnografische Untersuchung innerhalb Europas ist von Morris et al. (1979) unternommen worden. Aus dieser Untersuchung gingen 20 Schlüsselgesten hervor, die quer durch Europa zu finden waren. Morris et al. (1979) haben diese zwanzig Embleme geographisch lokalisiert, um eine Karte ihrer Verbreitung im europäischen Raum zu erstellen. Die verschiedenen Bedeutungen wurden gesammelt und damit die einzelnen Gesten beschrieben.

Während die meisten Arbeiten die interkulturellen Unterschiede der redebegleitenden Gesten, meist in Zusam-

menhang mit einer Richtungsbeschreibung im Raum, untersucht haben (siehe Kendon, 2004a¹; Müller, 1998; McNeill & Duncan, 2000; Kita & Ozyürek, 2003), haben nur sehr wenige Arbeiten eine kontrastive interkulturelle Untersuchung der Embleme aufgenommen, wie zum Beispiel die Studie von Efron (1941)², in der unterschiedliche Gesten miteinander verglichen werden, um Unterschiede und/oder Ähnlichkeiten herauszuarbeiten. Aber meines Wissens hat sich keine Studie bis jetzt mit Emblemen beim Kulturwechsel beschäftigt. Deswegen bleiben Fragen wie die, ob die Gestik, ebenso wie die Sprache, in einer neuen Kultur neu erlernt oder einfach in diese transferiert wird und wie die Menschen mit ihr umgehen, offen.

4 Aufbau der empirischen Untersuchung

Gestik, Sprache oder sonstigen kulturellen Alltagsgewohnheiten der Menschen sind sowohl Teil der Mikro- wie auch der Makrokultur. Darüber hinaus dokumentieren entsprechende empirische Untersuchungen die durchschnittliche Meinung oder die Gewohnheiten ausgewählter Menschen an einem Ort und zu einer bestimmten Zeit. Gestik genauso wie Sprache, Mode und alle soziokulturelle Form der Kommunikation unterliegt zeitliche Veränderungen.

Somit werden Gesten veralten und verschwinden oder ihre Bedeutung verändern und parallel dazu entstehen neue Gesten. Trotzdem lassen sich auch immer noch die «Klassiker», wie zum Beispiel die Bündelhand für Italien, siehe Abbildung Nr. 2 aus der Kategorie «typisch italienisch»

- 1 Kendon (2004a) analysiert die redegleitenden Gesten eines erwachsenen Neapolitaners im Vergleich mit einem erwachsenen Briten und stellt fest, dass es pragmatische und Gestaltungsunterschiede zwischen den beiden Kulturen gibt.
- 2 Kendon (2007, S. 13): “There exist remarkably few studies that can be cited that have investigated these alleged differences in any systematic way, however. The most famous study that does so, which is still the best, was first published in 1941 by David Efron.”

im Paragraph 4.2, erkennen, die wiederum Merkmal für einen Kulturkreis werden. In der heutigen Welt, in welcher die Medien eine immer schnellere Kommunikation ermöglichen und auch die Menschen sich aus verschiedenen Gründen mehr von Ort zu Ort bewegen, wandert auch die Gestik und wird teilweise von neuen Kulturen aufgegriffen und dort verankert. Diese Symbole wandeln sich innerhalb des neuen Kulturkreises und werden von den Benutzern neu semantisiert und neu kodiert.

Nur wenn die emblematische Gestik als offenes und flexibles System betrachtet wird, lässt sich der Übergang von der Intrakultur zur Interkultur beobachten. Nur dann ist man imstande zu erklären, wie das Gestiksystem der Kommunikation dient und warum die gleiche Handkonfiguration in verschiedenen Länder teilweise verschiedene Bedeutungen trägt.

Also stellen sich die Fragen: Wie erlernt man die Gestik einer fremden Kultur? Wird man dabei die eigene Gestik verlieren?

Die Ergebnisse der Untersuchung zeigen, dass sich die Embleme vermischen und beiden Kulturen entnommen werden. Wenn das gleiche Konzept mit zwei unterschiedlichen Gesten zum Ausdruck kommt, wird man die Geste verwenden, die man am liebsten hat.

In der Untersuchung wurden zwei Kontrollgruppen befragt. Daraus resultierte ein Gestenglossar, welches für die Untersuchungsgruppen verwendet wurde. Das prozedere wird in den folgenden Abschnitten erläutert.

4.1 Zusammensetzung der Informanten

Diese Analyse untersucht die Emblemodynamik im Zusammenleben zweier Kulturen: der italienischen und der deutschen. Zwischen 2002 und 2005 vier Untersuchungsgruppen in Italien und in Deutschland befragt und teilweise gefilmt (nur wenn die Person es erlaubt hat). Insgesamt haben 160 Informanten an der Studie teilgenommen, die in eine Kontroll- und Untersuchungsgruppe unterteilt wurden:

Die Kontrollgruppe (KG) besteht aus 50 Italienern, die in Italien (Rom und Sizilien) wohnen und keine Verbindung zu

der deutschen Kultur haben und 50 Deutschen, die in Deutschland (Berlin und Stuttgart) wohnen und keine Verbindung zu der italienischen Kultur haben. Diese Informanten beider Geschlechter sind im Alter zwischen zwanzig und fünfundsiebzehn Jahren und haben unterschiedliches Bildungsniveau.

Mit diesen 100 Informanten wurde eine ethnographische Emblemuntersuchung der beiden Kulturkreise durchgeführt. Diese erlaubt es, Übereinstimmungen und Unterschiede der Emblemsysteme herauszufiltern.

Die Untersuchungsgruppe (UG) besteht aus 30 in Deutschland lebenden Italienern und 30 in Italien lebenden Deutschen. Die Informanten leben seit mindestens fünf Jahren im Ausland (in Italien oder in Deutschland), beherrschen sowohl die Mutter- als auch die Fremdsprache und in ihrem Alltag benutzen sie beide Sprachen. Sie wurden aber in ihrem jeweiligen Heimatland sozialisiert (das heisst, dass sie mindestens bis zu ihrem 18. Lebensjahr in Italien bzw. in Deutschland gewohnt haben).

Aufgrund der Tatsache, dass die meisten italienischen Informanten, welche in Berlin wohnen, ursprünglich aus Süditalien (Sizilien und Kampanien) stammten, habe ich dementsprechend deutsche Informanten ausschliesslich in Süditalien (Sizilien) gesucht.

Die Informanten der Untersuchungsgruppe rekrutieren sich aus dem Universitätsbereich (Dozenten und Studenten), gehören beiden Geschlechtern an und sind zwanzig bis sechzig Jahre alt.

4.2 Methodologie der Untersuchung

Die Vorbereitung der Untersuchung aufgrund der Beobachtung von Gesprächen, der Analyse von italienischen bzw. deutschen Filmen und der Literatur (Posner et al., 2004; Diadori, 1990; Ricci-Bitti, 1976; Poggi & Magno Caldognetto, 1997) diente zur Festhaltung der Gesten, die am häufigsten vorkamen.

Insgesamt wurden zwanzig Embleme aus dem deutschen und dem italienischen Gestikraum abgebildet. Das erstellte Emblemcorpus wurde den Informanten der

Kontrollgruppe (Italiener in Italien und Deutsche in Deutschland) gezeigt und nach der Analyse und Systematisierung der Resultate wurden die 20 Embleme in Kategorien eingeordnet (siehe Kapitel 5) und somit der Untersuchungsgruppe gezeigt.

In vielen Untersuchungen bedienen sich der Aufzeichnung von Gesprächen in Bild und Ton um Gestik und Sprache zu analysieren. Dabei hat sich eine kombinierte kanal- und kodespezifische Sichtweise etabliert, die bereits in der Systematik älterer Arbeiten auftritt, dann vor allem in Arbeiten der 70er und 80er Jahre (Argyle, 1975; Scherer, 1979; Wallbott, 1982) angewandt wurde. Mit dieser Methode der Datenerhebung lassen sich die Übertragungskanal-spezifischen Modalitäten (wie «auditiv» oder «visuell») gut von einander unterscheiden und damit besser untersuchen.

Bezüglich der geht es darum, die aktive (bzw. bewusste) und passive Gestenkompetenz der Befragten zu testen. Hierzu bietet sich Befragungen mittels Fragebogen an. Die standardisierte Befragung mit Hilfe eines Fragebogens bringt einerseits eine hohe Vergleichbarkeit der Antworten und andererseits lassen sich die Ergebnisse quantifizieren.

Zusätzlich zum Fragebogen wurde auch ein persönliches Interview mit den Informanten geführt, das aufgrund der sprachlichen Interaktion die aktive Gestenkompetenz der Informanten zu testen erlaubt.

Die Interviews mit der Kontrollgruppe in Deutschland und in Italien benutzte eher die Methode des qualitativen Interviews, da die Gruppe nur nach der Kodierung und der Dekodierung von Emblemen gefragt wurde.

Zuerst wurden in einem kurzen *small talk* die Angaben zur Person gesammelt.

Anhand des Alters kann man abschätzen, wie neu oder alt eine Geste ist, wenn sie zum Beispiel von den jüngeren bzw. älteren Leuten nicht erkannt wird. Anhand der Herkunft kann man erfahren, wo eine gewisse Geste mehr Präsenz hat und anhand des Geschlechts kann man schliess-

lich realisieren, ob eine Geste mehr von Frauen oder Männern verwendet wird.

Solche Daten sind ja wichtig für eine diatopische und eine diastratische Analyse, die aber nicht Ziel meiner Untersuchung war.

Nach dem sich kurz Kennenlernen bekamen die Informanten die Abbildungen der zwanzig Emblemen und hatten circa dreissig Sekunden bis eine Minute Zeit über jede Geste nachzudenken. Schliesslich wurden sie nach Benutzung und Bedeutung der Geste gefragt.

Die Zusammenstellung der beiden Untersuchungsgruppen hat sich als problematischer als gedacht herausgestellt, da es sich um Leute handelt, die ihres Land nicht immer freiwillig verlassen haben. Die meisten Italiener, die in Deutschland wohnen, frequentierten teilweise nur andere Italiener und haben viele Vorurteile Deutschen gegenüber. Anders sieht es bei den Deutschen aus, die in Italien leben. Viele von ihnen sind aus Lust auf etwas Neues ausgewandert und haben sich teilweise so gut integriert, dass sie die deutsche Kultur vernachlässigt haben. Deshalb musste ich Menschen aussuchen, die regelmässig nach Deutschland gefahren sind, um dort Freunde und Verwandte zu besuchen. Und bei den italienischen Informanten habe ich aufgepasst, dass diese deutschen Freunde hatten, mit welchen sie sich regelmässig trafen. Ohne diese Voraussetzungen kann es keine unvoreingenommenen Ergebnisse geben.

Diese Menschen, die zwischen den Kulturen leben, bewegen sich in einem so genannten interkulturellen Bereich. Genau in diesem Bereich stösst man auf Kulturinterferenzen, die erkennen lassen, in welcher Masse die Gestik vom Sprachregister und von der ursprünglichen Kultur unabhängig ist.

Den beiden Untersuchungsgruppen wurden Fragen nach der Alltagskommunikation gestellt (am meisten benutzte Sprache, verwendete Gestik, Erkennung von Gesten als typisch für einen Kulturkreis, Zusammenspiel mit der Sprache) und das Interview erfolgte auf Deutsch und auf Italienisch, um die Beherrschung beider Sprachen zu testen. Nachdem mit

den Informanten über Gestik geredet wurde, zeigte ich ihnen die Abbildungen in Kategorien gruppiert (siehe Paragraph 5. dafür) und testete ihr passives und aktives Gestikwissen. Die Befragten mussten eine Bedeutung zu jeder Geste assoziieren und ihre Affektivität zu der Geste auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6 angeben. Das hat Informationen über die Integration der Teilnehmer geliefert. Wenn sie die Gesten der Fremdkultur als theatralisch oder ungewohnt bezeichnet haben, dann konnte ich davon ausgehen, dass sie die entsprechenden Gesten auch dann nicht verwendeten, wenn sie die Sprache dieser Kultur sprachen. Ausserdem hatten einige Informanten immer eine deutsche bzw. italienische Haltung und Gestik, unabhängig von der gesprochenen Sprache.

Im Prinzip hat auch diese letzte Beobachtung dieser Untergruppe meiner Untersuchungsgruppe meine Hypothese bestätigt, weil man feststellen konnte, dass die Körpersprache nicht vom Sprachregister abhängig und daher nicht kulturgebunden ist.





















Ausserdem hat dieser abschliessende Test gezeigt, dass es in einer interkulturellen Begegnung zur Mischung der Gestik kommt. In der Tat schöpften die gut akklimatisierten Informanten die Gesten aus dem deutschen oder italienischen Kulturraum je nach Lust, Gebrauch oder Ökonomie.

5 Zusammenstellung der Embleme

Bei der Systematisierung der erhobenen Daten aus der Kontrollgruppe zeigte sich, dass einige Gesten von den Informanten gleich, andere unterschiedlich oder gar nicht dekodiert wurden. Somit wurden die zwanzig Embleme in vier Kategorien eingeordnet (siehe unten in diesem Paragraphen für die Abbildungen der Embleme; vgl. Marcantonio, 2016, S. 177).

- › typisch italienische Embleme
- › typisch deutsche Embleme
- › unterschiedlich dekodierte Embleme
- › gemeinsame Embleme

Abbildung 1: Kategorisierte Embleme^a

Typisch italienisch	Typisch deutsch
 <p>1</p>  <p>2</p>	 <p>1</p>  <p>2</p>
 <p>3</p>  <p>4</p>	 <p>3</p>  <p>4</p>
 <p>5</p>	 <p>5</p>
Unterschiedlich dekodiert	Gemeinsam
 <p>1</p>  <p>2</p>	 <p>1</p>  <p>2</p>
 <p>3</p>  <p>4</p>	 <p>3</p>  <p>4</p>
 <p>5</p>	 <p>5</p>

^a Die folgenden Embleme bilden die zwanzig Embleme, die die Kontrollgruppe dekodiert hat. Hier werden sie so vorgestellt, wie die Untersuchungsgruppe (die Gruppe, an welcher meine Hypothese geprüft wurde) sie bekommen hat. Als Basis für die Bilder dienen die Arbeiten von Diadori (1990), Olivieri (2000), De Jorio (1832) und Romeo (1997). Insbesondere stammen die Abbildungen der Gesten: «typisch italienisch» aus Diadori (1990); «typisch deutsch» aus Marcantonio (2008, 2016); «unterschiedlich dekodiert» Nr. 1, 2 und 4 aus Diadori (1990), Nr. 3 und 5 aus Olivieri (2000); «gemeinsam» aus Diadori (1990). Die Bilder wurden teilweise leicht modifiziert.

In den ersten zwei Kategorien sind Embleme, die von der Kontrollgruppe erkannt und dekodiert wurden, von der anderen jedoch nicht. Diese Embleme sind also der einen Kontrollgruppe «fremd» und können als «typisch» für die andere Kontrollgruppe bezeichnet werden. Das bedeutet, dass die Gesten, welche die deutschen Informanten nicht deuten konnten, die italienischen hingegen schon, in der Kategorie «typisch italienisch» eingeordnet wurden, während die Gesten, welche die italienischen Informanten nicht deuten konnten, die deutschen aber schon, in der Kategorie «typisch deutsch» zusammengefasst wurden. Die Übereinstimmungen (Embleme, die sowohl von Deutschen als auch von Italienern erkannt wurden) genauso wie die Unterschiede, welche aus der ersten Befragung resultierten, wurden anhand ihrer Dekodierung sorgfältig verifiziert, um zu testen, wie viele Gemeinsamkeiten es zwischen den beiden Kulturkreisen gibt. Diese weitere Überprüfung ergab, dass viele Gesten, die ähnlich oder gleich aussehen, in ihrer Dekodierung (Bedeutung) jedoch voneinander abweichen. Andererseits wurde auch festgestellt, dass in einigen Fällen zwei unterschiedliche gestische Gestalten die gleiche Dekodierung besaßen. Daraus ergibt sich, dass in diesen beiden Kulturkreisen die gleiche Botschaft manchmal eine andere emblematische Kodierung besitzt.

Jede Geste wurde anschliessend hinsichtlich ihrer Durchführung, ihrer Bedeutung und ihres Anwendungsfeldes beschrieben (siehe Paragraph 5.1 für ausgewählte Beispiele). Dieses ein semantisch und pragmatisch organisierte Embleme-corpus wurde den beiden Untersuchungsgruppen präsentiert.

5.1 Ausgewählte Beispiele aus der qualitativen Analyse der Kontrollgruppe

Wie schon oben erwähnt, hatte die Kontrollgruppe zwanzig Embleme zu dekodieren. Die Untersuchungsgruppe hat die zwanzig Embleme erhalten, nachdem sie der Kontrollgruppe vorgelegt und dort dekodiert worden waren. Basierend auf den Antworten in der Kontrollgruppe, wurden

die zwanzig Embleme in vier Kategorien eingeordnet und danach der Untersuchungsgruppe gezeigt, die für das Testen der Fragestellung zusammengestellt wurde.

Unten sind einige der Embleme abgebildet. Die Beschreibungen sind auf Basis der Analyse der Daten der Kontrollgruppe erstellt worden. Danach wurden die Beschreibungen zusammen mit den Mitgliedern der Untersuchungsgruppe diskutiert, um zu testen, ob zwischen den Kulturen die Embleme noch ihre starke Kodierung behalten und wie sich die Teilnehmer der Befragung bei der Verwendung der Embleme verhalten.


Die ausgewählten Beispiele gelten jeweils als prototypisch für ihre eigene Kategorie.

5.1.1 Prototypisches Emblem für die Kategorie «typisch italienisch»

Kognitiv-semantisch-pragmatische Erläuterung. Die “mano a borsa”³ (deutsch: Bündelhand) ist im Ausland das gestische Merkmal der Italiener. Tatsächlich benutzen die Italiener diese Geste mehrmals täglich. Die Frage nach Präzision, die diese Geste ausdrückt, ist auch von Morris (1994, S. 115) beobachtet worden: “Essentially this is a request for clarity. It is a ‘precision posture of the hand that says, I want precise information.’” Philogenetisch, aber auch ontogenetisch gesehen, vermuten verschiedene Wissenschaftler, dass die Bündelhand ihren Ursprung bei dem Akt des Essens hat. In der Tat hat diese Geste die typische Handform, die man sieht, wenn man Kinder aber auch Primaten beim Essen beobachtet. Höchstwahrscheinlich hat schon der Homo habilis den Daumen den anderen Fingern entge-

3 So beschreibt De Jorio (1832, S. 85) die “mano a borsa” “(...) riunire in un punto tutte le dita della mano s’intende dire loro: ‘riunite le vostre idee: raccogliete le tante parole in una, o in breve, in un punto e dite cosa volete! Insomma, di che si tratta’”. [«Wenn man alle Finger einer Hand in einem Punkt zusammenführt, möchte man Folgendes mitteilen: ‘Drücke dich klar und kurz aus. Sag genau, was du willst, nämlich worum es sich handelt’», Übersetzung der Autorin].

Abbildung 2: Prototypisches Emblem für die Kategorie «typisch italienisch»

Beschreibung der Geste	Ergebnis der Umfrage (Kontrollgruppen)	
<p>Die Fingerspitzen einer Hand zusammen und an den Daumen führen und die Finger dabei leicht krümmen. In dieser Konfiguration wird die Hand aus dem Gelenk heraus hin und her auf Höhe des Oberkörpers zum Sprecher bewegt.</p> 	<p>Italienische Kontrollgruppe</p> <p>Bedeutung: "Che vuoi?" («Was willst du?») "Cosa?" («Wie bitte?»)</p> <p>Anwendungsfeld: 1. Jmd. signalisieren, dass man ihn nicht verstanden hat. 2. Jmd. darauf hinweisen, dass man sich gestört fühlt. 3. Jmd. zeigen wollen, dass man ihm nicht glaubt.</p>	<p>Deutsche Kontrollgruppe</p> <p>Bedeutung: Keine Bedeutung angegeben.</p> <p>Anwendungsfeld: Keine Anwendung angegeben.</p>

Anmerkung. Aus Marcantonio, 2016, S. 169.

gengesetzt, um Steine besser bearbeiten zu können. Diese Handgestalt, auch Präzisionsgriff genannt, haben Menschen also bereits vor zehntausend Jahren benutzt (Trinkaus, 1992). Neuere Studien über das Gehirn lassen vermuten, dass diese präzise Gegenüberstellung der Finger und des Daumens im Gehirn die Zellen aktivieren, die für Problemlösung, Planen, Objektmanipulation usw. zuständig sind.


Wenn diese Vermutung richtig ist, könnte man spekulieren, dass alle Menschen beim Nachdenken über Probleme spontan die Bündelhand bilden sollten. Man kann in der Tat, wenn man Talkshows oder politische Debatten – auch in Deutschland – im Fernsehen schaut, häufig diese Handform beobachten. Das bedeutet, dass Menschen unbewusst die Hand zum Bündel formen, wenn sie sich mit Themen wie Planen oder Problemlösen beschäftigen. Während in anderen

Ländern die Bündelhand, wenn überhaupt, eine redebegleitende Geste ist, ist sie in Italien ein häufig angewendetes Emblem, mit welchem man Präzision fordert. Das ist wohl der langen rhetorischen Tradition der griechischen und römischen Antike zuzuschreiben, die in Italien sehr präsent war und ist.

5.1.2 Prototypisches Emblem für die Kategorie «typisch deutsch»


Kognitiv-semantisch-pragmatische Erläuterung. Diese emblematische Geste, die auch in Grossbritannien bekannt ist, ist normalerweise in Deutschland eine Spottgeste, die meistens Kinder benutzen. Da die Geste in den romanischen Ländern nicht bekannt ist, vermutet man, dass es sich um ein altes, traditionsgebundenes Symbol der Germanen handelt. Bei der Befragung erkannten und deuteten

Abbildung 3: Prototypisches Emblem für die Kategorie «typisch deutsch»

Beschreibung der Geste	Ergebnis der Umfrage (Kontrollgruppen)	
<p>Mit dem ausgestreckten Zeigefinger einer Hand lebhaft über den Rücken des ausgestreckten Zeigefingers der anderen Hand streichen.</p> 	<p>Italienische Kontrollgruppe</p> <p>Bedeutung: Keine Bedeutung angegeben.</p> <p>Anwendungsfeld: Keine Anwendung angegeben.</p>	<p>Deutsche Kontrollgruppe</p> <p>Bedeutung: «Ätschi Bättschi!», «Rüben schaben»</p> <p>Anwendungsfeld: Jemandem seine Schadenfreude zeigen. Manchmal neckisch gemeint.</p>

Anmerkung. Aus Marcantonio, 2016, S. 176.

Abbildung 4: Prototypisches Emblem für die Kategorie «unterschiedlich dekodiert»

Beschreibung der Geste	Ergebnis der Umfrage (Kontrollgruppen)	
<p>Die Spitze des Zeigefingers an das untere Augenlid setzen und die Haut des Augenlids so herunterziehen, dass das Auge nach unten hin vergrößert erscheint.</p> 	<p>Italienische Kontrollgruppe Bedeutung: “Occhio!” («Pass auf!») Anwendungsfeld: Jemandem zum Aufpassen auffordern.</p>	<p>Deutsche Kontrollgruppe Bedeutung: «Ich bin doch nicht blöd!», «Holzauge sei wachsam!» Anwendungsfeld: Jemandem zeigen, dass man sich nicht einfach hereinlegen lässt.</p>

Anmerkung. Aus Marcantonio, 2016, S. 164.

alle deutschen Informanten diese Geste, aber sie gaben an, dass dieses Emblem nur von Kindern verwendet wird. Aus den Daten der deutschen Kontrollgruppe ergab sich, dass auch Erwachsene ab und zu die Spottgeste benutzen, aber mehr als Neckgeste und ohne negative Konnotation. Allgemein wird das Emblem mit Spott und/oder Schadenfreude assoziiert. Die Person, die die Geste benutzt, will damit ihre eigene Freude über den Misserfolg oder das Missgeschick (häufig selbst provoziert) einer anderen Person, die zugleich deswegen verspottet wird, ausdrücken. Der Spott kommt eben, weil die Person selbst der Grund für ihr Missgeschick ist. Daher drückt die Geste semantisch etwas anders aus, als die gewöhnlichen Spott- oder Schadenfreudegesten. Der Zeigefinger, der über den anderen streicht, symbolisiert das Sich-Selbst-Verletzen (vgl. Posner et al., 2004) und wird oft von dem Spruch «da hast du dich aber geschnitten» begleitet, sozusagen als Euphemismus für «da hast du dich selbst überlistet».


5.1.3 Prototypisches Emblem für die Kategorie «unterschiedlich dekodiert»

Kognitiv-semantisch-pragmatische Erläuterung. Alle Gesten in der Kategorie «unterschiedlich dekodiert» werden häufig im interkulturellen Bereich missverstanden. Während die italienische Benutzung eine Botschaft für den Adressaten entschlüsselt, ist die deutsche Benutzung selbstgerichtet. Das heisst, dass die Italiener damit

jemanden über eine Gefahr informieren und den Adressaten auffordern, aufmerksam zu sein. Mit dem Spruch “stai attento” (pass auf dich auf!) meinen die Italiener “tieni gli occhi aperti” (schau genau hin und lass dich nicht hereinlegen). Einen ähnlichen Spruch – «Holzauge sei wachsam» – benutzen die Deutschen. Man vermutet, dass diese Warnungen auf das Soldatenleben zurückzuführen sind. Tatsächlich ist es im Krieg sehr wichtig, gute Augen zu haben und immer wachsam zu sein. Im übertragenen Sinn wird es schwierig, eine wache Person zu betrügen. Insofern will die deutsche Kodierung bedeuten: «Ich bin doch nicht blöd». Dieser Spruch wurde auch von Media Markt Deutschland lange als Werbekampagne verwendet.

Wie schon oben erwähnt, ist die Geste bei den Italienern mehr eine Warnung für jemanden. Die Geste ist oft mit dem Warnwort “occhio!” paraphrasiert. Mit dem Spruch “occhio” (Auge) drückt man kurz die Konzepte: “tieni gli occhi aperti” (schau dich gut um, schau genau hin, halte die Augen offen oder pass auf dich auf). Ein interessantes Phänomen ist, dass die deutsche Kodierung der Geste immer häufiger in Norditalien verwendet wird. Das kann zwei Ursachen haben: Die geografische Nähe und der Austausch (Zu- und Abwanderung) zwischen den beiden Ländern. Die Tatsache, dass in Norditalien beide Kodierungen der “occhio” Geste (wobei die italienische Kodierung am weitesten verbreitet ist) zusammenleben,

Abbildung 5: Prototypisches Emblem für die Kategorie «gemeinsam»

Beschreibung der Geste	Ergebnis der Umfrage (Kontrollgruppen)	
<p>Mit dem Daumen und dem Zeigefinger einen Ring bilden. Die restlichen Finger werden gespreizt und weisen nach oben, wobei die Handinnenfläche nach vorne zum Adressat weist.</p> 	<p>Italienische Kontrollgruppe</p> <p>Bedeutung: "OK", "perfetto" («perfekt»)</p> <p>Anwendungsfeld: Jemandem zeigen, dass alles in Ordnung ist.</p>	<p>Deutsche Kontrollgruppe</p> <p>Bedeutung: "OK", «perfekt»</p> <p>Anwendungsfeld: Jemandem zeigen, dass alles in Ordnung ist.</p>

Anmerkung. Aus Marcantonio, 2016, S. 155.

führt dazu, dass diese Geste in Italien fast immer mündlich paraphrasiert wird.

5.1.4 Prototypisches Emblem für die Kategorie «gemeinsam»

Kognitiv-semantisch-pragmatische Erläuterung. Das OK-Geste zusammen mit der Interjektion "okay" ist aus Nordamerika nach Europa gekommen. Die Konfiguration der Hand hat eine starke ikonische Prägung mit den beiden Buchstaben O und K, indem der Zeigefinger zusammen mit dem Daumen einen Ring formen (Buchstabe O), während die anderen Finger gespreizt bleiben, um das K abzubilden.

Über den Ursprung der Geste ist lange geforscht und spekuliert worden, bis der Linguist Allen Walker Read⁴ nach zwanzig Jahren Forschung, die sehr wahrscheinliche Theorie aufstellte, dass O.K. für die Abkürzung von "Oll Korrekt" steht, die 1839 in einer Bostoner Zeitung zu lesen ist. Höchstwahrscheinlich haben die Nordamerikaner schon damals mit der Sprache gespielt und die heutige korrekte Form "all correct" eher näher an der Aussprache geschrieben. Da aber in Europa der Ringfingergeste schon lange bekannt und leicht negativ konnotiert⁵ ist, wundert es nicht, dass sowohl die italienische Informanten als auch die deutsche die andere «Perfekt-Geste» bevorzugen, d. h. mit

4 Vgl. dazu Metcalf (2011).

5 Vgl. Morris et al. (1979, S. 105): "The circular shape is seen as representing a body orifice, usually the anus."

dem Daumen nach oben gerichtet und der Hand zur Faust geballt.

In dieser Hinsicht ist es interessant was mir verschiedene meist junge Berliner Informanten mitgeteilt haben und zwar, dass die OK-Geste im Berliner Strassenverkehr vulgär belegt ist und für den Ausruf «Arschloch» steht (Marcantonio 2016, S. 156).

6 Analyse der Gruppendaten

6.1 Kontrollgruppe

Die Daten aus der Kontrollgruppe wurden dann an der Untersuchungsgruppe getestet, die eigentlich den Kern der Untersuchung darstellt.

Die Kontrollgruppe sollte nur die Embleme kodieren und dekodieren und ihre bewusste Benutzung bestätigen. Diese Daten, die die Gestikkompetenz der Probanden darstellen, dienten als Vergleichsmuster für die Untersuchungsgruppe. Nach den Interviews mit der Kontrollgruppe war es ausserdem möglich, die zwanzig Embleme aufgrund ihrer Merkmale in Kategorien einzuordnen.

Zusammenfassend kann man eine hohe passive und aktive Kompetenz der italienischen wie der deutschen Kontrollgruppe feststellen. Allerdings ist die passive Kompetenz etwas höher als die aktive Kompetenz. Beide Kontrollgruppen haben die meisten Embleme erkannt und ohne Probleme dekodiert. Daran kann man deutlich erkennen, dass die Deutschen in

ihrem Alltag fast soviel wie die Italiener gestikulieren. Es gibt aber mit Sicherheit Unterschiede in der Gestenfrequenz und in der Art des Gestikulierens. Aber nur die jüngeren deutschen Informanten hatten kein Problem damit einzugestehen, Gesten bewusst einzusetzen. Das ist eine interessante Tendenz, die aber in ganz Europa festzustellen ist. Höchstwahrscheinlich, weil die heutige Jugend mehr verreist und Freunde überall hat. Das bringt mit sich eine Erweiterung des Gestenrepertoirs.

Es war auch interessant festzustellen, dass die Italiener besser als die Deutschen die kulturfremden Gesten interpretiert haben. Das könnte man sich folgendermaßen erklären: Da es die Italiener gewohnter sind, Gesten zu benutzen, haben sie auch mehr Phantasie, wenn sie neue Gesten deuten müssen. Vor allem viele deutschen Embleme weisen eine mehr oder weniger starke ikonische Natur auf, die die Assoziationen zu der Bedeutung vereinfacht. Italienische Embleme sind dagegen schwieriger zu dekodieren, da sie im Rahmen der Metaphorisierung einem starken Abstrahierungsprozess unterlagen. Es wäre wünschenswert, solche ersten Überlegungen durch eine gezielte Studie gründlicher zu untersuchen.

6.2 Untersuchungsgruppen (UG)

Die zwei Untersuchungsgruppen (Italiener in Deutschland und Deutsche in Italien) haben die Abbildungen der Embleme in vier Kategorien eingeordnet bekommen (siehe Abbildung der Kategorien in Abschnitt 5). Nach den ersten Interviews ist sofort aufgefallen, dass die Informanten eine gute passive und aktive gestische Kompetenz besitzen und dass es keine relevanten Unterschiede zu der Kontrollgruppe gibt. Einige Unterschiede sind allerdings in der Verwendung der Gestik festzustellen. Es sieht so aus, als ob die aktive Kompetenz, nämlich die bewusste Einsetzung der Gestik, bei den Italienern im Ausland höher sei, als bei den Italienern in Italien. Es wäre interessant zu verstehen, ob die Italiener in Deutschland sich der Gestik bewusster sind und ob sie auch mehr gestikulieren.

Die Deutschen dagegen scheinen sich in Italien gut integriert zu haben. Sie verwenden ihre Heimatgestik kaum, aber sie sind in der Lage, sie zu deuten. Beide Untersuchungsgruppen hatten eine bewusste und scharfe Einstellung zur Benutzung der Gestik und kannten sowohl die deutsche als auch die italienische Variante, die sie kontextabhängig und unabhängig vom gesprochenen Sprachregister verwenden. Daraus kann man schlussfolgern, dass die Priorität des Sprechers bei dem Konzept liegt, das er ausdrücken möchte, und dazu werden alle Mittel benutzt, die ihm zur Verfügung stehen (vgl. Marcantonio 2016, S. 212–213).

Die folgenden Diagramme stellen die aktive und passive Kompetenz der Italiener in Deutschland und der Deutschen in Italien hinsichtlich der Gesten «typisch italienisch» und «typisch deutsch» im Vergleich dar.

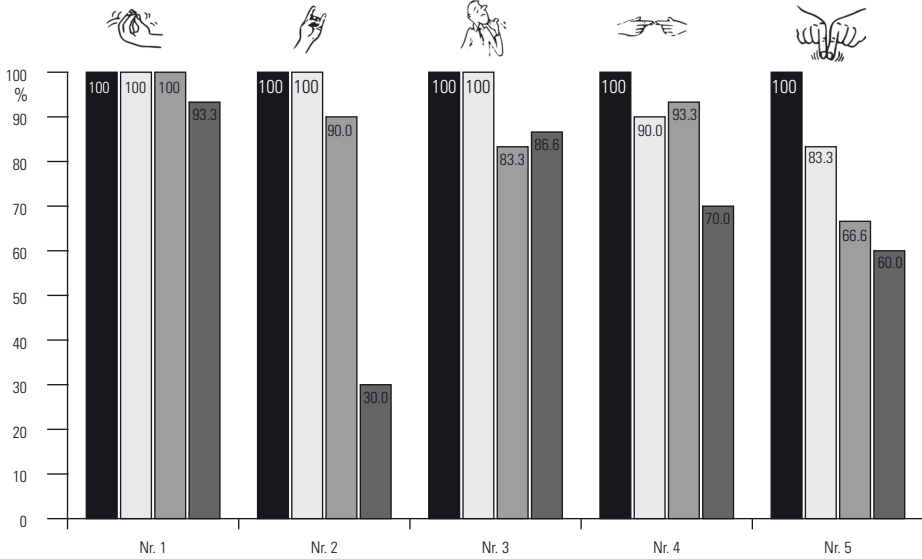
Diese vergleichende Analyse der relativen Häufigkeiten der ersten Gestenkategorien («typisch italienisch» und «typisch deutsch») der Untersuchungsgruppe ist exemplarisch, um Rückschlüsse auf den Integrationsprozess der Informanten zu ziehen und um festzustellen, wie die Informanten mit ihren typischen und den ihnen fremden Gesten im Ausland umgehen (qualitative Analyse).

Anhand der erworbenen Daten, die tabellarisch und statistisch unten aufgeführt werden, kann man erkennen, dass die Untersuchungsgruppe eine gute Kompetenz in der Erkennung und Anwendung der Gestik aufweist. Fast alle Teilnehmer der Untersuchungsgruppe haben angegeben, dass sie die typisch italienischen bzw. deutschen Gesten unabhängig vom Sprachregister benutzen und sie realisieren das, weil sie von Freunden oder Verwandten darauf aufmerksam gemacht werden. All das bestätigt die Hypothese, dass die Gestik kulturbezogen, jedoch nicht kulturgebunden ist.

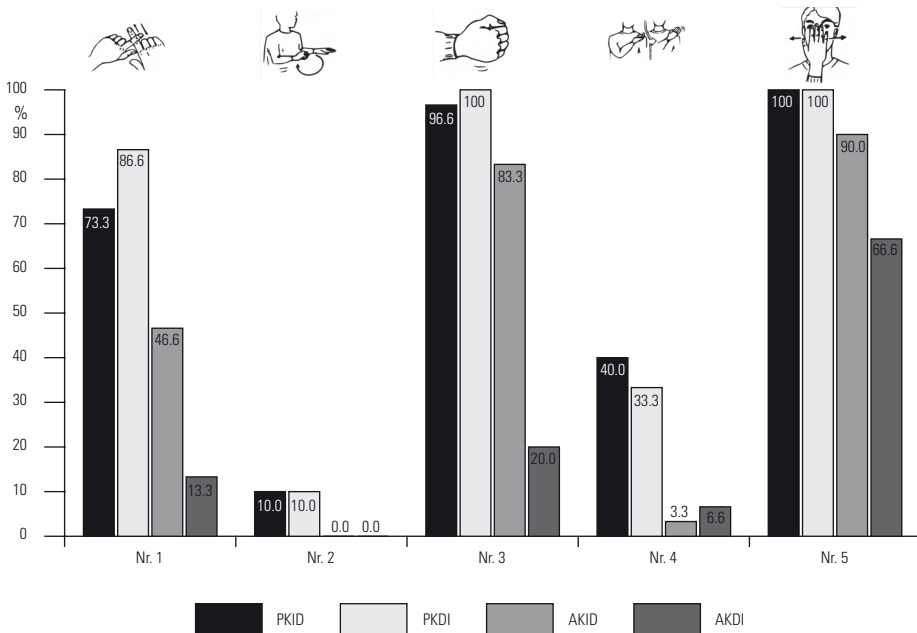
Interessant war es bei der Untersuchungsgruppe zu beobachten, dass die Informanten Lieblingsgesten – italienische und/oder deutsche – hatten, die sie immer, wenn es passte, verwendet haben.

Diagramm 1: Die Gestenkompetenz beider Untersuchungsgruppen im Vergleich

Typisch italienische Gesten



Typisch deutsche Gesten



Anmerkungen: PKID=Passive Kompetenz Italiener in Deutschland, PKDI=Passive Kompetenz Deutsche in Italien, AKID=Aktive Kompetenz Italiener in Deutschland, AKDI=Aktive Kompetenz Deutsche in Italien. Aus Marcantonio, 2016, S. 208–209.

Auf die Frage, warum sie besonders diese Geste mögen, wurde geantwortet, dass sie sich durch die Geste näher an der Landeskultur fühlten oder dass sie die Geste einfach schön, witzig oder nett fanden (vgl. Marcantonio 2016, S. 208–209). Das spricht dafür, dass die Gestik als gesellschaftlicher Faktor auch Identität und Affektivität der Person in sich trägt. Dieses Phänomen ist aber stärker bei Menschen, die im Ausland wohnen, zu beobachten. Grund dafür kann die Orientierung an die neue Kultur genauso wie die Aufbewahrung der eigenen Kultur sein. Im Ausland lebt die Person mit einer ausgeprägten kulturellen Sensibilität, deswegen sollten Variablen wie Integrationsgrad oder Kulturakzeptanz berücksichtigt werden.

7 Zusammenfassung und Forschungsausblick

Nach der Analyse aller Informationen, die zu Verfügung standen, konnte man schnell feststellen, wie selbstverständlich die Verwendung einiger Gesten geworden sei. Ausserdem hat man auch bemerkt, dass in der meisten Fällen die Benutzung der Gestik automatisiert worden ist, so dass die emblematische Gestik eher eine Hilfe zum Konzeptausdruck zu sein scheint, als eine Hilfe zur Unterstützung der gesprochenen Sprache. In einem interkulturellen Bereich kommt es zu einer Vermischung der Emblem Benutzung je nachdem, welches Konzept die Person ausdrücken möchte und das geschieht unabhängig von der Sprache, die man in diesem Moment spricht. Das heisst, dass die Gestik sich doch nicht am Sprachregister orientiert. Daher kann man behaupten, dass die Gestenverwendung wohl kulturbezogen ist, jedoch nicht kulturgebunden. (Vgl. Marcantonio 2016, S. 213).

Darüber hinaus hat man beobachten können, dass die gestische Anpassung keine Frage der Aufenthaltslänge ist, sondern mehr eine persönliche Einstellung zu dem neuen Heimatland. Um diese Untersuchung zu erweitern aber auch zu ergänzen, wäre es wünschenswert, andere Bereiche der nonverbalen Kommunikati-

on, wie Mimik und Körperhaltung, unter der Lupe zu nehmen. Eine vergleichende intrakulturelle genauso wie eine vergleichende interkulturelle Studie in dem Bereich ist immer noch ein Desiderat der nonverbalen interkulturellen Forschung.

Vor allem wünschenswert ist, wie Payrató (1993, 2003, 2014) oft ausdrücklich geäußert hat: “Our ultimate goal is not a gestural typology per se in a purely taxonomic sense, but to describe and to explain the human communicative behavior manifested by the regular usage of conventional items with significant values and complex pragmatic functions” (Payrató 2014, S. 1479).

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Technisch generalisierte Kommunikationsmedien. Kommunikation im Medium der Adresslisten

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Zusammenfassung

Aus systemtheoretischer Perspektive wird die Form adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation, wie sie das Internet ermöglicht – oft unter «soziale Medien» bzw. «soziale Netzwerke» kategorisiert –, untersucht. Kommunikation also etwa in Singlebörsen, sozialen Medien wie Facebook, Netzwerken beruflicher Ausrichtung, Reisekontaktbörsen, usw. Es wird gezeigt, wie Adresslisten als Medien eine technisch unterstützte Möglichkeit darstellen, das Problem doppelter Kontingenz, im Sinne von Initiative und Stabilisierung von Interaktionssystemen, zu bewältigen. Am Fallbeispiel der Anbahnung von (romantischer) Liebe, also in Bezug auf Singlebörsen, werden die Vorteile (Hoffnungen), wie auch die Nachteile (Enttäuschungen) von Adresslistenkommunikation erörtert. So wird nachgewiesen, dass hier zwar einerseits das Problem der Initiative bewältigt werden kann, aber Adresslistenkommunikation andererseits Probleme für die Kontinuität bzw. Stabilität von Interaktionssystemen innerhalb des symbolisch generalisierten Kommunikationsmediums Liebe induziert. Nicht zuletzt wird gezeigt, dass durch Adresslisten reputationsorientierte Kommunikation an Bedeutung gewinnt.

Schlüsselwörter

Soziale Medien, Soziale Netzwerke, Doppelte Kontingenz, Adresslisten, Liebe, Reputation

Abstract

From a system-theory perspective, the form of address list based communication, as made possible by the Internet – often categorized under “social media” or “social networks” – is analyzed. Examples of address-list based communication are online dating services, online social networking sites such as Facebook, networking sites for the business community, travel networking sites, etc. The paper theorizes how address-lists as media represent a technologically supported possibility to cope with the problem of double contingency in terms of initiative and stabilization of interaction systems. The paper addresses, as a case example, the advantages (hopefulness) and the disadvantages (disappointments) of address-list based communication in the initiation of love or romantic relationships. Thus, it shows that the problem of initiative can be overcome, but address list communication creates problems for the continuity or stability of interaction systems within love as a symbolically generalized medium of communication. Last, but not least, it shows that address lists increase the importance of reputation-oriented communication.

Keywords

social media, social networks, double contingency, address lists, love, reputation



Einleitung

In vorliegendem Aufsatz werden Form und Folgen von digitaler, adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation, wie sie das Internet ermöglicht, untersucht. Kommunikation also unter Ausnutzung von (oft auch zu kaufender) Mitgliedschaft in öffentlich zugänglichen Adresslisten.¹

Von Interesse ist vorliegende Untersuchung, weil digitale Adresslistenkommunikation, etwa mit Blick auf Dienste, wie Facebook, Twitter, Parship, Instagram usw., in den letzten Jahren einen enormen Aufschwung erlebt hat. Es kann also mit erheblichen gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen gerechnet werden. Unmittelbarer Weise offenkundig im Hinblick auf die Konstituierung von Interaktionssystemen.² Des Weiteren hat die Form möglicher Kommunikation erheblichen Einfluss auf die Form gesellschaftlicher Differenzierung. So erlaubte erst die Erfindung von Schrift gesellschaftliche Stratifikation von segmentierten Gesellschaften, die sich zuvor über Zehntausende von Jahren *nur* über mündliche Kommunikation reproduzierten. Allerdings kann angesichts der Neuartigkeit der internetbasierten Formen von Kommunikation nur darüber spekuliert werden, mit welchen gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen zu rechnen ist (etwa systemtheoretisch informiert: Baecker, 2007a).

Die Untersuchung knüpft zunächst an die grundlegende Beobachtung an, dass die Funktion uneingeschränkt aller digitalen, öffentlich zugänglichen Adresslisten vom Vorhandensein einer möglichst grossen Anzahl von Nutzerprofilen als

gleichartigen Elementen – und damit von einem *Medium* – abhängt. Als Adresslisten werden hier Listen von in digitaler Form vorliegenden gleichartigen Nutzerprofilen auf der Basis elektronischer Formulare verstanden. Die digitale, gleichartige Form der Nutzerprofile ermöglicht vielfältige Formen der Datenverarbeitung. Etwa den instantanen Austausch von Information, bzw. Nachrichten zwischen Profilen über das Internet, den allzeit möglichen Zugriff auf Nutzerprofile, ein jederzeit mögliches Sperren von Nutzerprofilen, die nahezu zeitlich unbegrenzte Speicherung von Nachrichten, Anonymität, Statistiken, die für Kommunikationspräferenzen nutzbar sind, bzw. diese abbilden, usw.

Es liegt damit auf der Hand, Form – Funktion und Strukturen – adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation mit Hilfe der Unterscheidung Medium/Form zu untersuchen. Vorliegende Studie erfolgt entsprechend mit den Bordmitteln der Luhmannschen Systemtheorie (zentral Luhmann, 1984, 1997). Das Kommunikationsmodell der Systemtheorie zu Grunde gelegt, wird versucht, sich Adresslistenkommunikation theoretisch mit Hilfe der Unterscheidung Medium/Form (Luhmann, 1997, S. 190 ff.) anzunähern.

Bislang erfolgten Studien zu Adresslistenkommunikation (bzw. zu «sozialen Medien» oder «sozialen Netzwerken») theoretisch mit Hilfe des Netzwerkbegriffs, bzw. durch Netzwerkanalyse (grundlegend dazu White, 1992; in systemtheoretischer Ausrichtung vgl. Baecker, 2007b, 2012; Fuhse, 2009; im Weiteren etwa Trier, Bobrik & Bartels, 2007, Lee & Wellman., 2012, Frank-Job et al., 2013). In Studien derart, steht die Untersuchung der Formung des Mediums, eben zu Netzwerken, im Vordergrund. Also die kommunikative Konstruktion von Identitäten als «Knotenpunkten» von Netzwerken und deren Sozialbeziehungen als «Kanten» (vgl. Fuhse, 2009, S. 302 ff.).

Allerdings lässt diese theoretische Annäherung an Adresslistenkommunikation deren *medialen Charakter* unterbeleuchtet. Charakteristisch für digitale soziale Medien ist nicht nur die leichte Koppelung ihrer Elemente (also der Nutzerprofile),

1 Also Singlebörsen, wie Parship, eDarling, meet2cheat, usw. (siehe Wikipedia Artikel «Singlebörse» für einen Überblick an Anbietern), Reisekontaktlisten, wie z.B. joinmytrip, Netzwerke beruflicher Ausrichtung, wie LinkedIn oder XING, Netzwerke zur Pflege gemeinsamer Interessen, wie Pinterest, Fotosharing Plattformen, wie Instagram, soziale Medien, wie Facebook und Twitter usw.

2 So haben sich mittlerweile ein Drittel aller zwischen 2005 und 2012 zustande gekommenen Partner von Ehen in den USA über das Internet kennengelernt (vgl. Cacioppo et al., 2013).

und so die Formung von Identitäten (Personen, Adressen, Akteuren) und Sozialbeziehungen zu Netzwerken, sondern ebenso deren *leichte Entkoppelung*. Wir gehen davon aus, dass gerade die anfänglich leicht mögliche Auflösung von so initiierten Sozialbeziehungen – also deren zunächst wiederum unkompliziert möglicher Verfall in die mediale Abstraktheit des Kommunikationsmediums – zu den charakteristischen, funktional dienlichen Eigenschaften internetbasierter sozialer Medien gehört. Es ist insbesondere dieser Aspekt von digitalen sozialen Medien, der bislang unberücksichtigt geblieben ist.

Vorliegende Studie versteht sich als eine theoriegeleitete Exploration. Es soll untersucht werden, was in den Blick gerät, wenn Adresslisten mit einer bislang unerprobten Unterscheidung (Medium/Form) beobachtet werden. Aufgrund dieses theoretisch neuen Zugangs – gewissermaßen ein Biss in einen *anderen* Apfel (Luhmann, 1984, S. 9) – geht es zunächst nicht darum, kurzschlüssig Defizite oder Unzulänglichkeiten von Netzwerkanalysen nachzuweisen. Allenfalls mag zukünftige Forschung erweisen, dass die unterschiedlichen Ansätze auf je unterschiedlich fruchtbare Weise Wissen generieren. Ganz so, wie die systemtheoretischen Fundamentalunterscheidungen System/Umwelt und Medium/Form nicht als konkurrierende, sondern als ergänzende wissens- bzw. informationsgenerierende Unterscheidungen zu verstehen sind (vgl. Huber, 1991, S. 121). Dabei erlaubt die Neuheit der Anwendung der Unterscheidung Medium/Form auf Adresslistenkommunikation, ganz im Sinne einer theoretischen Exploration, spekulative, gleichwohl theoriegeleitete Beobachtungen. Diese mögen zukünftige, auch empirische Forschungen inspirieren.

Der Aufsatz gliedert sich in drei Abschnitte. Im ersten Teil (I.) wird es darum gehen, möglichst genau die Form adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation zu beschreiben und zu verstehen. Hier geht es generell um die Konstituierung von Interaktionssystemen (abwesender) Anwesender in der Gesellschaft. Dabei wird vor allem die eigentümliche Bewältigung

doppelter Kontingenz durch Adresslistenkommunikation im Fokus stehen. Das im Vergleich mit Kommunikation Anwesender (Face-to-Face Kommunikation) innovative Potential adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation zeigt sich nämlich, wie detailliert zu erörtern sein wird, gerade im unterschiedlichen Umgang mit dem Problem doppelter Kontingenz. Entsprechend orientiert sich vorliegende Studie methodisch an der funktionalen Analyse (vgl. Luhmann, 1984, S. 83 ff., 1997, S. 36 ff.). Durch funktionalen Vergleich mit Kommunikation unter Anwesenden (in Bezugnahme auf eine kanonische Studie von Kieserling, 1999), wird möglich, charakteristische Funktionen und (latente) Strukturen von internetbasierter Adresslistenkommunikation – sozusagen Kommunikation unter *abwesenden Anwesenden*³ – herauszuarbeiten.

Im Zuge der Ausführungen des ersten Teils, wird zu erläutern sein (Abschnitt I. 5), dass sich mit der Kommunikation in Adresslisten in der «digitalen Moderne» ein neues Kommunikationsmedium ausdifferenziert hat. Nämlich *technisch* generalisierte Kommunikationsmedien. Dies in Anlehnung an die bereits von Luhmann erläuterten *symbolisch* generalisierten Kommunikationsmedien (vgl. Luhmann, 1997, S. 316 ff.; spez. etwa Luhmann, 1992, in Bezug auf Wahrheit und 1994 in Bezug auf Geld).

Im zweiten Teil (II.) werden, am Fallbeispiel der Anbahnung von (romantischer) Liebe durch Adresslisten, die eher abstrakten Überlegungen des ersten Teils angewendet und veranschaulicht. Im Rahmen vorliegender Untersuchung ist das symbolisch generalisierte Kommunikationsmedium Liebe von besonderem Interesse, weil bei adresslistenbasier-

3 Die Rede von «abwesenden Anwesenden» trägt dem Umstand Rechnung, dass Kommunikation von räumlich Abwesenden in Adresslisten nicht notwendig zeitlich synchronisiert erfolgt, gleichwohl diese Möglichkeit durch «Instant-Messaging» (oft) besteht. Dies ist insbesondere auch bei privat erstellten Adresslisten der Fall, die durch Software Applikationen («Apps», wie etwa WhatsApp, Line, Skype) ermöglicht werden.

ter Kommunikation gerade in Bezug auf *höchstpersönliche* Kommunikation äusserst optimistische Erfolgserwartungen vorherrschen.⁴ Insofern geht es im zweiten Abschnitt darum, zu zeigen, wie die für Liebeskommunikation charakteristischen Strukturen (wie von Luhmann 1982 dargelegt) durch Medien der Adresslisten aufgegriffen, bzw. berücksichtigt werden. Es kann vermutet werden, dass sich der Erfolg, bzw. die Popularität von Singlebörsen wesentlich aus dieser gelingenden Bezugnahme erklärt.

Im abschliessenden dritten Teil (III.) wird erläutert, wie durch Adresslistenkommunikation Reputation in ihrer Multifunktionalität zunehmend an *gesellschaftlicher* Bedeutung gewinnt.

I Form adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation

1 Adresslisten als Medien

Adresslisten werden, wie schon angedeutet, vorliegend als *Adress-Medien* verstanden. Also als eine Vielzahl von lose gekoppelten, *gleichartigen* Elementen, als die die Nutzerprofile in Adresslisten gelten sollen, welche potentiell in Form gebracht, also strikt gekoppelt werden können (grundlegend: Heider, 1926; in systemtheoretischer Ausarbeitung Luhmann, 1997, S. 190 ff.). Als Formung des Mediums, als «strikte Koppelung» soll erwartungsgenerierende Kommunikation zwischen den Adressanten bzw. Adressanten⁵ von Adresslisten gelten.

4 Es ist hier von erstaunlich hohen Nutzerzahlen auszugehen. So lag Ende 2015 die Anzahl der Mitgliedschaften bei Online Dating Börsen in Deutschland bei 118.1 Millionen; die Zahl der aktiven Nutzer lag immerhin noch bei 8.4 Millionen (Quelle: Statista: Statistiken zum Online Dating, <https://de.statista.com/themen/885/online-dating/>).

5 Wir nutzen hier den veralteten Begriff «Adressant» (statt Absender oder Sender) zur Abgrenzung vom Sender-Empfänger Model der Kommunikation. Im systemtheoretischen Sinne ist Kommunikation als selbstreferentielle Operation sozialer Systeme zu verstehen («Kommunikation kommuniziert»), als eisdynamische Operation autopoietischer Systeme. Kommunikation wird also nicht als

Dies mag anfänglich eine lediglich durch einen «Button» realisierte «Freundschaftsanfrage» (Facebook) sein; später etwa Chats, Sprachnachrichten, (Bild-)Telefonate, Face-to-Face-Kommunikation.

Von Adresslisten als *Medien* kann sicher bei öffentlichen Adresslisten (wie Parship, eDarling, Tinder, LinkedIn, Joinmytrip usw.), deren Zugang durch Mitgliedschaft allerdings oft erkaufte werden muss, die Rede sein. Dies im Gegensatz zu privaten Adresslisten, die sich in Mobiltelefonen und durch Messenger-Apps, wie WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, Line usw.⁶, erstellen lassen. Die Elemente (Adressen) privat erstellter Adresslisten sind üblicherweise durch unterschiedliche Erwartungen strukturiert, vorgeformt, wodurch sich schon vorweg ausdifferenzierte Kommunikationspräferenzen ergeben. Flüchtige Bekanntschaften von Personen, deren Namen kaum noch erinnert wird, sind neben Arbeitskollegen, Freunden, die auch regelmässig Face-to-Face getroffen werden, Geschäftspartnern, Sportfreunden, (Ex-)Lebenspartnern, dem Ehepartner, Liebschaften, Reisebekanntschaften usw., aufgelistet. Bei privat erstellten Adresslisten kann also nicht ohne weiteres von der *Gleichartigkeit der Elemente*, einem *medialen Charakter* ausgegangen werden.⁷

Austausch von Nachrichten, bzw. Informationen zwischen Sendern und Empfängern verstanden (vgl. Luhmann, 1984, S. 191 ff.).

6 Für einen Überblick an Anwendungen: siehe den Wikipedia Artikel «Liste von mobilen Instant-Messengern».

7 Allerdings ist auch nicht auszuschliessen, dass private Adresslisten im Laufe jahrelanger Nutzung den Charakter eines Mediums bekommen können, also in der dann oft undifferenzierten schlichten Vielzahl von Einträgen den Charakter von «öffentlichen» Adresslisten annehmen. Nutzer von Facebook etwa verfügen über durchschnittlich 342 «Freunde» (gemäss statistischen Untersuchungen – vgl. Data Science of the Facebook World, 14.4.2013 – <http://blog.stephenwolfram.com/2013/04/data-science-of-the-facebook-world/>) Festzuhalten ist deshalb, dass zumindest fallweise nachfolgende Überlegungen auch für privat erstellte Adresslisten Geltung beanspruchen können.

2 Das Problem der doppelten Kontingenz

Im Problem der doppelten Kontingenz, welches das Verhältnis von Ego und Alter betrifft, stellt sich das Grundproblem der Ermöglichung sozialer Handlungen – ja sozialer Ordnung. In den vielfältigen Lösungsmöglichkeiten dieses Problems realisiert sich soziales Handeln. Wobei «Lösung» hier nicht als Beseitigung des Problems doppelter Kontingenz zu verstehen ist (was Systeme kollabieren lassen würde), sondern davon ausgegangen wird, «dass doppelte Kontingenz zwangsläufig zur Bildung von sozialen Systemen führt und in diesem Sinne als Dauerproblem (nicht nur: als Anstoss) autokatalytisch wirkt (...)» (Luhmann, 1984, S. 177)

Das Problem stellt sich erst dadurch, dass sich Alter und Ego gegenseitig und gleichzeitig als Sinnsysteme erleben; dies durch die Intransparenz selbstreferentiell geschlossener Bewusstseine, die sich gewissermassen als “black boxes” (vgl. Luhmann, 1984, S. 156) erfahren. Denn «[z]u einem Akutwerden doppelter Kontingenz genügt (...) nicht die blosse Faktizität der Begegnung; zu einem motivierenden Problem der doppelten Kontingenz (und damit: zur Konstitution sozialer Systeme) kommt es nur, wenn diese Systeme in spezifischer Weise erlebt und behandelt werden: nämlich als unendlich offene, in ihrem Grunde dem fremden Zugriff entzogene Möglichkeiten der Sinnbestimmung» (Luhmann, 1984, S. 151–152).

Indem Alter und Ego (als alter Ego) im gegenseitigen Erleben ihre Erwartungen an die Erwartungen des je anderen knüpfen (und so als doppelt kontingent erfahren), wird – idealtypisch – in unbestimmbarer Selbstreferenz jegliches Handeln blockiert. Anfängliches Handeln, bar jeglicher Orientierung, ist derart mit maximaler Erwartungsunsicherheit verbunden, also höchst risikoreich. Es entsteht ein Zirkel, der erst aufzulösen, gewissermassen zu enttautologisieren ist, damit überhaupt etwas passiert: «Ich tue, was Du willst, wenn Du tust, was ich will» (Luhmann, 1984, S. 166). In der Konstituierung sozialer Systeme aus dieser Unbestimmtheit, in der Überwindung des Problems

der doppelten Kontingenz, etwa durch Etablierung von Interaktionssystemen, wird anfängliche maximale Erwartungsunsicherheit in zunehmende Erwartungssicherheit verwandelt (vgl. auch Kron et al. 2003, S. 376–377). Zunächst risikoreiche, so allerdings Aufmerksamkeit fördernde Unbestimmtheit der Begegnung doppelkontingenter Systeme ermöglicht, dass anfänglich jeder Zufall, ein flüchtiger Blick, eine kaum wahrnehmbare Geste, ein Irrtum etwa, die Situation enttautologisieren kann (Luhmann, 1984, S. 165–166).

Dabei ist festzuhalten, dass Systembildung nur erfolgen kann, wenn Unterschiede nicht aufgelöst werden, sondern Unterscheidungen vielmehr operativ fortlaufend zu neuen Unterscheidungen führen. In Bezug auf soziale Systeme kann Kommunikation deshalb nicht gleichbedeutend sein mit der Übertragung von Information, gewissermassen einem “whitening” der “black boxes,” als die Alter und Ego sich erfahren. Kommunikation würde dadurch zum Erliegen kommen. Es ist gerade die *Unmöglichkeit* der Kommunikation die Intransparenz von Ego und Alter durch Kommunikation aufzulösen, die Kommunikation «autokatalytisch» ständig re-vitalisiert. Die gegenseitige Intransparenz von Bewusstseinsystemen (Ego/Alter) und sozialen Systemen (etwa Interaktionssystemen) – also die Stabilität dieses Unterschieds als Unterschied –, sorgt für den Fortgang (die Autopoiesis) sowohl von gedanklichen, wie auch von kommunikativen Unterscheidungen. In sich gegenseitig konstituierender autopoietischer Selbstreferenz kann weder Kommunikation Kommunikation, noch können Gedanken Gedanken transzendieren. Systembildung ist in diesem Sinne als der beständige Versuch der Lösung eines unlösbaren Problems zu verstehen.⁸

8 Dem widerspricht nicht, dass in verständnisvoller («harmonischer») Kommunikation, dann wohl oft im Dunstkreis von Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe oder der innigen (sic) Freundschaft, gleichwohl der (bewusste) Eindruck von Transparenz erzeugt werden kann, der Eindruck eines gegenseitigen «vollkommenen» Verständnis'. Gerade weil dieser Zustand des Bewusstseins nicht

3 Bewältigung des Problems doppelter Kontingenz durch Adresslisten

3.1 Kontrolle von

Adresslistenkommunikation durch Komplexitätsreduktion

Bei Kommunikation im Medium der Adresslisten handelt es sich um eine besonders effiziente, technisch unterstützte Möglichkeit, den Zirkel doppelter Kontingenz aufzulösen. Kommunikation abwesender Anwesender in digitalen Adresslisten, eine unverbindliche Mitteilung zunächst, ist fast risikolos, ohne zu erwartende negative Folgen möglich. Etwa anfänglich lediglich als «technisch», mit Hilfe eines «Buttons» erfolgreiches «Zuzwinkern» oder «Interesse». Demnach möglich, ohne allfällige Peinlichkeit, wie sie in Face-to-Face-Kommunikation wahrscheinlich wäre, würden hier die vergleichsweise rüden Methoden der Kontaktaufnahme – besonders aber der *Verweigerung* der Aufnahme eines Kontakts – angewendet, wie sie das Medium der internetbasierten Adresslisten erlaubt. Ein unmittelbares Verweigern, bzw. Ignorieren von Antworten, etwa auf «Freundschaftsanfragen» (Facebook), nicht unüblich in adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation, ist in der Kommunikation physisch Anwesender fast unmöglich, bzw. wird als *barscher, feindseliger Fortgang* von Kommunikation verstanden.

Charakteristisch für Kommunikation in Adresslisten ist eine massive Einschränkung von *körperlicher* Wahrnehmung. Hingegen ist für Kommunikation unter Anwesenden gerade die informationsgenerierende Reflexivität von körperlicher Wahrnehmung (Blickkontakte etwa ermöglichen die Beobachtung eigener

Beobachtung) kennzeichnend (vgl. Kierserling, 1999, S. 110 ff.). Das reichhaltige, informierende Anschauungsmaterial, das die Wahrnehmung der Physis liefert, entfällt. Lediglich das Aussehen in Form von Bildern (immerhin eingeschränkte körperliche Wahrnehmung), ein gemeinsames Reiseziel, gemeinsame Bekannte, ähnliche berufliche Interessen, mögen zunächst als Attraktoren für eine Kontaktaufnahme dienen. Informationen, wie die Wahl der Kleidung, Stimme, Wortwahl und Rhetorik, das Verhalten in der Kommunikation, direkter oder indirekter Blickkontakt, Wendigkeit/Schlagfertigkeit in der Kommunikation, Erröten, durch Auftreten indizierte Selbst(un)sicherheit usw., bleiben notwendig aussen vor. Die Komplexität von schriftlicher (und in schwächerem Masse auch fernmündlicher) Kommunikation ist hingegen in ihrer Form extrem reduziert; sie erfolgt in notwendig serieller Selektivität, in der der Verkettung von Information, Mitteilung und Verstehen.⁹

Es ist die massive Einschränkung der körperlichen Wahrnehmung, die die Enttautologisierung des Zirkels doppelter Kontingenz erleichtert.¹⁰ Der sich über physische Wahrnehmung ergebende dichte (Zusatz-)Gehalt an Information (etwa sich in Stottern und Erröten ausdrückende Unsicherheit, Übergewicht, Ticks, die keiner bewussten Kontrolle unterstehen usw.) ist in der Kommunikation körperlich Anwesender kaum zu kontrollieren.¹¹ Die

mitgeteilt werden kann (Sprache erlaubt, ja evoziert leichthin Negation; Mitteilungen würden diesen Zustand also zerstören), wird er allenfalls etwa durch vielsagendes (nichtssagendes?) versonnenes Schweigen, tiefe Blicke, einen verständnisvollen Händedruck kommuniziert. Mehr bedarf es eben aufgrund tiefen Verständnis' nicht. Und wir, als Beobachter der sich so Beobachtenden, können zudem beobachten: Mehr darf es auch gar nicht bedürfen.

9 Wir argumentieren hier genau entgegengesetzt zu Illouz (2011, S. 409 ff.), die von einem dichten Informationsgehalt schriftlich basierter Internet-Kommunikation ausgeht, von einem ausgedünnten, «Illusionen» erlaubenden, bei Einbezug von körperlicher Wahrnehmung.

10 Und dies paradoxer Weise gerade in Bezug auf die Anbahnung von Liebeskommunikation, wo es doch um die Universalbetreuung eines Individuums geht. Aber: Liebe auf den ersten Blick ist – der erwähnenswerte – Ausnahmefall. Indifferenz, und allenfalls sogar Ablehnung, der Normalfall. Vgl. zur Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe Abschnitt II.

11 Auch die Versendung von «Emoticons», die das sich körperlich, etwa über das Gesicht ausdrückende Gefühlsleben von Adressat bzw. Adressant kennzeichnen sollen, bie-

massive Einschränkung der informativen Möglichkeiten erleichtert abwesenden Anwesenden die Kontrolle, nicht zuletzt auch darüber, ob Kommunikation überhaupt initiiert wird. Die zunächst gegebene Einschränkung körperlicher Wahrnehmung bietet nämlich die Möglichkeit, diese *kontrolliert zu steigern bzw. einschränken*. Und damit den Grad der Erwartungs(un)sicherheit der Kommunizierenden sowohl auszudrücken, wie auch zu bekräftigen bzw. abzuschwächen. Die Intensivierung der Koppelung¹², ein erhöhtes Mass an Vertrauen bzw. Erwartungssicherheit, welche sich auch im zunehmenden Mass ermöglichter körperlicher Wahrnehmung sowohl ausdrücken, wie auch verstärken kann, erfolgt gewissermassen performativ selbstgesteuert, durch den je erreichten Grad der Koppelung selbst: «(...) Vertrauen [hat nämlich] jenen *zirkulären*, sich selbst voraussetzenden *und bestätigenden* Charakter, der allen Strukturen eigen ist, die aus doppelter Kontingenz entstehen. Es macht Systembildungen möglich und gewinnt aus ihnen dann wieder die Kraft zu verstärkender, riskanterer Reproduktion» (Luhmann, 1984, S. 181, Hervorhebung durch den Autor).¹³

ten hier natürlich keine Abhilfe. „Emoticons“ sind als Elemente der Kontrolle von Kommunikation zu verstehen und nicht als Hilfsmittel, um unverstellten Gefühlen der kommunizierenden Personen Ausdruck zu verleihen.

12 Als Minimalform strikter Koppelung soll hier gelten, dass auf eine Mitteilung zumindest eine Anschlussmitteilung des zunächst Adressierten zurück an den Adressanten erfolgt, also davon ausgegangen werden kann, dass erwartungsbildend zumindest einmalig Information von Mitteilung unterschieden und verstanden worden ist. Im Zusammenhang mit Medien der Adresslisten können dies auch „Likes“/„Dislikes,“ „ReTweets,“ Kennzeichnung als «Favoriten» usw. sein.

13 Der Zuwachs an Kontrolle ist anfällig dafür, überschätzt zu werden. So wird bei allmählich intensivierten, Vertrauen scheinbar zu kontrollierenden Kontaktaufnahmen eben oft unterschätzt, dass Identität im Internet durch eingeschränkte, bzw. leicht zu kontrollierende körperliche Wahrnehmung gefälscht werden kann. Dies erleichtert diverse Formen der Kriminalität, etwa Betrug finan-

In kontrollierter Steigerung (oder allenfalls auch Verweigerung) körperlicher Wahrnehmung kann es, etwa in Datingwebseiten, von Chatkommunikation zur Versendung von E-Mails kommen; von E-Mails zum Austausch von Bildern; von Bildern zu Telefonaten; von Telefonaten zu Bildtelefonaten (etwa über Dienste wie «Skype» oder «WhatsApp»); von Bildtelefonaten zu Treffen Face-to-Face; von Treffen Face-to-Face zu körperlichen Intimitäten. Wobei natürlich dem Einzelfall überlassen bleibt, Geschwindigkeit und Schrittfolge der so graduierten Koppelung, bzw. allenfalls auch kommunikativen Rückzug oder gar Abbruch, zu bestimmen.

Nicht nur die Reduktion von Komplexität durch eingeschränkte körperliche Wahrnehmung erlaubt eine, jedenfalls im Vergleich zur Kommunikation physisch Anwesender, überragende Kontrolle von Kommunikation, sondern auch der für Adresslistenkommunikation typische Sachverhalt, dass raum-zeitliche Parameter zur Disposition stehen. Typisch für schriftliche, und damit auch für Adresslistenkommunikation ist, dass die Unterscheidung (das Verstehen) der Unterscheidung von Information und Mitteilung zeitlich und räumlich auseinandergesogen ist. Speichermedien (wie Papyrus, Bücher, Computerserver) erlauben, dass Mitteilungen auch noch *später* und *woanders* von Informationen unterschieden, und so verstanden werden können. Zeit ist in Adresslistenkommunikation also *nutzbar*, etwa um besonders originelle, überlegte Anschlussmitteilungen auszuarbeiten, oder etwa um Zeit selbst latent informativ zu nutzen, etwa indem entschieden werden kann, ob umgehend oder zeitlich verzögert geantwortet wird.¹⁴

zieller Art, Pädophilie, Heiratsschwindelei, Stalking usw.

14 In der Diktion Bourdieus (1982) lässt sich feststellen, dass die Disposition der Adresslistenkommunikation ein effektives Management der Arten des «Kapitals», über das Individuen verfügen, erlaubt. So lässt sich etwa – gerade durch zunächst schriftliche Kommunikation – ein hohes kulturelles Kapital herausstellen, bei etwa gleichzeitigen Defiziten hinsichtlich des ökonomischen

Hingegen ist zeitliche Kontrolle in Face-to-Face Kommunikation äusserst eingeschränkt. Anschlusskommunikation hat, soll sie nicht irritieren, innert angemessener Zeit zu erfolgen. Zu starke zeitliche Kontrolle (Monolog) ist, wenn es sich nicht um Vorträge handelt, denen zeitliche Freiheiten auch nur unter der Voraussetzung eines zeitlichen Rahmens zugestanden werden, bei der Kommunikation Anwesender eher unerwünscht. Zwar ist es in jedem Fall die Kommunikation selbst, die zeitlichen Erwartungsdruck aufbaut («Kommunikation kommuniziert»), im Vergleich zu Interaktionssystemen Anwesender ist dieser Druck in Adresslistenkommunikation jedoch weitaus weniger restriktiv, was ein stärker differenziertes, Kontrollmöglichkeiten erlaubendes Zeitmanagement erlaubt.

Nicht zuletzt ist das Risiko von (anfänglicher) Kommunikation im Medium der Adresslisten auch durch die schlichte Vielzahl potentieller Kontakte minimiert. Werden Mitteilungen ignoriert, stehen weiterhin hunderte andere Elemente zu Verfügung, um Formen der strikten Kopplung zu realisieren.¹⁵

3.2 Funktionale Äquivalente zur Steigerung von Komplexität in Adresslistenkommunikation

Die erhebliche Kontrolle von Adresslistenkommunikation ermöglichende Reduktion von Komplexität – durch eingeschränkte körperliche Wahrnehmung, weitgehende Beherrschung raum-zeitli-

chen Faktoren und durch die Vielzahl alternativadressabler Adresslistenmitglieder (Nutzerprofile) – bedarf funktionaler Äquivalente, um kommunikative Komplexität wiederum zu steigern. Denn es ist davon auszugehen, dass etwa die auf Dauer eingeschränkte körperliche Wahrnehmung abwesender Anwesender, etwa als Chat- oder E-Mail-Partnerschaften, destabilisierend wirkt. Die Möglichkeit, dass sich durch dominanteren körperlichen Wahrnehmung (bei Preisgabe auch zeitlicher Kontrollmöglichkeiten) der Informationsgehalt der Adresslistenkommunikation *steigern* (bzw. allenfalls auch *einschränken*) lässt – von Chats zum Austausch von Bildern, von Telefonie zur Videotelefonie usw. –, wirkt in diesem Sinne stabilisierend.

Ein weiteres funktionales Äquivalent, adresslistenbasierte Kommunikation wieder mit Komplexität anzureichern, ist, dass die Historie der gesendeten Nachrichten gespeichert wird, bzw. gespeichert werden kann. Damit spielt die «Systemgeschichte» bei Kommunikation im Medium der Adresslisten gleich zu Beginn eine entscheidende Rolle; dies zumal die Historie der Mitteilungen, technisch unterstützt, *exakt* abgespeichert wird. Bei Kommunikation unter Anwesenden ist davon auszugehen, dass die Systemgeschichte erst im Laufe der Zeit eine zunehmend grössere Rolle spielt, also «(...) die Interaktion im Laufe der Zeit Prämissen aufbaut, die erschwert negierbar sind, (...) in Form einer Systemgeschichte, die allen Beteiligten unverstellbar präsent ist, so dass niemand die eigenen Beiträge dazu einfach bestreiten oder sich aus den Erwartungen, die dadurch aufgebaut wurden, einfach zurückziehen kann, ohne dem Widerstand der anderen zu begegnen. Diese Prämisse ist dann zwar im System selbst konstituiert, gleichwohl aber Vorgabe für jede Einzeloperation und durch weitere Kommunikation nicht mehr in vollem Umfang auflösbar» (Kieserling, 1999, S. 134).

Durch die Einschränkung (auch reflexiv wirksamer) körperlicher Wahrnehmung ist zudem die Möglichkeit von indirekter Kommunikation – also etwas «fallenzulassen», «verstehen zu geben», etwas «durchblicken zu lassen» (vgl. Kie-

Kapitals. Oder es wird, umgekehrt, etwa ein hohes ökonomisches Kapital betont (vgl. <http://www.mysugardaddy.eu/>), das ermöglicht, allenfalls später aufgedeckte Defizite hinsichtlich des kulturellen oder sozialen Kapitals zu überstrahlen.

¹⁵ Was allenfalls selbstverstärkende Effekte nach sich zieht. Wird ohnehin mit dem Ignorieren von Mitteilungen gerechnet, mag es generell sinnvoll erscheinen, zahllose unverbindliche (Massen-)Mitteilungen («Hallo», «Wie geht´s?», «Du hast ein nettes Lächeln ...» usw.) zu versenden, was zur Folge hat, dass generell mit unverbindlichen Mitteilungen gerechnet werden muss, die mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit ignoriert werden können ...

serling, 1999, S. 147 ff.) –, welche die Kommunikation unter Anwesenden auszeichnet, extrem eingengt. Auch wenn sich das Problem der *Initiierung* von Kommunikation, für die indirekte Kommunikation bei der Konstituierung von Interaktionssystemen unter Anwesenden nutzbar gemacht werden kann,¹⁶ in adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation kaum stellt, können die gespeicherte Systemgeschichte der Nachrichten und die Möglichkeit, dass die strikte Koppelung der Personen von Adresslisten potentiell steigerbar ist, als funktionelle Äquivalente für komplexitäts-induzierende körperliche Wahrnehmung verstanden werden.¹⁷

So ermöglicht einerseits die *Steigerung* der Erwartungssicherheit der Kommunikation von Nutzern von Adresslistenmedien auch «strikte Koppelungen» bis hin zur Face-to-Face Kommunikation, und damit potentiell auch indirekte Kommunikation unter *Anwesenden*. Die *Speicherung* der Systemgeschichte (von Chats oder E-Mails) ermöglicht andererseits, dass sich im Zuge von Rekursen auf die Systemgeschichte – in der Systemgeschichte und wiederum als Systemgeschichte – Sinngehalte (Bedeutungen) der Systemgeschichte immer wieder ändern; also bereits Ge-

sagtes in neuem Licht erscheint, sich neu Erwähntes relativiert, Widersprüche auftauchen oder abgeschwächt werden usw.¹⁸ Gleichwohl die sich ergebenden Mehrdeutigkeiten, die Unsicherheiten von Bedeutungen, im Rückgriff auf die *schriftlich* festgehaltene Systemgeschichte *objektiver*; also, im Vergleich zur Kommunikation unter Anwesenden, allenfalls schwerer zu kontrollieren sind, können diese doch als funktionales Äquivalent zu komplexitätssteigernder indirekter Kommunikation gelten.

Im Vordergrund steht dabei allerdings nicht die Funktion der Initiierung von Kommunikation; dieses Problem ist in adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation bereits auf effiziente (technisch unterstützte) Weise gelöst. Gerade die Leichtigkeit aber mit der Interaktionssysteme abwesender Anwesender durch Adresslisten initiiert werden können, hat anfänglich zur Folge, dass sich Kontakte derart durch Flüchtigkeit, Beliebigkeit, Unverbindlichkeit – ja: Stereotypizität, auszeichnen. Die Möglichkeit der *Steigerung* der strikten Koppelung und die *Speicherung* der Systemgeschichte, haben die Funktion, die Komplexität dieser Interaktionssysteme zu steigern, um eine höhere Verbindlichkeit bzw. Stabilität zu ermöglichen. Dabei ist es im Laufe der Systemgeschichte nicht unbedingt eine sukzessive Erhöhung des Vertrauens bzw. der Sicherheit von Erwartungen, die für eine Stabilisierung von Interaktionssystemen sorgt. Im Gegenteil, sich im Rekurs auf die Systemgeschichte ergebendes Misstrauen und ergebende Erwartungsunsicherheit, angesichts von Widersprüchen, Unstimmigkeiten, Ambivalenzen, Unverständlichem, kann zu mehr Engagement, höherer Aufmerksamkeit, mehr Vor- oder Nachsicht, stärkerem Einsatz, schlicht zu intensiverer Kommunikation in Entgegnung von Irritationen sorgen und damit

16 So wird «(...) indirekte Kommunikation verwendet (...), um das Problem der Initiative zu entschärfen. Die Problemlösung läuft dann über eine Ambiguisierung der Zurechnungsfrage. Vor allem bei ungleich verteilten Initiativrechten gilt dann: Wer Initiative zeigen müsste, den kann man durch indirekte Kommunikation dazu ermuntern. Reflexives Wahrnehmen macht es leicht so zu verfahren. Blicke können länger dauern als üblich. Ein Lächeln kann mehr als nur Standardfreundlichkeit ausdrücken. Man kann einen Fehler und die Entschuldigung für den Fehler (zu der man eben dadurch ein Recht erwirbt) zur Andeutung eigener Gesprächsbereitschaft nutzen» (Kieserling, 1999, S. 162–163) usw.

17 In privaten Adresslisten kann auch die Ambiguität der Adressierung von Kommunikation in Gruppenchats als Form der indirekten Kommunikation verstanden werden. So kann etwa Kommunikation scheinbar an die Gruppe gerichtet sein, gleichwohl so einem einzelnen Gruppenmitglied etwas «durch die Blume» mitgeteilt werden soll.

18 Wenn Sinn als Medium, als Einheit der Differenz von Aktualität und Potentialität verstanden wird (Luhmann 1984, S. 92 ff.), verändern sich Formen des Sinns (Bedeutungen), Unterschiede ausmachende Unterschiede zwischen aktuellen und potentiellen Möglichkeiten, im Zuge der Systemgeschichte, also mit sich ändernder Aktualität.

die Stabilität derartiger Interaktionssysteme steigern.

Interaktionssysteme, ob unter Anwesenden oder unter «abwesenden Anwesenden» (z.B. Chatpartner), zeichnen sich als autopoietische Systeme durch grundlegende, die Ebene der Operationen, also Kommunikation betreffende Selbstreferentialität aus («Kommunikation kommuniziert»). Es bedarf demnach der Enttautologisierung, der Selbstreferenzunterbrechung oder Asymmetrisierung, um diese Systeme zu erhalten (vgl. Kieserling, 1999, S. 187 ff.) Dabei bedingt die Abwesenheit der Wahrnehmung der Physis, dass die Selbstreferenzunterbrechung in adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation im Wesentlichen zunächst *thematisch* erfolgt, also hinsichtlich der *sachlichen* Sinndimension über Externalisierung. Erst später ist möglich, dass Enttautologisierung auch über die Sinndimension der *Zeit*, also im Rekurs auf die Systemgeschichte eines Interaktionssystems, und die *soziale* Sinndimension, etwa in der Ausdifferenzierung geschlechterbezogener Rollenbilder, durch Expertentum, Dominanz usw., erfolgt. Nicht zuletzt ist davon auszugehen, dass die Selbstreferenzunterbrechung abwesender Anwesender (also chatbasierte Interaktionssysteme oder etwa “E-Mail-Buddies”¹⁹) zudem über *Reflexivität* erfolgt. Es ist charakteristischer Weise der durch Speicherung mögliche Zugriff auf die exakte Historie dieser Interaktionssysteme, der Selbstreferenzunterbrechung durch Reflexivität privilegiert.

Dass eine Asymmetrisierung bei adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation thematisch erfolgt, ergibt sich schon aus der Tatsache, dass die Adresslisten selbst thematisch organisiert sind; etwa als Datingpartnerschaften jedweder Couleur (Liebe,

Freundschaft, Sexualität²⁰, Seitensprung usw.), als potentielle Reisebekanntschaften, berufliche Netzwerke, Freundschaften mit thematischen Schwerpunkten (Autos, Motorräder, Sport usw.), Lernpartnerschaften, usw. Thema und Interesse an demselben, indiziert durch die Registrierung in der betreffenden Adressliste, sind schon, bevor überhaupt Kommunikation erfolgt, klar festgelegt, was die Handhabung des Zirkels doppelter Kontingenz ungemein erleichtert. Dies zumal, angesichts der Abwesenheit von physischer Wahrnehmung, zunächst Kommunikationsofferten, bzw. darauf folgende Kommunikation, in weitgehender Anonymität erfolgen kann. So kann davon ausgegangen werden, dass Interaktionssysteme, die unter der Ägide einer Thematik stehen, leichter auszdifferenzieren sind, als bei bereits konstituierten Interaktionssystemen spezifische «Thematisierungsschwellen» (Luhmann, 1981, S. 55 ff.) zu überwin-

20 Auf technisch besonders effiziente Weise bedient sich die Anwendung «Tinder» (<http://www.gotinder.com/>) adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation. Das Programm ermöglicht es Nutzern, anhand ihrer Profilbilder eine Vorauswahl der Personen zu treffen, die sie (erotisch) attraktiv finden und kennen lernen möchten. Ablehnung bzw. Zustimmung wird in der Smartphone-App durch ein «wegwischen» der Bilder nach links bzw. rechts, bzw. das Drücken entsprechender “Buttons” signalisiert. Die (je individuelle) Liste der Personen, die sich *gegenseitiges* Interesse gezeigt haben, wird daraufhin den Nutzern zu Verfügung gestellt, gefiltert nach der Entfernung der Personen unter Ausnutzung des GPS-Systems des Smartphones, bzw. der angegebenen Verortung der Nutzer. Kommunikation wird so wahrscheinlich gemacht, da eine *symmetrische Asymmetrisierung* in sachlicher (erotische Partnerschaft) und sozialer Hinsicht (gegenseitiges Interesse) bereits erfolgt ist, obwohl eine Kommunikationsofferte allenfalls gegenüber dem Abstraktum «Adressliste», nicht jedoch an die Adresse einer individuellen Person erfolgte. Zudem bleiben den Nutzern die enttäuschenden Listen desinteressierter bzw. einseitig interessierter Personen unbekannt, bzw. lediglich latent bekannt.

19 Da *zumindest synchrone* Anwesenheit Bedingung von Interaktionssystemen ist, kann E-Mail-Interaktionssystemen dieser Status nur dann zugerechnet werden, wenn klar ist (etwa durch umgehende Beantwortung von Mitteilungen, Statusanzeigen), dass der andere synchron anwesend ist. So im Unterschied etwa zu Brief-Freundschaften.

den. Was wiederum der Etablierung *neuer* Interaktionssysteme zugutekommt.²¹

Eine Enttautologisierung der Interaktionssysteme durch die Sinndimensionen der Zeit (Systemgeschichte), der Sache nach (Thema) und über Reflexivität (im Zugriff auf die Systemgeschichte), kann für eine beträchtliche Stabilität von adresslistenbasierten Interaktionssystemen, wie Chat- oder E-Mail-Partnerschaften, sorgen. Dass die Abwesenheit der körperlichen Wahrnehmung, bzw. die dadurch eingeschränkte (bzw. idealisierte) Sozialdimension gerade in der Konstituierung von Intimbeziehungen oft eher konstruktiv, als destruktiv erlebt wird, wie die Popularität von Singlebörsen zeigt, ist angesichts der sich ergebenden Kontrollmöglichkeiten verständlich.

Gerade angesichts stabiler, idealisierter Komplexe von Erwartungen, die unter abwesenden Anwesenden aufgebaut werden können, ist die Wahrscheinlichkeit allerdings hoch, dass bei der späteren prosaischen Wahrnehmung des Körpers (bzw. körperlichen Verhaltens) mit destruktiv wirkenden Enttäuschungen zu rechnen ist. Zudem sollen, modernen Erwartungen gemäß, nicht zuletzt als Errungenschaft des Feminismus, Geschlechterrollen in Interaktionssystemen im Medium der Liebe *symmetrisch*, als eine Beziehung *unter Gleichen*, ausdifferenziert werden (vgl. etwa Illouz, 2011, S. 318), was ein Zustandekommen von Liebes-Beziehungen angesichts von Hierarchien (etwa Professoren – Studentinnen), oder angesichts stark unterschiedlichen Alters, oder angesichts wirtschaftlichen oder sonstigen Abhängigkeiten, zumindest unwahrscheinlich machen *soll*. Dem modernen Wertekanon

21 Dies ermöglicht durch Adresslisten extrem unwahrscheinliche Formen von Interaktion. Man denke hier an so unwahrscheinliche Interaktionssysteme, wie sie durch Kannibalismus- oder Suizid-Foren ermöglicht werden. In diesem Sinne werden auch eher neue Interaktionssysteme, etwa zu einer «Domina» konstituiert, als entsprechende Thematisierungsschwellen (hier: sexuelle Präferenz) in bereits bestehenden Interaktionssystemen (angelehnt etwa an Partnerschaft oder Ehe) zu überwinden.

nach soll in Bezug auf Intimbeziehungen von einer Asymmetrisierung doppelter Kontingenz durch die Sozialdimension abgesehen werden.²²

4 Die Bewältigung des Problems doppelter Kontingenz durch Adresslisten als Problem

Das Paradigma der Konstituierung von Interaktionssystemen unter Anwesenden ist die Konfrontation von gegenseitig intransparenten Bewusstseinsystemen. In adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation, bei der Konstituierung von Interaktionssystemen unter abwesenden Anwesenden kommt hinzu, dass nicht nur das Bewusstsein als “black box” zu verstehen ist, sondern zudem die jeweilige Adressliste der Adressaten bzw. Adressanten. Auch wenn Adresslisten, anders als Bewusstsein keine autopoietischen Systeme, nicht *aktiv* «(...) dem fremden Zugriff entzogenen Möglichkeiten der Sinnbestimmung» (Luhmann, 1984, S. 152) vorhalten können, haben die Teilnehmer von Kommunikation in Adresslisten zu berücksichtigen, dass Kommunikationsofferten, bzw. -annahmen in Relation (etwa Konkurrenz oder Widerspruch gar) zu anderen Offerten, bzw. Annahmen von anderen Elementen (Personen) der Adresslisten stehen und somit *passiv* gleichfalls «dem fremden Zugriff entzogene Möglichkeiten der Sinn-

22 Angebote, die die Enttautologisierung von Interaktionssystemen spezifisch auf Asymmetrien in der Sozialdimension stützen (etwa hinsichtlich Alters und ökonomischer Situation: <http://www.mysugardaddy.eu/>), werden dadurch zumindest moralisch fragwürdig, aber vermutlich, angesichts modernem moralischen Pluralismus, kaum weniger erfolgreich. Selbstredend kann es sich hier anfänglich nicht um Liebe handeln, geht es doch in diesen Fällen nicht um *Individuen*, sondern ihnen zuzurechnende spezifische Eigenschaften. So etwa Unterschiede hinsichtlich des «Kapitals» (Bourdieu) von Personen. In Abschnitt II wird gezeigt, dass es die strukturellen Charakteristika von Liebeskommunikation selbst sind, die bedingen, dass die Enttautologisierung von höchstpersönlichen Interaktionssystemen (Liebesbeziehungen) *nicht* über die Sozialdimension erfolgen darf.

bestimmung» bereithalten. Sie deshalb jederzeit etwa Prioritäten ändern können, kommunikative Annahmen oder Offerten unter Vorbehalt stehen, eigene Zusagen allenfalls revidiert werden müssen, mit Absagen gerechnet werden muss, Verbindlichkeiten in Frage stehen usw.

Im Fokus steht bei Kommunikation unter Anwesenden das Bewusstsein. Es sind *kommunikative Handlungen*, die sich hier als kontingent darstellen. Selbst wenn kommunikative Handlungen auf eine bestimmte (nicht unmögliche) Weise möglich, gleichwohl aber, nämlich gegenseitig bedingt durch die Bedingungen des je Anderen, nicht auf diese Weise notwendig sind, und Kommunikation als Handlung so blockiert wird, steht gemeinhin Adressant bzw. Adressat (Alter bzw. Ego) der Kommunikation nicht infrage.²³ Bei Kommunikation unter Anwesenden ist im Allgemeinen klar, dass *bestimmte Individuen* kommunizieren.

Bei Kommunikation unter abwesenden Anwesenden stehen zudem die Adresslisten der Kommunizierenden im Fokus. Kontingent werden damit (und dies auf jeden Fall mit Blick auf öffentliche Adresslisten) die *adressierten Individuen* von Kommunikation. Es ist nicht unmöglich mit einer bestimmten Person in Kontakt zu treten, aber auch nicht notwendig angesichts der Vielzahl gleichartiger Elemente (Nutzerprofile) in Adresslisten. Dies zumal der zufällige Charakter von Kommunikation in Adresslisten offenkundig ist. Nicht unbedingt die Individualität einer Person steht im Fokus, sondern etwa die Tatsache, dass sie gerade online ist, oder dass eine Person früher, als eine andere, auf eine Kommunikationsofferte antwortete, oder die räumliche Entfernung zu dieser Person günstiger ist, als zu jener, oder dass für ein Treffen eine Terminabsprache mit der einen Person bequemer ist, als mit der anderen usw.

Die Leichtigkeit, mit der bei Kommunikation im Medium der Adresslisten das Problem der doppelten Kontingenz handhabbar ist, ist dadurch bedingt, dass nicht, wie bei Kommunikation unter Anwesenden, mit *einzigartig wahrgenommenen Individuen* kommuniziert wird, sondern mit Elementen eines Mediums. Es lässt sich sagen, dass hier anfänglich nicht Individuen, sondern *Dividuen* kommunizieren. Personen also, die als Elemente von Adresslisten mit vielen anderen Elementen strikt koppelbar sind und sich so gewissermaßen als «teilbar» darstellen.²⁴

Unter Anwesenden, also in Fällen, in denen sich Ego und Alter mit ihrem Bewusstsein gegenseitig als “black boxes” erleben, kann jede (kommunikative) Handlung, ein kurzer Blick etwa, ein verschämtes Lächeln, ein Gähnen, ostentatives Ignorieren, verschränkte Arme, ein bestimmter Kleidungsstil, usw., mit Bedeutung aufgeladen werden, ist als *kommunikative Handlung* individuellen Personen zurechenbar und damit, da eben auch Ablehnung individuell zuzuordnen ist, risikoreich. Hingegen sind anfängliche kommunikative Offerten in Adresslisten in ihrer Bedeutsamkeit, ihrem Risiko (was Konsequenzen betrifft) für Individuen extrem limitiert. Der Adressat der Kommunikation in öffentlichen Adresslisten ist zu Anfang gewissermaßen das Medium, nicht ein Individuum. Gerade dieses anfänglich beschränkte Risiko ist es, das problemloses Initiieren von Kommunikation in Adresslisten ermöglicht.

²³ Eine gleichwohl bestehende Fragwürdigkeit kann – als indirekte Kommunikation – gerade dazu benutzt werden, das Problem doppelter Kontingenz zu enttautologisieren (vgl. Kieserling, 1999, S. 147 ff., auch weiter oben: Fussnote 16).

²⁴ Wir können bei dieser Begrifflichkeit an Fuchs (2007, S. IV. Die Listenförmigkeit *des* Menschen, Hervorhebung durch den Autor) anknüpfen. Fuchs konzeptuell allerdings eher im philosophischen (begriffsanalytischen) Zugriff, bezogen auf die Charakterisierung *des* Menschen in seiner eben fragwürdigen Individualität. Wir gehen hier konkreter von Dividualität im Sinne der Bestimmung von «Individuen» als Elementen in einem Medium (hier: Adresslisten) aus, beziehen uns – mit diesem Begriff – also ausdrücklich nicht auf die Charakterisierung der wie immer fragwürdigen Individualität *des* Menschen. Vgl. in diesem Zusammenhang auch Nietzsche (1954, S. 75).

Zurückweisungen, ignorierte Kommunikationsofferten von *Individuen* sind schmerzlich, führen schon angesichts dieser Möglichkeit dazu, dass Offerten nur zögerlich erfolgen. Mit ablehnenden Kommunikationsannahmen oder ignorierten Kommunikationsofferten von *Dividuen* in Adresslisten ist jedoch plausibler Weise, angesichts der Leichtigkeit, mit der (selbst) Kommunikation initiiert werden kann, bzw. (selbst) kommunikative Offerten ignoriert, bzw. abgelehnt werden können, stets zu rechnen. Das Scheitern anfänglicher Kommunikation muss nicht persönlich genommen werden. Allerdings erzwingt wohl die *systematische Ablehnung* – oder zumeist eher noch die *systematische Ignoranz* – des Adresslistenmediums gegenüber kommunikativen Offerten dazu, dass der Adressant Defizite der eigenen Person zurechnet.

Individualität wird in Adresslisten erst im Zuge der Kommunikation, im Zuge der strikten Koppelung der Adresslistenelemente, der *Dividuen* konstruiert. Erst im Rekurs auf die dann tatsächlich je *individuelle* Systemgeschichte des sich konstituierenden Interaktionssystems, im spezifischen Zugriff des Interaktionssystems auf ein bestimmtes Thema, indem durch den Austausch von Bildern, durch (Bild-) Telefonate oder Face-to-Face-Kommunikation komplexitätssteigernd körperliche Wahrnehmung zugelassen wird, kann sich das Interaktionssystem stabilisieren. Adressat und Adressant, zunächst als *Dividuen* lediglich gleichartige Elemente in einem Medium, werden gegenseitig zu *Individuen*.

Es muss allerdings davon ausgegangen werden, dass in der Systemgeschichte von Interaktionssystemen, die sich durch adresslistenbasierte Kommunikation anbahnten, die (anfängliche) Kontingenz der *Dividuen* bzw. *Individuen* erinnert wird. Individualität wird dadurch ermöglicht, dass im Zuge der Stabilisierung eines Interaktionssystems das Paradox der anfänglichen Kontingenz der Kommunizierenden – von *Dividualität* zur *Individualität* – verdeckt wird. Die *Kontingenz von Individualität* – gewissermassen die *Beliebigkeit von Einzigartigkeit* –, die bei

Kommunikation im Medium der Adresslisten unverblümt vor Augen geführt wird, stellt sich bei adresslisteninitiiert Kommunikation als latent auftauchendes *Paradox* dar, welches so konstituierte Interaktionssysteme destabilisieren kann. Problematisch ist dies vor allem für Interaktionssysteme, die von der wechselseitigen Einzigartigkeit von Ego und Alter ausgehen müssen, also mit Blick auf (romantische) Liebesbeziehungen.²⁵ Adresslisten führen vor Augen, dass es sowohl für Adressat wie Adressant Alternativen gibt. Mit (vermeintlicher) Leichtigkeit mit anderen Personen kommuniziert werden kann, andere Personen getroffen, andere Personen wichtig oder wichtiger, andere Personen «individueller» werden können. Begegnungen sind, führen Adresslisten brutal vor Augen, nicht von «schicksalhafter» Bedeutung, sondern zufällig und kontingent.²⁶

Dieses Problem ist hinsichtlich Adresslisten struktureller Art. Es ist durch das unlösbare Problem doppelter Kontingenz gegeben, das sich aus der wechselseitigen Intransparenz der Adresslisten von Alter und Ego ergibt. Dem Problem ist demnach nicht «psychologisch» zu entgegnen. Es reicht nicht aus, (sich selbst) mehr Willen zu zeigen, an sich selbst (therapeutisch) «zu arbeiten», zu versuchen, (Liebes-) Beziehungen etwa dadurch zu stabilisieren, indem die Individualität des Anderen mehr wertgeschätzt wird (in diesem Sinne zuzustimmen: Illouz 2011, S. 34 ff.). Die mittlerweile oft in Alltäglichkeit gegebene Adresslistenkommunikation *notigt* Kommunizierenden auf, einzurechnen, dass sowohl mit Blick auf die eigene Adresse

25 Es entbehrt nicht der Tragik, dass, der Erfolg von Datingwebseiten indiziert dies, heutzutage sehr häufig versucht wird, Liebesbeziehungen gerade durch adresslistenbasierte Kommunikation zu initiieren. Also mit Adresslisten ein Medium in Anspruch genommen wird, das der Konstituierung von (romantischer) Liebe *strukturell hinderlich* sein kann.

26 Die Kontingenz und Instabilität moderner Liebesbeziehung führt eindrücklich Illouz (2011) vor. Wir werden im folgenden Abschnitt II. auf Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe zurückkommen.

(als Adressant) wie auch mit Blick auf Adressierte, stets mit Alternativen zu rechnen ist. Andere Kommunikation, andere Personen (für Andere) bedeutsame(re) Möglichkeiten bereithalten können. Auch wenn wir in vorliegender Untersuchung vorrangig öffentliche Adresslisten im Blick haben, kann sich dieses Problem auch durch überbordende private Adresslisten in Smartphones stellen.

Das unlösbare Problem der doppelten Kontingenz muss also unlösbar bleiben. «Lösungen», wie Adresslistenkommunikation, führen dazu, dass das Problem in anderer Form wieder auftaucht. So könnten die erwähnten Probleme adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation dazu führen, dass auch hier Kommunikation blockiert wird. Eine Meta-Lösung, bzw. ein Meta-Problem für in Adresslisten auftauchende Kommunikationsblockaden aufgrund doppelter Kontingenz mag sein, hier Kommunikation nicht zu ernst zu nehmen, selbst nicht zu verbindlich zu sein, da hier mit der Unverbindlichkeit anderer zu rechnen, es demnach vernünftig ist, nicht zu verbindlich zu sein ... Erneut also: Wie diesen sich nunmehr ergebenden Zirkel der *Unverbindlichkeit* auflösen?²⁷

Festzuhalten ist jedenfalls, dass adresslistenbasierte Kommunikation die Stabilisierung von Interaktionssystemen im Sinne von *Bekanntheit* (unpersönlicher Kommunikation) privilegiert, etwa im Sinne der Initiierung und Aufrechterhaltung von Kontakten in beruflichen Netzwerken. Die Speicherung von Kontakten, die leichte Erweiterbarkeit von Adresslisten, die Möglichkeit, die Systemgeschichte schriftbasierter Interaktionen (Chats und E-Mails) exakt abzuspeichern, die (technisch unterstützt) problemlose Initiierung bzw. Beendigung von Kommunikation, ermöglicht dies.

5 Die mediale Form von Adresslisten

Es bleibt die Frage zu stellen, um welche Form des Mediums es sich bei Adresslisten

handelt. Als Medien fallen sie weder klar in die Kategorie der Verbreitungsmedien, die sich dem Problem der *Erreichbarkeit* von Kommunikation in der Gesellschaft widmen (vgl. Luhmann, 1997, S. 249 ff.), noch sind sie unzweideutig als *symbolisch* generalisierte Kommunikationsmedien, die sich dem Problem des *Erfolgs*, der *erfolgreichen* Erwartbarkeit von Kommunikation stellen (vgl. Luhmann, 1997, S. 316 ff.), zu verstehen. Nicht unplausibel ist, internetbasierte Adresslisten als *technisch* generalisierte Kommunikationsmedien zu verstehen. Es geht hier zwar darum, Kommunikation – erfolgreich – mit dann erwartbaren Folgen (Kontaktaufnahme bzw. Stabilisierung von Interaktionssystemen) zu versehen, geleistet wird dies jedoch nicht über symbolische, sondern *technische* Generalisierung.

Digitale soziale Medien sind abhängig von der Erzeugung einer möglichst grossen Anzahl von gleichartigen Elementen (Nutzerprofilen) auf der Basis von elektronischen Formularen. Die *Gleichartigkeit* der Elemente ermöglicht eine (statistische) Datenverarbeitung, die, in Verbindung mit einer technischen Infrastruktur (Internet), eine mühelose informative Koppelung, bzw. Entkoppelung der Nutzerprofile erlaubt. Die Funktionalität digitaler sozialer Medien ist also in essentieller Weise abhängig von den technischen Möglichkeiten, die das Internet und die elektronische Verarbeitung der Daten der Nutzerprofile bietet. Würden die Daten in analoger Form vorliegen (etwa als Listen in Papierform), und würde eine durch Personen erfolgende Vermittlung der Nutzerprofile (am Beispiel der klassischen Heiratsvermittlung) erfolgen, wäre es unmöglich, die Funktionalität der heutigen digitalen sozialen Medien aufrecht zu erhalten – es wäre schlicht unangemessen, bei Listen derart überhaupt von einem *Medium* der Kommunikation auszugehen. Von daher ist gerechtfertigt, hier von *technisch* generalisierten Kommunikationsmedien zu sprechen.

Die *Generalisierung* erfolgt dabei nicht über Symbole – symbolische Generalisierung kann allenfalls vorausgesetzt wer-

²⁷ In Abschnitt III. wird erläutert, dass *Reputation* in Adresslistenkommunikation angestrebt wird, um der hier bestehenden Gefahr der Unverbindlichkeit von Kommunikation zu entgegenen.

den²⁸ –, sondern erfolgt technisch, durch die Nutzung von *gleichen*, bzw. *gleichartigen* Programmen, bzw. „Apps.“ Es ist von erstaunlich hohen Nutzerzahlen auszugehen. So verwenden (Stand: Januar 2016) monatlich etwa 1.65 Milliarden Personen Facebook, Messenger, wie WhatsApp oder Facebook messenger, werden von etwa je einer Milliarde Personen angewendet, die Fotosharing Plattform Instagram verfügt über etwa 400 Millionen Nutzer.²⁹ Dabei sind es die – eben programmatisch – beschränkten Möglichkeiten der Apps, die bestimmte Folgekommunikation wahrscheinlicher, bzw. erwartbarer machen, als andere.

Die generell durch die Operation der sprachlichen Negation gegebene Unwahrscheinlichkeit von Kommunikation wird also *technisch* (programmatisch) mit bestimmten erwartbaren Folgen versehen. Die Selektion etwa von sogenannten «Freundschaftsanfragen» bei Facebook, wird deshalb motiviert, weil Nutzer mit genau abschätzbaren, generalisierten Kommunikationsfolgen rechnen können. Angesichts unabwägbarer Kommunikationsfolgen, nicht abschätzbaren Peinlichkeiten, sind derartig umstandslose, direkte Anfragen Face-to-Face sonst allenfalls bei Kindern, die die Konsequenzen ihres kommunikativen Handelns eben noch erlernen müssen, möglich. Wobei selbst hier potentielle Peinlichkeit durch Schriftlichkeit, bzw. einen humoristischen Kontext, abgeschwächt wird: «Willst du mit mir gehen? – Ja/Nein (Bitte ankreuzen).»

Ebenso wie Schrift und Buchdruck nicht lediglich technische Hilfsmittel darstellen, etwa um mündliche Rede ortsun-

abhängig zu Verfügung zu stellen, sondern zu tiefgreifenden gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen geführt haben, lässt sich Adresslistenkommunikation nicht lediglich als Technik verstehen, mit der etwa bloss die Möglichkeiten der etablierten symbolisch generalisierten Kommunikationsmedien (etwa Geld, Macht, Wahrheit, Liebe) effizienter ausgestaltet würden. Auch wenn aufgrund der Neuheit dieser Formen von Kommunikation Folgen kaum abzuschätzen sind, kann mit gravierenden Konsequenzen gerechnet werden. So zeichnet sich mittlerweile empirisch ab, dass zukünftig reputationsorientierte Formen von Kommunikation an Bedeutung gewinnen (vgl. nachfolgend auch Abschnitt III.) Dies liegt daran, dass sich durch Adresslistenkommunikation die Adressierung von Kommunikation an eine Vielzahl von Personen *normalisiert*; gewissermaßen die Adressierung an *Publikum privatisiert*, und nicht mehr nur in Ausnahmesituationen (wie etwa im Theater, bei Vorträgen, oder z. B. mittels verlagsunterstützter Publikationen) praktiziert wird.³⁰

Adresslisten lassen sich demnach als «Zwitter» von Verbreitungsmedien und symbolisch generalisierten Kommunikationsmedien verstehen. Es geht hier darum, individuelle Erreichbarkeit mit Erfolg zu versehen, wahrscheinlich zu machen. Es ist diese Zwitterform, die es zulässt, dass hinsichtlich des Erfolgs von adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation unterschiedliche Schwerpunkte gesetzt werden können. So kann einerseits eine möglichst *breitgestreute* individuelle Erreichbarkeit als Erfolg im Vordergrund stehen (etwa bei sozialen Medien wie «Twitter» oder «Instagram»); andererseits mag die Etablierung einer *tatsächlich einzigartigen* individuellen Erreichbarkeit im Sinne

28 Dabei ist nicht von einer kongruenten technischen und symbolischen Generalisierung auszugehen, wodurch sich Möglichkeiten der Korruption ergeben. So lässt sich durch *technische* Generalisierung mittels sozialer Medien Liebe oder allenfalls Freundschaft – in ihrer symbolischen Generalisierung – korrumpieren. Eine Möglichkeit, die bei der Rekrutierung von Frauen (oft jungen Mädchen) für den sogenannten «Islamischen Staat» (IS) genutzt wird (vgl. etwa Black, 2015; Nitsch, 2018).

29 Vgl. zu diesen Zahlen allfacebook.de: <https://allfacebook.de/toll/state-of-facebook>.

30 Beobachten lässt sich z. B., dass China plant, Reputation anhand eines «Punktesystems» zur Überwachung einzusetzen (vgl. «China plant die totale Überwachung», faz.net, 22.11.2017). Oder wie sich durch sogenannte «Influencer» Reputation wirtschaftlich ausnutzen lässt (vgl. etwa Kilian, 2017). Hinsichtlich allfälliger Gefahren zunehmender reputationsorientierter Kommunikation Räwel (2017).

von *höchstpersönlicher* Kommunikation (Liebesbeziehungen) als Erfolg angestrebt werden (dann in Orientierung an Adresslisten wie etwa «Parship» oder «ElitePartner»).

Festzuhalten ist, dass die Nutzung *aller* Erfolgsmedien, sei es nun Macht, Geld, Liebe, oder Wahrheit, nicht voraussetzungslos erfolgen kann. Um Erfolgsmedien grundsätzlich erfolgreich nutzen zu können, ist nämlich schon vorweg ein erfolgreiches Erwartungsmanagement vorausgesetzt. So muss vorweg klar sein, dass es auf der Suche nach wissenschaftlicher Wahrheit sinnvoll ist, z. B. Universitäten aufzusuchen, nicht etwa Kirchen; dass man für die Möglichkeit des wahrscheinlichen Eigentumsübergangs mit Hilfe des Geldes (etwa von Büromaterial), dafür geeignete Geschäfte, und nicht etwa Amtsstuben aufsucht. Auch sollte klar sein, dass für die Ausübung von Macht etwa Kasernen geeignete Institutionen sind; hingegen die Anwendung von Macht beim Casting von Schauspielerinnen, um sexuelle Dienstleistungen zu erzwingen (Harvey Weinstein), tunlichst zu unterlassen ist. Ebenso muss vorweg klar sein, dass es für die Anbahnung, etwa von (Liebes-)Beziehungen oder Reisepartnerschaften, mehr oder weniger geeignete Adresslisten gibt.³¹

II Fallbeispiel: Die Anbahnung von (romantischer) Liebe

1 Hoffnungen

Zugleich mit den Folgen gesellschaftlicher Phänomene geraten die Voraussetzungen dieser Folgen in den Blick. Untersuchte Kommunikation ist gerade aufgrund des *Erfolgs* von adresslistenbasierter Kommunikation von Interesse; also auch aufgrund der spezifischen Voraussetzungen, die zu

31 Es ist eine Forschungsfrage, ob ausreichend ist, die Aneignung dieser Erwartungserwartungen generalisierend der «Sozialisation» oder «Lebenspraxis» zuzurechnen. Zu vermuten ist, dass allenfalls an das Bildungs- bzw. Erziehungssystem erhöhte Ansprüche gestellt werden, ein gesamtgesellschaftlich adäquates Erwartungsmanagement herauszubilden.

diesen Folgen geführt haben.³² Und von einem Erfolg, indiziert durch die Popularität von Singlebörsen, ist insbesondere im Dunstkreis von Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe auszugehen:

The Internet is the one social arena that is unambiguously gaining in importance over time as a place heterosexual couples meet. For couples who met in 1990 and before, the percentage who met online was essentially zero. Between 1995 and 2005, there was exponential growth in the proportion of respondents who met their partners online, reaching what appears to be a plateau at approximately 22%. For heterosexual couples who met in 2009, the Internet was the third most likely way of meeting, after the intermediation of friends, and approximately tied with the bars, restaurants and other public places. With the rise of the Internet as a way couples meet in the past few years, and the concomitant recent decline in the central role of friends, it is possible that the Internet could eventually eclipse friends as the most influential way Americans meet their romantic partners. (Rosenfeld & Reuben 2012, S. 531)

Um Folgen abzuschätzen, ist zunächst zu verdeutlichen, wie voraussetzungslos, wie *unwahrscheinlich höchstpersönliche* Kommunikation, Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe überhaupt ist:

Für das Medium Liebe liegt [das] Problem in der höchstpersönlichen Kommunikation selbst. Unter höchstpersönlicher Kommunikation wollen wir eine Kommunikation verstehen, mit der der Sprecher sich von anderen Individuen zu unterscheiden sucht. (...) Gibt

32 Was letztlich ein Hinweis darauf ist, dass es sich bei der Gesellschaft um ein autopoietisches System handelt (vgl. Luhmann, 1997). Kommunikation ist nur im Netzwerk von Operationen möglich, die gerade diese Operationen selbst wiederum ermöglichen. Isolierte, an Kausalität orientierte Betrachtungen von Folgen, bzw. Voraussetzungen von Kommunikation sind daher wenig sinnvoll. Folgen können vielmehr gerade deshalb folgenreich sein, weil sie ihre Voraussetzungen stabilisieren. Veränderungen erfolgen in autopoietischen Systemen nicht kausal, sondern evolutionär.

sich der andere als weltkonstituierende Individualität, ist jeder, der angesprochen wird, in dieser Welt immer schon untergebracht und damit *unausweichlich* vor die *Alternative* gestellt, *den egozentrischen Weltentwurf des anderen zu bestätigen oder abzulehnen*. Diese Komplementärrolle des Weltbestätigers wird einem [in der Liebe] zugemutet, obwohl mit impliziert ist, dass dieser Weltentwurf einzigartig, also eigenartig, also nicht konsensfähig ist. Das heisst auch: es wird einem ein Bestätigungsverhalten zugemutet, das nach aussen nicht anschlussfähig ist, das man also anderswo nicht vertreten kann. (...) Nicht Totalität, sondern Universalität des Bezuges wird erwartet im Sinne einer laufenden Mitbeachtung des Partners in allen Lebenslagen; man könnte auch sagen: einer laufenden Mitanreicherung des Informationsgehaltes aller Kommunikation durch den «für ihn» Aspekt. (Luhmann, 1982, S. 24–25, Hervorhebung durch den Autor)³³

33 Wir können nur andeuten, dass dieses unwahrscheinliche, also extrem voraussetzungsvolle Medium wiederum von unwahrscheinlichen, nur durch soziale *Evolution* ermöglichten Voraussetzungen abhängig ist. So ist Liebe, zumal romantische Liebe, von der Ausdifferenzierung von Individualität abhängig, die wiederum erst durch funktionale Differenzierung der Gesellschaft ermöglicht wurde. Erst in der wesentlich durch die Erfindung des Buchdrucks ermöglichten Abkehr von gesellschaftlicher Stratifikation, die eher fremdreferentielle, also an Idealen orientierte Formen der – dann passionierten – Liebe plausibilisierte, konnten selbstreferentielle, nur an Individualität orientierte Formen der Liebe entwickelt werden, konnte Liebe in einem Kommunikationsmedium, konnte die Codierung von Liebe ausdifferenziert werden. So wurde erst in der romantischen Liebe, in Bezug auf die als sinnsteigernd, welterzeugend gedachte Relevanz von Individuen, ermöglicht, zu plausibilisieren, wenngleich sicherlich auch nicht erfolgreich zu realisieren, traditionell als flüchtig, fragil, paradox, ja unmöglich erscheinende Liebe widersinnig mit der Stabilität der Institution Ehe kurzzuschliessen. Uns bleibt in diesem Zusammenhang nur übrig, auf Luhmanns (1982) detaillierten Nachvollzug der Semantik der Liebe (deren Ideenevolution) zu verweisen.

Angesichts der extrem diffizilen Problemlage der Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe, wird deutlich, warum gerade in Adresslisten grosse Hoffnungen gesetzt werden. Angesichts der *Normalität von unpersönlicher* Kommunikation unserer hochgradig ausdifferenzierten Gesellschaft, zeigt sich, «dass sowohl im Erleben als auch im Handeln Schwierigkeiten des *Anfangens* auftreten, weil man in Situationen, die primär durch unpersönliche Erwartungen geordnet sind, ein Interesse am Persönlichen sehen und zum Ausdruck bringen muss, ohne dafür über gesellschaftlich geprägte Anlaufformen (Galanterie) zu verfügen.» (Luhmann, 1982, S. 205, Hervorhebung durch den Autor) Wenn überhaupt Kommunikation im Medium der Adresslisten einer klarer Erfolg zugesprochen werden kann, dann sicherlich hier. Wobei in diesem Abschnitt spezifisch von Adresslisten die Rede ist, die die Etablierung von langfristigen «Beziehungen» unterstützen, Adresslisten, wie etwa Parship, ElitePartner, eDarling usw. Dabei ist natürlich keineswegs ausgeschlossen, dass sich nicht auch bei anderen Formen der (Adresslisten-)Kommunikation (langfristige) (Liebes-)Beziehungen anbahnen können.

Technik liefert mittlerweile Chancen der Problemlösung, die weit über die Möglichkeiten von Galanterie (Luhmann, 1982, S. 97 ff.) der höfischen Gesellschaft hinausgehen. Galanterie ermöglichte in Oberschichten, *Geselligkeit* zum Trotz, *intime* Kommunikation. So gesehen stellen Adresslistenmedien (Singlebörsen) sozusagen ein funktionales Äquivalent der «Gesellschaft» in stratifizierten (höfischen) Gesellschaftsformen dar; in Zeiten also, in denen noch vorstellbar war, dass gesellige Interaktion «die Gesellschaft» repräsentieren konnte (vgl. Kieserling, 1999, S. 407 ff.). Auch Angehörige von Oberschichten in stratifizierten Gesellschaften charakterisierten sich ja nicht durch ihre Individualität, sondern durch ihren Rang, bzw. ihre Distinktion von anderen (ebenso überindividuellen) Schichten. In diesem Sinne stellte die «Gesellschaft» in der geselligen Interaktion von Oberschichten (vgl. Luhmann, 1980) ein Kontaktmedium dar.

Die Orientierung von Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe *ausschliesslich* an Sach- und Zeitdimension ist zentral. Die Sozialdimension, die Orientierung von Kommunikation an spezifischen, aber überindividuell Geltung beanspruchenden Rollen (soziale Generalisierung) muss aussen vor bleiben:

Über alle Nuancen von Aufrichtigkeit und Unaufrichtigkeit [im Handeln] hinweg und trotz häufiger Unentscheidbarkeit genau dieser Frage des Aufrichtigseins ist der Zusammenhang von Handlung und individuellem Selbstsein der Schlüssel des Generalisierungsproblems – und eben deshalb kann nur sachliche und zeitliche, nicht aber soziale (für jedermann geltende) Generalisierung in Betracht kommen. (...) Man muss die eigene Identität als Garant für Dauer nämlich nicht statisch, sondern dynamisch einsetzen; nicht als so-wie-sie-immer-ist, sondern als an-der-Liebe-wachsend. Die Berufung auf die eigene Identität macht ja zunächst gerade Unabhängigkeit von den Umständen und Unabhängigkeit von den Einflüssen anderer deutlich. Diese Sinnverweisung muss gelöscht bzw. ersetzt werden durch das Konzept der Identität-in-Transformation. Und dazu gehört, dass man gerade dem, den man liebt (und der sich selbst als dauerhaft weiss), bescheinigt, dass man durch ihn und durch die Liebe zu ihm das eigene Ich entfaltet. Identität muss also als Stabilitäts- und als Steigerungsbegriff zugleich gehandhabt werden. (Luhmann, 1982, S. 44–45)³⁴

34 Insofern ist verfehlt, wenn Illouz (2011, S. 308 ff.) davon ausgeht, dass der Feminismus in seinem durchaus erfolgreichen Bestreben nach Gleichheit, damit auch einer Wahlmöglichkeiten fördernden Vergleichbarkeit zwischen den Geschlechtern, in der Orientierung von Beziehungen an «Äquivalenzprinzipien» (Illouz, 2011, S. 316 ff.), gewissermassen *überzogen* hat. Entgegen ihren eigenen Intentionen verdeutlicht Illouz (2013) anhand ihrer Analyse des weltweiten Bestsellers “50 Shades of Grey” nämlich, dass Liebe sich an «Identität-in-Transformation» steigert. Die Romantrilogie führt vor, wie sich Liebe gerade dadurch entwickelt, dass sie sich zunächst stereotyper Rollenbilder (junge, hübsche Literaturstudentin, bzw. attraktiver, mysteriöser Milliardär) entledigt

Kommunikation im Medium der Adresslisten, Kommunikation unter abwesenden Anwesenden *erzwingt*, dass Interaktionssysteme (Chatpartner) zunächst durch zeitliche und sachliche Sinndimension enttautologisiert werden (vgl. Abschnitt I.3.). Die zumindest anfängliche Abwesenheit von Wahrnehmung der gewissermassen invariablen Physis erleichtert nicht nur die «Löschung» sozialer Generalisierung, sondern unterstützt vielmehr, indem körperliche Wahrnehmung sukzessive zugelassen wird, das Konzept einer «Identität-in-Transformation». Identität wird hier gerade in Abkehr von etwa an Rollen orientierter üblicher unpersönlicher Kommunikation nicht vorausgesetzt, sondern muss in der Beschränkung auf zunächst schriftliche Kommunikation, in Orientierung an weitgehend anonymen Nutzerprofilen, erst selbstreferentiell konstruiert werden. Das *dynamische* Einsetzen von Identität, eine Berücksichtigung des Konzepts einer «Identität-in-Transformation», wird also durch die Nutzung des Adresslistenmediums selbst *erzwingen*. In Adresslistenmedien erfolgt sowohl eine Stabilisierung, wie auch Steigerung von Identität – etwa von Chats zu Telefonaten, von Bildtelefonaten zu Face-to-Face Kommunikation – auf gleichsam natürliche Weise.

Adresslistenkommunikation ermöglicht zudem an frühe Formen der Liebeskommunikation anzuknüpfen. Im 17. Jahrhundert wurde erstmals gesellschaftlich damit experimentiert, Inter-

und vielmehr *Individualität konstruiert*. Hier Hoffnungen auf die Sozialdimension zu setzen (Mehr Hierarchien zulassen? Dominanz in Rollen ausdifferenzieren?), also gerade von Individualität *abzusehen*, ist in der Liebe fehlgeleitet. Was nicht heissen soll, dass sich hier nicht in anderen Hinsichten Lösungsmöglichkeiten ergeben können – etwa: «Das Problem mit der Gleichheit oder «Fick mich endlich, verdammt noch mal!» (Illouz, 2013, S. 56) Wobei Liebe nicht mit Sexualität verwechselt werden sollte. Allerdings soll hier auch nicht bestritten werden, dass sich aus einem zunächst lediglich an Sexualität orientierten «Kontakt» (wie bei “50 Shades of Grey” vorgeführt) eine Liebesbeziehung entwickeln kann.

aktionssysteme «freizugeben», also nicht anhand der Sozialdimension (orientiert etwa an gesellschaftlichen Schichten) zu enttautologisieren. Die Komplexität dieser sich neu ergebenden Freiheit – das Problem der doppelten Kontingenz wurde hier *offensichtlich* akut – wurde durch *imaginative Idealisierung* des Subjekts der Liebe reduziert:

In der Imagination verfügt man über die Freiheit des anderen, verschmilzt sie mit den eigenen Wünschen, übergreift die doppelte Kontingenz auf der Metaebene, die dem eigenen und dem anderen Ego das zuweist, was das eigene Ego für beide projiziert. Aber wie kommt es zur Imagination, wie schafft sie sich den Raum, und vor allem: wie schafft sie sich Zeit? Die Antwort liegt (...) in der Zentrierung auf die letzte Gunst – und in ihrem Aufschub. Die Idealfigur wird durch Temporalisierung der Liebessemantik abgelöst. (Luhmann, 1982, S. 62)

Auch Imagination leistet Adresslistenkommunikation gewissermassen auf natürliche Weise. Die Wahrnehmung der Physis ist hier (zunächst) extrem eingeschränkt, was Imagination zugutekommt. Die körperliche Abwesenheit erzwingt bzw. plausibilisiert den Aufschub der «letzten Gunst». Der in Chats abwesender Anwesender hochfrequente Wechsel von Beobachter- und Handlungsperspektiven, die hier mögliche *kontrollierte* Verdichtung von Interaktion, leistet einer Idealisierung Vorschub, privilegiert «Identität-in-Transformation», ermöglicht, dass Liebe an dieser Identität wachsen kann, leistet *einem Prozess* der Ausdifferenzierung komplexer (welterzeugender) und allenfalls idealer Individualität Vorschub.

Insofern lässt sich beim Medium der Adresslisten von geradezu idealen (Ausgangs-)Bedingungen für Initiierung und Konstitution von Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe ausgehen. Das Problem der doppelten Kontingenz *muss* – zunächst aus rein technischen Gründen – nach Massgabe von Sach- und Zeitdimension gehandhabt werden. Beim Zugriff auf Adresslisten ist von einem symmetrischen Sozialverhältnis der liebesuchenden Nut-

zer auszugehen. Durch die zumindest zunächst gegebene Einschränkung der physischen Wahrnehmung, ist die Möglichkeit der Asymmetrisierung von interaktioneller Selbstreferenz durch die Sozialdimension, stark eingeschränkt. Identität muss (zunächst durch Chats, durch E-Mails usw.) vielmehr kommunikativ-reflexiv (erleichtert durch den einfachen Zugriff auf die Systemgeschichte, vgl. oben Abschnitt I.3.2.) ausgehandelt werden und kann so – als «Identität-in-Transformation» – gesteigert bzw. imaginiert (idealisiert) werden. Es kann davon ausgegangen werden, dass sich nicht zuletzt aufgrund dieser idealen (Idealisierung und Imagination Vorschub leistenden) Bedingungen, der erstaunliche Erfolg von Singlebörsen erklärt.

2 Enttäuschungen

Anders als Handlungstheorie, geht die Systemtheorie nicht von einer Kontinuität sichernden Stabilität handelnder Subjekte bei der Konstitution von Interaktionssystemen aus. Interaktionssysteme verstehen sich vielmehr als die flüchtigsten, fragilsten Systemformen der Gesellschaft.³⁵ Der Übergang von Interaktionssystemen abwesender Anwesender (Chatpartner) zur Interaktionssystemen Anwesender (Face-to-Face Kommunikation) verläuft demnach *diskontinuierlich*. Diese Interaktionssysteme sind ganz unterschiedlich disponiert. Es werden grundlegend *neue* Interaktionssysteme etabliert. Kommunikation erfolgt nunmehr mündlich und der Körper ist als zusätzlicher Faktor *der Umwelt* eines Interaktionssystems nunmehr Anwesender zu berücksichtigen.³⁶

³⁵ Vgl. Kieserling (1999). Allenfalls lässt sich bei der Kommunikation *auch abwesend Anwesender* im Medium der Adresslisten, durch ständiges «online» sein, der Eindruck von Kontinuität erzeugen. Es kann davon ausgegangen werden, dass auch diese Wahrnehmung den Hoffnungen potentiell Liebender im Medium der Adresslisten Auftrieb verleiht; immerhin ist «totale» Kommunikation charakteristisch für Liebende (Luhmann, 1982, S. 24).

³⁶ Wir müssen genauer sagen: der Körper ist nunmehr *informativ* zu berücksichtigen. In der Kommunikation abwesender Anwe-

Gleichwohl natürlich bisherige Interaktionsgeschichte (als abwesende Anwesende) der Enttautologisierung doppelter Kontingenz des sich neu etablierenden Interaktionssystems der nunmehr Anwesenden dienlich ist, ist festhalten, dass die bisherige Systemgeschichte, etwa bereits erfolgte Kommunikation über spezifische Themen, vor allem aber *bewusste* Vorstellungen (Imaginationen) hinsichtlich der Individualität der nunmehr Anwesenden, der *Umwelt* des sich neu konstituierenden Interaktionssystems zugehörig ist. Die bisherige Systemgeschichte, die in der Kommunikation abwesender Anwesender *bewusst-imaginativ* konstruierte Individualität wirkt *nicht determinierend*, sondern *irritierend* auf das neu konstituierte Interaktionssystem nunmehr Anwesender. Individualität ist hier also, zumal an diesen Irritationen, *neu* zu konstruieren.

Mit Enttäuschung ist also, besonders bei der ohnehin extrem anforderungsreichen Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe, zu rechnen.³⁷ Die sich durch not-

sender ist diese Informationsquelle weitgehend ausgeschaltet. Nämlich dadurch, dass Körper in der Benutzung der technischen Infrastruktur weitgehend «unterschiedslos» benutzt werden, in einer Unterschiedlichkeit also, die eben keinen informativen Unterschied ausmacht (vgl. zu diesem Informationsbegriff Bateson, 1972, S. 315). Körperbezogene Information (etwa Bilder und Emoticons) werden allenfalls *kontrolliert* zugänglich gemacht.

37 Aktuell diesen Enttäuschungen plausibel Ausdruck verleihend: Illouz (2011). Die Popularität, gewissermassen die Plausibilität der Plausibilität dieser Enttäuschungen, zeigt sich durch den Status dieses Sachbuchs als Bestseller. Festzustellen ist allerdings, dass hier ein Teil der Enttäuschungen nicht der Form der Kommunikation der Liebe, sondern der theoretischen Disposition dieses Sachbuchs zuzurechnen ist. Wird Liebe paradigmatisch (hier etwa mit Bezug auf die Romane von Jane Austen) auf den keineswegs selbstverständlichen Kurzschluss von *romantischer* Liebe und Ehe bezogen, kann, gerade angesichts moderner Wahlmöglichkeiten, eine Verfallsgeschichte von (Ehe-) *Versprechen* konstruiert werden (ebd., S. 186). Für die Moderne zeigt sich dann *Bindungsangst* geradezu als charakteristisch

wendig *neu* zu konstituierende Interaktionssysteme ergebende *Diskontinuität* von Individualität – und eben nicht ihre Handhabung als «Stabilitäts- und Steigerungsbegriff» (Luhmann, 1982, S. 45) –, kann für bereits abwesend anwesend Liebende einem Drama gleichkommen. Zwar ist nicht ausgeschlossen, dass Kommunikation an bereits etablierte Individualität anschliessen kann, oder dass sich neu konstituierende Individualität auch mit – sich erneut einstellender – Liebe kompatibel ist. Die hochgradig spezifischen Anforderungen der Liebe machen dies jedoch *unwahrscheinlich*. Zu berücksichtigen ist nämlich, dass Liebende, dadurch, dass sie den Eindruck haben, dass selbst der Umweltbezug, der individuelle Weltbezug des je Anderen (als Erlebende) *erfolgreich*, also *bestätigend* zum Ausgangspunkt ihres Handelns wurde, notwendig den Eindruck haben müssen, den anderen bereits bestens zu verstehen, bereits zu kennen und demnach von hochgradig differenzierten, detaillierten Vorstellungen von der Individualität des je anderen ausgehen. Gerade diese dezidierten Vorstellungen machen Enttäuschungen bei erstmaligen Treffen Face-to-Face – bei denen Individualität *notwendig diskontinuuiert* wird – hochwahrscheinlich.

Diesem Problem mag mit gegensätzlichen Strategien entgegnet werden. Einerseits kann auf allzu intensive, erwartungsgenerierende Kommunikation abwesender Anwesender verzichtet werden (etwa in Orientierung an Adresslisten wie «Tinder»³⁸). Verzichtet wird damit

(ebd., 115ff). Diese Perspektive verfehlt allerdings, dass traditionell gerade die Instabilität, die Vergänglichkeit dem Kommunikationsmedium Liebe charakteristisch ist. Mit Blick auf Liebe als Passion gilt daher: «Nichts wäre abwegiger als bei Liebe an Ehe zu denken.» (Luhmann, 1982, S. 89) In diesem Zusammenhang ist allerdings *generell* von einer *Enttäuschungsanfälligkeit* der Handlungstheorie auszugehen, muss diese doch von der *Kontinuität* handelnder Subjekte ausgehen, die eine interaktionssystemübergreifende Erwartungssicherheit erwarten lässt.

38 Dabei soll in diesem Zusammenhang nicht behauptet werden, dass es bei Adresslisten

aber auch auf das allenfalls das neue Interaktionssystem wirksam enttautologisierende Potential, das sich aus der Systemgeschichte, bereits kommunizierten Themen, Vorstellungen von Individualität (sogar allenfalls enttäuschten) ergibt, das eine im Entstehen begriffene «Beziehung» stabilisieren kann. Andererseits mag erfolgversprechend sein, so lange wie möglich ein Treffen (Face-to-Face Kommunikation) hinauszuzögern (was die Wahrscheinlichkeit von Enttäuschungen erhöht), oder eben ganz zu vermeiden, um die Liebe begründende Individualität der abwesenden Anwesenden nicht zu gefährden.³⁹ Sich also mit platonischer Liebe zu begnügen. Ist dies aber Liebe, wenn vom Körper (von Sexualität) als essentiellen Bestandteil von Individualität abgesehen werden soll?

Es ist schwierig, festzustellen, ob die Kommunikation der Liebe in der Moderne mit mehr Enttäuschungen verbunden

wie «Tinder» vorrangig um die Anbahnung von Liebesbeziehungen geht. Nach eigenen, naturgemäss eher stichprobenartigen Recherchen wird «Tinder» auffallend geschlechtsspezifisch genutzt. Der epidemisch anzufindende Hinweis von Frauen (zumindest in der Alterskohorte 30+) in ihren Nutzerprofilen: Keine ONS! (One Night Stands), zeugt davon, dass es hier, ganz dem Geschlechterklischee entsprechend, Frauen oft auf die Etablierung von langfristigen (Liebes-)Beziehungen anlegen, während Männer bei «Tinder» oft eher nach sexuellen Abenteuern Ausschau halten.

39 Vgl. Illouz (2011, S. 420). Hier bezogen auf eine «virtuelle» Liebesbeziehung abwesender Anwesender. In drei Jahren kam es zu keinem Treffen. Ein nach zwei Jahren vereinbartes Treffen wurde kurzfristig abgesagt. Es ist in diesem Zusammenhang allerdings fehlgeleitet, von «fiktionalen Gefühlen» oder «interaktioneller fiktionaler Emotion» zu sprechen (ebd.). Das Gegenteil ist der Fall. Eher haben sich hier *reale Gefühle* von der Fiktionalität eines Treffens bedroht gesehen. Würde Handlungstheorie «den Menschen» in seiner Individualität ernst nehmen, wäre hier eher ein an *Realität ausgerichtetes* hohes Mass an *Sensibilität* zu konstatieren, als abschätzig von «fiktionalen Gefühlen» zu sprechen. Ein, liesse sich in Zusammenhang bemerken, durchaus *liebenswerter* Charakterzug.

ist; zumal hier Vergleichskriterien fehlen.⁴⁰ Wobei sich fragen lässt, ob die ohnehin extrem enttäuschungsanfällige Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe sinnvoller Weise überhaupt Steigerungsformen der Enttäuschung zulässt. Klar ist jedenfalls, dass handelnde Wahrnehmung von Ego in der Moderne zu berücksichtigen hat, dass, neben der “black box” des Bewusstseins, die “black box” der Adresslisten zunehmend integraler Bestandteil von Persönlichkeit, bzw. Individualität von Alter wird.⁴¹ Dies ist insofern nichts Neues, als ohnehin von *sozialer* Konstruiertheit von Individualität auszugehen ist.

Neu ist allerdings, dass Liebende nun gerade in der *totalen* Wahrnehmung, in der umfassenden Berücksichtigung des Weltbezugs anderer Individuen berücksichtigen und *bestätigen* müssen, dass in der Wahrnehmung dieser Individuen potentiell andere Individuen *zugleich* abwesend anwesend, und allenfalls *auch* von höchstpersönlichen Interesse sind. Mit Bezug auf (private) Adresslisten (in Smartphones) also gewissermassen *konkreter* und *realistischer*, als früher, als dies ledig-

40 Anders handlungstheoretisch orientierte Positionen. Hier ermöglicht der Bezug auf einen unveränderbaren (zeitstabilen?) «Kern» menschlicher Subjektivität die Vergleichbarkeit von Epochen in Relation auf Subjekte und so – die Moral von der Geschichte – in einem *generellen Sinne* Personen «Verantwortlichkeit» und «Rechenschaft» zuzuweisen (vgl. Illouz, 2011, S. 437 ff.). Dies für Verhältnisse, in denen Systemtheorie die gesellschaftsstrukturell bedingte Disponiertheit von Individualität sieht und es allenfalls der Moral, bzw. dem Recht überlässt, Individuen Verantwortlichkeit oder Rechenschaft zuzuweisen. Aus systemtheoretischer Sicht ist festzustellen, dass Handlungstheorie, einmal mehr theoriebedingt, lediglich eine weitere Quelle für Enttäuschungen konstruiert.

41 In diesem Sinne ist nur konsequent, dass nach einem Urteil des Supreme Court in den USA, Smartphones «ein solch beherrschender und vereinnahmender Teil des täglichen Lebens [sind], dass der sprichwörtliche Besucher vom Mars sie für ein wichtiges Merkmal der menschlichen Anatomie halten könnte.» (Fast schon ein Körperteil. US-Urteil zu Smartphones, in: suedutsche.de, 26.6.2014).

lich bezogen auf die Sinnmöglichkeiten des intransparenten Bewusstseins der Fall war. Es ergibt sich das Paradox, dass gerade die *totale* Bezogenheit eines Liebenden auf *ein Individuum* die Mitberücksichtigung *anderer Individuen* erfordert. Es mag sein, dass dies Individuen überfordert. *Zugleich* den Bedarf nach höchstpersönlicher Kommunikation steigert *und* Strategien fördert, nicht zu starke Bindungen zuzulassen, um allfälligen Enttäuschungen zu entgehen.⁴²

III Reputation

Es lässt sich fragen: Wenn bei Liebe, bezogen auf das Paradigma des Bewusstseins, die Orientierung eines Individuum an einem anderen Individuum zentral ist; wenn es hier um *höchstpersönliche* Kommunikation geht, darum, den anderen noch in seinem Umweltbezug, seiner Wahrnehmung, seinem individuellen, idiosynkratischen Weltbezug handelnd zu berücksichtigen und zu *bestätigen*⁴³ – was könnte ein funktionales Äquivalent sein, bezogen auf das Paradigma der Adresslisten?

Man darf vermuten, dass bezogen auf Adresslisten – also mit Blick auf die “black box” von Individuen, aus der sich Sinnmöglichkeiten durch die intransparente Vielzahl von Kontakten ergibt – die Orientierung *an generalisierten, allgemeinen Erwartungshaltungen* zentral ist. Reputation kann, bezogen auf Adresslisten, als ein funktionales Äquivalent von «Liebe», bzw.

«Hass» gelten. Gemeint ist, dass hier nicht empathische, an Individuen ausgerichtete Kommunikation angestrebt wird, sondern Kommunikation an den Erwartungshaltungen eines *Publikums* ausgerichtet ist. Also Rollen in ihrer Generalisierung ausdifferenziert werden, denen eine Allgemeinheit, eine möglichst grosse Zahl an Personen, wenn vielleicht nicht «Liebe», so doch ein erhöhtes Mass an Aufmerksamkeit schenkt.

Reputation lässt sich demnach als ein Verfahren verstehen, durch welches versucht wird, das Problem der kontingenten Adressierung von Kommunikation in Adresslisten zu bewältigen.⁴⁴ Reputation soll die Wahrscheinlichkeit erhöhen, dass Kommunikation in Adresslisten trotz einer unüberschaubaren Vielzahl von gleichartigen Elementen (potentiellen Adressaten) dennoch zustande kommt. In den sozialen Netzwerken lassen sich problemlos empirische Hinweise finden, dass Kommunikation im Medium der internetbasierten Adresslisten an Reputation ausgerichtet ist – etwa mit Blick auf die Fotosharing-Plattform Instagram:

Surft man bei Instagram, sticht die Professionalität vieler Teenagerprofile ins Auge. Perfektes Make-up, perfektes Styling, perfektes Licht. Die Inszenierungsspielregeln sind bekannt. Instagram ist eine Bühne. Es geht dabei nicht immer um Schönheit, aber sehr oft. Es existieren unzählige Apps, die den Fotos den professionellen Schliif verleihen. Im Grunde kann beinahe jeder, der den nötigen Aufwand betreibt, bei Instagram gut aussehen. Was unter dem Label Schnappschuss oder Selfie daherkommt, wirkt oft wie das Ergebnis eines durchgeplanten Fotoshootings. Die Bandbreite reicht von mädchenhaft verspielt bis eindeutig erotisch. Viel Haut bedeutet viele Likes. Likes sind die soziale Währung, ein

42 Extrem unterschiedliche Lebensformen, wie «Polyamory» oder «Hikikomori» (vgl. dazu die entsprechenden Wikipedia Artikel) könnten diese Tendenzen ausdrücken.

43 In der Liebe hat Ego in seinem Handeln auch noch die Wahrnehmung, den individuellen, idiosynkratischen Weltbezug von Alter zu *bestätigen*. *Hass*, könnte man von dieser Warte aus sagen, ist ganz ähnlich disponiert. Nur dass es hier nicht um Bestätigung, sondern um *Ablehnung* in der *Komplettbetreuung* von Individuen geht. So gesehen lässt sich verstehen, warum etwa im “Stalking” (sozusagen ein Atavismus passionierter Liebe), oder in sogenannten «On-Off Beziehungen», die eine Form relativ leicht in die andere umschlagen kann.

44 Die Einschränkung von Kontingenz – die graduelle Abschwächung von medialer Anonymität – bietet allerdings auch Möglichkeiten der Überwachung, wie das reputationsorientierte «Punktesystem» zeigt, das in China eingeführt werden soll. Für Gefahren, die mit zunehmend reputationsorientierter Kommunikation einhergehen Räwel (2017) (siehe auch Fussnote 30).

permanent abrufbares Ranking, sichtbar für jeden. «Die mit besonders vielen Likes sind die «Fame-Leute», sagt Lara. «Die sind halt «Like-geil». Sie wollen Applaus, jeder will Applaus, auch dieser Wettkampf ist Instagram Realität. Was für die «Fame-Leute» Segen ist, kann für jene, die ignoriert werden, Fluch sein. Unkommentierte Sichtbarkeit ist Unsichtbarkeit. (FAZ, Wer nicht auf dieser Bühne ist, ist raus, 17.1.2015, S. 13)

“Likes”⁴⁵ können als Reputation indizierendes Surrogat der Wahrnehmung der Wahrnehmung anderer gelten. Allerdings kommt es dabei eben nicht auf die Wahrnehmung der Wahrnehmung eines Individuums an, darauf, dass ein Individuum auch noch die *Wahrnehmung* eines anderen Individuums, dessen individuellen Weltbezug zur Maxime des eigenen, bestätigenden, also liebevollen Handelns macht. Entscheidend ist vielmehr die *Anzahl* der “Likes,” also die Würdigung (oder doch wenigstens Aufmerksamkeit) eines allgemein-populären «Anderen», die sich im Idealfall zu einer Art Berühmtheit («Fame-Leute») auswachsen kann, bzw. soll. Reputation, ein Ranking in Bezug auf ein Adresslistenmedium ist durch die schlichte Anzahl der “Likes” durchaus messbar. Dies aber gerade indem von der Individualität, der einzigartigen Welt von individuellen Personen abgesehen wird.

Dabei kommt in diesem Zusammenhang “Likes” (etwa Facebook, Instagram), bzw. zudem “Dislikes” (etwa bei Youtube), “ReTweets” (bei Twitter), «Favoriten» (etwa bei Flickr) usw., zudem die Funktion zu, sicherzustellen, dass es hier überhaupt zur Kommunikation, zu einer *strikten Koppelung* im Medium kommt. Denn auch wenn an hunderte oder gar Tausende «Freunde» (Facebook) oder “Follower” (etwa Twitter, Instagram, Youtube usw.) Mitteilungen

45 Neben einer Vielzahl von anderen Möglichkeiten, die Wahrnehmung von Wahrnehmungen (allenfalls, in positiver Wendung; Anerkennung) zu indexieren. Etwa die Anzahl von “Followern” bei Twitter, Ranglisten, wie Verkaufszahlen oder Bestsellerlisten, Zitationsindizes, Länge von Publikationslisten, Anzahl von Kommentaren, Rang und Anzahl von Ergebnissen in Suchmaschinen usw.

(etwa eine Nachricht, ein Bild, ein Video, ein Link usw.) gesendet werden können, manifestiert sich eine strikte Koppelung (Kommunikation) doch erst dadurch, dass sichergestellt wird, dass – durch eine Anschlussmitteilung – eine Mitteilung von einer (latenten) Information (etwa: «Schau dir das an.», «Das ist interessant.») unterschieden und verstanden worden ist. Genau dies wird, auch wenn tausende von Personen adressiert wurden, durch *zumindest ein* “Like”/“Dislike,” “ReTweet” usw., geleistet.

Indiz dafür, dass Reputation oder zumindest Aufmerksamkeit, heute – man darf vermuten: geprägt durchaus durch die Einübung moderner Adresslistenkommunikation – oft nicht nur im persönlich-individuellen, sondern im unpersönlich-allgemeinen gesucht wird, mag die *inflationäre* Vielzahl der international im Fernsehen ausgestrahlten Castingshows sein⁴⁶, die mutmasslich komplementär zu den *deflationär* eingeschätzten Persönlichkeitswahrnehmungen der Fernsehzuschauer stehen. Dem individuellen Eindruck also, dass die Möglichkeiten der persönlichen Wertschätzung von der Allgemeinheit unterschätzt werden. Ebenso mag an der Normalität, Häufigkeit und den Steigerungsraten von Schönheitsoperationen ein Bedarf an Reputation abgelesen werden.⁴⁷

Spezifisch auf das symbolisch generalisierte Kommunikationsmedium Liebe bezogen, ist davon auszugehen, dass es hier nicht um Ersatz geht (obwohl auch dies in der modernen Einübung von Adresslistenkommunikation zunehmend der Fall sein kann), sondern eher um Er-

46 In Deutschland etwa «Deutschland sucht den Superstar», “The Voice of Germany,” «Das Supertalent» usw. Vgl. für einen Überblick internationaler “Talent Shows” den Wikipedia Artikel “Castingshow.”

47 So wurden im Jahr 1997 in den USA etwa 1.7 Mio. Schönheitsoperationen (Surgical and Nonsurgical Cosmetic Procedures) durchgeführt; im Jahr 2012 waren es etwa 10.1 Mio., im Jahr 2016 13.6 Mio. (Quelle: Cosmetic Surgery National Data Bank, Statistics, 2016: 4; vgl. <http://www.surgery.org/media/statistics>).

gänzung, die Erwartung, dass Reputation, gar Ruhm (unpersönliche Liebe) allenfalls der Konstitution höchstpersönlicher Kommunikation dienlich sein kann. Es spricht für die Unwahrscheinlichkeit von Kommunikation im Medium der Liebe⁴⁸ und die Normalität und Dominanz *unpersönlicher* Kommunikation in der modernen, hochgradig funktional ausdifferenzierten Gesellschaft, dass die Nachfrage nach höchstpersönlicher Kommunikation (Liebe von Individuen) Ergänzung, wenn nicht sogar Ersatz, in einer anderen, extrem unwahrscheinlichen Form der Kommunikation sucht.

Deutlich wird allerdings durch technisch generalisierte Kommunikationsmedien, dass Reputation im Sinne ihres selektierenden und motivierenden Potentials nicht (mehr) nur als ein Mittel der Selbststeuerung einzelner Funktionssysteme zu verstehen ist. Etwa hinsichtlich Wissenschaft (vgl. Luhmann, 1991, insb. S. 237 ff.), oder in Bezug auf hier behandeltes Kommunikationsmedium Liebe. Reputation scheint zunehmend eine *gesellschaftliche* Relevanz zuzukommen. Eine nicht zuletzt durch die Infrastruktur des Internets sich mehr und mehr als «globales Dorf» (McLuhan & Powers, 1989) wahrnehmende Gesellschaft macht offenkundig Instanzen notwendig, denen eine komplexitätsreduzierende «Vermittlungsrolle» zwischen den unterschiedlichen funktionalen Bereichen der Gesellschaft zukommt. «Dank der Abkürzungen und Erleichterungen, die es ermöglicht, eignet

[das] Medium symptomatischer Reputation sich vortrefflich für Vermittlungsdienste. (...) Ausserdem verbindet Reputation die Wissenschaft [aber eben nicht nur die Wissenschaft, J.R.] mit ihrer [innergesellschaftlichen, J.R.] gesellschaftlichen Umwelt.» (Luhmann, 1991, S. 237)

Dem angesprochenen reputationsorientierten «Punktesystem», das China plant einzuführen (siehe Fussnote 30), kommt eben nicht nur die Funktion der Überwachung zu, sondern wird auch Vermittlungsfunktion in komplexen, modernen gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen zugetraut. Inwiefern sich damit Reputation auch korrumpierend auswirken kann, bleibt abzuwarten. So ist etwa fraglich, ob es bei der Rekrutierung von Arbeitnehmern für Unternehmen zielführend ist, für spezifische berufliche Tätigkeiten auch doch «private» reputationsindizierende Facebook- oder Twitter-Profile der Bewerber mit einzubeziehen. Oder, andererseits, ob sich nicht durch entsprechend «frisierter» Profile in sozialen Medien beruflicher Ausrichtung (etwa XING oder LinkedIn) Möglichkeiten der Täuschung eines zukünftigen Arbeitgebers ergeben.⁴⁹ Dass aber hier grundsätzlich Bedarf an Instanzen der Vermittlung besteht, ist angesichts von zunehmend komplexer werdenden Verhältnissen – etwa einem nunmehr etablierten europäischen Arbeitsmarkt – durchaus verständlich.

Niklas Luhmann muss unzweifelhaft Weitsicht zugesprochen werden, da er schon Anfang der 70ziger Jahre des letzten Jahrhunderts prophezeite: «Steigende Komplexität wird die Diskrepanz der Selektionsbedürfnisse und der Motivationsbedürfnisse verschärfen, und es lässt sich nicht ausschliessen, ja fast erwarten, dass im Laufe weiterer Entwicklung auch hier eine funktionale Differenzierung eintreten muss, die das multifunktionale Medium der Reputation sprengt.» (Luhmann,

48 «Liebe lässt sich nicht kaufen» – erzwingen.

Im Gegensatz zu Geld als prinzipiell *jeder Person zugänglichem* symbolisch generalisiertem Kommunikationsmedium, ist Liebe an die Zufälligkeiten und zeitlichen Instabilitäten von sehr spezifischen Interaktionssystemen gebunden. Während wirtschaftlich der Eigentumsübergang mit Hilfe von Geld gewissermassen durch Geschäfte direkt organisierbar ist, sind in Bezug auf die Liebe allenfalls deren Anfangsbedingungen (zuvorderst das Kennenlernen) organisierbar. Dauerhafter Erfolg in der Liebe ist so gesehen vermutlich, verglichen mit anderen Erfolgsmedien, wie Geld, Wahrheit oder Macht, am unwahrscheinlichsten zu erreichen.

49 Siehe zur Veranschaulichung dieser neuen Erfordernisse: «Ihre Online-Reputation als Faktor bei der Jobsuche», Personalberatung MichaelPage, 9.2.2017; <https://www.michaelpage.de/advice/karriere-tipps/job-social-media/ihre-online-reputation-als-faktor-bei-der-jobsuche>.

1991; zuerst 1970, S. 244) Zu sehen ist zunächst eine «Sprengung» des «Mediums der Reputation» im Sinne der Hypertrophie ihrer Bedeutung und Multifunktionalität. Bestrebungen, wie diejenigen in China, lassen im Sinne Luhmanns vermuten, dass sich mit Hilfe von Technik beginnt ein auch symbolische Geltung beanspruchendes generalisiertes *Kommunikationsmedium der Reputation* auszdifferenzieren. Die in diesem Medium von Personen je erreichten «Reputationspunkte» würden einer sozialen «Währung» gleichkommen, die mit symbolischer Bedeutung aufgeladen wäre und erfolgreich «Türen öffnen» würde – oder eben nicht.

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SComS

Thematic Section

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Digital astroturfing in politics: Definition, typology, and countermeasures

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Abstract

In recent years, several instances of political actors who created fake grassroots activity on the Internet have been uncovered. We propose to call such fake online grassroots activity digital astroturfing, and we define it as a form of manufactured, deceptive and strategic top-down activity on the Internet initiated by political actors that mimics bottom-up activity by autonomous individuals. The goal of this paper is to lay out a conceptual map of the phenomenon of digital astroturfing in politics. To that end, we introduce, first, a typology of digital astroturfing according to three dimensions (target, actor type, goals), and, second, the concept of digital astroturfing repertoires, the possible combinations of tools, venues and actions used in digital astroturfing efforts. Furthermore, we explore possible restrictive and incentivizing countermeasures against digital astroturfing. Finally, we discuss prospects for future research: Even though empirical research on digital astroturfing is difficult, it is neither impossible nor futile.

Keywords

political communication, Internet, public opinion, astroturfing, bots

1 Introduction

Not long after the advent of the World Wide Web, there were high hopes that this new form of access to the Internet might prove a boon for democracy. Thanks to the World Wide Web, citizens could gain access to politically relevant information far easier than ever before. Even more than that: The World Wide Web seemed to carry the potential to make the elusive ideal of deliberative democracy a reality (or, at least, to make instances of deliberative democratic participation easier) (Buchstein, 1997; Dahlberg, 2001; Rheingold, 1993). The positive force of the Internet, the hope went, would make democratic participation easier than ever and thus it would promote democratic values, even in non-democratic countries.

The rapid progress both of Internet penetration and of Internet-related technologies has created circumstances in which the democratic online revolution as

envisioned in the World Wide Web's early days could, in principle, take place. Access to the Internet is increasingly common even in relatively poor countries, and both the means for accessing the Internet as well as the ways in which users can access political information and engage in political discourse have proliferated.

Of course, the World Wide Web has not produced the democratic utopia that some might initially have hoped for. But Internet has certainly had an impact on politics and, more specifically, on political discourse. Citizens do indeed seek political information online and they do engage in new forms of digital political discourse. Unfortunately, the relative ease of engaging in political discourse on the Internet makes it also relatively easy to undermine, or at least negatively affect, that very discourse. One perfidious way in which this can happen: Political actors can create online activity that seems like authentic



activity by regular citizens, when it is, in reality, anything but.

Online users who are not what they pretend to in order to ruse real people are the opposite of what is hoped for in the ideal of deliberative democracy. Fake online users are not interested in participating in rational political discourse, but rather in deliberately and actively skewing the discourse according to the goals they are pursuing. This is not an entirely new tool. So-called astroturfing, fake grassroots campaigns and organizations that are created and backed by political actors or businesses, have a long tradition (Lyon & Maxwell, 2004; Walker & Rea, 2014). Astroturfing on the Internet is more problematic than the traditional kind: Digital astroturfing is cheaper, has a greater scope, and is potentially much more effective than regular astroturfing.

1.1 A new era of political astroturfing

In the wake of the 2016 U.S. presidential election, the National Intelligence Council, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a declassified version of an assessment of Russian state-sponsored activities during the election (National Intelligence Council, 2017). In that report, the National Intelligence Council describes the Russian interference in the 2016 election as a continuation of covert influence campaigns that Russia and the Soviet Union were conducting in the past. However, the report also mentions the activities of the St. Petersburg-based “Internet Research Agency” as part of the Russian influence campaign. The Internet Research Agency is a state-sponsored online astroturfing organization (Chen, 2015; MacFarquhar, 2018) specialized in creating and maintaining sock puppets, fake online personae that are mimicking regular users (Bu, Xia, & Wang, 2013). The astroturfing campaign conducted by the Internet Research Agency was great in scope. In early 2018, Twitter notified over 1.4 million of its US-based users that they had interacted with sock puppet accounts likely affiliated with the Internet Research Agency (Twitter PublicPolicy, 2018). But the campaign was also sophisticated, as evidenced by the

persuasive power of some of sock puppets, such as the influential, yet fictitious “Jenna Abrams” (Colins & Cox, 2017). The astroturfing campaign of 2016 was so pervasive that it was proposed that the US create a military unit in order to defend from such campaigns (Hart & Klink, 2017).

Digital astroturfing is not limited to U.S. elections. Instances of digital astroturfing have been documented in many countries (Wooley, 2016). Astroturfing efforts can be conducted by outside political actors, such as in the 2017 French election (Ferrara, 2017) or in the 2016 Brexit vote in the United Kingdom (Bastos and Mercea, 2017 ; Llewellyn et al., 2018), or they can be campaigns of political actors within their own country, such as the systematic digital astroturfing strategy of China (King et al., 2017). Digital astroturfing is also not limited to manually curated sock puppets. For example, many digital astroturfing efforts are conducted with automated bots, whereby computer software impersonates humans by acting and reacting in as “natural” ways as possible (Bessi & Ferrara, 2016; Shao et al., 2017; Wooley, 2016).

1.2 The goal of this paper

The phenomenon of digital astroturfing is of obvious importance. Digital astroturfing represents an inherently deceptive political activity that is detrimental to the democratic discourse and to democratic decision-making. In view of this problem, the goal of this present paper is threefold.

First, we want to define digital astroturfing in a generalized, universally applicable manner. Digital astroturfing is a complex political activity. Second, we propose a typology of different forms of digital astroturfing. That typology is based on the type of actor that is engaging in the astroturfing effort; the persuasion target that is to be affected by the astroturfing effort, and the goal that is pursued by the astroturfing effort. Third, we discuss possible countermeasures to either prevent digital astroturfing or to lessen its impact.

2 A generalized definition of digital astroturfing in politics

In the previous section, we have provisionally introduced digital astroturfing as a type of political online activity that pretends to be the activity of individual, regular online users, when it is in fact activity created by political actors. Such a provisional definition already describes the nature of digital astroturfing to some degree, but it is derived from an intuitive inductive process of describing what different cases of digital astroturfing have in common. A more precise deductive definition is needed in order to describe digital astroturfing in a generalized way, independent from specific singular occurrences of digital astroturfing. To that end, we propose the following definition:

Digital astroturfing is a form of manufactured, deceptive and strategic top-down activity on the Internet initiated by political actors that mimics bottom-up activity by autonomous individuals.

In this definition, digital astroturfing as a form of political activity consists of five necessary conditions: It takes place on the Internet, it is initiated by political actors, it is manufactured, it is deceptive and it is strategic. Digital astroturfing is manufactured in that it is not an honest expression of autonomous individual opinions, but rather activity created to mimic honest expression of autonomous individual opinions. It is deceptive, because the goal of digital astroturfing is to trick the target, usually the public at large (including individuals and small groups), into believing that the manufactured activity is real. It is strategic, because the political actors who engage in digital astroturfing pursue certain goals in doing so. This definition is relatively simple, but in simplicity, we believe, lies analytical clarity. So far, only few authors have attempted to define digital astroturfing. The most relevant such attempt is a recent conceptual study by Zhang, Carpenter, and Ko (2013). In that study, the authors define online astroturfing (the authors use the term online rather than digital astroturfing) as follows: “Therefore, we define online astroturfing

as *the dissemination of deceptive opinions by imposters posing as autonomous individuals on the Internet with the intention of promoting a specific agenda*” (p. 3).

This definition is similar to the one we introduce in three respects. First, we have adopted the authors’ very apt notion of “autonomous individuals” into our own definition because it describes very precisely what kind of deception is taking place. We expand the descriptive notion of autonomous individuals by contrasting bottom-up and top-down activity; autonomous individuals engage in bottom-up activity, and digital astroturfing is top-down activity pretending to be bottom-up activity. Second, and this is nontrivial, the authors define digital astroturfing as an activity that is taking place on the Internet. And third, they describe digital astroturfing as a deceptive activity. We agree with those three aspects as necessary conditions, but the definition lacks accuracy and generalizability. The definition is inaccurate because it implies that the relevant actors are the imposters posing as autonomous individuals. However, the truly relevant actors are not the imposters themselves, but rather the political actors initiating the astroturfing efforts. The imposters, such as, for example, the employees of the Internet Research Institute in St. Petersburg, are simply performing tasks on behalf of political actors; they are the means to an end. It is possible that in some cases, the actors who initiate the digital astroturfing in pursuit of some goals will also actively carry out the digital astroturfing effort themselves. For example, a politician might himself create a number of fake Twitter accounts with which he would then follow his own, real account in order to feign popularity of his account. But even in such a scenario, the distinction between who initiates the digital astroturfing effort is clearly separate from how the digital astroturfing effort is actually performed. The origin of digital astroturfing lies with the political actors who pursue certain goals by engaging digital astroturfing, and the means of actually carrying out the digital astroturfing effort can be, and in many in-

stances probably are, separate from those political actors.

Furthermore, the above definition by Zhang et al. (2013) is not fully generalizable because it does not describe a general principle, but rather one empirical scenario of digital astroturfing: Cases in which individuals create fake online personæ, the so-called sock puppets, in order to communicate certain points of view. While such a digital astroturfing scenario might be a very important one, it is not the only possible one as we will later point out in our typology.

2.1 The difference between regular astroturfing and digital astroturfing

Ours is not the first study to tackle the phenomenon of digital astroturfing. However, in the previous section, we only discuss one definition of digital astroturfing from one recent study. We are not willingly disregarding other definitions of digital astroturfing, but the status quo of the conceptual work on digital astroturfing is rather limited: Most studies that look at digital astroturfing do not operate with an explicit definition of digital astroturfing, but they tend to extend the concept of regular astroturfing into the online realm instead. For example, Mackie (2009) describes astroturfing on the Internet in the following terms: “Astroturfing is the use of paid agents to create falsely the impression of popular sentiment (the grass roots are fake, thus the term astroturf, which is artificial grass)” (p. 32). Even though the author goes on to argue that and why the Internet is vulnerable to astroturfing, he does not propose a separate, explicit definition of astroturfing that is occurring on the Internet. This implies that astroturfing is astroturfing, no matter where it takes place. Furthermore, Mackie (2009) is only considering paid agents to be indicative of astroturfing. We believe that unpaid agents can be involved in digital astroturfing as well, as in the case of sympathizers who become involved in digital astroturfing because they honestly support a cause; we delve into this issue in the sections below. In a similar vein as Mackie (2009), Boulay (2012) explicitly addresses

the potentials of *digital* astroturfing, but she operates with the definition of regular astroturfing: «L’astroturfing est une stratégie de communication dont la source est occultée et qui prétend, à tort, être d’origine citoyenne» (p. 201).

Is a conceptual differentiation between regular and digital astroturfing, as indirectly proposed by our proposal of an explicit definition of digital astroturfing, reasonable given the fact that several authors analyse digital astroturfing, but only apply a definition of regular astroturfing? We believe it is, because digital astroturfing conceptually clearly differs from regular astroturfing. In our definition of digital astroturfing, we identify five necessary conditions: The activities take place on the Internet, they are initiated by political actors, and they are manufactured, deceptive and strategic. If digital astroturfing is to be understood simply as the extension of astroturfing onto the Internet, then four of these five criteria have to apply to regular astroturfing; obviously, regular astroturfing does not have to fulfil the condition of taking place on the Internet. However, regular astroturfing is not adequately described by the remaining four necessary conditions. In regular astroturfing, some political actors are present, and those actors act strategically in that they pursue goals. But those actors are not necessarily always initiating the activities, they are not necessarily directly manufacturing the activities, and they are not necessarily deceitful about their involvement in the activities. Vergani (2014) makes this point clear by introducing the concept of *grassroots orchestra*, a situation where genuine grassroots activity takes place, but over time, political actors get involved in that genuine activity and they influence, if not usurp the grassroots activity in order to steer it in a direction beneficial to themselves. A recent prominent example of a grassroots orchestra is the Tea Party movement in the United States: It seems that the Tea Party was an amalgamation of genuine grassroots activity with coordinating and mobilizing influence by political actors (Formisano, 2012).

The distinction between regular and digital astroturfing, in summary, lies in the fact that digital astroturfing is a clearly demarcated dichotomous phenomenon, while regular astroturfing is not; in regular astroturfing, varying degrees of genuine grassroots components can be present. Of course, this conceptual difference between digital astroturfing and regular astroturfing does not preclude the possibility that there are instances of astroturf campaigns where regular and digital astroturfing are combined in order to achieve as great an impact as possible (Walker, 2014).

2.2 A typology of digital astroturfing

With our generalized definition of digital astroturfing, it is possible to reflect upon what digital astroturfing can empirically look like. Because of the clandestine nature of digital astroturfing, it could be very misleading to base a typology of digital astroturfing solely on the exposed cases of digital astroturfing, since there is no way of knowing whether those exposed cases, such as the briefly mentioned ones in the introduction, cover all possible types of digital astroturfing. For that reason, we opt for a theoretico-deductive typology of digital astroturfing: It is not possible to inductively gather information on all instances of digital astroturfing, but it is possible to define a set of dimensions that will plausibly exhaust the possible types of digital astroturfing.

We propose three dimensions that encompass the different possible types of digital astroturfing: The political actors who engage in digital astroturfing, the target of the digital astroturfing effort, and the goal of digital astroturfing.

The first dimension of digital astroturfing types are the political actors who engage in digital astroturfing. It is reasonable use the category of the political actors that engage in digital astroturfing as a starting point for a typology of digital astroturfing – after all, political actors are the *conditio sine qua non* of digital astroturfing; political actors are the initiating force behind every digital astroturfing effort. We distinguish between five categories of political actors: governments, political par-

ties, interest groups, individual politicians, and individual citizens. The first two actor categories, governments and political parties, are self-explanatory. The third actor category, interest groups, perhaps less so. We use the term interest group to mean a group that pursues political goals, but is neither part of the government nor a political party. This can include loose groups of like-minded people, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and so forth. Interest groups are thus groups that pursue political interests, and to that end, they interact with the political system. Sometimes, interest group activity will be in the form of discrete, non-public direct interaction with members of government or parliament; i. e., in the form of lobbying. But in other situations, interest groups are advocating their position publicly. The nature of interest groups can be very varied; typical examples of interest groups in Western countries are corporations as employer interest groups and unions as employee interest groups (Walker, 1983). In the context of interest groups as political actors, it is important to keep in mind that digital astroturfing is concerned with political goals. There is a prominent phenomenon of non-political, strictly commercial quasi-astroturfing that some businesses engage in: The practice of faking online consumer reviews to make one's products or services appear more popular than they actually are or to make competitors' products or services appear less popular than they actually are (Yoo & Gretzel, 2009). This type of deceptive online activity by commercial interest groups is not digital astroturfing, because the nature of the activity that the actors pursue is not political. If, however, a business is pursuing political goals and is engaging in digital astroturfing to that end, then we subsume that business in the interest group category of initiating political actors. The fourth category of political actors are individual politicians. Individual politicians are, for the most part, members of groups such as political parties, but there are situations in which individual politicians act on their own in terms of digital astroturfing. We mentioned one such scenario in the introduc-

tion: A politician who, as part of his election campaign, paid for Twitter followers.

The second dimension of digital astroturfing types is the persuasion target of digital astroturfing. We differentiate among two general persuasion targets, the public and specific political actors. It is quite obvious to imagine the general public as one target of digital astroturfing, since most known cases of digital astroturfing are cases of public digital astroturfing activities. Of course, political actors can also perceive public digital astroturfing and be affected by it. But another category of digital astroturfing is possible, one that is specifically aimed at political actors and is not public.

The third dimension of the typology of digital astroturfing are the goals the political actors pursue by engaging in digital astroturfing. There are, of course, a myriad specific goals that specific political actors can pursue in specific political contexts. The idea of this third dimension of the digital astroturfing typology is not to describe every possible situational configuration, but rather to meaningfully divide the spectrum of the goals of digital astroturfing into a small number of categories. We identify two such categories of goals: support for or opposition to policy, and support for or opposition to political actors. We propose only two categories, since the goal of digital astroturfing is to communicate a valence either towards policy or towards political actors, and being positive or negative is simply the property of the valence. As for the objects of the valence, political actors who engage in digital astroturfing will either want to influence public opinion or specific political actors with regard to certain policy issues, either to support their own position on those issues, or to oppose the position of other political actors. The other broad category of goals is support for or opposition to political actors. When political actors pursue this goal, they will either do so in order to feign public support for themselves, or to make other political actors appear unpopular.

In public discussions of digital astroturfing, instances of digital astroturfing are sometimes described as *trolling*. To equate

digital astroturfing with trolling in such a manner is a grave conceptual error. We have defined digital astroturfing as manufactured, deceptive and strategic activity on the Internet initiated by political actors. Of these five necessary conditions, trolling only satisfies two: Trolling takes place on the Internet, and there is a strategic component to it. However, trolling is not initiated on behalf of political actors, it is not manufactured and it is only somewhat deceptive.

Trolling is best understood as malicious, disruptive or disinhibited (Suler, 2004) online behavior by individuals who engage in the activity of trolling of their own individual volition (Hardaker, 2010). Trolling often also appears as a social, coordinated activity (MacKinnon & Zuckerman, 2012). Still, conceptually, digital astroturfing is completely separate from trolling, and mixing these concepts should be avoided, not least because talking about digital astroturfing in terms of trolling trivializes digital astroturfing: Digital astroturfing is a deceptive effort aimed at the public and launched by political actors. However, there is one potential connection between trolling and digital astroturfing: Cases of digital astroturfing in which the deceptive activity takes the form of trolling. In such cases, the trolling that is taking place is not authentic, but manufactured and strategically used by political actors. We believe this conceptual distinction is important. Not every activity that is widely described as trolling is in fact trolling.

However, it is possible that political actors engage in digital astroturfing and the honest bottom-up activity they mimic is trolling. This behavior can still be described in terms of our typology, because a deceptive and strategic use of trolling is meant to disrupt some public debate and expression of opinion that a political actor objects to, and those public debates and expressions of opinion will, naturally, refer to some policy or to some political actors. Fake trolling thus has the goal of indirectly stymieing expressions of support for or criticism against policy or for political actors. For example, the Chinese government regularly tries to distract the

Table 1: Typology of digital astroturfing

Initiating political actor	Persuasion target	Goal: Support for or opposition to:	
		Policy	Political actors
Government	The Public	1	2
Political party		3	4
Individual politician		5	6
Interest group		7	8
Government	Political actors	9	10
Political party		11	12
Individual politician		13	14
Interest group		15	16

Note. Each number represents one digital astroturfing scenario as a combination of three dimensions. Reading example: The digital astroturfing type with the number 7 describes a digital astroturfing scenario in which an interest group has the goal of influencing the public opinion on some policy issue.

public and change the subject of critical discussions online with fabricated user comments (King et al., 2017).

Combining the three dimensions of the typology leads to the sixteen different types of digital astroturfing, as reported in Table 1, provide a useful framework for analyzing individual cases of digital astroturfing as well as for guiding expectations about digital astroturfing efforts in general. Digital astroturfing can occur, as we argue in the introduction, in very different political contexts, and as a consequence, it can be challenging to analyze separate cases. With our typology, we provide, in essence, a useful heuristic – a way to think about digital astroturfing.

2.3 Digital astroturfing repertoires

Our typology consists of sixteen digital astroturfing scenarios that describe which actors pursue what kind of goal with their digital astroturfing efforts. However, the different scenarios do not automatically imply what specific measures the political actors take in order to carry out their digital astroturfing efforts. These specific efforts consist of three elements: The specific digital astroturfing tools used, the specific venues where these tools are applied, and the specific actions that are taken with those tools in those venues.

In social movement research, the concept of *protest repertoires* is used to describe which tools social movements use in which contexts (Della Porta, 2013;

Tarrow, 2011). It is useful to use an analogous concept for digital astroturfing: The concept of *digital astroturfing repertoires*. Digital astroturfing repertoires cannot be defined universally, because the tools and venues available for digital astroturfing are very much bound by time and space and are likely to change – just like the protest repertoires of social movements are bound by time and space and likely to change over time (Biggs, 2013). Also, describing digital astroturfing repertoires is ultimately an inductive task of continued observation of digital astroturfing cases. Even though we cannot specify a definitive and final list of context specific digital astroturfing repertoires, there are some typical repertoires, we believe, that encompass a large portion of contemporary digital astroturfing repertoires.

Digital astroturfing repertoires can be thought of, as mentioned above, as combinations of tools, venues and actions. Some typical digital astroturfing tools are sock puppets, click farms, and sympathizers. *Sock puppets* are, as we describe in the introduction, fake online personae (Bu et al., 2013) that can be used for a variety of purposes. Click farms are a relatively recent variant of sock puppets tied to the rise of social media. *Click farms* provide services that, essentially, boil down to faux social media activity, such as fake followers on Twitter or fake likes on Facebook (Clark, 2015). Both sock puppets and click farms can contain various degrees of automa-

tion through *bots*, programs that operate automatically on behalf of agents (Geer, 2005). For example, fake user profiles used in click farms are usually created manually, but the accounts are subsequently operated automatically. A lot of the current research in the area of digital astroturfing is focused on bots. Bots are certainly important, not least quantitatively, since creating and deploying bots is fairly easy and cheap. However, bots are still, for the most part, not able to persuasively mimic humans (Stieglitz et al., 2017), limiting their potential persuasive power. Bots as automated sock puppets or as automated click farms are certainly important, but manually curated and operated sock puppets and click farm profiles still matter. The idea of *sympathizers* as digital astroturfing tools might, prima facie, seem a misclassification. After all, sympathizers are real people who honestly hold the opinions they put forward. The question whether sympathizers as digital astroturfing tools honestly believe in what they do is conceptually irrelevant. Political actors are still orchestrating, i.e., manufacturing some activity that is supposed to look like non-manufactured, spontaneous activity; that activity is deceptive (the target of the astroturfing attempt has no knowledge of its manufactured origins); and the activity is strategic from the point of view of the political actor. Whether sympathizers as the tools of digital astroturfing sympathize with the political actors on whose behalf they act has no conceptual impact on the nature of the activity at hand. Howard (2006) describes such a case in which sympathizers were mobilized in an orchestrated attempt without even knowing that they were instrumentalized by a political actor. Finally, paid supporters are similar to sympathizers: They both engage in activities on behalf of political actors without openly declaring so, and they both do so with their true identities rather than with sock puppets. However, paid supporters are not (only) acting out of personal conviction, but out of pecuniary interests – they are being paid for their activities.

Some typical venues of digital astroturfing are social media, websites, com-

ment sections (predominantly those of news websites), and emails. We understand *social media* as platforms where users, be they individuals, groups or organizations, can connect with other users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) and where the users themselves are the primary creators of content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Typical examples of social media are services such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and so forth. We also consider online petitions to be a form of social media; after all, when signing online petitions, users connect with each other and by doing so create a certain type of content. *Websites* are separate from social media in that the users who curate websites do not simply create profiles on social media sites, but rather create separately hosted, independent content. *Comment sections* are the sections on websites that allow website visitors to leave written comments below content on the website, and sometimes, to like or dislike existing comments. In the context of digital astroturfing, comment sections of news websites are potentially one of the most relevant venues. In principle, comment sections could be thought of as just another form of social media, but we treat them as a separate venue. Users are the primary creators of content on social media, but not in comment sections of news websites – in comment sections, users only react to content created by journalists. The final venue of digital astroturfing are *direct messages*. Describing direct messages (such as emails, online contact forms, private messages on social media, and so forth) as venues is perhaps somewhat confusing, because direct messages aren't public places on the Internet. But what we mean by venue is not a public location, but rather the place where the digital astroturfing tools are applied. However, direct messages are a somewhat special case of digital astroturfing, because direct messages can be targeted at specific political actors, without the general public taking notice.

Finally, there are only two digital astroturfing *actions*: Actively creating content, or passively signaling (dis-)approval. The difference between active content

creation and passive signaling of (dis-)approval can be exemplified with comment sections on websites. Writing a comment constitutes an active creation of content, whereas liking or disliking is merely a passive signaling of approval or disapproval. The different tools, the different venues and the different actions of digital astroturfing are summarized in Table 2.

A digital astroturfing repertoire may consist of any combination of tools, venues

ital astroturfing being effective in some venues. More specifically, we identify two broad strategies of countermeasures: Restrictive countermeasures and incentivizing countermeasures. Restrictive countermeasures are measures that limit the spectrum of possible online activities, and this limitation of online activities in general also limits digital astroturfing activities. Incentivizing countermeasures, in contrast, are measures that are conducive to honest forms of online activity. Incentivizing countermeasures do not necessarily prevent digital astroturfing, but by rewarding more openly honest activity, incentivizing countermeasures make digital astroturfing less prominent and thus, potentially, less impactful.

Before we delve into both types of countermeasures in more detail, it is in order to justify why exactly we propose countermeasures in the first place – the fact that we actively discuss countermeasures implies that we regard digital astroturfing to be a problem.

There are two major reasons why digital astroturfing is an important and problematic phenomenon, a normative one and an empirical one. Normatively, digital astroturfing is challenging because the act of engaging in digital astroturfing, essentially, amounts to subterfuge, and subterfuge is nothing more than a form of lying (Grover, 1993). Empirically, digital astroturfing almost certainly has some real-world impact. While it is, for obvious reasons, very difficult to quantify the effects of digital astroturfing on public opinion or on political actors, it is not far-fetched to assume that some effects are very likely to exist. If, for example, a user comment in the comment section of a news website is written by a sock puppet, and some individual reads that comment without realizing that it was written by a sock puppet, then the minimal effect of digital astroturfing has happened – someone was deceived by the digital astroturfing effort. The probability of such a minimal effect of digital astroturfing is very high; if the amount of people who get deceived by digital astroturfing efforts is greater than zero, then the minimal effect

Table 2: Tools, venues and actions of digital astroturfing repertoires

Tools	Venues	Actions
sock puppets	social media	creating content
click farms	websites	signalling (dis-) approval
sympathizers	comment sections	
paid supporters	Direct messages	

and actions from Table 2. For example, the combination of sock puppets with comment sections (of news websites) and creating content is the digital astroturfing repertoire used by the Russian Internet Research Agency described in the introduction. The combination of click farms with social media and the signaling of approval is the digital astroturfing repertoire used by the Swiss politician mentioned in the introduction who bought fake twitter followers. A repertoire consisting of sympathizers combined with direct messages and creating content is a digital astroturfing repertoire sometimes applied by political candidates running for office who encourage sympathizers to send pre-written emails to friends and to newspaper editors (Klotz, 2007).

3 Countermeasures

Digital astroturfing is a clandestine activity, and as such, it is difficult to devise defense mechanisms against it. While there is probably no way to completely prevent digital astroturfing from occurring, there are ways to limit the probability of digital astroturfing occurring or, at least, of dig-

exists, and consequently, digital astroturfing has an empirical impact. What is not clear, however, is the full extent of the empirical impacts of digital astroturfing. For example, there is some evidence that user-generated comments on news articles can, in general, affect the perception of the content of those news articles (Anderson, Brossard, Scheufele, Xenos, & Ladwig, 2014; Lee, 2012). It is entirely possible that astroturfed comments can produce similar effects.

3.1 Restrictive countermeasures, or:

Limiting online activity

The most sweeping restrictive countermeasure against digital astroturfing is to outlaw it. However, an outright criminalization of digital astroturfing is, at the very least, hardly enforceable (digital astroturfing is, after all, clandestine). Also, digital astroturfing activities that do not use sock puppets but individuals who engage in digital astroturfing activities with their real identities, would present a difficult legal situation: While the activity is clearly digital astroturfing (a political actor manufactures deceptive activity in order pursue his own goals), the individuals who represent the digital astroturfing tools can easily claim to honestly have the opinions that they express through their activities. Outlawing digital astroturfing thus seems very unrealistic. Furthermore, such action would potentially harm freedom of speech and thus, from a consequentialist point of view, do more harm than good (e.g., Deibert et al., 2008).

More realistic means of restrictive countermeasures are countermeasures applied at the different digital astroturfing venues as summarized in Table 2. But not all of the venues are suited for restrictive measures. Specifically, digital astroturfing can neither be meaningfully restricted when it comes to creating websites (it is trivially easy to create a website anonymously) nor when it comes to sending direct messages, such as emails, to political actors. But for the other two venues, restrictive countermeasures can be implemented.

The first of those venues is social media. One potential restrictive measure for social media is the detection of inauthentic user accounts. There already exists considerable research in the area of automated detection of fake social media accounts, usually in the context of spam accounts that post links to products and services or to other unrelated online content (Mukherjee, Liu, & Glance, 2012; Zheng, Zeng, Chen, Yu, & Rong, 2015). While there is some research that extends the question of automated detection of fake profiles to digital astroturfing (Chen et al., 2011), that research is still scarce. Another possible restrictive countermeasure for social media platforms is the implementation of a mandatory real-name policy for users. Implementing a mandatory real-name policy might sound drastic, but it has been the official policy of one of the largest social media platforms, Facebook, for years (Wauters, Donoso, & Lievens, 2014; Giles, 2011). However, even though using one's real name is the default policy at Facebook, not every user has to or is able to provide credentials for their identity. Facebook is detecting potential pseudonyms algorithmically and, apparently, selectively, which has led to instances of users accounts being blocked despite being honest expressions of real identities (Dijck, 2013; Lingel & Golub, 2015). Mandatory real-name policies for social media also exist beyond Western social media platforms, notably in China. A prominent step towards banning anonymity on Chinese social media has been taken in 2011, when a mandatory real-name policy for so-called microblogging sites that are headquartered in Beijing, such as Sina Weibo, had been introduced. Under that policy, users have to register with their real identities, but are allowed to use nicknames on their public profiles. However, the policy has not yet been thoroughly enforced (Jiang, 2016).

The second digital astroturfing venue where restrictive countermeasures can be implemented with a high probability of the desired impact are comment sections on news websites. By and large, comment sections of news websites are already governed by some degree of restrictive mea-

asures in that most news websites have some moderation policies in place (Canter, 2013; Hille & Bakker, 2014). Comment moderation policies can be made more restrictive in order to prevent astroturfed comments. One restriction measure is to ban anonymous comments and enforce a real-name policy, similar to the social media examples cited above. From a logical point of view, banning anonymous comments will always prevent sock puppets from commenting, which means that this measure is definitively effective, but only if it is systematically enforced by means of an explicit verification process.

Enforcing a real-name policy is not a viable restrictive countermeasure against all digital astroturfing tools listed in Table 2: Paid supporters and sympathizers will still be able to be active on social media and to comment on news websites, since they do so with their real identity.

Another possible restrictive measure is not aimed at the tools used for digital astroturfing, but at the specific actions of digital astroturfing: Disabling the possibility of signaling approval or disapproval for existing comments through liking or disliking them. From a logical point of view, disabling the possibility of liking or disliking comments will always prevent this form of astroturfing. A third and most far-reaching restrictive measure with regard to comments is to completely disable comments. A number of prominent news websites have opted for disabling their comment section in recent years (Finley, 2015), but not primarily because of perceived inauthentic commenters. Disabling comments will, from a logical point of view, always prevent all instances of astroturfed comments and, as a logical consequence, it will always prevent all instances of astroturfed “liking” or “disliking” of existing comments as well. This means that completely disabling comments is the most effective restrictive measure against astroturfed comments, since it always prevents 100% of astroturfing instances.

In summary, there are ways to implement restrictive countermeasures against digital astroturfing which are very likely to lead to the desired outcome, which is

reducing or completely preventing instances of digital astroturfing. However, implementing such restrictive measures can also have some downsides, and we believe that the benefit of reducing digital astroturfing by restrictive measures does not necessarily outweigh the downsides. When it comes to the automatic detection of unauthentic user profiles on social media platforms, the potential downside are primarily false positives: When automatic means of detecting and deleting inauthentic user accounts are implemented, there is a chance that a portion of the accounts thus detected will actually be authentic ones. However, this downside of false positives can be actively controlled and dialed down. How many false positives there are is to a substantial degree a trade off with the desired sensitivity of the automatic detection algorithms. If a maximum sensitivity is desired, meaning that a perfect rate of true positives is the goal, then the false positive rate will, probably, be at its highest. But if a lower sensitivity is accepted, meaning that not all true positives will be detected, then the false positive rate can be lowered.

The downsides of restrictive countermeasures in comments sections on news websites are less open to adjustment than the downsides of automatic detection of inauthentic user accounts on social media. The first such measure we discuss above is enforcement of a real-name policy in the comment sections. Perhaps it is not self-evident why non-anonymity should have downsides at all – if one has an honest opinion to publicly share, why not do so using their true identity? The problem with that notion is that in many non-democratic countries, voicing one’s opinion publicly can have dire consequences. A prominent example of such a country is China, where online users criticize the government under the guise of anonymity because such criticism is essentially illegal (Qiang, 2011). Limiting the possibilities of anonymous online commenting in such political contexts will either lead to less expression of opinion, or to an increase in sanctions because those who speak out are easier to be tracked down. Another down-

side of doing away with anonymous commenting is commercial in nature. Removing anonymous commenting reduces the total comment volume (Fredheim, Moore, & Naughton, 2015), but only a small part of those anonymous comments is likely to be astroturfed. This means that websites will lose a lot of user-generated content and, consequently, website traffic. This can ultimately lead to loss in revenue, which is a relevant factor for commercial operators of social media and of news websites.

The strongest measure with regard to comments on news websites that we discuss above is the complete disabling of comments. Completely removing the possibility for users to comment is a measure, we believe, that represents a step backwards in terms of the development of the Internet, because it is a measure that reduces the opportunities for honest citizens to participate in public discourse. Of course, the Internet is a big place, and any one user can, for example, easily create a website to express whatever opinions he or she may hold. Furthermore, news organizations obviously have no obligation to host user-generated content (Jönsson & Örnebring, 2011) of any sort on their online platforms. But the possibility for citizens to directly react to news content by commenting on it and by engaging with other users who comment as well does seem like an added discursive value which is lost by disabling comments altogether.

Restrictive countermeasures against digital astroturfing are possible, but they carry with them some degree of downsides. Because of those downsides, it is worth exploring alternative strategies of countermeasures: Such countermeasures that do not restrict, but instead incentivize.

3.2 Incentivizing countermeasures, or: Rewarding honesty

The general idea behind incentivizing countermeasures against digital astroturfing is to provide incentives that motivate users to behave in ways that are more likely to be honest. Incentivizing honest behavior does not prevent digital astroturfing from occurring, but by rewarding

honest behavior, honest online activity can become publicly discernible from online activity for which there is no information about its authenticity.

One goal of such incentives is to encourage user participation under one's true identity, without enforcing it. In the case of social media, encouraging users to use their true identity consists of two steps. First, there needs to be an actual possibility for users to verify their identity on a given social media platform. Second, after a user has verified his or her identity, the information of the authenticity of the social media profile in question needs to be publicly visible. Some prominent social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, have such a verification program in place, and verified accounts are awarded with a publicly visible badge. However, both Twitter and Facebook do not currently implement their verification scheme widely for their whole user base, but only to a relatively small portion of users who are a "public figure, media company or brand" (Facebook, 2015). We believe that users can be incentivized to opt into a verification process by nudging them towards it. Users can be presented with advantages of a verified account, such as the pro-social norm of transparency and authenticity, but also with the rather playful element of receiving a badge that is proof of their verified status. However, such nudging strategies are, to a certain degree, paternalistic in nature (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). We think that the paternalistic element of verification options should be minimized by explicitly presenting verification as a choice that brings with it certain benefits.

User verification is also possible for the venue of comment sections. Besides identity verification, another type of verification is possible for comment sections: Incentives that allow for anonymous commenting, but reward a history of good and consistent commenting behavior. One such scheme is currently applied by the New York Times, where some commenters are algorithmically selected for a publicly visible verification badge based on their commenting history (Sullivan, 2014). Commenters become eligible for verifica-

tion if they have not run afoul of comment moderators in the past. The main incentive under that scheme is that verified commenters are able to immediately get their comments published, without prior moderation.

In comparison with restrictive countermeasures, incentivizing ones have the great advantage that they do not limit the spectrum of online activities, but rather expand it by offering rewards for behavior that is more likely to be honest. However, incentivizing countermeasures against digital astroturfing are not without downsides. One major downside is the temporal component of incentivization: It takes time, first, to implement incentives, and second, for a critical part of a given user base to react to incentives. For example, if Twitter and Facebook decided to offer verification to all of their users, that would pose a non-trivial technical challenge, and the widespread adoption of verification would probably not be immediate but rather follow adoption rates and patterns similar those of other technological innovations (Rogers, 2003).

4 Conclusion: Is research on digital astroturfing feasible?

Laying out a conceptual map of digital astroturfing is only a means to an end – a map is meant to be used to explore. We have described a typology with ideal-types (Weber, 1922). In the real world, no two instances of digital astroturfing will be exactly the same, and they might employ any mix of astroturfing repertoires. Still, the map that we propose, even though preliminary and likely incomplete, should be of some use for maneuvering the terrain of digital astroturfing. But how exactly can digital astroturfing be explored empirically? After all, digital astroturfing is a clandestine activity, and if it is carried out successfully, we do not know that it has taken place. This makes any kind of research inherently challenging. For example, research designs that are routinely used in the study of other forms of political communication can be impossible to imple-

ment in the study of digital astroturfing, since very basic facts such as who is doing what in the pursuit of which strategic goals is, by definition, absent in digital astroturfing. Even though it undoubtedly poses unique challenges, the empirical study of digital astroturfing is not futile.

A first step in the study of digital astroturfing is the establishment of a plausible conceptual framework of digital astroturfing. The very goal of our study is to contribute to this first step. In order to conduct empirical research, we first need a sound understanding of how to think about our object of study. In this sense, we do not think that research on digital astroturfing should be exploratory in nature, as is sometimes suggested for research on regular astroturfing (Boulay, 2013).

Some important recent research efforts in the area of digital astroturfing are focusing on so-called “social bots” (Bastos and Mercea, 2017; Ferrara et al., 2016; Woolley, 2016;). Social bots represent one digital astroturfing tool (automated sock-puppets) used within one venue (social media). As such, they most certainly warrant scientific scrutiny. However, it is important to note that social bots probably represent the low hanging fruit of digital astroturfing. Social bots are a relatively crude form of digital astroturfing, and because of their highly automated nature, they are relatively easy to detect. Furthermore, and perhaps just as importantly, the less sophisticated a digital astroturfing effort, the less probable it is that the effort will have the impact intended by the initiating actor behind the digital astroturfing effort. Not only could there be no effect, but there could actually be a negative effect (from the point of view of the initiating actor): When people become aware of persuasion attempts and thus develop persuasion knowledge, they tend not only to not be persuaded, but to actually react negatively (Friestad & Wright, 1994).

There are several empirical research strategies that can be applied to the study of digital astroturfing. A very important one are case studies. To date, most research on cases of digital astroturfing is done by investigative journalists. Such

journalistic work is, of course, very valuable, but a more scientifically vigorous analysis of digital astroturfing cases is still necessary, not least because of the need to ground case study research in a sound conceptual framework. An obvious disadvantage of case studies is the fact that the cases that can be analyzed cannot be freely selected – only those instances of digital astroturfing that have been revealed to be digital astroturfing are available for case study analysis. This a priori selection could potentially introduce bias, because observed digital astroturfing is perhaps different from unobserved digital astroturfing. However, this potential bias is not an insurmountable problem. Given a conceptual foundation that consists, among other things, of a typology and a reasonable expectation of digital astroturfing repertoires, the potential selection bias in case study research can be actively addressed. For example, if case study research consistently failed to identify a certain type of digital astroturfing that could indicate that that type of digital astroturfing is very successful at remaining hidden.

Another possible research strategy consists of surveys and interviews of political actors. It might seem naive to suggest to simply ask political actors whether they engage in digital astroturfing. However, it is not at all unheard of for political actors to disclose sensitive information for scientific purposes as long as they are guaranteed anonymity. But talking to political actors about digital astroturfing does not have to produce a direct “admission of guilt” to be useful. For example, the perception of digital astroturfing by political actors is valuable data, because it could indicate how prevalent a phenomenon digital astroturfing is. Talking to people who are potentially involved in or knowledgeable about digital astroturfing does not have to be limited to political actors. Communication professionals in the business of political consulting are also willing to talk about their line of work, given a sufficient layer of anonymity (e.g., Serazio, 2014).

A third promising research strategy is the direct collaboration with venues of digital astroturfing. Two of the venues that

are summarized in Table 2 are suitable for this, social media services and news organizations that have comment sections on their websites. Both social media services and news organizations should, in principle, be interested in reducing, or at least in understanding digital astroturfing on their respective platforms. The specific nature of the collaboration can be twofold. First, the combined effort of researchers and operators of social media or of news platforms can be focused on the detection of digital astroturfing. The second possible kind of collaboration is the implementation and monitoring of countermeasures against digital astroturfing. For this kind of collaboration, greater weight should be given to the implementation of incentivizing countermeasures than to restrictive ones. Restrictive countermeasures are mostly a technical affair with potentially big downsides, while incentivizing countermeasures involve not only technical innovation, but observation of and interaction with users as well. Restrictive countermeasures carry the promise of relatively fast short-term solutions, but in order to effectively combat digital astroturfing in the long term, we believe that innovations in the form of incentivizing countermeasures are inevitable.

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Trust in government: What's news media got to do with it?

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Abstract

In modern democracies, trust in government is a key indicator of political legitimacy and stability. Drawing from theories of media effects, we investigated whether using traditional media has a negative (media malaise hypothesis) or a positive (virtuous circle hypothesis) impact on trust in the national government. We used a serial mediation model involving evaluations of politicians and evaluations of the political process as mediators of how political communications influence trust in government. To test the model empirically, we conducted an online survey among 1 115 respondents in Germany. Results suggest that the use of traditional media to access political information has a direct positive impact on trust in government mediated by people's evaluations of politicians and of the political process. We also found a positive serial mediation effect of using traditional media on trust in government mediated first by evaluations of politicians and second by evaluations of the political process.

Keywords

Trust in government, media effects, politicians, political Processes, quantitative survey, mediation effects

1 Introduction

In modern democracies, the amount of trust that people place in politics is a key indicator of political legitimacy and stability (Aarts, Fladmoe, & Strömbäck, 2012; Easton, 1965). Consequently, the substantial decline of political trust in Western democracies since the 1960s poses considerable reason for concern (Hetherington, 2005; Torcal, 2014). Although some authors have viewed the trend as a chance to raise a “new generation of critical citizens” (Marien & Hooghe, 2011, p. 267), most scholars have highlighted the detrimental effects of such eroding levels of political trust. The dominant view in the debate maintains that political distrust decreases voter turnout (Grönlund & Setälä, 2007) and fosters support for populist parties (Billiet & De Witte, 1995; Pauwels, 2011). Since mass media remain the primary source of political information in Western-type democracies, their importance as generators and inhibitors of political trust has been widely recognized in political communication research. In litera-

ture on the topic, two opposing concepts characterize the effects of media use on political trust. On the one hand, the media malaise hypothesis posits that negative media content and its lack of substance cultivate public mistrust in politics (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Robinson, 1976). On the other, scholars have argued that the relationship between media exposure and political trust can be conceived as a virtuous circle (Norris, 2000), in which people with higher levels of political interest use a variety of media sources and thereby develop increased trust in politics. Empirical evidence for both claims has yielded inconclusive results. However, at times when the term «Lügenpresse» (“lying press”) is chanted in public demonstrations and even named the official “non-word of the year” in Germany, insights about the consequences of media use on political attitudes are needed more than ever.

In response, we examined trust in government by conducting an online survey in order to extend current literature on the topic in two important dimensions. In what follows, we first introduce and re-



port an outcome-based measurement for trust in government. Second, we discuss various mediation effects that we conceptualize as *trust reasons* –that is, reasons for trusting one’s national government (Kohring & Matthes, 2007). Ultimately, we propose a serial mediation model running from respondents’ media use for political information, through their evaluations of politicians and evaluations of the political process to their trust in government. To test our hypotheses, we conducted an online survey among 1 115 respondents in Germany.

2 Trust in government

Because trust is a broad, multifaceted construct, scholars have developed and extended several concepts to shed light on the objects of political trust. At base, *political trust* refers to “a basic evaluative or affective orientation toward the government” (Miller, 1974, p. 952). To date, however, in exactly whom or what people essentially trust when discussing political trust remains controversial (Catterberg & Moreno, 2005; Wong, Wan, & Hsiao, 2011). According to Owen and Dennis (2001), the various objects of political trust include national legislatures (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1995), presidential incumbents (Citrin & Green, 1986), national and local governments (Levi & Stoker, 2000; Ulbig, 2008), political institutions (Zmerli & Newton, 2008), and the political system as a whole (Gamson, 1968). Imagining less distinction among objects of trust, research stemming from the European Social Survey and European Values Survey often merges trust in government, parliament, the legal system, and the police into the single concept of institutional trust (Grönlund & Setälä, 2007; Hooghe & Marien, 2012; Marien & Hooghe, 2011). Early on, Citrin (1974) suggested subdividing political trust by discriminating attitudes affiliated with mistrust, including dissatisfaction with current government policy positions, dissatisfaction with the outcomes of ongoing events and policies, mistrust of incumbent officeholders, and

the rejection of the entire political system. Decades later, Hetherington (1998, p. 792) developed that distinction by arguing that political trust consists of support for “regime-level political objects regardless of performance,” or *diffuse support*, as well as support for political incumbents, or *specific support* (Easton, 1965). Nevertheless, literature addressing political trust remains divided regarding the objects of political trust. Consequently, as Torcal (2014, p. 1544) has observed, the interchangeable conceptualization of political trust and trust in government “is responsible for the traditional confusion between satisfaction with incumbents (political satisfaction) and political trust in the system.” Drawing from that argument, we examined the specific form of trust that citizens place in their national government.

Trust in government, like any form of trust, is based on expectations about the future. As such, it encourages citizens to make risky investments in the future today. For instance, trust in government enables citizens to delegate political power to individual political actors whom they do not know personally via the concept of the sovereignty of the people. By actively supporting or at least accepting an incumbent government, citizens entrust authority over state affairs and even parts of their income in the form of taxes to a rather small group of politicians without being able to effectively assess their job capability in advance (Levi & Stoker, 2000). For citizens to do so, not only legal compulsion but also trust is paramount. This investment is risky because citizens cannot be sure that the entrusted resources, such as political power and money, will be used responsibly, that is, in accordance to personal or societal hopes, wishes, and needs. Citizens are well aware that democratic decision making is highly contingent upon various conditions and that political promises are often broken after elections. Eroding levels of political trust therefore arguably reduce voter turnout in elections (Grönlund & Setälä, 2007; Shaffer, 1981), discourage institutionalized political participation (Hooghe & Marien, 2012), undermine the public’s willingness to pay taxes and less-

en their compliance with laws (Marien & Hooghe, 2011), and spur voting for extreme right and populist parties (Billiet & De Witte, 1995; Pauwels, 2011).

As Miller and Listhaug have observed, citizens base their political actions on “evaluations of whether or not political authorities and institutions are performing in accordance with normative expectations held by the public” (1990, p. 358). Accordingly, any comprehensive conceptualization of trust in government needs to specify those normative expectations—that is, what citizens refer to when they say that they trust or distrust the government. They added, however, that trust in government is rarely absolute (e.g., blind trust) and, more often than not, refers to context-specific expectations (Miller & Listhaug, 1990). By analogy, a patient trusts his or her doctor to cure diseases but not to solve other personal problems; likewise, citizens trust the government not in general but, on the contrary, to take specific action in the future. In line with “extant research (...) using policy outcomes as the implicit object of citizens’ trust” (Gershtenson & Plane, 2007, p. 5), we argue that people ultimately place their trust in the outcomes of political decision making, such as personal freedom, peace, economic wealth, social welfare, and a healthy natural environment. By extension, we propose that individuals’ expectations about future policy outcomes form the core of political trust (Citrin & Muste, 1999; Listhaug, 1995). We therefore use Hetherington’s (2005, p. 9) definition of *trust in government* “as the degree to which people perceive that government is producing outcomes consistent with their expectations.”

Such expectations are based on individuals’ experiences and observations as well as different kinds of secondhand information. Personal, everyday experiences with political decisions such as energy prices or tax policies, of course, strongly shape people’s expectations for future political outcomes. Thus, we expect mediated secondhand information about political outcomes to bear only slight direct effects upon people’s trust in government. However, we also argue that mediated in-

formation about political personnel (Citrin & Luks, 1999; Miller & Borrelli, 1991; Seyd, 2015) and political processes (Miller & Listhaug, 1990; Owen & Dennis, 2001) that enable political outcomes influence people’s trust in government as well. Regarding the role of individual actors in cultivating trust in abstract social systems, Giddens (1990, p. 85) has argued that connections formed via such so-called face-work connections “carry a reminder that it is flesh-and-blood people (...) who are its [the system’s] operators.” For instance, even though past experiences might not give citizens reason to expect tax reductions, they could nevertheless expect such reductions because they believe current political personnel to be more competent, more intelligent, more courageous, or more honest than their predecessors. Furthermore, scholars have argued that trust in government stems from people’s perceptions of political institutions and processes (Kong, 2014; Lühiste, 2006; Miller & Listhaug, 1990). From that perspective, output performance depends on special qualities of the input structure of political systems. For instance, if citizens perceive political processes to be fair, transparent, and responsive, then they consequently expect the government to produce better political outcomes. Thus, evaluations of both politicians and political processes shape individuals’ expectations about beneficial political outcomes in the future.

In sum, traditional conceptualizations of trust in government have failed to isolate the very core of trust: expectations about the outcomes of future actions of public trustees. Instead, they have compounded trust-related beliefs and supporting ideas into a single concept that fails to conclusively conceive the trust-building process, as well as the role of news media therein. In response, we argue that expectations about future policy outcomes are the object of people’s trust in government. We conceptualize all factors that build and shape those expectations – most notably, citizens’ evaluations of politicians and political processes – as reasons for trust. Last, we hypothesize that people’s chief sources of information about political actors and

processes are either personal experiences or mediated communication that provides secondhand information. In the following section, we discuss major consequences of news media environments for people's perceptions of politics.

3 Media effects

Most literature addressing media effects on political trust (Avery, 2009; Strömbäck, Djerf-Pierre & Shehata, 2015) has been situated within the debate about whether using news media ultimately decreases trust in politics (i.e., the media malaise hypothesis, Robinson, 1976) or increases it (i.e., the virtuous circle hypothesis, Norris, 2000). On the one hand, the media malaise hypothesis claims that reliance on TV news, its questionable credibility, and its tendency to stress negative aspects of politics (e.g., conflicts and scandals) have contributed to the decrease of political trust since the 1960s. On the other, Norris (2000) has argued that trust in politics and media exposure is best characterized by a circular relationship. In a cross-national analysis, she found that people with greater trust and interest in politics tended to access various media sources, which further increased their political trust and interest in politics, whereas the politically disinterested and distrusting did not pay attention to the news media in the least (Norris, 2000). To avoid confusion with overlapping concepts (e.g., trust in institutions), we review only literature specifically addressing trust in government.

To date, empirical studies investigating how using news media influences trust in government have yielded inconclusive results. Whereas some studies have suggested that accessing various kinds of news media, especially on TV, negatively affects trust in government (Avery, 2009; Mutz & Reeves, 2005; Pietsch & Martin, 2011; Ts-fati, Tukachinsky, & Peri, 2009; Valentino, Beckmann & Buhr, 2001), others have indicated its positive influence (Moy & Pfau, 2000; Norris, 2000) or else its lack of any significant effect whatsoever (Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger & Bennett, 1999; Moy &

Scheufele, 2000). From another angle, some authors have also reported conditional effects according to news source (Avery, 2009) or effects of a source's ideological leaning and the ideological views of each citizen (Ceron & Memoli, 2015). The ambiguity of such results could derive from the trend that most studies either focus on a single medium or compare the impacts of different media with each other. However, other scholars have posited that media users typically do not access only newspapers, only TV news media, or only the internet to receive political information but instead “combine different media contacts into a comprehensive pattern of exposure” (Hasebrink & Popp, 2006, p. 369; cf. Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012; Taneja, Webster, Malthouse & Ksiazek, 2012; Yuan, 2011). That strand of literature argues that studies focusing on a single type of media could over- or underestimate the media effect. For instance, if watching TV news negatively influences the viewer's trust in government but reading the newspaper has a positive influence, the effects could cancel each other out if respondents use both sources to access political information. To account for such effects among media users, we investigate the impact of media use in general terms by asking the following research question:

- › RQ: To what extent does the use of traditional media to access political information directly affect trust in government?

Given the mentioned theoretical reasons, we expect to detect indirect effects of media use on trust in government mediated by two sets of trust reasons. First, we hypothesize that evaluations of political decision makers, especially influential national-level politicians often covered by news media, act as crucial predictors of trust in government. To explain, as the personalization hypothesis suggests, individuals instead of parties or institutions have become more important in political communication (Van Aelst, Sheafer & Stanyer, 2012). Moreover, as empirical studies have indicated, public perceptions of politi-

cians are increasingly based on their individual characteristics such as competence, integrity, empathy, and charisma (Hellweg, Dionisopoulos & Kugler, 1989) instead of their political stances or party affiliations (Balmas & Sheafer, 2013; McAllister, 2007). Since most citizens lack direct personal contact with politicians, news media provide important information that shapes their opinions about politicians' individual characteristics. However, the question of whether news media negatively or positively influence evaluations of politicians remains disputed. Some findings indicate a positive relationship (Kim & Kim, 2012), whereas others suggest that media use prompts more negative evaluations of politicians' character traits (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006; Mutz & Reeves, 2005). By contrast, some scholars have argued that "media use can induce positive or negative evaluations of political leadership based on the tone in which media reports describe the issues" (Camaj, 2014, p. 190; cf. Kim & McCombs, 2007). Some studies investigating the nonverbal behavior of politicians have suggested that exposure to TV, as image-based media, can influence viewers' evaluations of character traits (Bucy, 2000; Haumer & Donsbach, 2009). Given such inconclusive empirical evidence regarding whether the hypothesized mediation effect is positive or negative, we formulated our first hypothesis:

- › H1: The use of traditional media to access political information indirectly affects trust in government mediated by evaluations of politicians.

The second set of trust reasons concerns perceptions of the political process. We hypothesize that people's assessments of fundamental democratic concepts such as responsiveness, transparency, and procedural justice increase their level of trust in government (Camaj, 2014). Those perceptions, in turn, are affected by people's news media use (Camaj, 2014; Floss, 2008; Sadri & Flammia, 2014). Empirical studies investigating media effects on perceptions of democratic institutions and processes have generated inconclusive results. For

instance, Camaj (2014, p. 187) posits that "the most important dimension of political trust is media priming of institutional efficiency and honesty." Furthermore, the results of Moy and colleagues indicate that media use has a positive influence on the perception of some institutions and processes and a negative influence on others (Moy & Pfau, 2000; Moy, Pfau & Kahlor, 1999). Taken together, those arguments inform our second hypothesis:

- › H2: The use of traditional media to access political information indirectly affects trust in government mediated by evaluations of political processes.

Last, drawing from the argument that political discourse increasingly centers on political personalities, we hypothesize that people's evaluations of politicians also shape their evaluations of political processes. If people generally consider that politicians act responsibly, transparently, and fairly, then they will also consider the political process to be responsive, transparent, and fair. Thus, evaluations of political actors not only directly influence people's trust in government but might also influence another effective trust reason: people's evaluations of the political process. That dynamic prompts our third hypothesis:

- › H3: The effect of using traditional media to access political information on trust in government is mediated first by evaluations of politicians and second by evaluations of the political process.

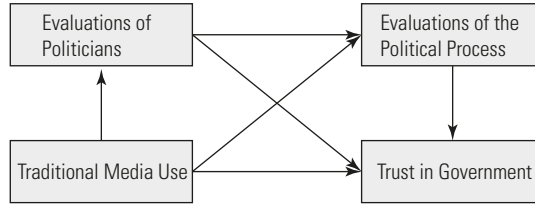
The serial mediation model shown in Figure 1 illustrates the relationship of the theoretical arguments and empirical findings discussed thus far.

4 Methods and data

4.1 Survey

To examine how the use of traditional media affects trust in government with cross-sectional data, we conducted an online survey using a nationwide online

Figure 1: Conceptual serial mediation model explaining the impact of c on trust in government



access panel in Germany administered by Respondi AG. The average interview length was 14 minutes.

4.2 Fieldwork and sample

Respondi recruits survey respondents on- and offline using a multichannel method (Respondi, 2016). Each panelist double-opted in to participating by completing an online registration form and activating an account. For nine days in August 2016, we gathered 1 329 completed questionnaires. Next, we cleaned the dataset regarding the time that respondents spent on completing questionnaires. Respondents who answered all survey questions in fewer than 5 minutes were excluded from analyses, given extensive pretesting indicating the high improbability that they completed their questionnaires carefully in so little time. Second, we identified respondents who simply clicked through the item batteries of the independent variable, the two mediator variables, and the dependent variable. After applying those filtering processes, we identified 1 115 respondents to include in statistical analyses. According to the standards of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, our study achieved a response rate of 0.604 (Response Rate 2, American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2016).

Having conducted an online survey, we applied a quota system to match our sample to the German population of internet users (M=44.9 vs. M=43.7) in terms of gender (47.1% women compared to 47.6%) and education (37.9% A levels compared to 37.1%; (Frees & Koch, 2015; GLES, 2015).

4.3 Measures

For the purpose of our study, we constructed an independent variable, two mediating variables, a dependent variable, and several control variables.

Trust in Government (Dependent Variable). We conceive trust in government as a function of a person’s expectations of the national government’s ability to provide favorable outcomes. Accordingly, we measured trust in government using a two-step procedure. First, we asked respondents to rate the favorability of 11 different policy outcomes on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = not favorable at all, 7 = very favorable): preserve peace in Europe and the world (M=6.57, SD=1.00), protect jobs and economic wealth (M=6.21, SD=1.09), ensure internal security and public order (M=6.40, SD=1.01), protect the environment and nature (M=6.04, SD=1.22), ensure individual freedom (M=5.94, SD=1.19), reduce social inequalities (M=5.99, SD=1.25), provide sufficient pensions (M=6.24, SD=1.13), integrate migrants into German society (M=4.79, SD=1.96), accomplish the energy transition (M=5.32, SD=1.54), provide a well-functioning educational system (M=6.22, SD=1.06), and foster European cohesion (M=5.07, SD=1.84). We excluded four items not considered to be highly favorable (i.e., received average scores of less than 6.0) from the second step of measuring trust in government. In the second step, we asked respondents to rate their confidence in the German national government’s near-future achievement of the 11 policy outcomes on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = not sure at all, 7 = very sure). We

used the remaining seven items from the first step to form a mean index ($\alpha=0.94$, $M=3.65$, $SD=1.46$).

Use of Traditional Media (Independent Variable). Using traditional media to access political information was measured with eight items. We formed a consistent mean index ($\alpha=0.76$) encompassing four items addressing the use of print media, including their online editions, as well as three items addressing the use of TV and one item addressing the use of radio. The question asked on how many days in a typical week respondents read, watched, or listened to articles or news programs about politics or the government in seven types of media: regional newspapers or their respective online editions, nationwide newspapers or their respective online editions, magazines or weekly newspapers or their respective online editions, newsstand newspapers or their respective online editions, public broadcasting channels, private broadcasting channels, and the radio. The eighth item addressed the general use of political TV programs such as political talk shows or political satires. Responses were given on an eight-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 8 = *every day*; $M=3.54$, $SD=1.53$).

Evaluations of Politicians (Mediating Variable). To measure perceptions of national politicians, we formed a consistent mean index with 16 items ($\alpha=0.91$) used in the German Longitudinal Election Study. The 16 items consisted of seven subdimensions: autonomy (two items), nonpartisanship (two items), leadership (three items), integrity (three items), benevolence (two items), responsiveness (two items), and likeability (two items). Table 1 in the appendix presents the exact wording of the items. Respondents gave their answers on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *totally disagree*, 7 = *totally agree*; $M=2.91$, $SD=1.06$).

Evaluations of the Political Process (Mediating Variable). Various researchers have identified four major criteria to evaluate political processes: transparency (Klingemann & Fuchs, 1995), responsiveness (Lane, 1988), efficiency (Floss, 2008), and procedural justice (Lind & Ty-

ler, 1988). We measured evaluations of the political process based on those four criteria as subdimensions. We constructed three items to gauge transparency, used a three-item measure (Esaiasson, Kölln & Turper, 2015) to gauge perceived responsiveness, constructed three items to gauge efficiency, and slightly adapted Besley's (2010) two-item measure to our topic (see exact wording in Table 1 in the appendix) to gauge procedural justice. Respondents were asked to either agree or disagree with each statement on a seven-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; $M=2.79$, $SD=1.03$). After reversing some items, we constructed a consistent mean index with all 11 items ($\alpha=0.84$).

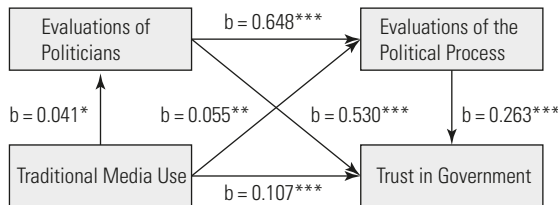
Control Variables. Researchers have shown that trust in government is influenced by political and social predispositions such as political interests, satisfaction with democracy, perception of the economy, support for governing parties, and social trust (Hetherington & Rudolph, 2008; Marien, 2011; Meer & Dekker, 2011; Zmerli & Newton, 2008). Three items addressed the respondents' interest in German, European, and non-European international political affairs ($\alpha=0.92$, $M=4.61$, $SD=1.62$) using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *no interest at all*, 7 = *strong interest*). Their satisfaction with democracy ($M=4.06$, $SD=1.80$; seven-point Likert scale, 1 = *very unsatisfied*, 7 = *very satisfied*), their perception of the current state of the economy ($M=4.63$, $SD=1.58$; seven-point Likert scale, 1 = *very bad*, 7 = *very good*), and their support for a party currently governing Germany (42% "voted for one of the governing parties") were assessed with single-item questions. Three items previously used in other studies addressed social trust ($\alpha=0.73$, $M=4.15$, $SD=1.29$), measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *totally disagree*, 7 = *totally agree*). We also assessed sociodemographic variables (i.e., gender, age, education, and income) with single-item questions.

5 Results

To answer our research question and test our hypotheses, we ran ordinary least squares regression (OLS) models with the use of traditional media as the independent variable and trust in government as the dependent one. The hypothesized mediation effects were tested using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) add-on PROCESS specifically designed to measure moderation and mediation effects (Hayes & Preacher, 2014). PROCESS tests indirect effects via bootstrapping, a nonparametric approach to estimate effect sizes that does not require certain “assumptions about the shape of the distributions of the variables or the sampling distribution of the statistic” (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, p. 722). Preacher and Hayes (2004) suggest using 5000 bootstrap samples to generate 95% bias-corrected accelerated confidence intervals; if the 95% confidence interval (two-tailed) of the respective effect excludes zero, then the indirect effect is considered to be significant (see also Hayes, 2017; Hayes & Preacher, 2014). Bootstrapping methods can be applied to analyses based on OLS regression models as well as structural equation modeling because both types of analysis yield similar results (Hayes, Montoya & Rockwood, 2017). To account for potential confounding variables, we included the mentioned control variables in the final model. All results are summarized in Figure 2.

The regression model explains 44% of the variance in trust in government (adjusted $R^2=0.438$, $p\leq 0.001$). In response to our research question, which asks whether media use directly influences trust in government, the positive and highly significant effect of media use shows that it directly influences the dependent variable ($b=0.107$, $t=4.22$, $p\leq 0.001$); the more that respondents use media to access political information, the more that they trust the national government. The results additionally suggest that both mediating variables positively affected trust in government and that both predictors have the two strongest effect sizes in the final regression model. We observe that the effect of evaluations of politicians ($b=0.530$, $t=11.01$, $p\leq 0.001$) is stronger than the effect of evaluations of the political process ($b=0.263$, $t=5.42$, $p\leq 0.001$). In line with previous empirical findings, satisfaction with democracy ($b=0.077$, $t=3.27$, $p=0.001$) and perception of the economy ($b=0.123$, $t=4.72$, $p\leq 0.001$) both positively affect trust in government. Political interest ($b=-0.106$, $t=-4.26$, $p\leq 0.001$), however, exerts a negative influence on the dependent variable, which indicates that the more interested respondents are in politics, the less that they trust the national government to implement favorable policies. Our results show significant effects for both age ($b=-0.180$, $t=-2.61$, $p=0.009$) and gender ($b=0.006$, $t=2.53$, $p\leq 0.012$). The older respondents are, the less they trust the government, although that effect is relatively small. By gender,

Figure 2: Serial mediation model of the impact of using traditional media on trust in government



First mediation effect: $b=0.022$, 95% CI [0.001, 0.049]. Second mediation effect: $b=0.014$, 95% CI [0.004, 0.031]. Serial mediation effect: $b=0.036$, 95% CI [0.008, 0.070]. * $p\leq 0.05$; ** $p\leq 0.01$; *** $p\leq 0.001$.

men have more trust than women in the government.

H1 addressed the indirect effect of media use on trust in government mediated by evaluations of politicians. We computed an OLS regression model using trust in government as the dependent variable, evaluations of politicians as the mediator variable and media use as the predictor variable. All control variables mentioned were also included in analysis. The results indicate that media use positively influence evaluations of politicians ($b=0.041$, $t=1.99$, $p=0.047$), which in turn increases their trust in the government ($b=0.530$, $t=11.01$, $p\leq 0.001$). The direct effect of media use on trust in government is mediated by evaluations of politicians ($b=0.022$, BCa CI [0.001, 0.049]), which supports H1.

Concerning the second mediator variable, we ran another OLS regression model with trust in government as the dependent variable, evaluations of the political process as the mediator variable and media use as the independent variable. In line with the assumptions of H2, media use affects evaluations of the political process ($b=0.055$, $t=2.65$, $p=0.008$). The results further show that the indirect effect of media use on trust in government mediated by evaluations of politicians is positive and significant ($b=0.014$, BCa CI [0.004, 0.031]). In other words, the more that people use media to access political information, the more highly they evaluate the political process, which in turn prompts increased trust in government.

H3 assumed a serial mediation effect. We hypothesize that the assessment of the second mediator (i.e., evaluations of the political process) is also affected by perceptions of individual politicians. Ultimately, the hypothesized effect of evaluations of politicians on evaluations of the political process is not only positive and highly significant ($b=0.648$, $t=28.68$, $p\leq 0.001$) but also particularly strong. In line with H3, we therefore detect a significant indirect serial mediation effect ($b=0.036$, BCa CI [0.008, 0.070]). That finding underscores the crucial role of personal perceptions of politics in the building trust in government.

6 Discussion and conclusion

We conceived trust in government as people's expectations that the government would provide favorable political outcomes. Drawing from literature in sociology and political science, we also conceived evaluations of politicians and of the political process as reasons for trust in government. By introducing a novel reliable measurement for such trust, our results can enrich the theoretical debate about what objects of trust in government encapsulate and their implications for empirical research.

To investigate the media effects on trust in government, we scrutinized at how the use of traditional media to access political information affects the mentioned trust reasons and, accordingly, tested three mediation effects empirically. The results shed light on the importance of news media in democratic societies. Among them, the direct positive impact of media use to access political information on trust in government indicates that expectations regarding the government's ability to deliver favorable outcomes are directly affected by using traditional media. That finding can especially inform current academic debates about media effects on trust in government, for we found no support for the media malaise hypothesis's claim that media use decreases people's trust in government. On the contrary, our results suggest that media use enhances trust in government, which supports the virtuous circle hypothesis. Political news media are often criticized for their (over-)dramatization of political issues (Slattery, Doremus, & Marcus, 2001; Vettehen, Nuijten & Beentjes, 2005), and some scholars have even argued that news media coverage has contribute to the electoral success of populist politicians, including U.S. president Donald Trump, by offering them a platform to garner attention (Sides & Lertaru, 2016). Our results, however, give reason to assume that media use fosters positive effects on political attitudes because it increases the image of political personnel, democratic processes, and trust in the national government.

Our findings also reveal that using traditional media also indirectly affects trust in government. As we predicted, media use influenced respondents' evaluations of politicians' various character traits, both personal and professional, information about which seems to represent an important means for citizens to form expectations of the national government. Although the personalization of politics has already been extensively discussed in political communication research (Van Aelst et al., 2012), its influence on political trust has not received much attention. In that sense, the finding highlights the particular importance of individual political actors in the political system in general. Giddens (1990, p. 85) argues that individual actors are crucial "access points" to the system in order for trust to be maintained or built up. However, we could not control for the basis of people's evaluations; for instance, it remained plausible that respondents were thinking primarily about certain members of the government while evaluating politicians in general, because certain politicians are more prominently covered by news media. Nevertheless, the finding reflects the great responsibility that politicians bear in representing the political system, for their individual misconduct can erode trust in government as a whole.

Taken together, those findings indicate that traditional media is an important means by which people form opinions and expectations about politics. Despite criticism of the substance of political media content, our results show that news media increase people's assessment of political personnel and processes. Instead of examining the effects of different media separately (e.g., TV vs. newspapers), we used a joint measure to account for the entirety of people's media use. Accordingly, our study opens up avenues for future research to further distinguish different kinds of media repertoires, assuming that people tend to rely on a variety of media outlets. In a sense, investigating the impact of different media repertoires on trust in government could prove to be more fruitful than the common distinction of different media.

That approach could also pave a way to better understand the complementary impact of traditional and digital media (e.g. Yuan, 2011).

We also observe a serial mediation effect: that positive evaluations of politicians increase people's perceptions of political processes, which raises their levels of trust in government. Because concepts such as transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness, and the distributive justice of the political system are complex, in forming opinions people tend to generalize their evaluations of individual political actors to broader political processes. In line with the personalization hypothesis, the serial mediation effect suggests that citizens use politicians as valid indicators when evaluating the quality of procedures in the political system. From another perspective, our results also encourage further investigations into the indirect mediation effects on trust in government in traditional media environments.

The impact of evaluations of politicians on evaluations of political processes in building trust in government seems evident at the national level, given the personalization of media discourses on domestic politics (McAllister, 2007). However, at the supra-national level (e.g., the European Union), an argument for reversed causation can be made. At the level of the European Union, for example, processes of institutions such as the European Commission or the European Parliament receive more attention in media discourses than individual political actors do (Trenz, 2004). For that reason, people are liable to form opinions about lesser-known political personalities based on their evaluations of those institutions and their proceedings. In such cases, the logical order of the two mediators might be reversed.

Before drawing some concluding remarks, we should identify some general limitations of our study. For one, because we relied on cross-sectional data, our statistical analysis based on the OLS regression model could not provide proof regarding the direction of causation. To solidify the causal pathways between the

variables investigated, additional longitudinal (e.g. Strömbäck et al., 2015) or experimental (Avery, 2009; Mutz & Reeves, 2005) research designs are needed. However, because our study builds upon a long research tradition in the realm of the media malaise and virtuous circle hypotheses, researchers have largely assumed the direction of causation. Moreover, our study is limited in scope because we draw solely on a German sample. Future comparative research on mediation effects when investigating how media use influences trust in government could enrich literature on the topic and illuminate whether the indirect effects of the mediator variables would succumb to characteristics of the media system, the political system, or both. For instance, the evaluation of political processes might differ between competitive democracies such as Germany and concordance ones such as Switzerland.

Governments require a certain degree of trust from the electorate in order to make decisions about political issues. In our study, we investigated the impact of traditional media use on trust in government, and across the board, we find positive influences of political news media on different political attitudes. Media use encourages better images of politicians and more positive perceptions of different crucial aspects of the democratic process, including transparency, responsiveness, efficiency, and procedural justice. As a result of all of those factors, people tend to be more trusting of the national government when they frequently use mass media to stay informed about public affairs.

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Appendix

Table 1: Questionnaire items for the mediator variables evaluations of politicians and evaluations of the political process

Evaluations	Wording of the questions and items
Evaluations of Politicians	"When you think of our leading politicians in Berlin, how much do you agree with the following statements?"
Autonomy1	"Politicians are puppets of big business."
Autonomy2	"Politicians dare to fight people in power."
Nonpartisanship1	"Politicians are able to overcome partisan bias."
Nonpartisanship2	"Politicians represent the opinion of their parties only."
Leadership1	"Politicians have personalities suited to leadership."
Leadership2	"Politicians follow up their words with actions."
Leadership3	"Politicians are able to decide quickly and with confidence."
Integrity1	"Politicians are sincere people."
Integrity2	"Politicians are reliable people."
Integrity3	"Politicians pursue their own interests only."
Benevolence1	"Politicians fight for social justice."
Benevolence2	"Politicians are people like you and me."
Responsiveness1	"Politicians are aware of the problems that regular citizens face."
Responsiveness2	"Politicians consider the opinions of citizens."
Likeability1	"Politicians are likable people."
Likeability2	"Politicians have positive charisma."
Evaluations of the political Process	"Now, we have some questions about your impression of the political system in Germany. How much do you agree with the following statements?"
Transparency1	"Citizens do not know which direction Germany is headed because nobody tells them."
Transparency2	"Citizens do not participate in politics because they lack the necessary information."
Transparency3	"German politics try to keep citizens informed."
Responsiveness1	"Government and parliament inform themselves about the wishes of citizens."
Responsiveness2	"Government and parliament try to satisfy the wishes of citizens."
Responsiveness3	"Government and parliament explain their policies to citizens."
Efficiency1	"In politics, addressing urgent problems is often postponed."
Efficiency2	"Too much time passes between political decisions and their implementation."
Efficiency3	"Government actions are more expensive than originally calculated."
Procedural justice1	"A citizen's opinions are represented in political decision making."
Procedural justice1	"Before political decisions are made, every citizen has a fair chance to voice complaints."

What prevents knowledge inequalities among citizens from increasing? Evidence from direct-democratic campaigns in Switzerland

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Abstract

This article seeks to enrich the normative debate on the advantages and drawbacks of direct democracy through an empirical analysis of individual learning about the contents of ballot propositions during campaigns. Following the knowledge gap paradigm, this article examines the factors that prevent socio-economic-knowledge inequalities among citizens from increasing. I argue that ballot propositions of low complexity exert a moderating influence, since such environments provide citizens with easy learning situations. The empirical analysis, based on panel survey data on three federal level votes that took place in Switzerland from 2006 to 2008, supports the issue complexity hypothesis.

Keywords

Switzerland, direct democracy, campaigns, political knowledge

1 Introduction

Direct democracy remains very controversial. When assessing the benefits and shortcomings of referendums and initiatives, considerations about the *competence of citizens* prove to be of crucial importance. Critics of direct legislation usually emphasize that citizens are not sufficiently qualified to directly participate in political decisions (see Budge, 1996, p. 59 ff.). From an elitist point of view, participatory democracy in general, and direct democracy in particular, is considered to be too demanding for ordinary citizens (Schumpeter, 1942). This scepticism is shared by many influential political theorists who fear that direct democracy could lead to a reinvigoration of extremism. Dahl (1956) famously argues that extending participation rights to ordinary people can be dangerous, as such reforms may lead to increasing political activity among lower socio-economic classes, thus provoking a rise of authoritarian ideas. In a similar vein, Sartori (1987, p. 120) expects that direct democracy “would quickly and disastrously founder on the reefs of cognitive incompetence.” In line with such con-

cerns, early public opinion research carried out in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s largely confirms the ignorance and incompetence of large parts of the citizenry. The paradigm of “minimalism” maintains that mass publics are characterized by low levels of political attention and competence (Sniderman, 1993, p. 219).

From a participatory point of view, however, it is believed that direct democracy empowers citizens by increasing their political capabilities. In concert with the major arguments proposed by theorists of participatory democracy (Barber, 1984; Pateman, 1970), proponents of direct democracy tend to adhere to the view that the opportunity to participate in direct-democratic votes leads citizens to acquire the necessary skills and capabilities. As a consequence, this theory suggests that granting people more voice is a promising remedy against the current crisis of democracy (Cain, Dalton, & Scarrow, 2003).

In recent years, scholars have built an impressive body of literature about the secondary effects of direct democracy. Overall, the empirical work suggests that direct democracy bolsters civic orientations (Frey, 1997). As to political knowl-



edge, empirical studies indeed show that voters are generally more politically aware of political issues when they have a say in policy decision-making (Benz & Stutzer, 2004; Smith & Tolbert, 2004; Smith & Tolbert, 2007; Smith, 2002).

Yet, despite these rather encouraging findings about the educative effects of direct democracy, a major concern must be addressed from a normative point of view. While the occurrence of referendums and initiatives seems to increase factual knowledge in political matters, these studies also find considerable inequalities in terms of the socio-economic status (SES) of voters. Specifically, citizens with higher levels of formal education have been shown to be more competent. In other words, political knowledge appears to follow a highly discriminatory logic. The positive educative spillover effects caused by exposure to direct democracy thus tend to be confined to people with above-average SES.

This article seeks to enrich the normative debate on the advantages and drawbacks of direct democracy through an empirical analysis of individual learning about the contents of ballot propositions during campaigns. Following the knowledge gap paradigm (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970), I examine the conditions that moderate resource-based inequalities. Past research reveals that the effects of political communication depend on two sets of characteristics – the predispositions of individuals and the more general context of the political communication (Iyengar & Simon, 2000). In this empirical contribution, I focus on the interplay between these two levels. My hypothesis is that the discriminatory effects of socio-economic status on learning disappear when propositions of low issue complexity are at stake. The empirical part of this study employs panel survey data collected in the framework of three direct-democratic campaigns held in Switzerland from 2006 and 2008. The results support the issue complexity hypothesis.

This article is structured as follows. In Section 2, I develop my theoretical argument, which culminates in the formulation of my issue complexity hypothesis.

Section 3 describes the three ballot propositions selected for this study. In Section 4, I provide an overview of the panel data and the indicators I employ. Section 5 presents the results through descriptive and multivariate analyses. Section 6 provides a concise overview of this article.

2 The moderating role of issue complexity

Ballot propositions are simple binary choices where voters are able to vote “yes” or “no.” However, these propositions relate to political decisions that usually have important and far-reaching policy consequences. Since citizens have the final say, it appears crucial that they are aware of the contents of the propositions that are submitted to the ballot. In order to arrive at a reasoned choice, direct democracy imposes high demands on citizens in terms of their level of issue-specific knowledge.

Some scholars suggest that voters can rely on shortcuts and simple cues, such as recommendations issued by the government or their preferred party when making their choice (Kriesi, 2005; Lupia & Matsusaka, 2004). This heuristic strategy reduces the effort necessary to make a reasoned choice. In a widely cited study on insurance propositions conducted in California, Lupia (1994) shows that voters who rely on shortcuts tend to vote the same way as those who possess deep encyclopedic knowledge. However, the use of this minimalist strategy can pose some risk to poorly informed citizens. Indeed, the literature on correct voting (Lau & Redlawsk, 2008) suggests that people cannot systematically be expected to vote as if they had full knowledge about the propositions at stake. In the case of Swiss direct-democratic votes, several empirical analyses reveal that citizens who lack issue-specific knowledge are less likely to vote in accordance with their own preferences than those who are well informed (Lanz & Nai, 2015; Milic, 2012; Nai, 2015). It is thus advantageous for individuals if they base their choices on substantive considerations. In order to cast a reasoned ballot, a

minimal level of issue-specific knowledge seems to be necessary.

Yet in light of their low levels of political knowledge (Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996), ordinary citizens cannot generally be expected to have such information when referendums and initiatives are placed on the ballot. Political communication scholars believe that the *campaigns* that precede the votes are crucial for citizens' acquisition of factual knowledge. Campaigns create an environment that is conducive to political learning by greatly increasing the flow of information to citizens (Zaller, 1992; Nadeau, Nevitte, Gidengil, & Blais, 2008). In the case of direct democracy, competing political elites and the media face great incentives to provide citizens with a huge amount of information about the contents of the ballot propositions at stake (Kriesi, 2011). When exposed to such intensive campaigns, citizens are thus expected to gain substantial relevant issue-specific knowledge.

However, as has long been observed, citizens are differently endowed with resources that they can use in politics (Verba et al., 1978). This means that gains in knowledge may not be equally distributed among citizens. The influential knowledge gap hypothesis (Tichenor et al., 1970) posits that the process of knowledge acquisition of highly publicized topics diverges across socio-economic strata. Based on the assumption that there is a gap in knowledge between high and low SES groups at the beginning, the classic hypothesis expects a widening of this gap as a result of the flow of information provided by political actors and journalists. Several rationales have been proposed for the expectation that individuals with a high SES tend to acquire information at a faster pace than individuals with a lower SES. Amongst others, the former tend to possess better communication skills, higher levels of existing knowledge, more social contacts as well as greater attention to the mass media (Hwang & Jeong, 2009).

In the last decades, numerous panel studies across a wide range of issues and countries have supported the knowledge gap hypothesis (Bonfadelli, 1994;

Hwang & Jeong, 2009). This empirical work reveals significant positive associations between education, on the one hand, and knowledge levels on political matters, on the other. However, patterns showing stable, and even decreasing inequalities, have also emerged from a non-negligible amount of empirical analyses. Similarly, Holbrook's (2002) comprehensive study of six US presidential elections reveals that knowledge gaps do not always widen over the course of campaigns. The state of the art thus prompts the question: under what conditions is a broadening of knowledge inequalities most likely *not* to occur.

Hereafter, I will argue that the relationship between socio-economic status and issue-specific learning is moderated by the level of *issue complexity*. When faced with complex issues, it is hypothesized that during political campaigns individuals with a high SES learn more about the issue at stake than individuals with a low SES. This expectation is based on the rationale that the appropriation of relevant information is demanding in circumstances of high issue complexity. Thus, the process of knowledge acquisition may follow a discriminatory logic that works to the advantage of individuals with a high SES, thus leading to a widening of (presumably) existing knowledge gaps. In line with this consideration, Bonfadelli (2005, p. 44) observes that the knowledge gap hypothesis tends to perform particularly well when scholars investigate scientific, technological and health-related issues. Indeed, all of these topics can be considered to be of a rather complex nature. In contrast, the knowledge gap is expected to remain stable, or even diminish, when propositions of low complexity are submitted to the vote. The rationale behind this hypothesis is that individuals with a low SES will not have any major difficulties understanding the content of the proposition. In other words, citizens find themselves in what Zaller (1992) calls an "easy learning situation." In such a situation, learning should not be systematically dependent on the socio-economic status of individuals.

In what follows, I propose to conceive of issue complexity as a three-dimensional phenomenon in the context of direct democracy. Accordingly, complex ballot propositions are characterized by 1) a wide range of issues, 2) a large number of issues and 3) a high degree of technical complexity. Following Gormley (1986, p. 598), the latter means that specialized knowledge and training are needed if a given issue is to be satisfactorily addressed.

In the Swiss variant of direct democracy at the federal level (see Kriesi & Trechsel, 2008), *popular initiatives* generally qualify as ballot propositions of low complexity. These votes usually contain one single topic, a very restricted number of issues and are characterized by a low level of technical complexity. Popular initiatives are propositions “from below” and are formulated by organizations that have been unable to channel their demands through legislation.

In terms of scope, the texts of initiatives must be thematically focused on a *single topic*. In addition, the number of issues and the level of technical complexity tend to be low. These two features can be attributed to the fact that popular initiatives always refer to modifications to the constitution. This is the domain of guiding principles. As a consequence, the texts of popular initiatives are usually no longer than a page, given that they mostly only contain one or a few demands. As opposed to legislative bills, these demands are generally easy to understand. In other words, no specialized knowledge is required to understand the meaning of the content.

In contrast, referendums follow a reverse logic, since these votes deal with propositions “from above.” Referendums concern legislative bills that have been previously approved by Parliament. Such votes, therefore, constitute a final hurdle to be taken. Unlike initiatives, referendums offer the opportunity to block a reform project (i.e. to defend the status quo). Referendums take two basic forms. While compulsory referendums refer to the constitution, optional referendums are subject to regular legislation. For pragmatic reasons, I only assess the level of issue

complexity in the optional referendum, since the cases in the empirical analysis do not include any mandatory referendums.¹

With respect to the range of issues, the bills subject to optional referendums prove to be rather narrow in scope. The pieces of legislation that can be submitted to the vote usually focus on a particular topic. However, legislative bills sometimes contain sub-issues that are closely related to other issue domains. Nevertheless, optional referendums have rather low levels of complexity in terms of the range of issues. However, this is not the case regarding the number of issues. Given that optional referendums concern legislative bills adopted by Parliament, these votes are typically characterized by a multitude of articles and a large number of new policy measures. Finally, the contents of optional referendums are characterized by a high level of technical complexity. Again, this can be attributed to the fact that articles are set up at the level of regular legislation, which contains detailed provisions.

To summarize, optional referendums tend to be much more complex than popular initiatives, especially in regard to the number of issues and their technical complexity. Thus, I classify the former as having high issue complexity and the latter as having of low issue complexity. My hypothesis predicts that SES-based knowledge inequalities widen in the case of optional referendums and remain constant in the case of popular initiatives.

3 Case selection

This study analyzes three direct-democratic campaigns that took place in Switzerland between 2006 and 2008. Such campaigns typically involve a considerable intensification of political communication

1 In terms of issue complexity, mandatory referendums are similar to popular initiatives. The fact that most votes of this type involve the constitutional level denotes a low number of issues and a low level of technical complexity. In addition, propositions use to be narrow in scope and thus address a very restricted range of issues.

and have a limited duration of around two months (Kriesi 2011). As represented in *Table 1*, the selected cases vary in their direct-democratic institutions and their policy domains. Two campaigns precede optional referendums, while the remaining one precedes a popular initiative. One referendum campaign and the initiative pertain to the domain of immigration policy. These propositions represent two cases that are typical of this policy domain – a referendum launched by the left against the tightening of the asylum law and an initiative launched by the right in favour of a more restrictive naturalization policy. The third campaign deals with fiscal matters, specifically a neoliberal corporate tax reform against which the left forced a referendum.

Table 1: Overview of the selected ballot propositions

Direct-democratic institution	Policy domain	
	Immigration policy	Fiscal policy
Optional referendum	Asylum law	Corporation tax reform
Popular initiative	Naturalization initiative	

The remaining part of this section provides an overview of the three cases.² The first campaign is related to a referendum against a revision of the *asylum law*, which was backed by moderate and radical right parties. This reform was a clear case of tightening, as it contained a series of restrictive measures towards asylum seekers. Immediately following the adoption by Parliament, parties from the left and civil society groups launched a referendum challenge. These organizations did not have difficulty qualifying the legislative bill for the ballot. The vote was preceded by a long, spirited and intense campaign. On 24 September 2006, Swiss voters accepted the reform of the federal asylum law by a large majority of 67.7 per cent.

2 Kriesi (2011) and Bernhard (2012) provide additional information about these campaigns.

I now address the second case. In 2005, the radical right Swiss People's Party (SVP) submitted an initiative on *naturalizations*, in reaction to a ruling by the Federal Court.³ The initiative proposed that voters in a given municipality be able to decide on the kind of procedure to adopt for naturalizations – specifically on whether they wanted to vote on individual naturalizations at the ballot box. Moreover, the initiative stipulated that it not be possible to appeal the rejections of naturalization requests. The campaign took place in spring 2008 and turned out to be very heated, as it gave rise to opposition between two key figures of Swiss politics at that time – Christoph Blocher, the charismatic leader of the Swiss People's Party, who was surprisingly voted out of the government by a majority of Parliament some months before, and Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, his successor as Minister of Justice, whose cantonal branch was excluded from the SVP because she accepted her replacement of Blocher against the will of the party. A TV debate on this proposition was followed by a record audience several weeks before the vote. On 1 June 2008, 63.6 per cent of participating voters rejected the naturalization initiative.

The third selected case, the *corporate tax reform*, was designed to strengthen small and middle-sized firms (SMEs), which are often considered to be the backbone of the Swiss economy. The reform proved to be of an extraordinarily high level of technical complexity, including a tax cut on dividends for large shareholders and various special measures for SMEs. After the moderate and radical right passed the bill in Parliament, against the votes of the left, the latter forced a referendum. During the weeks that preceded the vote, the Swiss business community led an intensive and well-orchestrated campaign in support of the bill. It came as quite a surprise that, on 24 February 2008, the corpo-

3 In order to avoid arbitrary decisions, the judges stated that rejected citizenship applications had to be justified. This decision de facto banned secret ballot votes. This procedure had been subject to heated criticism and media attention.

rate tax reform was accepted by a narrow majority of only 50.5 per cent.

4 Data and operationalization

This analysis is based on an integrated dataset that combines content analysis with panel survey data using media use variables (see Bernhard 2018 for a similar analysis). Information about the survey respondents' preferred newspapers and political television (TV) shows allows for news reporting information to be included into the panel dataset. The latter is based on individual-level data collected in the framework of a two-wave survey conducted for each of the three campaigns in the German and the French language regions of Switzerland.⁴ The first waves were conducted at the beginning of the campaigns (i.e. approximately two months before Ballot Day), the last waves were conducted immediately following the official voting date. I include respondents who answered both waves, resulting in 1092 (asylum law), 999 (naturalization initiative) and 1001 (corporate tax reform) respondents. Three independent samples were recruited by random quota. In order to minimize drop-out, the interviewees received an incentive for their participation. The samples are representative in terms of the respondents' sex, age and place of residence. However, there is a bias in terms of education. Due to panel mortality biases, the lowest educational levels are underrepresented in the sample.⁵ Computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) lasted about 20 to 30 minutes for each wave. For the content analysis, the most important quality newspapers, free newspapers, news magazines, regional newspapers, tabloid newspapers, public service TV news and TV shows in the German and

French-speaking parts of the country were selected.⁶

The study's indicators were constructed as follows. To measure the dependent variable (i.e. individual level of learning from the beginning to the end of the selected campaigns), I rely on factual knowledge questions about the propositions in question. As opposed to general questions about general political knowledge, this approach is designed to capture "practical knowledge" (Lupia, 2006). Indeed, to reach a competent decision in direct-democratic votes, citizens must be informed of the contents of the propositions at stake. For each ballot proposition, respondents were asked three issue-specific questions.⁷ The nine items used in this analysis, as well as the correct answers, are listed in *Table 2*. Respondents had three response options – "yes," "no" and "do not know." For each respondent, I first count the number of correct answers in both panel waves. "Do not know" answers were given a zero, while incorrect answers were deducted one point. The rationale behind this penalization is that uninformed respondents who adopted guessing strategies had a 50 per cent probability of guessing the correct answer (Mondak, 2001). Overall, negative scores were set at zero for each wave. Hence, issue-specific knowledge levels range from 0 to 3. Subsequently, I calculate the extent of individual learning by subtracting the respondents' knowledge scores in the first wave from the second wave. Hence, the learning indicator theoretically ranges from –3 to 3.

Let me now turn to the independent variable. As is standard practice in the knowledge gap literature, socio-economic status is measured by individuals' levels of formal education. I apply the classification used by the Swiss Federal Office of Statistics regarding educational achievements.

4 In the case of the asylum law referendum, a three wave survey was conducted (Kriesi, 2011). However, for the sake of comparability across campaigns, I omitted the second one.

5 The underrepresentation of the lowest education levels does not affect the findings of this study.

6 The selected media outlets are listed in Kriesi (2011).

7 Given that the popular initiative on naturalizations only consisted of two demands, two items refer to the same issue. As demonstrated in *Table 2*, the first and the third question concern the organizational body in charge of naturalization decisions at the local level.

Table 2: Issue-specific knowledge questions according to ballot proposition

Campaign	Question	Correct answer
Asylum	1) Does the law stipulate that asylum-seekers have to possess identity papers in order to apply for asylum?	No
	2) Does the law allow excluding rejected asylum-seekers from social assistance?	Yes
	3) Does the law in principle allow accepting demands of asylum-seekers who can return to a safe third country?	No
Naturalization	1) Does the initiative demand that only the people will decide on naturalization requests in the future?	No
	2) Does the initiative interdict that decisions on naturalizations can be contested before Court?	Yes
	3) Does the initiative leave it to the communes to choose the body in charge of naturalization decisions?	Yes
Corporate tax	1) Does the reform provide tax reliefs for all kind of dividends?	No
	2) Does the reform allow for alleviating the firms' tax on capital at the cantonal level?	Yes
	3) Does the reform introduce fiscal measures for personal companies in a period of transition?	Yes

This scale ranges from zero (“no graduation”) to 12 (“university degree”).

In addition, I include a series of control variables. Evidently, political interest is a “usual suspect” in the field of knowledge inequalities studies. For this variable, I employ a scale ranging from 1 = “not interested at all” to 4 = “very interested.” Given that the issue of the gender gap has proven to be rather salient in the scholarly literature (Fraile 2013; Ferrin Pereira, Fraile, & Rubal, 2015), I also account for sex (woman = 1, men = 0). In addition, the effect of age is modelled by using the respondents’ age and a quadratic term in order to observe curvilinear patterns. Based on the tripolar party configuration that exists in Western Europe (Kriesi et al. 2008), I also consider individuals’ political camp by distinguishing between voters from the left (Social Democrats and the Green Party of Switzerland), the moderate right (Christian Democrats and Liberals) and the radical right (Swiss People’s Party). An individual’s preferred party is identified based on questions relating to voting probabilities.⁸ The responses range from “will never vote for this party” (score 0) to “will certainly vote

for this party at some time in the future” (score 10). I assign respondents to a given camp based on the highest party score.

Finally, I include mass media exposure and attentiveness. In both cases, I distinguish between TV and newspapers, since the latter usually provides citizens with more elaborate information (Fraile, 2010). However, there is an obvious lack of consensus as far as the appropriate measurement of media exposure is concerned. Capturing an individual’s informational environment proves to be very difficult. Indeed, Goldstein and Freedman (2002) call it a vexing challenge. In line with the fundamental assumption that “people are influenced by mass communication in proportion to the amount of it they receive” (Zaller, 1996, p. 33), my indicator for media exposure corresponds to the respective number of arguments the respondents received during the campaign in their preferred TV show and newspaper. As far as media attentiveness is concerned, I rely on two questions that asked respondents about the extent to which they usually pay attention to TV and newspapers (from 1 “no attention at all” to 5 “a great deal of attention”). Finally, I consider the role played by interpersonal communication. To that end, I use the answer to an item that refers to the vote under scrutiny. Participants were asked how many times they had private discussions with relatives, friends or colleagues about the topic of the ballot proposition in the last few weeks. Again, the scale ranges from 1 “very rarely” to 5 “very often.”

8 A stricter definition of party identification or party choice in the last election or in a hypothetical election next Sunday results in a large amount of non-responses in Switzerland. Partisan preferences is designated on the basis of a set of questions that ask respondents to indicate how likely they are to ever vote for the five most important parties: the Greens, the Social Democrats, the Christian-Democrats, the Liberals and the Swiss People’s Party.

5 Empirical analysis

The analysis is carried out in two steps. First, I resort to descriptive analyses in which I outline the knowledge levels and the magnitude of learning for each of the three selected campaigns. Second, I turn to the multivariate analysis by testing the issue complexity hypothesis.

5.1 Descriptive analysis

Table 3 provides an overview of individuals' knowledge levels at the outset of the three campaigns and at their ends. The highest level of initial knowledge is observed for the asylum law (0.70). In contrast, this figure proves to be much lower for the two remaining cases (0.28 for the naturalization initiative and 0.23 for the corporate tax reform). This sharp difference can be attributed to the fact that an unusually high number of media reports were published about the asylum law before the campaign entered into its hot phase in the last few weeks. Thus, many voters were familiar with the proposition's content when the first wave of the panel survey took place. At the end of this campaign, respondents remained most knowledgeable about the asylum law (1.52), followed by the naturalization initiative (1.05), and the corporate tax reform (0.87). The intermediate position of the campaign on naturalization is somewhat surprising. Given that this proposal was characterized by a low level of issue complexity, citizen competence should have been highest in this case. A closer look reveals that respondents had a difficult time correctly answering the first knowledge question (see *Table 2*). Indeed, it is striking to observe how knowledge levels with respect to this item even slightly decreased.⁹

More generally, it appears that learning occurred during these campaigns. In terms of magnitude, there are no large differences across the three cases under scrutiny (+0.82 for the asylum law, +0.76 for the naturalization initiative and +0.64 for the corporate tax reform). It can thus be asserted that respondents learnt a great

deal about the issue-specific provisions of the ballot propositions. It is important to note that the amount of issue-specific learning is highest in the case of the naturalization initiative when the item that caused a lot of confusion among respondents is removed. Many citizens believed that the initiative demanded that citizens should decide on naturalization requests (by means of ballot votes at the local level). In fact, the initiative was much less constraining: the text stipulated that municipalities should be free to decide on the kind of procedures that they would like to apply. Finally, the comparatively low levels of both initial knowledge levels and learning in the corporate tax reform case are consistent in light of its extraordinarily high level of complexity.

Table 3: Issue-specific knowledge levels and learning, by campaign

Knowledge level and level of learning	Asylum	Naturalization	Corporate tax
Knowledge (t1)	0.70	0.28	0.23
Knowledge (t2)	1.52	1.05	0.87
Learning	+0.82	+0.76	+0.64

5.2 Multivariate analysis

Before addressing my hypothesis, I will briefly present the determinants of initial knowledge levels. The ordered probit regression models (in the Appendix to this article) contain the independent variables outlined in the previous section, with the exception of campaign-specific factors (i.e. the two indicators on exposure and the item about interpersonal discussions). As demonstrated in *Table A.1*, the level of formal education is only significant for the case of the asylum law. Remarkably, education-based inequalities are unable to explain individual levels of issue-specific knowledge at the outset of the campaigns for the naturalization initiative and the corporate tax reform. These findings call into question the basic assumption of the knowledge gap paradigm. In contrast, initial knowledge is found to depend positively on levels of political interest. This

⁹ Among the nine knowledge items studied, this negative difference is an exception.

relationship proves to be significant in all three campaigns. In addition, the analysis reveals that voters from the left were most knowledgeable about the ballot measure on asylum policies. This result can be attributed to the strong public involvement of the left and their allies during the pre-campaign period, since these actors did not interrupt their mobilization efforts after having collected the required number of signatures (Bernhard 2012).

In the case of issue-specific learning, I make two important decisions in order to deal with the challenge posed by ceiling effects. First, I omit individuals from the analysis who provided correct answers to all three questions in the first wave survey, since these respondents are unable to acquire additional knowledge.¹⁰ Second, I decide to account for initial knowledge levels. The rationale behind this choice is that it is expected that learning potentials should be largest for respondents who are not knowledgeable at the beginning of the campaigns. In other words, individuals who are already knowledgeable about the issues at stake before the beginning of the campaign cannot learn much afterwards.

Consistent with this line of reasoning, *Table 4* shows that there is a strong negative association between initial knowledge levels and the magnitude of issue-specific learning during all three campaigns. With respect to formal education, the findings are in line with my hypothesis. According to the estimation models, there are significant education-based disparities in terms of issue-specific learning regarding the two optional referendums, i. e. the asylum law and the corporate tax reform. In contrast, the coefficient for the popular initiative on naturalizations is not statistically significant. These results support the view that learning follows a resource-based logic when ballot propositions of high complexity are at stake. On the contrary, in the case of popular initiatives, citizens find themselves in easy learning situations. As a consequence, when confronted with

these kinds of ballot propositions, individuals with low levels of formal education do not tend to learn more from the campaigns than those with lower levels.

With respect to the control variables, the level of an individual's political interest only appears to be instrumental to learning in the case of the corporate tax reform. This positive relation may be due to the high technical complexity of this proposition. In such a difficult learning situation, individuals with high political interest may be much more motivated than the remaining individuals to acquire issue-specific knowledge. Regarding the vote on naturalization, there are two significant associations. First, women turn out to have learnt less than men, a finding that has no satisfactory explanation. Unquestionably, the domain of political rights (including questions pertaining to naturalizations) has historically been a men's affair in Switzerland. However, the absence of a gender gap at the outset of the campaign seems to somewhat cancel out this line of reasoning. Second, it is interesting to note that exposure to TV leads to greater issue-specific knowledge during this campaign. As mentioned in the section on case selection, it is precisely in the case of the naturalization initiative that TV shows play an important role. Regarding the asylum law, voters from the radical right have learnt significantly less than the voters from the left and the moderate right. It may be possible that most adherents of the Swiss People's Party did not consider it necessary to grapple with the proposition's content because simply knowing that the revised asylum law contained tightening measures may have reassured them that they were consistently voting with their predispositions.

Regarding the control variables, I have to admit that I accounted for the determinants which are generally used in the knowledge literature. A reviewer convincingly observed that those variables which can be expected to causally follow the independent variable (i. e. education) should be dropped in order to avoid post-treatment biases. Based on these considerations, I decided to rely on alter-

¹⁰ This affected 139 respondents in the case of the asylum law, 39 respondents in the case of the naturalization initiative and 34 respondents in the case of the corporate tax reform.

Table 4: Ordered probit regression models explaining levels of issue-specific learning

Variables	Asylum (1)	Naturalization (2)	Corporate tax (3)
Initial knowledge	-0.595*** (-10.80)	-0.634*** (-7.72)	-0.685*** (-9.51)
Education level	0.049*** (3.67)	0.019 (1.38)	0.033** (2.70)
Political interest	0.065 (1.08)	0.096 (1.68)	0.208*** (3.77)
Woman	0.043 (0.55)	-0.194* (-2.41)	-0.066 (-0.85)
Age	-0.025 (-1.92)	-0.005 (-0.37)	0.012 (0.89)
Age ²	0.0001 (1.17)	0.0000 (0.23)	-0.0001 (-0.41)
Left	0.346*** (3.72)	0.054 (0.60)	-0.154 (-1.71)
Moderate right	0.225* (2.41)	0.019 (0.19)	-0.009 (-0.09)
TV exposure	-0.000 (-0.01)	0.002* (2.43)	0.001 (1.09)
Newspaper exposure	-0.000 (-0.27)	-0.000 (-0.88)	0.000 (0.81)
TV attention	-0.239 (-1.81)	0.179 (1.26)	0.064 (0.45)
Newspaper attention	0.042 (0.33)	-0.093 (-0.73)	-0.101 (-0.78)
Interpersonal discussions	0.127 (0.88)	0.024 (0.16)	0.121 (0.82)
N	897	951	954
Pseudo R ²	0.076	0.046	0.055

Note. Z-Values in parentheses.

* p ≤ 0.05, ** p ≤ 0.01, *** p ≤ 0.001.

Supporters of the radical right serve as reference category for the political camp.

native specifications by removing political interest, camp affiliations, media exposure, media attention, and interpersonal discussions from the models presented in *Table 4*. In so doing, I obtained the same results in terms of statistical significance for the remaining variables.

Due to another sensible remark made by a reviewer, I also tested the issue complexity hypothesis in a single model. To that end, I merged the three campaign data sets. As explanatory factors, I introduced – in addition to the variables listed in *Table 4* – a dummy variable for optional referendums (i.e. “1” for the asylum law and corporate tax reform and “0” for the initiative on naturalizations) as well as an interaction term between formal education levels and optional referendums. The latter turns out to be positively significant

at the 5 per cent error level. Hence, formal education appears to be instrumental for issues-specific learning when individuals face optional referendums. This finding is in line with my hypothesis.

6 Conclusion

The question of the relative merits of direct democracy over representative democracy has long given rise to an insurmountable divide between proponents and opponents of extended popular rights. While the former emphasize that the use of referendums and initiatives empower citizens, the latter argue that ordinary voters lack the ability to make reasoned choices on ballot propositions. In the last decades,

this controversy has been nurtured by a vast amount of empirical studies.

In this article, I focus on factual knowledge gains during direct-democratic campaigns. More specifically, the present contribution examines the moderating role played by issue complexity in regard to the relationship between education-based inequalities and learning about the content of ballot propositions. Based on survey panel data available for three Swiss direct-democratic campaigns on the topics of asylum, naturalizations and corporate taxes, the results suggest that issue-specific learning is positively related to an individual's level of formal education when complex ballot propositions are at stake (i. e. optional referendums). Conversely, learning does not prove to be discriminatory when proposals of low issue complexity (i. e. popular initiatives) are submitted to the vote.

Arguably, the most interesting by-product of this empirical analysis concerns the finding that levels of knowledge at the outset of campaigns are not always a function of formal education. Only in the case of the asylum law do the results reveal education-based inequalities in citizens' initial levels of knowledge. Moreover, this knowledge gap tends to be reinforced during this particular campaign. The naturalization initiative constitutes a contrasting case. The absence of both knowledge gaps and unequal learning patterns sheds a positive light on this campaign. The corporate tax reform is an ambivalent case. While there was no knowledge gap at the beginning of the campaign, formal education plays a major role in the acquisition of issue-specific knowledge.

I would like to emphasize that I am somewhat reluctant to generalize the findings obtained in the framework of this study. First, and most obviously, this research has only dealt with three campaign contexts. This limited number causes some apprehension about the general validity of the results presented here. Second, Swiss direct-democratic campaigns take place against the backdrop of a peculiar and well-structured context, characterized by rather intensive campaigns. This may

strongly limit the external validity of the results of the empirical analysis. Thus, the number of campaigns and countries in future empirical studies should be increased. However, this requires a substantial effort given that the use of panel surveys seems to be the appropriate method for convincingly detecting possible campaign effects.

From a normative point of view, this study paints a rather ambivalent picture. On the one hand, I show that individuals learn a great deal about the contents of propositions in the case of intensive campaigns. This basic pattern lends support to advocates of direct democracy, as it illustrates that the possibility of participating in decision-making can motivate people to become involved in political issues. On the other hand, I establish that citizens with lower levels of education face significantly greater difficulties in acquiring issue-specific knowledge than those with higher levels of education when complex propositions are at stake. This finding yields some support to critics of direct democracy who maintain that referendums and initiatives are too demanding for ordinary citizens. However, instead of throwing the baby out with the bath water and abandoning direct legislation altogether, it may be worth considering the implementation of specific provisions that could facilitate issue-specific learning by citizens with lower levels of education. These may include investments in political education by means of target group-oriented courses and accessible voting applications about the issues at stake.

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Appendix

Table A.1: Ordered probit regression models explaining initial knowledge levels

Variables	Asylum (1)	Naturalization (2)	Corporate tax (3)
Education level	0.041*** (3.49)	0.004 (0.31)	0.008 (0.60)
Political interest	0.353*** (6.51)	0.129* (2.24)	0.246*** (4.27)
Woman	-0.049 (-0.68)	0.061 (0.74)	-0.127 (-1.55)
Age	0.018 (1.45)	-0.018 (-1.21)	-0.012 (-0.86)
Age ²	-0.0002 (-1.55)	0.0002 (1.47)	0.0002 (1.38)
Left	0.199* (2.36)	-0.105 (-1.12)	0.056 (0.59)
Moderate right	0.018 (0.21)	-0.083 (-0.80)	0.140 (1.39)
TV attention	0.011 (0.09)	0.068 (0.47)	0.025 (0.17)
Newspaper attention	0.028 (0.24)	0.083 (-0.73)	-0.153 (-1.14)
N	1035	990	990
Pseudo R ²	0.033	0.008	0.025

Note. Z-Values in parentheses.

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.

Supporters of the radical right serve as reference category for the political camp.

Journalists in Switzerland: Structures and attitudes revisited

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Abstract

It is often stated that journalism and the media are going through some fundamental changes. In this article, we present a description of the journalists in Switzerland, based on a nation-wide survey conducted in 2015. This data gives a quantitative description of journalists in Switzerland. Furthermore, this article makes comparison between various groups of journalists, for example between the different language regions in Switzerland, in order to give a differentiated picture of who the journalists are, what their working situation looks like and how they perceive their own professional role in society.

Keywords

Journalism studies, Journalistic profession, Switzerland, survey

1 Introduction

One way of understanding journalism and change in the field is to survey the main actors of journalism, the journalists themselves. Based on this assumption, journalism surveys have been conducted regularly around the world for several decades (Weaver & Wilnat, 2012, p. 1). In Switzerland, journalism surveys have taken place in 1980 (Saxer & Schanne, 1981), 1998 (Marr, Wyss, Blum, & Bonfadelli, 2001) and 2008 (Keel, 2011; Bonfadelli, Keel, Wyss, & Marr, 2012). These surveys were based on similar studies conducted in Germany (Weischenberg, Löffelholz, & Scholl, 1993, 1994) and the United States (Johnstone, Slawski, & Bowman 1976; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986, 1996). All of them were looking for answers to the research questions put forward in the initial journalism surveys in the 1970s and used ever since by researchers involved in “the Global Journalist” efforts (Weaver & Wilnat, 2012).

In 2007, a new international initiative was launched to understand how journalists were thinking and working around the world, called “Worlds of Journalism”

(Hanitzsch & Seethaler, 2009). In its first round, this international survey covered Switzerland with a sample of 100 journalists from the German-speaking part of the country. For the second round, carried out in 2015, a nation-wide approach was chosen to fully represent the various language regions of the country and the different media types (Wyss & Keel, 2010). This article is based on the data from this second round of the survey.

The main research questions are: Who are the journalists in Switzerland? What are the characteristics of their daily work? And what are their perceived roles and influences in their work?

The Swiss survey was carried out with three objectives in mind: (1) The survey should be in line with the “Worlds of Journalism” surveys elsewhere, in order to allow for comparisons across country boundaries (2) The survey should also be compatible to some extent with the Swiss surveys of 1998 and 2008, to allow for longitudinal comparisons (3) The survey should pick up new elements in the world of journalism to be able to describe the current state of the journalistic profes-



sion in Switzerland. These three objectives were often contradictory, and thus it was decided that in case of conflict, the first objective was to be prioritized, while the third objective could be met by adding additional questions to the survey (for more details, see Methodology). However, this means that the new data gathered in 2014 and 2015 can only partly be compared to the data collected in the surveys of 1998 and 2008.

In the following sections, methodological aspects relevant to this survey will be presented, followed by the results of the survey describing the Swiss journalists. We will finish with a series of conclusions about the Swiss journalists in 2015. While this research cannot show to what extent journalism is changing in general, these

findings allow for insights into journalism in Switzerland.

2 Methodology and sample

In 2015, a country-wide sample of roughly 1000 journalists was selected, based on the distribution of journalists according to the relative population of the three language regions and to the media type, as measured in the survey of 2008 (Keel, 2011).

In a first step, the editors-in-chief of 227 Swiss newsrooms were contacted in order to get their approval, as well as to raise the acceptance of the survey among the journalists. To include a wide variety of newsrooms, the number of journalists per newsroom was limited: for large news-

Table 1: Final sample compared to the sample of the 2008 survey (percentages)

		Survey from 2008 (N=2509)	Survey from 2015 (N=909)	Language Region		
				German N=660 (72.6%)	French N=176 (19.4%)	Italian N=73 (8%)
Gender	Female	35.2	38.5	40.5	36.4	26.0
Age	Up to 35	26.4	32.0	33.8	28.2	23.6
	35 to 44	31.5	28.7	28.3	29.4	30.9
	45 and older	42.1	39.3	37.9	42.4	45.5
Employment	Freelancer	18.8	7.7	9.7	2.3	2.7
Hierarchical role	Managing role (chief editor)	12.0	8.5	6.0	13.6	19.2
	Partial managing role (sectional chief etc.)	28.3	18.5	20.2	14.2	15.1
	No managing role (editor, reporter, presenter etc.)	48.4	67.7	68.9	65.9	61.6
	Trainee	11.2	5.1	4.9	6.3	4.1
Media type*	Daily newspaper		26.1	23.3	33.5	32.9
	Weekly/sunday newspaper		12.0	11.7	14.2	9.6
	Magazine		9.2	10.3	6.3	6.8
	TV		10.0	9.2	9.7	17.8
	Radio		17.7	18.9	15.3	12.3
	News agency		3.2	2.1	6.3	5.5
	Online (indep.)		5.4	6.4	1.7	5.5
	Online (of offline media title)		4.4	4.4	4.1	6.3
Mixed media types	Daily and weekly newspaper (no main)		1.8	2.4		
	Daily newspaper and online (no main)		2.8	2.9	2.8	1.4
	Other mix (no main)		7.5	8.6	4.0	5.5

Note. *Due to differences in media type categories, a comparison with 2008 is not possible.

rooms, five to eight journalists, for small newsrooms three to five journalists.

The survey design was within the framework provided by the Worlds of Journalism project. The questionnaire used a multi-layered analytical model (Weischenberg & Scholl, 1998; Reese, 2001) and thus attempted to include organizational and societal context factors, since a journalist always works and functions as an actor within a society and usually as part of an organization. However, due to the questionnaire-based research design, the source of all the acquired information remained the individual journalist.

In order to make the questionnaire more meaningful for the Swiss context, certain questions and/or answer sets had to be adapted to local circumstances. Furthermore, questions which were considered to be of high relevance for the Swiss context were added to the questionnaire. This means that the wording of questions was kept in line with the surveys of 2008 and 1998 whenever possible.

The samples of the 2008 and 1998 surveys were partly drawn from membership lists of professional journalism associations, e.g. Impressum and Comedia, partly by contacting radio and TV stations. By contacting journalists only via newsroom, the sample of the 2015 survey was likely to differ in two ways. First, the approach via newsroom made sure that only active journalists, who were employed as such or at least worked actively as freelance journalists, were included in the survey. Second, by focusing on the variety of newsrooms, smaller media titles were better represented in the sample than in the previous surveys. One side effect of this focus on a wide representation of newsrooms and journalists was a much better representation of journalists from the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, which represents 10 percent of the Swiss population.

While we were not able to get meaningful answers from all 1016 journalists that the survey sought to include, the sample of the 2015 survey can be considered the most diverse of all samples ever analyzed in a Swiss journalism survey in terms of representation of different language

regions. At the same time, the selection of journalists via media titles and newsrooms as well as the premise including only journalists that gather at least 50% of their income from journalism lead to a lower representation of freelance journalists.

3 Results

In this section, the general results of the survey are presented and discussed. Furthermore, where an aspect of the survey allows for a meaningful breakdown into various sub-groups, a more detailed look at the data is presented.

3.1 Five basic characteristics: Gender, age, education, origin, political stance

In the survey of 2008, it was assumed that the total number of active Swiss journalists at that time was roughly 10500. However, this number was mainly based on previous studies and media developments since then, plus on membership numbers of journalistic associations and unions. Thus, as was pointed out for 2008, this number was to be treated with great caution, since the definition of who is a journalist and the ways that they can be systematically counted have become less clear over the years. For 2015, it can be assumed that the number of journalists in the traditional sense has further decreased. This is based on the fact that while the number of radio and TV stations has remained more or less stable, there has been a reduction in independent newspaper titles and a reduction in staff in the newsrooms of the remaining newspapers (Lucht, 2010, p. 77). The few new titles and jobs in online media hardly compensated for those jobs lost in print.

For a general characterization of the Swiss journalists, this survey first looks at five variables which are unrelated to the journalistic profession: Gender, age, education, origin and political stance.

Gender: In 2015, 39% of the journalists who took part in the survey were women. This is a further increase in the share of female journalists in Switzerland compared to previous studies. In 1980,

Table 2: Highest educational degree of Swiss journalists (N = 871)

	Total	German-speaking Switzerland	French-speaking Switzerland	Italian-speaking Switzerland
Not completed high school	9.1%	10.4%	6.9%	2.7%
Completed high school	10.9%	12.3%	5.2%	12.3%
College/bachelor's degree or equivalent	24.0%	25.6%	21.4%	16.4%
Master's degree or equivalent	42.3%	37.0%	56.1%	54.8%
Doctorate	3.3%	3.8%	1.7%	2.7%
Some university studies, no degree	10.4%	10.9%	8.7%	11.0%

the percentage of female journalists in the two regions covered in that study was 17% (Saxer & Schanne, 1981). By 1998, this number had risen to 32%, and in 2008 to 35% (Keel, 2011). There is still a male bias in the newsrooms of newspapers (42% of all male journalists vs. 32% of all female journalists), while magazines (13% of all women vs. 7% of all men) and radios (21% of all women vs. 15% of all men) are preferred by women. This means that roughly 67% of all newspaper journalists are men, while 55% of all magazine journalists are women.

A closer look at the language regions shows that the share of women in the journalistic workforce is still largest in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Here the differences between the language regions have increased significantly compared to the sample of 2008. The lowest percentage for female journalists can be found in the Italian-speaking part, where only 26% of all journalists were female.

Age: The average age of Swiss journalists has remained stable over the years. While it went from 41 to 43 between 1998 and 2008, it was back at 41.6 for 2015. The slightly lower average age is likely to be an effect of the different sampling method: While in the 2008 survey, journalists were partly selected based on membership lists of journalistic associations, where younger journalists often don't register and journalists keep their membership even after retirement, contacting journalists via newsroom made sure the survey includes only active journalists.

While there are no significant differences of average ages between language regions, there are some differences in the

age structure between different media types. As was noted in previous studies, the journalists at private broadcasting stations tend to be much younger than journalists working for other media. This is particularly true for private radio, where the average age is about 32. Journalists working for online media also tend to be younger (37.5 for websites of offline media, 39 for online-only media), but the average age for online media is clearly higher than for those working for a private radio station. The highest average age, on the other hand, can be found among journalists working for the public service TV station (46.5). While only about 12% of all journalists working for the public broadcasting radio station are younger than 30 years old, this percentage increases to 51% when looking at private broadcasters.

Education: The third sociodemographic variable deals with education. A general overview shows that more than two thirds of the surveyed journalists in Switzerland have an academic degree. Furthermore, almost half of the academics (47%) said that they have received their degree in journalism, communications or a related field.

A more detailed look at the language regions shows some striking differences between the German and the French-/Italian-speaking part of Switzerland: The share of journalists with master's degrees in the French and Italian region is almost 20% higher as in the German-speaking part. One explanation could be that only in the French-speaking part of the country there is an academic master's program in journalism.

Table 3: Highest education in longitudinal comparison

	1998 (N=1 997)	2008 (N=2 460)	2015 (N=871)
High school or professional degree at the most	28%	27%	20%
Attended university, but no degree	18%	16%	10%
University degree	54%	57%	70%

A strict comparison with earlier surveys is difficult, because the response items for the education in earlier surveys were more detailed. However, in broad terms, a general comparison (academics vs. non academics) is still possible, and it reveals that the journalistic profession has become even more academic compared to 2008. This is in line with a finding that has been made before: in an increasingly complex profession, journalists are more and more likely to be educated at a university (Keel, 2011, p. 168 ff.).

Origin: To further describe the nature of the profession, the survey looked at the country of origin of Swiss journalists. Already in 2008, it could be shown that the immigrant part of Swiss society, which makes up for 24% in the Swiss population at the end of 2014 (Bundesamt für Statistik, 2016), is starkly under-represented among journalists. While this finding could be confirmed for 2015, the numbers indicate that the extent of the misrepresentation has diminished, compared to 2008.

Table 4: Percentage of foreigners among Swiss journalists, by language region

	Total	German-speaking Switzerland	French-speaking Switzerland	Italian-speaking Switzerland
2015	17	13	24	28
2008 (N=2 460)	9	7	12	21

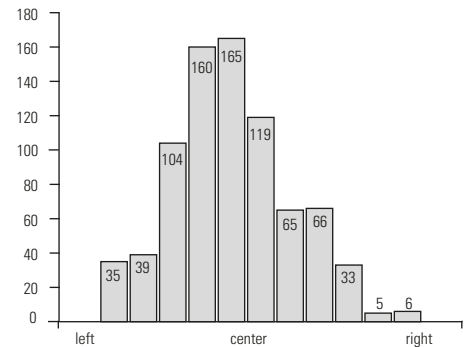
The question about the journalists’ mother tongue reveals that a large share of foreign journalists in Switzerland comes from nearby: While 13% of all journalists in the German-speaking part are not Swiss, still only 4% do not have German as their

mother tongue. This number is even higher for the French-speaking part (only 3% with a mother tongue other than French), and for the Italian-speaking part (only 1%, or three journalists in the survey sample with a mother tongue other than Italian).

Political Stance: Finally, a fifth socio-demographic variable to describe journalists deals with the political orientation. For the first time in Switzerland, this survey shows for all of Switzerland and all media types where journalists see themselves on the political spectrum.

The overall view shows that Swiss journalists, on average, are slightly to the left of the political center. On a scale from 0 (left) to 10 (right), with 5 being the center, Swiss journalists on average see themselves at 4.02.

Figure 1: Political stance of journalists in Switzerland (N = 797)



This picture applies for all language regions. As for significant differences between groups, such a difference can be found between women, who tend to be more left (3.6), and men (4.2). No statistically significant difference can be found

between journalists working for private media (4.0), which include both private broadcasters and print media, and journalists working for the public broadcasting company (3.8). This result both confirms a cliché and tempers it: journalists consider themselves to be slightly progressive, but not as much as it is commonly assumed.

3.2 Working situation

An economic crisis in a sector of the economy is often associated with deteriorating working conditions, which manifest themselves in a larger share of temporary and part-time jobs. With the media facing economic difficulties, it could be expected that more journalists work in temporary positions and part-time, and that the need to take on other paid jobs would be higher.

The percentage of journalists working in temporary positions is 6% in 2015. Temporary employment among female journalists was considerably higher, at 8%, while it was at only 4% for men.

Furthermore, in 2015, 57% of all journalists worked full-time, which is less compared to other countries in the survey as the country reports on the worlds of journalism website show. Germany for example has 74.5% and Austria 77% full-time employment (Hanitzsch, Steindl, & Lauerer, 2016; Lohmann & Seethaler, 2016).

A look at gender differences again shows that the share of women working full-time is much lower, at 43%, than that of men (66%). It is thus no surprise that more women stated that they had other paid jobs (24%) compared to men (20%).

An important aspect of the working situation in any profession is the level of the salary. In a deteriorating working environment, one would expect diminishing wages over time. However, the general comparison shows that wages have barely changed over the last twenty years. While real wages diminished from 1998 to 2008 due to inflation, the wage level in journalism over the last seven years can be described as stable, both in nominal and in real terms.

There are, however, the same differences between certain groups, as there have been in the past. First, there is a clear difference in salary between men and women: Women remain over-represented in the lower salary classes, while men are over-represented in the higher ones amongst journalists who earn 6000 Swiss francs and more. This remains true even if only regular editors without leadership roles are compared.

Second, there is a difference between the language regions when it comes to the distribution of salary classes: Journalists in

Figure 2: Percentages of salary classes among Swiss journalists (N for 2015=859, N for 2008= 1788, N for 1998= 1988)

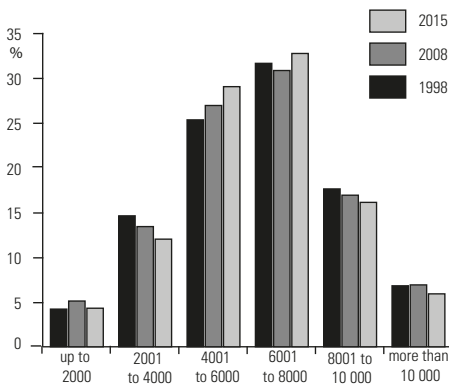


Figure 3: Share of journalists in salary classes according to gender (only senior editors, producers, reporters and news writers; N= 551)

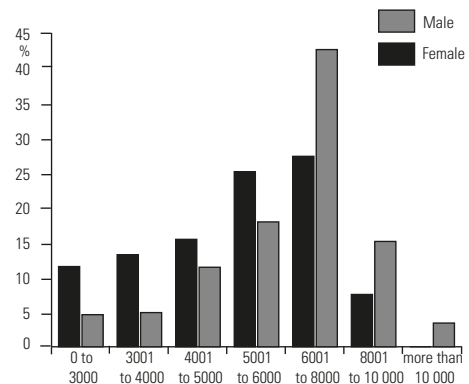
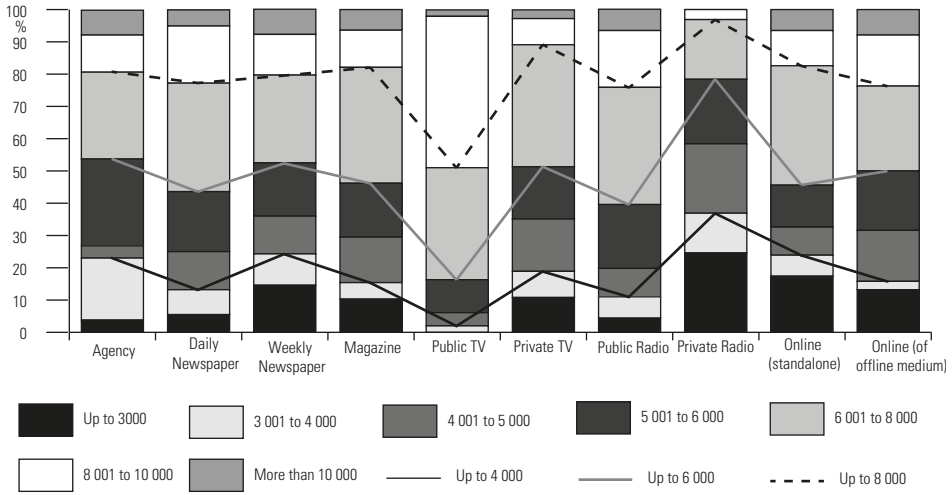


Figure 4: Salary according to media type (N = 756)



the German-speaking part are over-represented in the higher salary classes, compared to the colleagues in the French- and Italian-speaking regions.

The most striking difference, however, can be found between media types. As the following diagram with stacked columns shows, media types such as private radio or private TV have a much larger share of journalists who have a salary up to 6 000 Swiss francs than journalists from other media types. At the same time, journalists working for the public TV station have hardly any journalists in the lower salary classes; half the journalists there are in the salary classes of 8 000 Swiss francs and above.

3.3 Editorial organization

The logical way to organize a newsroom has typically been according to topics, or beats. This allows a journalist within a team to specialize in his or her field. However, this organizational logic has been under pressure recently, as newsroom capacities are reduced and journalists are more often forced to cover all kinds of topics. On the other hand, emerging convergent newsroom structures have shifted the focus of the organization away from outlet-specific structures and towards a focus

on topics or issues, which would support a strengthening of issue-related structures.

The 2015 data show that slightly less than half the journalists work on a specific beat (48%), while a small majority (52%) work on various topics and subjects. There is no significant difference between language regions or gender. However, there are significant differences between different media types:

Table 5 clearly shows that an organization along specific topics, i.e. in beats, is often found in newsrooms of the public

Table 5: Percentage of journalists working for a specific beat, according to media type (N = 901)

Work on a specific beat	Percentage
Total	48%
News Agency	86%
Public service radio (only)	58%
Daily newspaper	52%
Print magazine	52%
Public service TV (only)	51%
Weekly newspaper	47%
Online (of offline media)	43%
Online (Stand-alone)	35%
Private TV	24%
Private radio	12%

broadcasting company. News agencies are the only media type with an even higher percentage of journalists that work on a specific beat. Print media and online media follow in third and fourth position. Private radio and TV are at the other end of the spectrum: less than a quarter of all journalists working for private TV stations, and only 12% of private radio journalists, are assigned to a specific beat.

Another differentiation can be made in terms of gender. As previous studies have shown, there is a gender bias when it comes to the question on which topics female and male journalists work (Keel, 2011, p. 149). Men are still over-represented when it comes to the “hard news” – politics and economics –, while women are more likely to work in culture, society/lifestyle, and local news. The most uneven distribution, however, is still found in sports.

Table 6: Distribution of journalists between beats, according to gender (for those journalists working in newsrooms with dedicated beats; in percent; N = 430)

	Female	Male
Politics	26%	36%
International news	2%	3%
Domestic news/politics	13%	18%
News, information	11%	16%
Local news	11%	10%
Economics/finance	10%	13%
Culture	14%	11%
Sports	1%	15%
Society/lifestyle/other	37%	14%

3.4 Role perception

In journalism studies, it is commonly assumed that the understanding of one’s role in society has an impact on the work of journalists (Weischenberg, 1994, p. 241). Therefore, it is relevant to look at how journalists see themselves. The question of whether or not it is possible for a journalist to fulfill this role remains open. However, the findings give an indication as to how

a journalist ideally sees his or her role and the role of journalism in society.

As Weaver pointed out in 2008, the understanding of one’s role as journalist is characterized by stability, rather than change. The current data for Switzerland support this finding. The overall ranking of importance is in line with earlier surveys, and it shows little variation across language boundaries in Switzerland.

In the 2008 survey, three types of journalists emerged from a factor analysis of preferences for certain roles: first, the “objective reporter”; second, the “activist critic and commentator”; and third, the “audience-oriented journalist.”

In the 2015 survey, a different and more detailed list of role understanding was used. This leads to the emergence of different journalistic role types with the help of a factor analysis. The analysis verified that the typical roles still exist, but not all variables indicated a clear tendency towards one factor. These questions didn’t show an affiliation to one of the five defined types and was therefore labeled “no clear type.” While the objective reporter and the audience-oriented journalist could be identified again, the activist role from the earlier study (2008) splits itself into two different types according to the definition of the factor dimensions (which emerge from the common elements of the matching questions): The political journalist, who criticizes those in power and thus enables people to participate in democracy, and the social activist, whose focus lies more on the education of the audience to promote social change, emphasizing cultural diversity. Another role type to be found was the audience-oriented journalist, who sees his role mainly in the provision of entertaining content, which attempts to attract the largest possible audience. Finally, based on new role understanding used in the 2015 survey, a fifth type emerged, which can be labelled “state-friendly,” and which characterizes itself as being close to the state, supporting government policies.

A comparison of these types with the importance given to each role shows a clear pattern: roles associated with the

Table 7: Importance of different journalistic roles according to journalist type (scale: 5 = extremely important to 1 = not important; N = 908)

Item	Value	Role Type
Report things as they are	4.53	Objective reporter
Be a detached observer	4.26	Objective reporter
Provide analysis of current affairs	4.21	No clear type
Provide information people need to make political decisions	3.79	Political activist
Let people express their views	3.54	No clear type
Tell stories about the world	3.48	No clear type
Promote tolerance and cultural diversity	3.45	Social activist
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	3.34	Audience-oriented
Monitor and scrutinize political leaders	3.25	Political activist
Motivate people to participate in political activity	3.24	Social activist
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	3.20	No clear type
Provide entertainment and relaxation	3.13	Audience-oriented
Educate the audience	3.11	No clear type
Monitor and scrutinize business	3.07	Political activist
Advocate for social change	2.60	Social activist
Set the political agenda	2.59	Political activist
Be an adversary of the government	2.56	Political activist
Influence public opinion	2.52	No clear type
Support national development	2.26	No clear type
Support government policy	1.50	State-friendly
Convey a positive image of political leadership	1.29	State-friendly

objective reporter are the most important ones in the eyes of the journalists, while those related to the state-friendly-journalist type are seen as least important.

When comparing language regions, different journalistic cultures can be detected: German-speaking journalists are more audience-oriented than their colleagues in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland. On the other hand, journalists in the French- and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland see themselves as more political than journalists in the German-speaking part.

3.5 Perception of influence

Ideally, journalism is independent. It should be able to function without either economic or interests influencing their work. At the same time, journalism does not take place in a vacuum. It is part of society and serves various stakeholder groups’ needs and expectations. In order to understand what needs, expectations and interests influence journalists and their work, journalists were asked the

question: What influences you and your work as journalist. More specifically, they were confronted with 27 possible sources of influence.

A factor analysis shows that there are five categories of factors which influence journalistic work, according to the answers in the survey: 1) factors related to the media system and the power relations between the media and other institutions of society, such as politicians, economic leaders or other pressure groups; 2) internal factors, such as Editorial supervisors, peers, or managers of one’s media organization; 3) external audience-related factors, including feedback from friends and from journalists from other media; 4) economic factors, such as advertising or profit considerations, and 5) resource-related factors, such as time or other resources to gather news, or information access. Some of the variables did not indicate a specific factor and were defined as “not categorized.”

As could be seen for role understanding, there is also a clear order of relevance

Table 8: Average assessment of relevance of sources of influence (5 = very influential, 1 = least influential; N = 896)

Source of Influence	Relevance	Category
Journalism ethics	3.68	Could not be categorized
Time limits	3.55	Resources
Personal values and beliefs	3.51	Could not be categorized
Information access	3.49	Resources
Availability of news-gathering resources	3.47	Resources
Editorial policy	3.02	Could not be categorized
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	2.93	Internal
Relationships with news sources	2.87	Could not be categorized
Peers on the staff	2.82	Internal
Media laws and regulation	2.73	Could not be categorized
Feedback from the audience	2.54	External audience
Competing news organizations	2.50	External audience
Audience research and data	2.45	Could not be categorized
Friends, acquaintances and family	2.30	External audience
Public relations	2.24	could not be categorized
Managers of your news organization	2.22	Internal
Colleagues in other media	2.17	External audience
Profit expectations	2.12	Economics
Pressure groups	2.00	Power
Advertising considerations	1.97	Economics
Business people	1.89	Power
Politicians	1.87	Power
Owners of your news organization	1.86	Internal
Government officials	1.75	Power
The military, police and state security	1.69	Could not be categorized
Censorship	1.50	Could not be categorized
Religious considerations	1.39	Could not be categorized

attributed to the five different sources of influence. The internal sources of influence are clearly seen as most important, as they cluster on top of the table, while those related to political power or other pressure groups are seen as least influential. This confirms the thesis that while journalism in Western democracies is under great pressure from various sides and actors, political aspects and actors usually exert the smallest influence on journalism (Czeppek, 2010).

3.6 Job satisfaction

The last journalists' survey in Switzerland took place just about when the crisis in the media, namely the print media, had started to be felt. Despite the starting talk of crisis, back then, 73% of all journalists

still said that they would recommend journalism as a profession, down from 77% in 1998. This number has remained steady at 74% in 2015. Interestingly, this view is shared from the top of the editorial hierarchy to the bottom, from editors-in-chief (80%) to the interns (67%), the only exception being "news writers," most of whom wouldn't recommend the journalistic profession (only 42% would recommend it). There are differences in attitude between journalists in the three language regions (around 72% who recommend the profession in the German-speaking part, 78% in the French-speaking part and 84% in the Italian-speaking region). Also media types seem to have an influence on the perception of the desirability of the profession – journalists working for print media rec-

commend the journalistic profession less (68%) than those working for radio (83%) or TV (84%), no matter whether the company they work for is private or public. In addition, older age groups recommend the profession less often (69%).

4 Discussion

Although the representation of women in journalism gets stronger with the years, still 61% of our sample are men. The smaller share of women is especially true for higher positions, which again can partly be explained by the lack of highly experienced women. The older journalists are, the larger the share of men. The overall average age is 41.6 years and there are only few significant differences according to for example gender and region. One of the main differences according to age appears in media types. Younger journalists tend to work for private radios and online while older ones for the public service. Typically more stable working conditions in the public sector and the economy driven lower pressure to higher cheap labor in the private sector are likely explanations. While the percentage of highly educated journalists is steadily growing, the amount of foreign journalists is still under-represented in our sample, though higher than in earlier surveys. Lack of incentives and the language barrier might be possible explanations. Furthermore, the often-stated assumption that journalists are often politically left-leaning is indeed visible, but not extreme. On average, journalists see themselves slightly left to the political center.

The working situation is still tense as salaries haven't changed much between 1998, 2008 and now 2015 (Keel, 2011). The difficult financial situation applies especially to journalists in the private sector, as they are still earning significantly less than their colleagues working for public service media.

As far as the editorial organization is concerned, some elements seem to have changed in recent years, especially according to media type and beat. A large

share of journalists in our sample work for different media types and in different beats. 12.1% of the interviewed journalists cannot define their main media type because they either work in a convergent newsroom or produce to equal extent for different outlets.

Unchanged figures can be observed for the role perceptions as well as the influences. Our Swiss journalists strongly identify themselves with the objective reporter and feel the pinch on their daily work from resource-related influences like time or information access.

Nevertheless they are mostly satisfied with their job and are intrinsically motivated carrying on with their profession. And despite harshening circumstances and increasing pressure, 74% would still recommend journalism.

5 Conclusions

Journalism surveys often end with a description of the typical journalist. However, there is no typical journalist in Switzerland. To say that the typical Swiss journalist was male would ignore the fact that more and more journalists are female. To say that the typical journalist works for a daily newspaper would ignore the fact that more and more journalists are not working for one media title anymore, but supply on- and offline channels with their work.

Instead, it can be said that while the data from this journalism survey reflects some changes that the journalistic profession is going through, it draws a picture that still resembles that of 2008. Two reasons are likely to contribute to this: 1) In the Worlds of Journalism project, of which this is part, it was agreed that the objects of analysis were the journalists working for journalistic print products, for radio, TV and journalistic news websites. These journalists can be seen as the core of the professional field of journalism. It is one finding of this survey that in this core, there is a lot of stability – maybe not quantitatively, when it comes to the number of journalists, but qualitatively: little change

in terms of sociodemographic. However, this leaves out the fringes of the professional field – the bloggers, the journalistic satirists, the political talk show hosts, the special-interest websites, etc. To what extent journalism is changing in these fields cannot be measured with this data. Considering these fringes could show a different understanding of the journalistic profession. 2) The findings in journalist surveys are always based on what journalists tell the researchers. These answers may sometimes be more of a reflection of what should be or what one would like it to be, and not so much what actually is. What has been said in earlier surveys still applies: Journalism surveys of this type probably measure a shared understanding of professional norms more than the actual situation of journalists and journalism (Keel, 2011, p. 267 ff.).

However the data still provides a comprehensive picture of professional field of journalism in Switzerland in 2015. To fully understand the various actors involved in journalism and to holistically depict the field it might be helpful in future surveys to especially keep methodological approaches and the questionnaire unaltered but also to broaden the view and look beyond what is generally considered as “the Swiss journalist.”

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Thematic Section

Thematic Section:
Beyond the Myth of
Journalistic Storytelling

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Beyond the myth of journalistic storytelling: Why a narrative approach to journalism falls short

Guest Editorial Committee

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Despite the journalism education mantra to *think story*, news media accounts are far more than sheer storytelling. They are more about the punchline first than suspense, more about fragments of information than comprehensive storylines, and more about story-selling than *telling*. News reporters do not tell stories, as such – but utilize their own narrative routines that evoke stories in people’s minds and in the public sphere. This thematic section scrutinizes the widespread storytelling approaches and techniques that journalists are taught and offers fresh and focused insights into narrative practices in the newsroom.

News writing is not oriented towards telling entire stories in the sense of classical narrative genres. Instead, it systematically blends linguistic practices of narration and argumentation, of description and explanation, of voicing, inference, enregisterment, intertextuality, and information hierarchy. Stories take an additional life during their appropriation, when the addressees process – or contest – journalists’ communicational offers in order to make sense of them. As complex narratives, they become visible only in the follow-up communication and response to news. Social media is a modern-day example of this.

In consequence, public storytelling crucially depends on public sense-making practices as much as on journalists communicating information. From an empirical perspective, research into public storytelling, therefore, aims at explaining why news-making and news writing practices are likely to evoke this public co-construction of stories. Such analytical insights shed light on practical questions

of storytelling. As the authors of the papers in this thematic section argue, in a comprehensive public storytelling framework, the key question for news journalists is not how to tell a story – but how to connect with people’s persistent socioculturally reinforced narrative frames in order to be understood.

Gilles Merminod’s contribution opens the thematic section by addressing journalistic understanding of the activity of *telling a story*. Researchers and journalists agree that news has a narrative nature, but what *story* really means and how a story comes into being in journalistic practice remains unclear. After an overview of existing narrative approaches to news, Merminod argues for a culture-bound definition of story, one that can be discovered only by in-depth ethnographic and linguistic analyses of narrative practices in real newsrooms. This is what he does by analyzing a case study in a French-speaking broadcast newsroom in Switzerland. In this setting, the word *histoire* (French for *story*) takes on different meanings – both during the discussion between a journalist and a cutter preparing an item and in the journalist’s meta-reflection on his work. At various stages, *histoire* is used to refer to a genre, a set of information and a semiotic product. Merminod’s study helps us understand the use of narrative lexicon in the newsroom and rethink well-established beliefs about the narrative nature of news.

The article by Karl Niklaus Renner enriches the Thematic Section with the perspective of literary studies and its possible applications to journalism research. He wishes to find out what challenges journalists encounter when telling stories



that need to fit the criteria of topicality, truthfulness, and objectivity. To this aim, Renner analyzes narrative reporting of the dissertation plagiarism case of the former German Minister of Defense von Guttenberg.

Marta Zampa and Daniel Perrin start from the idea that what journalists believe to be stories are actually incomplete narrative pieces – fragments of narration, to be complemented and completed by the audience during the uptake process. They argue that this incompleteness, besides being related to material limitations, is a rhetorical strategy: leaving already shared information implicit keeps the audience attentive and leads it to agree with the viewpoint expressed in the articles. To provide evidence of the fragmentary nature of journalistic storytelling, Zampa and Perrin analyze the structure of two editorials and two reports in a Swiss Italian-language newspaper. This data is triangulated with results from analyzing journalists' reflection on their writing activity. The results provide evidence that the interplay of narration and argumentation in newswriting as relevant drivers of dynamics and complexity in public discourse deserves precise analyses, which requires interdisciplinary collaboration of production, product, and reception research at the intersection of argumentation and narration theory.

Wibke Weber, Martin Nils Engebretsen and Helen Kennedy deal with a new form of journalism derived from the technological evolution: data journalism. They especially consider whether data visualizations, i.e., “multimodal hybrid artifacts that weave together numbers, words, images and design into a coherent whole” (Weber, Engebretsen & Kennedy, this volume), count as stories. The authors analyzed 60 interviews with journalists, designers, developers and newsroom leaders from 26 European newsrooms to identify what they believe data stories to be, what characteristics they ascribe to this kind of storytelling, and how storytelling in data journalism can enrich narrative as a research field. Their findings demonstrate that data stories convey a message by showing it,

combining the modes of narration, explanation and argumentation, or by enabling users to choose their own story while exploring the data by themselves. Therefore, if we wish to address these new journalistic products as stories, we need to update traditional understandings of stories.

Saying “story” in the newsroom. Towards a linguistic ethnography of narrative lexicon in broadcast news

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Abstract

Despite a general agreement on the narrative nature of news, the question of what it means for the journalists to tell a story is usually taken for granted, while the analysis of the actual narrative practices in the newsrooms often remains shallow. A way of overcoming this state of affairs is to have a look at the narrative practices and norms in the newsroom. On the one hand, one can track the sites of narrative engagement in the newsroom, where journalists are telling or handling stories in order to achieve their work of making news. On the other hand, one can track the metacommentaries that foreground a narrative orientation to news, when journalists evaluate storying choices or when they use a narrative-related lexicon. This paper explores the latter aspect by tracking the uses of the word « histoire » (story) in the newsroom of a Swiss Public Broadcasting Corporation. The paper identifies and analyses three different meanings of « histoire »: « histoire » as a genre, « histoire » as a set of information and « histoire » as a semiotic product. As a reflexive means, « histoire » enables the media practitioners to navigate the very practical tasks entailed by the production of the multimodal artefact that a television news item is.

Keywords

News, narrative, story, histoire, metalanguage, formulations, newsroom, small story research, linguistic ethnography

1 News, stories and narrative

In communication and media studies as much as in journalism education, news and stories appear to be interchangeable notions. One can explain this partly because news and stories are both the result of verbal practices dealing with “what happens,” in terms of current or past events. The similarity of both news and stories has led scholars of diverse disciplines – such as linguistics, communication and sociology – to use the narrative conceptual apparatus to study news. However, despite a general agreement about the narrative nature of news, the question of what it means for the journalists to tell a story is usually taken for granted, while the analysis of the actual newsroom practices related to narration often remains shallow.

Another motivation for a narrative approach to news lies in the use of the word “story” in the newsrooms (Tuchman, 1976;

Bell, 1991), which would suggest the journalists’ narrative orientation to the world.

The journalist’s work is focused on the getting and writing of stories. This is reflected in the snatches of phrases in which newsroom business is conducted. A good journalist “gets good stories” or “knows a good story.” A critical news editor asks: “Is this really a story?” “Where’s the story in this?” (Bell, 1991, p. 147)

Nevertheless, in such cases, the meaning of “story” is taken for granted, without questioning what the journalists are doing when they are saying this word or what it really means in its context of use. Additionally, if “story” seems to be used in newsrooms that are English-speaking, one might very well wonder whether or not the German word *Geschichte*, the French word *histoire* or the Italian word *storia* are in use in the journalists’ daily routines and, if so, to what extent.



To address such concerns, this paper is divided into three parts. First of all, it sketches some of the main issues raised by the study of narrative and offers a brief overview of the current narrative approaches to news. Then, it examines how the word «histoire» (story in French) is used by a journalist during the production of a single broadcast news item. Finally, it discusses and indicates some aspects that deserve further investigation.

1.1 Narrative and narrative approaches

Narrative is a fickle notion “that resists straightforward and agreed-upon definitions and conceptualizations” (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012, p. 1). Depending on research traditions ranging from narratology and folklore studies to linguistics, philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology and even medicine (Mishler, 1995; Fludernik, 2005; Hyvärinen, 2006; Herman, 2009; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012), a narrative can be considered as a *semiotic product* (a text, a multimodal artefact), a *mental construct* (a mode, a cognitive schema, a way of making sense and apprehending reality) or a *communicative practice* (a social process, a resource for interaction). Because of this, a full-fledged¹ or prototypical narrative has been diversely defined as “one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred” (Labov & Waletzky, 1967, p. 95), “a mediation between man and the world, between man and man, between man and himself” (Ricœur, 1991, p. 26–27) as well as “a representation [...] about a structured time-course of particularized events [...] such that they introduce some sort of disruption or disequilibrium into a storyworld involving human or human-like agents [...] affected by the occurrences at issue” (Herman, 2009, p. XII). Whether it is as a mode of communication or a mode of representation, a narrative deals with time and space, events and actions,

human agency and experience, continuity and change.

Narrative studies have generally focused on the universal features of stories rather than on the culturally bound ones (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012). According to Herman (2009), narrative studies have underlined three diverse but related aspects of stories: *events sequencing*, *world depiction* and *rendering of experience*². One can consider the case of a story about people surviving a plane crash in Indonesia to illustrate this three-way split. The studies interested in the ordering of events would examine, for instance, whether the narrative follows the timeline (by representing the crash and then the people fleeing) or not (by mentioning the results before the cause). The studies focusing on world-making could study if the narrative depicts solely the immediate context of the crash (for instance, the plane burning) or if it locates the event in a master narrative (about recurrent crashes in Indonesia, for instance). The studies focusing on the depiction of experience could examine if the narrative represents the singular experience of a passenger fleeing or that of a collective.

Apart from key issues, narrative studies have provided a series of theoretical notions (see Herman, 2007; Hühn et al., 2014). These notions relate to *text organisation* (e.g. story/discourse; kernel/satellites; orientation, complication, resolution), *grammar of events* (e.g. cause, consequence; plot, closure; transformation; character, settings) and *logic of actions* (e.g. agent, motive, intention, goal,

2 Another way of summarizing narrative studies' key issues is suggested by Luginbühl, Schwab & Burger (2004) building on the work of Genette (1998): «Zentrale Fragen der Narrationstheorie sind die nach den Instanzen, die über ein Ereignis berichten, also nach den Erzählern; nach den Figuren, die in einer Erzählung vorkommen und zu Wort kommen oder nicht; nach der zeitlichen Ordnung der Erzählung, nach den Perspektiven, aus welchen das Geschehen erzählt wird; nach dem Modus der Erzählung (Distanz der Erzählung zur Geschichte, Blickwinkel auf die Geschichte)» (Luginbühl, Schwab & Burger 2004, p. 17–18).

1 But see the point made by Georgakopoulou (2007) about the ideologies surrounding the idea of proper narrative.

means) but also to *communication* (e.g. narrator/narratee; fact/fiction; focalization; evaluation; configuration) and *genre theories* (e.g. myth, tale, novel, anecdote, joke). The narrative descriptive apparatus has been used to study news, especially hard news – the newswriters’ “staple product” (Bell, 1991, p. 14) – and, as accurately underlined by Montgomery (2007), mainly written news. Nevertheless, if some studies have been explicitly based on narrative theories (e.g. Bell, 1991; Luginbühl, Schwab & Burger, 2004), others have only loosely referred to them or have drawn on our common understanding of what a story is (e.g. Tuchman, 1976; Schudson, 1982).

1.2 Narrative approaches to news

Apart from perspectives that have considered narrative journalism as a specific genre emphasizing literary aesthetics, creativity and authorhood (see Dardenne, 2005; Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2009; Vanoost, 2013), narrative approaches to news have mainly addressed two issues: the textualisation of news items relating to narrative structures and the identification of news events relating to narrative frames.

Regarding the textualisation of news, studies have focused either on the analysis of isolated texts or on the analysis of chains of texts. The studies analysing isolated texts or groups of texts isolated from each other have described how news items are organized regarding the event they cover (Barthes, 1964; Van Dijk, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1988a, 1988b; Bell, 1991, 1994, 1998; Jamet & Jannet, 1999; Ungerer, 2001; Montgomery, 2005, 2007; Adam, 2011). Drawing mainly on structural linguistics, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, these approaches have generally distinguished news stories from “personal/face-to-face/everyday” stories, and have tended to compare the former with the latter, as illustrated by Allan Bell’s studies making use of the work of Labov on oral narratives of personal experience:

In news, the abstract is obligatory not optional. Orientating and evaluative material occurs in a similar fashion to personal narratives,

but tends to concentrate in the first sentence. The central action of the news story is told in non-chronological order, with result presented first followed by a complex recycling through various time zones down through the story. (Bell, 1994, p. 107)

As for the studies examining the chains of texts, they have described the narrative dynamics that arise from text to text when covering developing or iterative events (Baroni, Revaz & Pahud, 2006; Revaz & Baroni, 2007; Revaz, Pahud & Baroni, 2007, 2008, 2009; Baroni, 2016; Revaz, 2009a, 2009b). More precisely, these approaches have been twofold: on the one hand, they have focused on how textual chains are sensitive to the development of events; on the other hand, they have worked on how the upstream and downstream of events are depicted in single texts.

The studies concerning the identification of news events can also be divided into two trends. On the one hand, some studies have analysed how stories frame news events (Tuchman, 1976, 1978; Bird & Dardennes, 1988, 2009; Lule, 2001). On the other hand, there are studies that have looked at how news participates in the creation of an “abstract text” about particular events and enables the strengthening or the countering of shared master narratives (Mouillaud & Tétu, 1989; Tétu, 2000; Dubied, 2004; Arquenbourg, 2005; Lits, 2008). Both trends have drawn on diverse notions, such as *frame* (Goffman, 1974), *typification* (Schütz, 1953), *myth* (Malinowski, 1926; Barthes, 1957; Eliade, 1963; Lévi-Strauss, 1964, 1967, 1968, 1971) and *configuration* (Ricœur, 1983, 1984, 1985). Originating from various traditions, such notions have been used to grasp what underpins the narrative organisation of the interpretation of events in terms of causality and consequence, agents and circumstances, motives and intentions, purposes and responsibilities, values and ideologies. Most of these notions favour an atemporal vision of narrative, understood as a network of relations between different parameters (cause, consequence, agent, etc.), similar to the Greimasian actantial model (Greimas, 1966) that suggests a log-

ic of narrative action relating to a network of relationships between actantial functions. The Ricœurian notion of *configuration* nevertheless entails a temporal feature that takes into account the changing nature of events, the idea that a narrative is oriented toward its end, its closure.

Both the textualisation and identification approaches have underlined some crucial aspects of news, such as a preference for a textualisation of events that presents consequences first (emphasizing the role of a particular part of news texts, the *lead*) and the pervasiveness of prototypical storylines. However, as illuminating as they are, these approaches have some limitations when the matter at issue is to know whether or not journalists are telling stories. Firstly, these approaches have mainly focused on events rather than on the rendering of experience or on world-making. Secondly, these approaches have mainly studied the final product and do not enable us to apprehend the narrative practices that participate in the process of news production. Thirdly, if newsroom ethnography has shed light on what happens backstage, the lack of linguistic and fine-grained interactional analysis prevents us from understanding precisely how, when and why news events are or are not identified relating to narrative frames as well as when, how and why news items are or are not designed as narrative structures.

A way of overcoming these limitations is to have a look at the narrative practices and norms in the newsroom. To do so, we have two loci of study. On the one hand, we can track the sites of narrative engagement in the newsroom, places where journalists move into narrative activities, where they are telling or handling stories in order to achieve their work of making news (Perrin, 2013; Merminod & Burger, forthcoming). On the other hand, we can track the metacommentaries that foreground a narrative orientation to news, when journalists evaluate storying choices (Perrin, 2011; Merminod, 2016) or when they use a narrative-related lexicon. The paper aims to explore this latter aspect

by tracking the use of the word «histoire» (story) in a newsroom.

1.3 Data and methods

1.3.1 Data

To examine the use of the word «histoire» by media practitioners, the paper draws on a data set collected in the newsrooms of the Swiss Public Broadcasting Corporation in 2007 within the Research Project *Idée Suisse*³. The data set gathers interviews with journalists, computer logs of their daily writing activities and audio-visual recordings of news production processes, such as editorial conferences, writing sessions and cutting-room activities. During their fieldwork, Perrin and colleagues followed several journalists, each one during one week, day-to-day, from the morning to the evening.

The paper focuses on the case of a Swiss-French television's journalist (CA), who was followed from Monday March 5 to Friday March 9. More precisely, it focuses on two events: a preliminary interview with CA on Monday and a session of collaborative work on Wednesday involving CA and a cutter. In the preliminary interview, which lasts 45 minutes, the journalist shares his professional credo with a researcher. The session of collaborative work recorded on Wednesday documents the way the journalist and the cutter are co-producing a news item about a plane crash. The recording lasts approximately 1 hour 45 minutes.

These 2 hours and 30 minutes of recording see 9 instances of the word «histoire», which were uttered by the journalist but not by the researcher or the cutter. It is worth mentioning that, during the three morning editorial meetings (8:30, 9:15 and 9:30) that preceded the co-production of the plane crash news item, the word «his-

3 Funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, the research project *Idée suisse: Sprachpolitik, Sprachnorm und Sprachpraxis am Beispiel der SRG SSR (2005–2007)* was part of a National Research Program, *Language Diversity and Linguistic Competence in Switzerland* (NRP 56). See Perrin et al. (2008) for a summary.

toire» was not uttered, at least not in relation to this particular news item.

1.3.2 Methods

The paper adopts the vantage point of Linguistic Ethnography (Rampton, Maybin & Roberts, 2015) and, more precisely, that of a linguistic ethnographic approach to news production (e.g. Van Hout & Jacobs, 2008; Cotter, 2010; News Text & Talk Research Group, 2011; Perrin, 2013; Van Hout, 2015; Jacobs, 2017; Burger 2018). It combines the insights of an ethnographic knowledge of what happens in a newsroom with a fine-grained linguistic analysis of actual news-making processes and news products.

Drawing on the work of Stokoe and Edwards (2006) on story formulations, the paper tracks the instances of the word «histoire» with a keen interest in “the sequential organization of such formulations – their occasioning, action-orientation and uptake –” (Stokoe & Edwards, 2006, p. 58) as well as “their action-orientation and the way they are shaped for the occasions of their production” (Stokoe & Edwards, 2006, p. 56). Nevertheless, as claimed by Deppermann, “[e]thnographic background is needed to discover how interactional histories are reflected by the choice of a formulation, [...] how institutional agendas and professional knowledge are indexed by formulations” (Deppermann, 2011, p. 120). The analysis of story formulations is thus led by two questions: “why that now?” (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) and “what is it that’s going on here?” (Goffman, 1974; also Scollon, 1998). The former helps us to take into account the sequential emergence of the word «histoire», the latter enables us to grasp the social practices that converge during its moment of emergence.

Because we assume that “metalinguage can work at an ideological level, and influence people’s actions and priorities in a wide range of ways” (Jaworski, Coupland & Galasinski, 2004, p. 3), our examination of story formulations is not only carried out to study the situated functions of these formulations in the newsroom but also to apprehend their social meanings.

By doing so, the paper’s reflection is more broadly anchored in the Small Stories Research, which aims, among other things, to “document local theories of what constitutes a narrative and what the role of narrative is in [a] specific communit[y]” (Georgakopoulou, 2007, p. 21), by “argu[ing] for the inclusion of emic criteria in definitions of narrative as complementing and even overriding etic criteria” (Georgakopoulou, 2015, p. 260).

2 Saying «histoire» in a television newsroom

The case study is divided into two parts. Firstly, it analyses the journalist’s usage of «histoire» to reflect on broadcast news production during the preliminary interview. Secondly, it examines the journalist’s usage of «histoire» to produce a broadcast news item in the physical space of a cutting-room.

2.1 Saying «histoire» to reflect on broadcast news production

The first excerpt comes from the preliminary interview between journalist CA and the researcher. Prompted by the researcher to talk about the goals of a TV news bulletin, CA mentions the risks of drifts relating to the editorial choices. The researcher asks him to follow up on this (1.1). First, the journalist talks about the non-coverage of iterative bad news, such as never-ending armed conflicts⁴. Then, he describes another type of drift: favouring good news at the end of the news bulletin (1.2–7).

In the excerpt, the journalist first suggests a characterisation of good news (1.4–7), and then gives an example of good news (1.8–14). «Histoire» appears twice (1.5 and 1.6) in a chain of reformulations, ending with a relative clause that specifies the function of such stories (1.6: “which are appealing”). In both cases, «histoire» is associated with derogatory qualifiers (the adjectives *petit* and *croquignolesque*, the suffix *-ette*) as well as realized by a plural indefinite article (*des*) that enables a

4 This is not transcribed in excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1: “Good news, [...] charming anecdotes, even nice stories” (March 5, 2007)^a

1 R	Tu peux donner un exemple? [...] Ce serait quoi une dérive? <i>Can you give me an example? [...] What is a drift? [...]</i>
2 J	Une dérive possible aussi, je dirais, c'est : <i>A potential drift also, I would say, this is:</i>
3	surtout dans les queues de journaux, enfin, les fins de journal, <i>especially in the tails of bulletin, well, at the ends of bulletin,</i>
4	il faut des images un peu de bonnes nouvelles, des images, <i>You need to have images of good news, images,</i>
5	des petites historiettes, <i>charming anecdotes,</i>
6	voire des histoires croquingnolesques , qui plaisent. <i>even nice stories, which are appealing.</i>
7	Voilà. Alors, avec des dérives, quoi. <i>That's it. So, with drifts, well.</i>
8	Je ne sais pas. <i>I don't know.</i>
9	Dernièrement, on m'a demandé de faire un truc sur une femme <i>Recently, I have been asked to do a thing about a woman</i>
10	qui avait chanté pendant soixante heures en Corée, <i>who had sung for 60 hours in Korea,</i>
11	dans un karaoké en Corée du Sud, <i>in a karaoke in South Korea,</i>
12	parce que son mari avait le cancer, <i>because her husband had cancer,</i>
13	enfin, pour lui donner du courage. <i>well, to keep his spirits up.</i>
14	Bon, là-dessus, eh bien, moi j'ai quelques doutes sur ce choix-là. <i>Well, about it, well, I have some doubts about such a choice.</i>

R=Researcher; J=Journalist.

^a Due to the vast amount of data and the topic at issue, the transcripts do not display all the phenomena observed in talk-in-interaction (e.g. rising/falling intonations, hesitations or overlaps). Our data is originally in French. We provide an interlinear translation in English. Apart from excerpts 4 and 8, we use the following conventions: the speaker's name is indicated on the left; the numbers on the left refer to the transcribed lines; *word*=the speaker is reading; (...)=pause; [...] =data not transcribed; ((word))=description; xxx=inaudible talk.

“refer[ence] to particular elements only identified by the fact that they are part of the class denoted by the noun” (Riegel, Pellat & Rioul, 2014, p. 293, our translation). Thus, «histoire» – in association with the derogatory forms and the indef-

inite article – refers to a genre that corresponds with soft news in contrast to hard news (see Tuchman, 1973; Bell, 1991; Cotter, 2010, p. 135–145).

In excerpt 2, the researcher asks journalist CA about his news-writing routines

Excerpt 2: “To relay a story that I did not know” (March 5, 2007)

1 R	Est-ce qu'il y a [...] des étapes types dans la rédaction d'un reportage? <i>Are there any typical steps in the writing of a report? [...]</i>
2 J	D'abord, savoir de quoi je vais parler. <i>First of all, knowing what I'm going to talk about. [...]</i>
3	Il y a des sujets que je découvre [...] deux, trois heures avant le téléspectateur. <i>There are topics I find out about two or three hours before the audience does.</i>
4	Je n'ai pas la science infuse, et [...] aucun journaliste ne l'a. <i>I'm not all-knowing, and I don't know any journalist who is all-knowing.</i>
5	Donc, forcément, pour être capable de retransmettre une histoire <i>So, necessarily, to be able to relay a story</i>
6	que je ne connaissais pas [...] moi-même trois heures avant le téléspectateur <i>that I did not know [...] myself three hours before the audience</i>
7	qui lui, ne la connaît pas, il y a forcément une méthode. <i>who don't know about it, there is necessarily a method.</i>
8	C'est ça qui fait le métier de journaliste: comment rendre <i>This is what makes the craft of journalist: how to make</i>
9	comestible, enfin, compréhensible, intelligible, une histoire <i>a story edible, well, understandable, intelligible</i>
10	dans un cadre donné. Et ce cadre, il est clair. <i>in a given framework. And this framework is clear.</i>
11	Ce n'est pas cinq mille ou six signes dans un journal. <i>This is not five thousand or six thousand characters in a newspaper.</i>
12	Mais c'est à la télévision. C'est une minute, une minute quinze <i>But this is on television, this is one minute, one minute fifteen seconds,</i>
13	une minute trente, deux minutes éventuellement. Voilà. <i>one minute thirty, two minutes maybe. That's it.</i>

(1.1). In his answer, the journalist frames the need for a method.

According to the journalist, a news-writing method is needed for three reasons: his epistemic status, *he is not all-knowing* (1.4); the task at hand, *to relay a story* (1.5); the genre, *a television news* (1.10–13). «Histoire» appears twice: firstly, relating to an epistemic issue (*knowing/not knowing*, 1.5–7); secondly, relating to an information processing issue (as indicated by the “assimilation” adjectives *understandable*, *intelligible* and *edible*). In both instances, «histoire» refers to an already existing set of information that is caught up in specific constraints relating to news production as well as news broadcasting. «Histoire» is thus differentiated from the material framework in which it is realised (1.10–13). To sum up, in excerpt 2, «histoire» refers to a set of information lifted from a context to another.

Excerpt 3 displays another meaning of «histoire». Here, the researcher interrogates the journalist about his collaboration network in the workplace. Apart from cutters and nearby colleagues, journalist CA talks about his contacts with the hierarchy and, more precisely, the producer of the news bulletin.

Excerpt 3: “I have already completely built my story” (March 5, 2007)

1 R	Avec qui est-ce que tu discutes des reportages? <i>Who do you speak to about reports?</i> [...]
2 J	Il peut arriver que le chef d’édition me dit: «Mais tu as vu ces images <i>It can happen that the producer tells me: “Did you see this footage</i>
3	qui arrivent à 19:15? Il faut absolument ça au début. <i>that come in at 7:15 pm? You absolutely have to put it in the beginning.</i>
4	C’est les dernières». Je dis: «Ecoute, ça ne va pas. <i>This is the latest one”. I say: “Listen, no way. Listen, did you see that?</i>
5	Ecoute, j’ai déjà tout construit mon histoire. <i>Listen, I have already completely built my story.</i>
6	Le montage est déjà à trois quart terminé». <i>The cutting is already almost done.”</i>
7	Là, il peut y avoir une interaction, à la limite, des fois, autoritaire, <i>At that point, there can be an interaction, sometimes nearly authoritarian,</i>
8	mais il peut y avoir des discussions. <i>but we can have a chat.</i>

The journalist is portraying these hierarchical relationships through a constructed dialogue (Tannen, 2007) that allows him to differentiate his position as reporter from that of producer. Of particular interest for us is the fact that «histoire» appears in a talk simulating an interaction taking place in the newsroom. According to journalist CA’s simulation, it does not seem to be implausible to encounter the word «histoire» in the actual talk of media practitioners engaged in their daily routine. In the animation of the newsroom dialogue made by the journalist, «histoire» refers neither to a genre (excerpt 1), nor to a set of information (excerpt 2) but rather to the semiotic product he made, as indicated by the use of a “production” verb (1.5: *built*) as well as the first person markers (1.5: *I have, my*). It is worth emphasizing that “story” seems to refer to a semiotic realization, entangling verbal and audio-visual means, and not only to a symbolic one.

To sum up, the use of «histoire» enables the journalist to describe diverse aspects of his work, ranging from news classifications and ethical issues to epistemic statuses and practical concerns.

2.2 Saying «histoire» to produce a broadcast news item









The second part of the case study focuses on the production of a television news item about the crash of an aircraft in Indonesia on March 7, 2007 for the news bulletin’s noon edition (see excerpt 4).

More precisely, we focus on the interaction between journalist CA and a cutter in the cutting-room. Our analysis is structured in three moments that correspond with the use of «histoire» before (2.2.1.), during (2.2.2.) and after (2.2.3.) the writing of the news item.

2.2.1 Saying «histoire» before the writing
Before beginning the writing, the journalist and the cutter swing between two segments of footage that could be used in the opening of the news item (Merminod, 2016). Then, they negotiate its structuring (excerpt 5, below).

The temporary structuring of the news items displays the following parts:

Excerpt 4: Yogyakarta news report (March 7, 2007, 12:45–12:48 pm)

	Anc1	We begin with news from another aviation catastrophe this morning in Indonesia.
	Anc2	It is a Boeing 737 of the national company Garuda that crashed upon landing on the island of Java killing about twenty people. Most of the passengers were Indonesians but a delegation of Australian diplomats and journalists was also on board. Warning: some footage might be shocking. They are commentated on by CA.
		
	Over	A few moments after the crash, the desperate escape, far from the Boeing, for one of the survivors. This passenger is not yet safe but his camera is on. No fewer than one hundred and twelve passengers, among the one hundred and thirty-three transported by the Indonesian company Garuda, survived, and six out of seven members of the crew. But many are injured. The statement of a security officer at the airport in Yogyakarta.
		
	Witt	I heard two explosions and I pulled four people out of the airplane, safe and sound. About thirty passengers were already outside, and they too were all alive.
	Over	Twenty-one people, however, did not manage to get out of the airplane and died, incinerated, trapped by the flames in the front part of the airplane. At the moment of the landing, the passengers had been warned that the Boeing was going to encounter strong turbulence. It hit the runway at excessive speed. The airplane rebounded on the tarmac twice before crashing violently into a rice field three hundred meters away and burning up completely.
		

Anc1=Newsreader 1; Anc2=Newsreader 2; Over=Voice Over (journalist CA); Wit=Witness (an Indonesian security guard).

Excerpt 5: “And we tell a little bit of the story” (March 7, 2007, 11:00-11:01 a.m.)

1 J	Bon, on va commencer quelque chose une scène comme ça. <i>So, we're going to start with something like a scene like this.</i>
2	((J does a large circular movement with his hand))
3 C	J'ai quand même envie de commencer avec le gars qui court, quoi, <i>In my opinion, we should start with the guy who is running, well,</i>
4	et puis on laisse après dix secondes. <i>and then we leave ten seconds after.</i>
5 J	Voilà, l'avion popo ^a , les gens qui s'enfuient, qui arrivent <i>Right, the plane popo, the people running away, who manage</i>
6	à se sauver, le sonore du <i>to save themselves, the audio of</i>
7 C	Ouais. <i>Yeah.</i>
8 J	de la sécurité de l'aé-, du gardien de l'aéroport qui dit: <i>of the security of the air-, of the security guard of the airport who says:</i>
9 C	C'est dingue, regarde les gens! <i>That's crazy, look at the people!</i>
10 J	« J'ai vu les gens réussir à se casser ». <i>"I saw people managing to get out of there."</i>
11	Puis, après, on raconte un peu l'histoire, hein ? <i>And then we tell a little bit of the story, isn't it?</i>
12 C	Ils sont complètement sonnés, quoi. Regarde comme ils marchent, quoi. <i>They are completely knocked out. Look how they are walking.</i>
13	C'est dingue, hein ? <i>That's crazy, no?</i>
13 J	Non mais dis hein, il y a de quoi, hein ? <i>Seriously, that's something, no?</i>
14 C	Complètement choqués, hein ? <i>Completely shocked, isn't it?</i>

J=Journalist; C=Cutter.

^a Either this sound imitates the plane's trajectory in the rice field or it means "and so on and so forth."

A. *the images of the guy who is running* (l.3), B. *the images of the plane* (l.5), C. *the images of the people running away and saving themselves* (l.5–6), D. *the audio of the security guard* (l.6, l.8, l.10), E. *the recounting of the story* (l.11). Actually, the temporary structuring corresponds more or less with the final structure of the news item (see excerpt 4). Parts A to C appear

in the beginning of the final news items, before the account of the security guard, which itself matches part D. This allows us to hypothesize that part E, only labelled as “the story” (excerpt 5, l.11) in the temporary structuring, corresponds with the recounting of the crash proceedings (excerpt 4: “At the moment of landing ... and burning up completely.”). Thus, it seems that «histoire» refers to the series of events that led to the crash. If there are images of the consequences of the crash (*people flee-*

ing and saving themselves, the plane burning, etc.), there are no images of the crash itself. Thus, at this specific moment of the news production, the use of «histoire», or more precisely of «raconter l’histoire», enables the journalist to contrast a part that can be only verbally recounted with parts that can be illustrated with some prefabricated material. Besides, the association of «histoire» with a definite article (l.11: *l*) and the absence of any further specification tend to place the crash episode as the sole story or, at least, as the central one.

2.2.2 *Saying «histoire» during the writing*⁵

«Histoire» is then used twice during the writing of the news item’s first segment: “A few moments after the crash, the desperate escape, away from the Boeing, for one of the survivors. This passenger is not yet safe but his camera is on.” The writing of the news item’s first segment is divided into three moments (Merminod, 2016):

- 1 From 11:09 to 11:10: “the desperate escape,” “far from the Boeing” and “of one of the survivors.”
Result: “The desperate escape far from the Boeing of one of the survivors.”
- 2 From 11:12 to 11:13: “his camera is on” and “a few moments after the crash.”
Result: “A few moments after the crash, the desperate escape far from the Boeing of one of the survivors. His camera is on.”
- 3 From 11:15 to 11:17: “this passenger is not yet safe” and “but.”
Result: “A few moments after the crash, the desperate escape far from the Boeing of one of the survivors. This passenger is not yet safe but his camera is on.”

The first «histoire» (“it is implausible, that story of shit[s],” excerpt 6, l.2–3) appears at 11:11 between the first and second writing phases; the second «histoire» (“it is unbelievable, that story,” excerpt 7, l. 6) emerges at 11:14 between the second and third

writing phases. Both segments display a similar syntactic format, a right dislocation featuring a demonstrative determiner. Right dislocation is usually used in French talk-in-interaction as a routinized format for emphasising an assessment (Pekarek Doehler, De Stefani & Horlacher, 2015, p. 133–160). This is the case for both instances: the first case sees a negative assessment while the second sees a positive one. Let’s examine them in turn.

In excerpt 6, the practitioners have agreed on how the report would begin. They work separately in silence (l.1), without looking at each other. The journalist is looking for a development that fits with

Excerpt 6: “Anyway, it is implausible, that story of shit” (March 7, 2007, 11:11 a.m.)

1	(14)
2 J	C’est quand même invraisemblable <i>Anyway, it is implausible,</i>
3	cette histoire de merde(s). <i>that story of shit(s).</i>
4	(11)
5 C	((speaking to his machine)) Arrête de pomper! <i>((speaking to his machine)) Stop pumping!</i>
6	(6)
7 J	((turning towards C)) On dit caméra au poing? <i>((turning towards C)) Can we say handheld camera?</i>

his first sentence: “The desperate escape, away from the Boeing, for one of the survivors.”

Excerpts 6 shows these “circumstances in which we will audibly address statements to ourselves, blurt out imprecations, and utter ‘response cries,’ such as, Oops!, Eek!, and the like [...], we will seek some response from those who can hear us, but not a specific reply. No doubt the intent is to provide information to everyone in range, but without taking the conversational floor to do so. What is sought is not hearers but overhearers, albeit intended ones” (Goffman, 1981, p. 136–138). The journalist, looking to develop his text, displays his reflexive activity (l.2–3) while the

5 The writing of the news item has been diversely analysed in previous works (see Burger, 2011; Perrin, 2013; Merminod, 2016; Zampa, 2017; Merminod & Burger, forthcoming).

cutter displays the technical problems he has with his machine (1.5).

By comparison with the other instances, the meaning of «histoire» in excerpt 6 seems at first to be abstruse for an external observer. «Histoire de merde(s)» could mean “shitty story.” Nevertheless, neither the journalist’s tone, nor his stance during the overall news production is consistent with such an assumption. Besides, it is difficult to know what «histoire de merde(s)» is referring to: the demonstrative determiner (1.3: *cette*) can point at the event the journalist is writing about, at the writing itself as well as at something completely different. Actually, «histoire de merde(s)» rather seems to be uttered in relationship with a previous event, an event that happened two hours earlier in the newsroom, just between the 9:15 am and 9:30 am editorial meetings.

The crash story was assigned to journalist CA during the 9:15 am meeting. Further to this, the journalist and his colleagues had a break in the same room. Two of his colleagues began to list the many disasters hitting Indonesia back then: *tsunami, earthquake, terrorism, plane crash, mudslide, flooding*. Then, playfully, they suggested different headlines, such as “how can one be Indonesian?,” and insisted on the following one several times: “Indonesia, shit(s) funnel of the world,” even calling out to the international desk editor and emphasizing the inappropriateness of such a headline. Journalist CA did not participate in their playful framing of the events but observed it. Then, he joined his colleagues’ conversation and listed with them the series of disasters: *tsunami, H5N1, mudslide, terrorism, ferryboat accident, plane crash*. After that, journalist CA brought to their attention the fact that the researchers’ camera was still running. Underlining again the inappropriateness of their framing, his two colleagues replied by alluding to the possibility that the recording would leak out on YouTube⁶.

6 Happily, the researchers were allowed to keep the recording. This event is interesting in many respects. The newsroom is sometimes considered as a backstage region in contrast to the public performance that a

In light of this event, «histoire de merde(s)» rather seems to mean “story about shit(s),” “shit” being the series of disasters experienced by Indonesia back then. In that case, «histoire» appears to refer to a frame that the journalist chose not to select.

Another instance of «histoire» appears a few minutes later. The journalist and the cutter are probing different descriptions of the actions carried out by the individual filming the event (Merminod & Burger, forthcoming). The journalist has already written a text that describes what happened in the footage: “A few moments after the crash, the desperate escape, away from the Boeing, for one of the survivors. His camera is on.” He is now wondering whether or not he has to insist on the fact that such a critical moment (*fleeing from a plane after a crash*) has been recorded (1.4–5).

In excerpt 7, «histoire», associated with a demonstrative determiner (1.6) and being the subject of an assessment, refers obviously to the experience of the individual filming the scene. It is worth noting that the story’s assessment is similar to the assessments expressed during the 9:15 am meeting, the first time the journalist heard about the escape experience and its images. At 9:15 am, while the international desk editor was commenting on the noteworthiness of the footage, a journalist from the international desk observed: “it is unbelievable that people managed to get out of the plane like that”; having insisted on the way it was shot, the desk editor replied: “yes it is unbelievable.” It seems that, in excerpt 7 as well as in the 9:15 am meeting, the assessment of the experience is mixed up with an assessment of the footage that

television news bulletin is. The “shits’ funnel” event, taking place between two scheduled events that punctuate the newsroom official business, shows, in a way, the backstage in the backstage: “Here costumes and other parts of personal front may be adjusted and scrutinized for flaws. Here the team can run through its performance, checking for offending expressions when no one is present to be affronted by them [...]. Here the performer can relax” (Goffman, 1959, p. 115).

**Excerpt 7: “It is unbelievable, that story”
(March 7, 2007, 11:13-11:14 a.m.)**

1 J	((looking at his screen)) *Quelques instants après le crash, ((looking at his screen)) *A few moments after the crash.
2	la fuite éperdue, loin du Boeing, de l’un des survivants. <i>the desperate escape, far from the Boeing, for one of the survivors.</i>
3	Sa camera est enclenchée. Virgule* euh <i>His camera is on. Comma* er</i>
4	Toute la scène est immortalisée. <i>The whole scene has been captured.</i>
5	((slightly leaning towards C)) Il faut le dire, non? Ça, quand même. ((slightly leaning towards C)) <i>We must say it, no? This, anyway.</i>
	Looking at his screen, during 18 sec, J mumbles words he has already written.
6 J	((turning towards C)) C’est incroyable, cette histoire. ((turning towards C)) <i>It is unbelievable, that story.</i>
7 C	Ouais, c’est ((leaning back and looking at his screen)). <i>Yeah, that’s ((leaning back and looking at his screen)).</i>
	Looking at his screen, J mumbles during 12 sec.
8 J	Il faut faire attention de pas avoir de jugement de valeur. <i>We have to be cautious not to make value judgments.</i>
9	<i>Leaning forward, C starts his work on the footage again</i>
10	C’est absolument incroyable, ouais. <i>It is absolutely unbelievable, yeah.</i>

shows it. In a way, the cutter’s reaction, acknowledging the journalist’s assessment (l.7) and even repeating it (l.10: “it is absolutely unbelievable”) while continuously looking at the footage, tends to strengthen this blending.

To sum up, during the writing, «histoire» appears twice: on the one hand, the journalist refers to a frame that locates the crash as an instance in a series of tragic events and relates to a master narrative about Indonesia; on the other hand, the journalist refers to an event that is considered to be noteworthy owing to the fact that the semiotic material bears witness to the unusual experience of fleeing from a crashed plane. Although different, the two assessments echo what has been said by colleagues before the actual writing of the news item.

2.2.3 Saying «histoire» after the writing

«Histoire» is used a last time while the news-making production process comes to an end. At 12:20 pm, in the cutting-room, the producer of the evening edition mentions the fact that a Swiss-Italian radio journalist was in the plane and was able to phone the radio station to record an account of his experience. Journalist CA decides not to include the account in the noon report. Nevertheless, at 12:28 pm, having recorded the news item’s voice-over, he begins to look for the Swiss-Italian radio journalist’s account the producer previously mentioned. Firstly, the journalist checks the news wires, typing in his search engine «indonésie» (Indonesia) and «tessinois» (Swiss-Italian), but he finds nothing. Then, at 12:29 pm, he goes on the broadcasting corporation website (tsr.ch), which devotes one page of the online news edition to the plane crash. The lead and the first paragraph of the webpage refer to the Swiss-Italian journalist (below, an English translation of a part of the webpage):

Excerpt 8: TSR online news edition about the Yogyakarta crash (March 7, 2007)

Crash in Indonesia: Around Twenty Dead
07.03.2007 07:29
A Boeing 737, which transported 140 persons, caught fire by failing to land on Wednesday on the island of Java. [...] A Swiss-Italian radio journalist survived the crash.
Alessandro Bertelotti is a RSI [Swiss-Italian Radio] correspondent for the Far East. According to him, the reason for the crash was the excessive speed at the moment of landing.
[...]
On this topic
RSR [Swiss-French Radio] – The report of Solenne Honorine – March 7. Morning Edition.

The journalist finds a mention of the Swiss-Italian journalist’s experience on the website but he does not find the audio recording of his account. On the other hand, the webpage provides him with a report by Solenne Honorine, a Swiss-French radio correspondent in Jakarta. From 12:31 to 12:32 pm, the journalist listens to the report. Further to this, the journalist comments on what he has (not) found on the website.

Excerpt 9: “That story of the Swiss-Italian journalist” (March 7, 2007, 12:32–12:33 p. m.)

1 J	Oh, pff ((sigh)). Oh, pff ((sigh)). During 17 sec., J looks at his screen, then at C's screen, then at his own again.
2 J	Bon. (...) Qu'est-ce que xxx Well. (...) What xxx
3	cette histoire du journaliste tessinois <i>that story of the Swiss-Italian journalist</i>
4	Mais enfin, bon, xxx. <i>But anyway, well, xxx.</i>
5	Il y a le témoignage d'une correspondante à Jakarta <i>There is the account of a correspondent in Jakarta</i>
6	de la télé ro-, de la radio romande. <i>of the Swiss-French TV, of the Swiss-French Radio.</i>
7	Mais pas particulièrement intéressant. <i>But not really interesting.</i>

In excerpt 9, the journalist is still wearing the headphones he used to listen to the French correspondent's report, and is looking only at the screens when talking. As for the cutter, he is working on the reporter's soundtrack and does not pay attention to the journalist's talk. Both the practitioners appear to be focused only on their own tasks. The noises coming from the soundtrack, as well as the fact that the journalist mumbles, make the beginning of this part (l.2) difficult to transcribe accurately. At line 3, «histoire» is associated with a demonstrative determiner (l.3: *cette*) and a prepositional group (l.3: “of the Swiss-Italian journalist”): thus, it does not refer to the story recounted by the Swiss-Italian journalist but rather to the story about him. More precisely, because of its twofold specification through a deictic marker and a description, «histoire» can refer to the experience of the journalist-survivor as well as to its previous mentions by the producer and on the website.

To summarize briefly the analyses carried out in the second part of our case study, we found that «histoire» is used as a reflexive means, enabling the journalist to orient himself in the very practical tasks entailed by the production of a multimodal artefact, such as structuring the news item or assessing available frames, semiotic resources and sources.

3 Conclusion

This article has examined how, when and why the word «histoire» is used in the context of newsroom activities. It has shown the presence of three different meanings of «histoire»: «histoire» as a genre, «histoire» as a set of information and «histoire» as a semiotic product. If these three meanings emerged when the journalist reflected on broadcast news production, the actual news production process favoured the use of «histoire» as a set of information. During the broadcast news production, the journalist used «histoire» before, during and after the writing of the news item. «Histoire» enables him to distinguish information conveyed by different semiotic means as well as to underline the (ir)relevance of particular production choices. «Histoire» referred to particular events but also to individual experiences and journalistic frames. Regarding the reference to events, it concerned the central event (the crash) as well as some background information (causes, consequences). It was further used not only to refer to what happened in the world but also to what happens in the newsroom.

The case study provides us with a better understanding of the use of the narrative lexicon in the newsroom and allows us to reconsider some of the assumptions surrounding the narrative nature of news. It echoes and puts into perspective the statement of Tuchman:

[A]t least in part, reporters may speak of stories among themselves rather than about events. They may see the everyday world and its supporting documents in terms of the product they are to manufacture – a news story. (Tuchman, 1976, p. 95)

More than seeing the world in terms of a news story, journalists navigate between different stories. In other words, they sort through narrative configurations that vary in terms of spatiotemporal and experiential extensions. These narrative configurations orient the journalists in their everyday work and, at the same time, are constantly assessed by the latter in view of

the tasks at hand. Thus, if the case study corroborates the idea that the newsroom is full of stories that make news, it leads us to go beyond the myth of journalistic storytelling, by taking into account the local rationalities that, as exemplified here, ground the use of «histoire» (“story”).

Story formulations in the newsroom still remain largely under-explored, and we would like to emphasize the need for further investigation that focuses not only on one participant – the pattern of use we described could be just idiosyncratic – but extends the analysis to a community of practice. Besides, as underlined in the introduction, “story” is not «histoire», neither «Geschichte»⁷, nor “storia”. Thus, our reflection on story formulation calls for a crosslinguistic comparison as well as a crossmedia inquiry (for instance: by contrasting the use of “story” between written and broadcast news). Likewise, it could be worth tracking the use of “story” in the news (rather than only in the newsroom) through different timeframes: if it is not unusual to encounter the word “story” in the news nowadays⁸, was it the case ten or twenty years ago?

Explorations in these directions would not only show that corresponding words are used in slightly different ways depending on the language, the culture, the time and the place. They could be a valuable means to grasp the changes that occurred and are occurring in the journalistic ideologies and practices of rendering events, experiences and worlds.

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7 As observed by Perrin & Wyss (2016): «Erzählen ist ein Sprachhandlungsmuster, das stark mit dem Konzept Geschichte verbunden ist: Man kann im Deutschen keine Fakten erzählen, keine Botschaften, keine Nachrichten, nur Lügen oder Geschichten und Spezialformen davon, wie Sagen oder Märchen» (Perrin & Wyss, 2016, p. 244).

8 As in the following instance: “Brexit. Follow this story everywhere. BBC News” (BBC One, 08.05.2017).

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Journalismus aus erzähltheoretischer Perspektive

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Abstract

The essay demonstrates how the narratological theories developed in the field of literary studies can accomplish a better comprehension of journalistic narratives. As they have to accommodate the principles of journalism, these narratives have to be true, topical and impartial. From this point of view storytelling and the inverted-pyramid principle prove themselves as two complementary approaches of journalistic narration, whose stories are all constructed on the basis of real world occurrences and the ideologies of the diverse societies. Storytelling is enabling the communication of individual experience and the inverted-pyramid principle is supporting the narrative construction of future-open macro stories.

Zusammenfassung

Der Aufsatz zeigt am Beispiel der Zeitungsberichterstattung über die Guttenberg-Affäre 2011, wie die literaturwissenschaftliche Erzähltheorie zum besseren Verständnis des journalistischen Erzählens beitragen kann. Da dieses Erzählen den Anforderungen des Journalismus Rechnung tragen muss, müssen journalistische Erzählungen wahr, aktuell und unparteiisch sein. In diesem Zusammenhang erweisen sich Storytelling und Leadprinzip als zwei komplementäre Verfahren des journalistischen Erzählens, dessen Geschichten ausgehend von den Geschehnissen der realen Welt und den Weltbildern der jeweiligen Gesellschaften konstruiert werden. Dabei unterstützen das Storytelling die Vermittlung individueller Erfahrungen und das Leadprinzip die Erzählung zukunftsöffener Makrogeschichten.

Keywords

Erzähltheorie, Geschichte, Informationsjournalismus, Leadprinzip, Storytelling, Storyworld

1 Journalismus und Erzählen

Der Begriff «Geschichte» ist nach Beobachtung von Daniel Perrin die weitaus häufigste Ethnokategorie¹, die Journalisten verwenden, wenn sie über ihre Arbeit sprechen (vgl. Perrin, 2010). Dennoch ist der Vorwurf, Journalisten würden keine Geschichten erzählen, sondern nur «anämisch» die Fakten berichten, ein durchgängiger Topos aller Streitschriften, die das journalistische Storytelling propagieren oder einen neuen, literarischen Journalismus fordern (vgl. Meier, 2004; Eberwein, 2013). So widersprüchlich beides ist,

es zeigt, dass es für eine Betrachtung des Journalismus aus erzähltheoretischer Perspektive gute Gründe gibt. Denn der Begriff «Geschichte» ist ein zentraler Begriff der Erzähltheorie, wie das die Begriffsbestimmung belegt, die Silke Lahn und Jan Christoph Meister ihrer *Einführung in die Erzähltextanalyse* voranstellen: «Unter Erzählen verstehen wir das (sprachliche) *Ausdrücken*, *Verknüpfen* und gleichzeitige *thematische Ordnen* von (wahren oder vorgestellten) *Fakten zu Geschichten*» (Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 4; Hervorhebungen im Original).

Auch die historische Entwicklung des Journalismus legt es nahe, die journalistische Berichterstattung als eine besondere Form des Erzählens zu verstehen. Denn bis ins 18. Jahrhundert übernimmt der Journalismus seine Textmuster «von exis-

1 Unter Ethnokategorien von Textformaten sind jene Kategorien zu verstehen, mit denen die Mitglieder einer Kommunikationsgemeinschaft selbst ihre Formate bezeichnen (vgl. Perrin 2010, S. 147).



tierenden literarischen Gattungen (...), z. B. von Erzählungen und Briefen» und viele Nachrichtenbeiträge «erinner[n] eher an eine Kleist'sche Novelle» als an heutige Nachrichtentexte (Burger, 1990, S. 8). Gerade die Gestaltung von Nachrichtentexten hat sich durch das Lead-Prinzip, wonach das Wesentliche zuerst kommt (vgl. Lüger, 1995, S. 94–102), so stark verändert, dass sie heute nicht mehr als Erzählungen gelten, auch wenn man auf den bunten Themenseiten viele «Soft News» findet, die nach wie vor als kurze Erzählungen gestaltet sind (vgl. Lüger, 1995, S. 103–108). Dieses Lead-Prinzip, das für die «Hard News» der Politik- und Wirtschaftsberichterstattung charakteristisch ist, wurde vom amerikanischen Journalismus während dessen Professionalisierungsschub in den 1880er Jahren entwickelt (vgl. Pöttker, 2003, S. 425). Wie denn generell anzunehmen ist, dass die Entwicklung und Fortentwicklung journalistischer Normen (vgl. Wilke, 2016) einen nachhaltigen Einfluss auf die Gestaltung der verschiedenen journalistischen Textsorten hatte.

Ohne diesen historischen Ansatz weiter zu verfolgen, prägender Faktor des journalistischen Erzählens ist zweifelsohne, dass dieses Erzählen den Anforderungen der Kommunikationsgattung Journalismus genügen muss. «Journalismus», so die Definition von Klaus Meier, ...

... recherchiert, selektiert und präsentiert Themen, die neu, faktisch und relevant sind. Er stellt Öffentlichkeit her, indem er die Gesellschaft beobachtet, diese Beobachtung über periodische Medien einem Massenpublikum zur Verfügung stellt und dadurch eine gemeinsame Wirklichkeit konstruiert. Diese konstruierte Wirklichkeit bietet Orientierung in einer komplexen Welt. (Meier, 2007, S. 13)

Versteht man daher Erzählen im Sinne von Lahn und Meister als eine kommunikative Handlung, die gleichermassen der Verknüpfung von Fakten zu Geschichten wie der Darstellung dieser Geschichten dient, dann ergibt sich die Frage, welche Auswirkungen es für die Konstruktion und die Präsentation von Geschichten hat, wenn dieses Erzählen den journalistischen Prin-

zipien der Aktualität, der Wahrheit und der Unparteilichkeit² verpflichtet ist.

Als Grundlage zur Beantwortung dieser Frage soll die literaturwissenschaftliche Erzähltheorie dienen. Die Literaturwissenschaft beschäftigt sich immer schon mit dem Erzählen, machen doch Erzählungen der unterschiedlichsten Formen einen Grossteil ihres Fachgebietes aus. Dementsprechend elaboriert sind ihre erzähltheoretischen Konzepte (Hühn, Pier, Schmid, & Schönert, 2009; Martínez, 2011). Ihre Anwendung auf das journalistische Erzählen, das ja kein fiktionales, sondern ein faktuales Erzählen ist und das nicht nur mit schriftlichen, sondern auch mit auditiven, visuellen und audiovisuellen Medien operiert, wird dadurch erleichtert, dass inzwischen interdisziplinäre Bestandsaufnahmen (Aumüller, 2012; Martínez, 2017) und Weiterentwicklungen vorliegen, die über das sprachliche und schriftliche Erzählen in literarischen Texten hinausführen. Für das journalistische Erzählen sind hier jene Arbeiten besonders wichtig, die das faktuale Erzählen (Klein & Martínez, 2009; Fludernik & Ryan, 2018) und das Erzählen mit Bildern und anderen Medien behandeln (Ryan, 2004; Kuhn, 2011).

Charakteristisch für die literaturwissenschaftliche Erzähltheorie ist zum einem die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Beziehungsfeld von Text, Autor, Erzähler und Leser und zum anderen die Differenzierung zwischen dem «Was der Erzählung», der *histoire* bzw. *plot* oder *Geschichte*,³ und ihrer sprachlichen Darstellung, dem «Wie der Erzählung», dem *discours*⁴ (vgl.

2 Das Prinzip der Unparteilichkeit wird in der Definition von Meier nicht explizit angeführt, es folgt jedoch aus dem Zusammenspiel des Relevanzkriteriums mit der Orientierungsfunktion des Journalismus.

3 Da sehr unterschiedliche Wissenschaftskulturen zur Erzähltheorie beigetragen haben, ist ihre Terminologie alles andere als einheitlich. Synopsen der wichtigsten Begriffe enthalten die Einführungsbände von Martínez & Scheffel (2012, 28) und Lahn & Meister (2008, S. 15–17).

4 Um Verwechslungen vorzubeugen, verwende ich die Schreibweise «discours» für den erzähltheoretischen und «Diskurs» für den

Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 13–17; Martínez & Scheffel, 2012, S. 22–28). Auf die Definition von Lahn und Meister bezogen, entspricht das «Wie der Erzählung» dem sprachlichen Ausdrücken von Geschichten und das «Was der Erzählung» dem Verknüpfen und Ordnen der Fakten zu einer Geschichte. Dabei konzentriert sich die strukturalistische Erzähltheorie auf die Organisation der Geschichte, während die neueren Ansätze die Gestaltung des discours und das Verhältnis von Autor, Text und Leser in den Vordergrund stellen.⁵

Die Unterscheidung dieser beiden Basiskategorien, des «Wie» und des «Was des Erzählens», erlaubt es, den Begriff des «journalistischen Erzählens» genauer zu fassen, womit sich auch die immer wieder aufflammenden Kontroversen zwischen den Anhängern der konventionellen Berichterstattung und des journalistischen Storytellings versachlichen lassen. Denn die beiden kommunikativen Handlungen «Berichten» und «Erzählen» sind zwei eng verwandte Assertionshandlungen, deren «Wie» sich zwar voneinander unterscheidet, doch deren «Was» in beiden Fällen eine Geschichte ist. Der Darstellungsmodus von Reportagen ist szenisch und schildernd (vgl. Lüger, 1995, S. 115), der von Nachrichten und Berichten dagegen sachlich und informierend (vgl. Lüger, 1995, S. 99).⁶ So gesehen lassen sich Reportagen als Erzählungen in einem engen Sinn und Nachrichten und Berichte als Erzählungen in einem weiten Sinn verstehen (vgl. Renner, 2012, S. 96–98). Ebenso wird nun verständlich, warum man immer wieder Beiträgen begegnet, die als Beispiele für journalistisches Storytelling gelten, obwohl sie keine Geschichten wiedergeben. Ihre Einordnung als Erzählung stützt sich nicht auf die Assertion einer Geschichte, soziolinguistischen Begriff.

5 Einen Überblick über die Geschichte der Erzähltheorie bieten Lahn & Meister 2008, 19–34, eine Übersicht über die Hauptströmungen der modernen Erzähltheorie enthält Martínez 2011, S. 106–129.

6 Die Erzähltheorie diskutiert vergleichbare Unterschiede des Darstellungsmodus unter dem Begriffspaar “telling vs. showing” (vgl. Lahn & Meister 2008, S. 26; Martínez & Scheffel 2012, 50).

sondern auf ihren szenischen Darstellungsmodus.⁷

Aus der Unterscheidung dieser beiden Basiskategorien folgt aber ebenso, dass sich eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem journalistischen Erzählen nicht auf die Fragen des Storytellings beschränken kann. Denn Erzählen ist nicht nur ein Akt der Präsentation, es ist immer auch ein Akt der Konstruktion von Geschichten. Im Folgenden soll am Beispiel der Berichterstattung über ein zentrales Ereignis der Plagiatsaffäre Guttenberg, der «Kelkheim-Episode», gezeigt werden, welche Folgen es für das Erzählen von Geschichten hat, wenn diese so konstruiert und dargestellt werden müssen, dass dies den journalistischen Kriterien der Wahrheit, der Aktualität und der Unparteilichkeit genügt. Das wird bei der Skandalberichterstattung besonders deutlich, wobei es von Vorteil ist, dass wir bei diesem Skandal den Standpunkt eines externen Beobachters einnehmen können. Denn anders als die Autoren der ausgewählten Artikel wissen wir heute, welches Ende der Skandal genommen hat.

2 Die Kelkheim-Episode der Plagiatsaffäre Guttenberg

Der Auftritt Guttenbergs am Montag, dem 21. Februar 2011, bei einer CDU-Veranstaltung in der hessischen Kleinstadt Kelkheim markiert aus heutiger Sicht den Wendepunkt der Plagiatsaffäre. Fünf Tage zuvor, am Mittwoch, dem 16. Februar 2011, hatte die *Süddeutsche Zeitung* erstmals über Unregelmässigkeiten in Guttenbergs Dissertation berichtet, was er – gerade auf dem Weg zu einem Truppenbesuch in Afghanistan – als «abstrus» zurückwies. Wieder zurück, kündigte er am Freitag an, dass er seinen Dokortitel bis zur Klärung

7 Ein Beispiel aus dem Materialkorpus dieser Studie ist die Reportage «Prüfungsdruck» von Tanjev Schultz (SZ 23.2.2011). Auch die Differenzierung von Narration und Storytelling, die Werner Früh vorschlägt, beruht darauf, dass der Begriff «Erzählen» sowohl auf inhaltliche wie auf Darstellungsaspekte bezogen werden kann (vgl. Früh & Frey 2014, S. 86–91).

der Vorwürfe ruhen lassen wolle. Nach einem oberflächlich ruhigen Wochenende sprach ihm an diesem Montag Bundeskanzlerin Merkel ihr Vertrauen aus. Sie habe ihn als Verteidigungsminister und nicht «als wissenschaftlichen Assistenten» berufen und das mache er gut. Am Abend erklärte dann Guttenberg in Kelkheim, wo er als Festredner eingeladen war, dass er in seiner Dissertation Fehler gemacht habe, dass er zu seinen Fehlern stehe und er daher für immer auf den Dokortitel verzichten wolle. Angesichts des jubelnden Beifalls seiner Anhänger, die sich dort um ihn geschart hatten, und der demonstrativen Unterstützung durch die Parteiführung schien die Affäre ausgestanden.

Ein objektiver Indikator für den besonderen Stellenwert der Kelkheim-Episode in der Plagiatsaffäre ist ihre Erwähnung in den Chroniken, die nach dem Ende dieses Skandals in verschiedenen Medien erschienen sind. Insgesamt wurden 13 Chroniken ausgewertet, zwölf davon erwähnen die Vorgänge in Kelkheim. Nur der Rücktritt Guttenbergs erreicht einen höheren Wert (vgl. Renner, 2013, S. 274).

Dieser Rücktritt erfolgte acht Tage später, am 1. März 2011. Trotz – oder wegen? – Guttenbergs brillanten Auftritts in Kelkheim nahm der öffentliche Druck auf ihn weiter zu. Die Enthüllungen der Online-Plattform Guttenplag über die Ungereimtheiten seiner Dissertation gingen unvermindert weiter, und nach der Äusserung der Kanzlerin flammten an immer mehr Universitäten Proteste auf. So sah sich Guttenberg schliesslich doch gezwungen, trotz Verzicht auf seinen Dokortitel als Verteidigungsminister zurückzutreten.

Als empirische Grundlagen dieser Studie dienen die Berichte, Reportagen und Kommentare in der *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung* und der *Süddeutschen Zeitung* über den Auftritt Guttenbergs in Kelkheim (vgl. die Liste im Anhang). Da diese Studie einen explorativen Anspruch hat, erscheint die geringe Zahl von Beispieltexen vertretbar. Auch wäre ein umfanglicheres Material im Rahmen dieser Untersuchung kaum zu bearbeiten, da sie erzähltheoretisch und nicht kommunikationswissenschaftlich-inhaltsanalytisch

angelegt ist. Thematisch schliesst sie an meinen Aufsatz zur öffentlichen Konstruktion einer nicht-fiktionalen Geschichte an, der die Plagiatsaffäre insgesamt behandelt (Renner, 2013).

3 Das «Was» des journalistischen Erzählens

3.1 Storyworld und Geschichte

Hatte die Erzähltheorie das «Was der Erzählung» zunächst mit der erzählten Geschichte identifiziert, so unterscheiden die neueren Arbeiten zwischen Geschichte und Diegese bzw. Storyworld, in der die Geschichte spielt: «Die *Geschichte* ist das *Was der Erzählung* – eine fiktionale Welt, die von Figuren und Dingen bevölkert ist und in der sich bestimmte Geschehnisse ereignen» (Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 14; Hervorhebungen im Original). Diese Begriffsdifferenzierung zeigt die Bedeutung, die das philosophische Konzept der möglichen Welten für das Verständnis des fiktionalen Erzählens gewonnen hat. Sie spiegelt aber auch wider, wie wichtig in unserer digitalen Medienkultur das transmediale Erzählen geworden ist, wobei es nicht mehr allein um das medienübergreifende Erzählen von Geschichten geht, sondern ebenso sehr um die Kreation von Figuren und um die Erfindung ganzer Welten (vgl. Thon, 2016).

Übernimmt man diese Differenzierung, kann man die Geschichte wiederum als eine Verknüpfung von Ereignissen in einer Storyworld definieren. Ereignisse werden dann «zur Einheit einer Geschichte integriert, wenn die Ereignisfolge zusätzlich zum chronologischen auch einen kausalen Zusammenhang aufweist, so dass die Ereignisse nicht nur aufeinander, sondern auch auseinander folgen» (Martínez & Scheffel, 2012, S. 27).

Dieser kausale Zusammenhang wird von den verschiedenen erzähltheoretischen Konzepten mal aus einer internen, mal aus einer externen Perspektive erklärt.

Charakteristisch für die interne Perspektive ist, dass sie den inneren Zusammenhang einer Geschichte auf die Intentionen der handelnden Figuren zu-

rückführt. Das ist die Vorgehensweise der traditionellen Textinterpretation, aber auch innerhalb der strukturalistischen Erzählanalyse sind das Konzept der Handlungsalternativen von Claude Bremond (1972) und das Aktantenmodell von Algirdas Greimas (1972) diesem Ansatz verpflichtet. Konzepte, die eine externe Perspektive vertreten, erklären den kausalen Zusammenhang der Ereignisse mit der Relevanz, die die Abfolge der erzählten Geschehnisse «für die Bedeutungsabsicht des Erzähltextes» besitzt (Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 213). Es macht einen Unterschied, ob am Ende eines Krimis das Verbrechen aufgeklärt wird oder nicht. Für diese externe Perspektive stehen das Funktionenmodell von Vladimir Propp ([1928] 1975), die Mythenanalyse von Claude Lévi-Strauss ([1955] 1978), das Gleichgewichtskonzept von Tzvetan Todorov (1972) und der Sujetbegriff von Jurij M. Lotman (1972).

Will man diese literaturwissenschaftlichen Konzepte für das journalistische Erzählen fruchtbar machen, muss man die Storyworld journalistischer Erzählungen mit der empirisch vorgefundenen realen Welt identifizieren. Denn journalistische Erzählungen (im engen wie im weiten Sinne) sind faktuale Erzählungen. Aufgrund der elementaren Bedeutung, die das Wahrheitsprinzip für den Journalismus besitzt, haben sie den Anspruch, Geschehnisse und Geschichten zu erzählen, die tatsächlich stattgefunden haben oder stattfinden. Das unterscheidet sie kategorial von literarischen Erzählungen. Diese sind «fiktional in dem Sinne, dass sie grundsätzlich keinen Anspruch auf unmittelbare Referenzialisierbarkeit, d. h. Verwurzelung in einem empirisch-wirklichen Geschehen erheben» (Martínez & Scheffel, 2012, S. 15).

Die Inhalte literarischer Erzählungen sind fiktiv, aber nicht fingiert in dem Sinne, dass sie ihre Leser täuschen wollen. Da sie keinen Wahrheitsanspruch haben, können sie auch nicht falsch sein und jemanden belügen (vgl. Martínez & Scheffel, 2012, S. 15).⁸

8 Eine wesentliche Voraussetzung ist dabei, dass die Rezipienten den Unterschied zwischen faktualen und fiktionalen Erzählungen kennen. Exemplarisch demonstriert das

Identifiziert man die Storyworld von journalistischen Erzählungen mit der realen Welt, so folgt daraus, dass alle journalistischen Erzählungen das gleiche, gemeinsame Bezugsobjekt besitzen – es gibt nur eine reale Welt – und dass die Storyworld die unabhängige und die Erzählungen die abhängige Größe sind. Bei fiktionalen Erzählungen entwickelt sich die Storyworld dagegen in Abhängigkeit von den jeweiligen Erzählungen. Daher kann jede Fortsetzung und jede mediale Bearbeitung eine etablierte Storyworld tangieren oder modifizieren. So entstehen bei Serien, Verfilmungen und anderen Formen des transtextuellen und transmedialen Erzählens immer wieder Mutationen und Verzweigungen der erzählten Storyworld (vgl. Ryan, 2013). Im Gegensatz dazu ist es für journalistische Erzählungen zwingend, dass sie auch dann zueinander passen, wenn sie von unterschiedlichen Autoren und in verschiedenen Medien erzählt werden. Abweichungen erfordern Revisionen oder gar die Preisgabe bereits erzählter Geschichten.⁹

Üblicherweise schreiben jedoch neue journalistische Erzählungen die alten einfach weiter fort. Das gilt insbesondere für die journalistischen Erzählungen im weiten Sinne. Nachrichten und Berichte sind in einem besonderen Masse dem Aktualitätsprinzip verpflichtet; da die Geschehensabläufe aber nur in Ausnahmefällen zu den Publikationsterminen passen, müssen Nachrichten und Berichte ihre Geschichten fast immer als Fortsetzungsgeschichten erzählen. Journalistische Erzählungen im engen Sinne können ihre Themen dagegen meistens so wählen,

Miguel de Cervantes in seinem Roman «Don Quijote».

9 Ein interessanter Grenzfall ist in diesem Zusammenhang der Fernsehfilm «Der Minister», eine satirische Aufarbeitung der Plagiatsaffäre (Sat.1, 12. März 2013). Hier tragen zwar alle Figuren fiktive Namen, sind aber eindeutig mit realen Vorbildern identifizierbar. Andererseits erzählt der Film eine erfundene Geschichte: die «Ghostwriter-Story.» Denn es wurde nie bewiesen, dass Guttenberg seine Dissertation von einem Ghostwriter schreiben liess, auch wenn dieser Verdacht immer wieder geäußert wurde.

dass ihre Geschichten einigermaßen abgeschlossen sind. Man muss daher beim journalistischen Erzählen Mikrogeschichten und Makrogeschichten unterscheiden, wenn eine Geschichte nicht von einem einzelnen Text, sondern im Rahmen des journalistischen Diskurses erzählt wird. «Einzelne journalistische Texte, ob narrativ oder nicht, können als Bestandteil eines narrativen Makrotextes, einer Makroerzählung aufgefasst werden, die ihrerseits durchaus einer narrativen Struktur (Komplikation/Auflösung) folgt» (Robert, 2013, S. 53).

3.2 Zur Konstruktion journalistischer Geschichten: Geschichte und Welt

Die Identifikation der Storyworld journalistischer Erzählungen mit der realen Welt macht es weiterhin erforderlich, strikt zwischen der Konstruktion von Geschichten auf Seiten der Rezipienten und der Produzenten zu unterscheiden. Die Rezipienten konstruieren die Geschichten, die ihnen erzählt werden, auf Grundlage kommunizierter Texte. Die Journalisten, die Produzenten dieser Texte, konstruieren ihre Geschichten jedoch aufgrund von Ereignissen in der realen Welt. Sei es, dass sie bei ihren Recherchen diese Ereignisse als Augenzeugen selbst beobachten, sei es, dass sie sich auf zuverlässige Quellen stützen. Daher kann man mit erzähltheoretischen Konzepten, die die Konstruktion der Geschichten ausgehend von der Textrezeption erklären (wie das für die meisten literaturwissenschaftlichen Ansätze zutrifft), zwar die Rezeption journalistischer Erzählungen, nicht aber ihre Produktion erfassen.

Hier bietet eine Verknüpfung von literaturwissenschaftlicher und kognitiver Erzähltheorie, wie das Marie-Laure Ryan skizziert, eine Lösung. Ryan unterscheidet zum einem zwischen den beiden Eigenschaften “being a narrative” und “possessing narrativity,” und zum anderen sind Geschichten ihrer Auffassung nach “in two distinct realms” zu lokalisieren.

On one hand, narrative is a textual act of representation (...). On the other hand, narrative is a mental image – a cognitive construct –

built by the interpreter as a response to the text. (...) But it does not take a representation proposed as a narrative to trigger the cognitive construct that constitutes narrativity: we may form narrative scripts in our mind as response to life, which is definitely not a representation. (Ryan, 2004, S. 9)

Folgt man diesem Vorschlag, so sind journalistische Geschichten zunächst Konstruktionen der Autoren, die diese Geschichten aufgrund ihrer Beobachtungen in der realen Welt erzählen. Diese Geschichten werden dann von den Rezipienten auf Grundlage der kommunizierten Texte rekonstruiert. Dabei ist es unerheblich, ob die Autoren ihre Geschichten ausgehend von den Beobachtungen bottom-up konstruieren, ob sie top-down ihren Beobachtungen ein Handlungsschema (vgl. Martínez & Scheffel, 2012, S. 127) überstülpen oder ob es sich um wechselseitige Prozesse handelt. Entscheidend ist vielmehr, dass man demnach nicht nur die Geschichten fiktionaler, sondern auch die Geschichten faktualer Erzählungen als Konstruktionen betrachten muss, obwohl man diese intuitiv viel eher mit den stattgefundenen Geschehnissen identifizieren möchte.

Dass die Geschichten faktualer Erzählungen keine Widerspiegelungen der Wirklichkeit, sondern Konstrukte ihrer Erzähler sind, ist bei Erzählungen vor Gericht besonders auffällig. Kläger und Beklagte, Ankläger und Verteidiger fügen das umstrittene Geschehen ihren Standpunkten entsprechend zu Geschichten und Gegengeschichten zusammen und müssen dazu keineswegs Lüge und Wahrheit vermengen. Geschichten können auch dann falsch sein, wenn die Einzelheiten stimmen. Die Aufgabe des Richters ist es dann, aus diesen «konkurrierenden Narrativen» ein «Masternarrativ» zu formen, das für alle Beteiligten verbindlich ist und Grundlage des Urteils bildet (von Arnould, 2009, S. 32).

In ähnlicher Weise benutzen auch bei Skandalen die gegnerischen Lager die gleichen Gegebenheiten, um Geschichten und Gegengeschichten zu konstruieren. Doch anders als beim Erzählen vor

Gericht sind dies keine zurückliegenden und abgeschlossenen Geschichten. Diese Geschichten entwickeln sich mit dem Fortgang des Skandals, sie sind erst dann abgeschlossen, wenn der Skandal beendet ist. Während des Skandals sind sie zukunfts offen und verbinden vergangene Ereignisse mit aktuellen Handlungsalternativen und zukünftigem Geschehen. Daher entstehen diese Geschichten nicht nur allein durch ihre Erzählung, sie entstehen ebenso durch die Handlungen der beteiligten Akteure, wobei der Sinn dieser Handlungen nur bedingt von den Intentionen der jeweiligen Akteure abhängig ist. Er ergibt sich viel eher durch den Stellenwert, den diese Handlungen für den Fortgang der jeweiligen Geschichte besitzen. In literarischen Erzählungen ist die narrative Sanktion ein vergleichbares Phänomen dieser Sinnggebung aus externer Perspektive. Normverletzungen werden nicht mit den diskursiven Mitteln des Erzählers, sondern durch den weiteren Gang der Ereignisse verurteilt (vgl. Kraß, 2006, S. 333).

«Skandalgeschichten» sind also für das Verständnis des journalistischen Erzählens in doppelter Hinsicht aufschlussreich. In erzähltheoretischer Hinsicht bieten sie eine Möglichkeit, die Konstruktion faktualer Geschichten transparent zu machen. In journalismustheoretischer Hinsicht machen sie das immanente Spannungsverhältnis zwischen den journalistischen Prinzipien der Wahrheit, Aktualität und Unparteilichkeit deutlich. Zugleich zeigen sie auf, wie der Journalismus dieses Spannungsverhältnis mithilfe der Trennung von Information und Meinung¹⁰ so auszutarieren sucht, dass er seiner gesellschaftlichen Funktion gerecht wird, durch die von ihm konstruierte Wirklichkeit in einer komplexen Welt Orientierung zu bieten (vgl. Meier, 2007, S. 13). In der Skandalberichterstattung ist das alles besonders ausgeprägt, es trifft aber mehr oder minder stark auch für viele andere

Bereiche der journalistischen Berichterstattung zu.

3.3 Geschichten und Gegengeschichten in der Plagiatsaffäre I

Im Skandal, den Guttenbergs Dissertation auslöst, konkurrieren drei (Makro-) Geschichten miteinander: die Fehler-, die Betrugs- und die Hetzjagdgeschichte (vgl. Renner, 2013, S. 276–283). Die Fehlergeschichte erklärt die Ungereimtheiten der Dissertation als Fehler beim Schreiben der Doktorarbeit. Die Betrugsgeschichte geht davon aus, dass Guttenberg betrogen hat. Die Hetzjagdgeschichte begründet die Plagiatsvorwürfe gegen Guttenberg damit, dass es seinen Kritikern nicht um die Reinheit der Wissenschaft gehe, sondern «darum, einen Superstar zu entzaubern», so die *Post von Wagner* in der BILD-Zeitung vom 17. Februar 2011. Wie die Berichterstattung zeigt, setzt sich Guttenberg in seiner Kelkheimer Rede mit allen drei Geschichten auseinander und strickt sie weiter fort.

An erster Stelle ist die Fehlergeschichte zu nennen. Guttenberg bestätigt sie, indem er die Konsequenzen zieht, die sich für ihn aus dieser Geschichte ergeben: Er verzichtet in aller Öffentlichkeit auf seinen Dokortitel. Damit scheint die Plagiatsaffäre ihren Abschluss zu finden. Dementsprechend hervorgehoben ist die Fehlergeschichte in der *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung* und in der *Süddeutschen Zeitung*. Sie bestimmt die Überschriften der Artikel, mit denen beide Zeitungen über Guttenbergs Auftritt berichten: *Guttenberg gibt «gravierende Fehler» zu* (FAZ 22.2.2011), *Guttenberg gibt seinen Dokortitel zurück* (SZ 22.2.2011). Die Betrugsgeschichte, mit der Guttenbergs Gegner ihre Rücktrittsforderungen begründen, spielt in der Kelkheimer Rede wiederum deswegen eine Rolle, weil Guttenberg diese Geschichte entkräften muss. Er habe, so liest man in der FAZ, «die Fehler nicht bewusst gemacht und nicht absichtlich getäuscht. (...) Von einem Rücktritt als Verteidigungsminister sprach er nicht» (FAZ 22.2.2011). Und die SZ schreibt, Guttenberg zufolge seien die falschen Zitate nicht bewusst geschehen.

¹⁰ Die Trennungsnorm entwickelt sich genauso wie das Leadprinzip während des Professionalisierungsschubs des amerikanischen Journalismus um 1880 (vgl. Emery & Emery 1992, S. 182).

«Einen Rücktritt schloss Guttenberg aus» (SZ 22.2.2011). Die Reportage in der *Süd-deutschen Zeitung* vom 23.2.2011 führt dann vor, wie die Hetzjagdgeschichte dazu dient, Guttenberg von den Betrugsvorwürfen zu entlasten. «Und die erdrückenden Beweise, die Doktorarbeit im Kopier-Verfahren verfasst zu haben?», fragt der Reporter. «Das ist nichts als politische Intrige. Da, wo Guttenberg ist, da wollen doch alle hin», lautet die Antwort des Befragten, der davon überzeugt ist, «so einer wie der (...), der kann auch Kanzler werden.» Auch Guttenberg selbst bedient diese Geschichte. Die FAZ zitiert: «Das Land müsse aufpassen, dass sich seine «Massstäbe nicht verschieben», sagte er und kritisierte, dass die «Fussnoten in einer ministeriellen Doktorarbeit» zeitweilig mehr Aufmerksamkeit erhalten hätten als die getöteten deutschen Soldaten in Afghanistan» (FAZ 22.2.2011). Und die SZ berichtet: «Umjubelt von der CDU-Basis rief er: «Eine oberfränkische Wettertanne hauen solche Stürme nicht um.»» (SZ 22.2.2011).

Betrachtet man die Kelkheim-Berichterstattung aus heutiger Perspektive, so sind vor dem Hintergrund dieser drei konkurrierenden Geschichten deutlich die Probleme zu erkennen, mit denen die Journalisten in der damaligen Situation zurechtkommen müssen.

Journalisten sind dem Aktualitätsprinzip verpflichtet, daher sind viele Geschichten, die sie erzählen müssen, zukunfts offen. Anders als Historiker kennen sie nicht das Ende, auch können sie bei konkurrierenden Geschichten nicht abwarten, welche Geschichte sich letztlich als die verbindliche erweist. Ebenso wenig können sie bei konkurrierenden Geschichten die Ereignisse nach dem Muster einer der Geschichten zu einem zusammenhängenden Ganzen verbinden, ohne damit für die Anhänger des entsprechenden Lagers Partei zu ergreifen. Dies widerspricht zwar nicht dem Selbstverständnis des Meinungsjournalismus, wie das in diesem Fall die Berichterstattung der BILD-Zeitung vorführt, doch mit der Objektivitätsnorm

des Informationsjournalismus ist das unvereinbar.¹¹

Weiterhin ist zu sehen, wie auch die journalistische Wahrheitspflicht die Konstruktion journalistischer Geschichten tangieren kann. Denn die Journalisten können zum damaligen Zeitpunkt trotz all ihrer Recherchen nicht verbindlich die Frage beantworten, die im Mittelpunkt der Plagiatsaffäre steht: Hat Guttenberg betrogen oder nicht? Dazu fehlt ihnen wie bei jeder Verdachtsberichterstattung (vgl. Liesem, 2017) die erforderliche Legitimation. So können sie zwar über alle Sachverhalte berichten, die für einen Betrug sprechen, doch das Vorliegen eines Betrugs selbst können sie erst dann behaupten, wenn Guttenberg dies selbst einräumt oder wenn dieser Verdacht in einem offiziellen Verfahren bestätigt wurde. Ein solches Verfahren kann aber nur von einem Gericht oder von der Universität Bayreuth durchgeführt werden, die den Dokortitel verliehen hat. Bis dahin können Journalisten nur Vermutungen anstellen. Das sind aber keine Fakten, die sie für die Konstruktion einer Geschichte verwenden dürfen.

Die Berichterstattung über Kelkheim ist aber auch ein gutes Beispiel dafür, wie der (Informations-)Journalismus diese Probleme durch die Trennung von Information und Meinung zu lösen sucht. In ihren Informationsartikeln berichten die beiden Zeitungen über den Auftritt Guttenbergs und die weiteren Fakten, die zur Beurteilung dieses Ereignisses relevant sind. Sie zitieren die aktuellen Äusserungen führender Politiker, sie informieren über den aktuellen Stand der Textvergleiche bei Guttenplag und sie melden, dass die Universität Bayreuth Guttenbergs Bitte um die Aberkennung seines Dokortitels bestätigt hat. Dabei rekurren sie in der für Nachrichten typischen Weise immer wieder auf das Vorwissen ihrer Leser (vgl. Lüger, 1995, S. 99). Die Bewertung der berichteten Fakten erfolgt dann in den Meinungsartikeln. Exemplarisch ist der Kommentar von Berthold Kohler, den die FAZ am

¹¹ Zu den verschiedenen Varianten des Journalismus vgl. Meier (2007, S. 78–79 und 183–187).

23.2.2011 unter dem Titel *Entlassen* veröffentlicht. Kohlers argumentative Basis ist die Betrugsgeschichte, auch wenn diese damals nicht als die allgemein verbindliche Geschichte akzeptiert ist. Er stellt die Selbstinszenierung Gutenbergs als «Saubermann» infrage und fordert den Rücktritt des Ministers: «Gutenberg hätte sich selbst, den Werten, die er hoch hält, und langfristig auch der Union einen besseren Dienst erwiesen, wenn er nicht nur der Universität Bayreuth einen Brief geschrieben hätte, sondern auch der Kanzlerin» (FAZ 23.2.2011).

Schliesslich zeigt die Kelkheim-Berichterstattung auch, warum es für den (Informations-)Journalismus so schwierig ist, Geschichten attraktiv und spannend zu erzählen. Das Trennungsgebot verhindert, dass die Akteure der jeweiligen Geschichten moralisch bewertet werden. Man kann daher nicht positive Helden und Bösewichter gegeneinanderstellen, ohne sich einem Manipulationsverdacht auszusetzen. Auch kann man den Handlungsbogen der erzählten Geschichten nur selten schliessen, da deren Ende aufgrund des Aktualitätsprinzips oftmals noch offen ist.

Bei Reportagen wird dieses Problem dadurch gelöst, dass anstelle der gesamten Geschichte eine in sich abgeschlossene Episode erzählt wird und dabei alles andere nur erwähnt wird. So verwenden sowohl Oliver Georgi wie auch Thorsten Schmitz und Stefan Braun die Dramaturgie des Kelkheimer Auftritts als Handlungsbogen der Geschichten, die sie in ihren Reportagen *Die fränkische Wettertanne nach dem Sturm* (FAZ 23.2.2011) und *Der Doktor und das liebe Volk* (SZ 23.2.2011) erzählen. Georgi beschränkt sich dabei auf das Geschehen in Kelkheim, den feierlichen Einzug in die Halle, die Rede und den jubelnden Schlussapplaus. Schmitz und Braun verbinden es mit der herzlichen Begrüssung, mit der die Abgeordneten der Unionsfraktion am nächsten Tag Gutenberg in Berlin empfangen. Tanjev Schultz kann dagegen in seiner Reportage *Prüfungsdruck* über die Situation an der Universität Bayreuth (SZ 23.2.2011) auf keinen linearen Geschehensablauf zurückgreifen, um einen Handlungsbogen zu bilden. So spitzt er

seine Reportage auf eine Schlusspointe zu: An der juristischen Fakultät wurde vor kurzem ein Graduiertenkolleg für geistiges Eigentum eingerichtet. «Das Kolleg bildet Doktoranden aus – lauter Experten für geistiges Eigentum. Diethelm Klippel [der Leiter des Graduiertenkollegs, knr] muss selbst lachen, als er davon erzählt.»

3.4 Zur Konstruktion journalistischer Geschichten: Erzähler und Geschichte

Identifiziert man die Storyworld faktualer Erzählungen mit der realen Welt, so hat das weitreichende Auswirkungen für die Referenz dieser Erzählungen. Nicht weniger weitreichend sind die Folgen für die Beziehung zwischen Erzähler und Geschichte. Denn dann gehören die Erzähler mitsamt ihren Geschichten zur real existierenden Welt. Daher müssen sie, anders als Märchen- oder Romanerzähler, für die Wahrheit dieser Geschichten haften. Erzählen sie absichtlich oder unabsichtlich falsche Sachverhalte, dann können sie dafür zur Rechenschaft gezogen oder gar juristisch belangt werden.

Die literaturwissenschaftliche Erzähltheorie erklärt diesen kategorialen Unterschied von faktualen und fiktionalen Erzählungen, indem sie bei fiktionalen Erzählungen zwischen dem Autor als dem realen Sprecher dieser Erzählung und dem Erzähler als dem «fiktive[n] Aussagesubjekt der fiktionalen Rede» differenziert (Martínez & Scheffel, 2012, S. 18). Diese «Grundunterscheidung» (Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 13) erklärt, warum journalistische Autoren, nicht aber literarische, für den Wahrheitsgehalt ihrer Erzählungen haften müssen.¹² Günter Grass kann nicht für die Geschichten belangt werden, die Oskar Matzerath, der von ihm erfundene Erzähler der *Blechtrommel*, über sich und ande-

¹² Da journalistische Beiträge nach dem Prinzip der Mehrfachautorenschaft produziert und publiziert werden (vgl. Bucher 2000), ist auch die Haftung für ihre Wahrheit dementsprechend modifiziert. Das Medienrecht legt fest, dass nicht nur die Autoren, sondern auch Redaktionen, Verlage und Sender für die Wahrheit und die Zulässigkeit journalistischer Beiträge haften müssen.

re erzählt.¹³ Die Differenz von realem Autor und fiktivem Erzähler erklärt aber auch, warum für die Erzähler fiktionaler Texte die Innenwelten ihrer Figuren zugänglich sind, während sie für journalistische Erzähler – ungeachtet aller Experimente des literarischen Journalismus – letztlich unzugänglich bleiben (vgl. Klein & Martínez, 2009, S. 2–5).

Andererseits kann gerade die Einbindung des Erzählers in die reale Welt erklären, warum es nicht nur bei fiktionalen, sondern auch bei faktualen Erzählungen Geschichten und Gegengeschichten geben kann, wie das die Plagiatsaffäre zeigt. Denn da die Erzähler faktualer Geschichten zur realen Welt gehören, sind sie auch in die Norm- und Wertesysteme ihrer Gesellschaften und Kulturen eingebunden, was wiederum ihre Sichtweise der Dinge bestimmt. Unterscheiden sich aber die Sichtweisen von Erzählern, dann unterscheiden sich auch ihre Geschichten. Das betrifft nicht nur die Darstellungsart, sondern auch die Geschichten selbst, sogar wenn diese auf den gleichen Sachverhalten beruhen.

Ein literaturwissenschaftliches Modell, das diesen Zusammenhang erfasst, ist das Sujet- bzw. Ereigniskonzept von Jurij M. Lotman. Nach Lotman hängt das Sujet, d. h. die erzählte Geschichte, «organisch (...) mit dem Weltbild [zusammen, knr], das den Massstab dafür liefert, was ein Ereignis ist» (Lotman, 1972, S. 333). Dieses Weltbild organisiert zunächst einmal die klassifikatorische semantische Ordnung, die die propositionale Struktur eines Textes bestimmt. Diese Ordnung ist anhand der räumlich-topographischen Zusammenhänge, die in einer Erzählung beschrieben werden, besonders gut zu erfassen,¹⁴ sie zeigt sich aber auch in allen anderen Klassifikationen. Ihr elementares Merkmal ist die Grenze. «Sie teilt den

Raum in zwei disjunkte Teilräume. Ihre wichtigste Eigenschaft ist ihre Unüberschreitbarkeit» (Lotman, 1972, S. 327). Ausgehend davon definiert Lotman den Begriff «Ereignis» als «die Versetzung einer Figur über die Grenze eines semantischen Feldes» (Lotman, 1972, S. 332; Hervorhebung beseitigt).¹⁵ Diese Figur ist dann der Handlungsträger, der «Held» der erzählten Geschichte (Lotman, 1972, S. 341). Da aber die Grenze vom Weltbild des Erzählers abhängig ist, sind auch das Ereignis und die erzählte Geschichte davon abhängig.

Lotmans paradoxe Ereignisdefinition als Überschreitung einer unüberschreitbaren Grenze erweist sich bei ihrer mengentheoretisch-logischen Rekonstruktion (vgl. Renner, 2004) als ein epistemologischer Sachverhalt, als ein Widerspruch zwischen dem, was ein Erzähler für wahr hält, und dem, was er beobachtet.

Die Grenze, die die klassifikatorische Ordnung einer Erzählung etabliert, lässt sich nämlich als eine Funktion von textspezifischen Ordnungssätzen darstellen. Syntaktisch gesehen sind das allquantifizierte Implikationen¹⁶, die mithilfe von Wenn-Dann-Beziehungen vorgeben, wel-

¹³ Diese Differenzierung zwischen Autor und Erzähler ist allerdings kulturabhängig, wie das die Fatwa von Ayatollah Khomeini gegen Salman Rushdie und seinen Roman *Die satanischen Verse* beweist.

¹⁴ Das erklärt die grosse Bedeutung, die Lotman topographischen Strukturen zumisst (vgl. Renner 2004, 366).

¹⁵ Lotmans Ereignisbegriff unterscheidet sich vom alltäglichen Ereignisbegriff in zweifacher Hinsicht. Er bezieht sich auf Ereignisse in einem emphatischen Sinn und nicht auf das, was eben so passiert. Auch ist er kein deskriptiver, sondern ein theoretischer Begriff, da er in ein theoretisches Konzept eingebunden ist. Ich versuche beidem dadurch Rechnung zu tragen, dass ich in meiner Terminologie zwischen Ereignis und Geschehen bzw. Geschehnis unterscheide.

¹⁶ Allquantifizierte Implikationen sind Sätze des Typs « $\forall x (Px \rightarrow Rx)$ » (Für alle x gilt: Wenn x die Eigenschaft P hat, dann hat x auch die Eigenschaft R). In der Alltagssprache nehmen allquantifizierte Implikationen die Form von Allaussagen und Stereotypen an, z. B. «Alle Bayern trinken Bier». Die Beziehung zur klassifikatorischen Funktion von Lotmans Grenze ergibt sich dadurch, dass die allquantifizierte Implikation das prädikatenlogische Korrelat der Teilmengenrelation ist (die Menge P ist eine Teilmenge der Menge R) und Lotmans Grenze mengentheoretisch als nicht-triviale Teilmengenrelation interpretiert werden kann (vgl. Renner 2004, 363–366).

che Figuren welchen Räumen bzw. Mengen angehören. Zugleich besitzen diese Ordnungssätze einen besonderen semantischen Status: Sie sollen im Rahmen der erzählten Geschichte immer wahr sein. In fiktionalen Erzählungen ist dieser Wahrheitsanspruch dadurch gegeben, dass der Autor bzw. Erzähler diese Geschichte so konstruiert hat. In faktualen Erzählungen beruht er darauf, dass diese Ordnungssätze vom Erzähler aufgrund seines Weltbildes, seiner Überzeugungen und Werte für wahr gehalten werden. Für die Figuren der erzählten Geschichte heisst das wiederum, sie sind an die Räume und Eigenschaften, die ihnen durch die Ordnungssätze zugewiesen wurden, gebunden. Daher können sie deren Grenzen nicht überschreiten. Aus diesem Grund muss das Geschehen – die Entwicklungen und die Wege der Figuren – mithilfe von Situationsbeschreibungen erfasst werden, die für jeden Zeitpunkt der Geschichte die Eigenschaften und Raumzugehörigkeiten der Figuren registrieren. Die Wahrheit dieser Situationsbeschreibungen beruht also auf Beobachtung und nicht auf Überzeugung. Sie ist korrespondenztheoretisch, nicht ideologisch begründet.

Ein Ereignis im Sinne Lotmans, das ergibt diese Rekonstruktion, liegt damit genau dann vor, wenn zwischen einem Ordnungssatz, dessen Wahrheit durch das Weltbild der Erzählers begründet ist, und einer Situationsbeschreibung, in der dieser Erzähler registriert, was tatsächlich der Fall ist, ein logischer Widerspruch besteht. Denn dann hat eine Figur eine Grenze überschritten, die nach den Spielregeln der erzählten Geschichte eigentlich unüberschreitbar ist. Versteht man eine Geschichte wiederum als Abfolge von Ereignissen, zwischen denen chronologische und kausale Zusammenhänge bestehen, so lässt sich dies als ein Zusammenwirken von Situationsbeschreibungen und Ordnungssätzen darstellen. Die Situationsbeschreibungen erfassen das zeitliche Nacheinander und die Ordnungssätze legen die kausalen Zusammenhänge fest.

Der weitere Fortgang einer Geschichte kann dann unter Rückgriff auf das Gleichgewichtskonzept von Tzvetan Todorov

(vgl. Todorov, 1972, S. 60) als Reparatur solcher Ordnungsverletzungen erklärt werden.¹⁷ Der Protagonist kehrt in seinen Raum zurück oder er verändert sich so, dass er in den neuen Raum passt. Eine dritte Möglichkeit ist, dass sich die semantische Ordnung durch eine Transformation so verändert, dass der Widerspruch verschwindet (vgl. Renner, 2004, S. 371–375). Ein weiteres Prinzip, das neben diesem Konsistenzprinzip den Fortgang einer Geschichte bestimmt, ist die Extrempunktregel. Sie besagt, dass durch die interne semantische Organisation der jeweiligen Teilräume ranghöchste Elemente ausgewiesen sind. Diese Extrempunkte bestimmen die Wege der Protagonisten innerhalb der Teilräume und markieren die Wendepunkte und Endpunkte von Geschichten (vgl. Renner, 2004, S. 375–377).¹⁸

Die Grenzüberschreitungstheorie bietet damit eine erzähltheoretische Erklärung, warum in journalistischen Erzählungen die gleichen Sachverhalte zu widersprüchlichen Geschichten verknüpft werden können, obwohl es sich nicht um fiktionale, sondern um faktuale Erzählungen handelt. Zugleich kann sie die Konstruktion von Geschichten aus Produzenten- wie aus Rezipientenperspektive erfassen, da sie auf ihrer elementaren Ebene mit mathematischen Mengen operiert und Mengen sowohl auf der Grundlage ausser- wie innertextlicher Gegebenheiten gebildet werden können.

Journalismustheoretisch folgt aus der Grenzüberschreitungstheorie, dass Journalisten die recherchierten Fakten nicht zu Geschichten verknüpfen können, ohne dabei auf Überzeugungen und Weltbilder zurückzugreifen.¹⁹ Journalistisches Erzählen kann daher schnell mit der Ob-

17 Dies entspricht dem Zusammenhang von Complication und Resolution bei Labov & Waletzky 1967.

18 Zukunftsstoffen sind Geschichten demnach, wenn sie zu einem Zeitpunkt erzählt werden, an denen Ordnungsverletzungen noch nicht behoben sind oder an denen ein Protagonist den Extrempunkt seines Weges noch nicht erreicht hat.

19 Ein vergleichbares Problem besteht bei der Auswertung statistischer Daten, etwa bei der Interpretation von Kurven.

jektivitätsnorm – genauer gesagt mit dem Unparteilichkeitsprinzip des Journalismus – in Konflikt geraten, was wiederum seine Mehrfachsystemfähigkeit (vgl. Kohring, 2001, S. 79) tangiert. Dieses Konfliktpotenzial wird so lange nicht virulent, solange alle Mitglieder einer Gesellschaft ein gemeinsames Weltbild teilen und das berichtete Geschehen nach gleichen Kriterien beurteilen. Genau das aber ist bei Skandalen und in polarisierten Gesellschaften nicht der Fall.

3.5 Geschichten und Gegengeschichten in der Plagiatsaffäre II

Ausschlaggebend für die gegensätzlichen Standpunkte der beiden Lager in der Plagiatsaffäre ist, dass sie die Ungereimtheiten in Guttenbergs Dissertation nach divergierenden Kriterien klassifizieren. Das eine Lager beurteilt sie als Fehler in einer wissenschaftlichen Arbeit, das andere als Plagiat, als Diebstahl geistigen Eigentums und Betrug. Rekonstruiert man die beiden (Makro-)Geschichten, die sich daraus ergeben, dann liegen der Fehlergeschichte die beiden Ordnungssätze OS 1 und OS 2 zugrunde und der Betrugsgeschichte die Ordnungssätze OS 3 und OS 4. Dabei erfassen die Ordnungssätze OS 2 und OS 4 die unterschiedliche Bewertung dieser Ungereimtheiten, während die Ordnungssätze OS 1 und OS 3 die treibende Kraft für den Fortgang der jeweiligen Geschichte bilden.

- › OS 1: Für alle x gilt: Wenn x den Dokortitel führt, dann setzt dies voraus, dass x eine Dissertation geschrieben hat, die keine gravierenden Fehler enthält.
- › OS 2: Für alle x gilt: Übernimmt x in seine Dissertation Passagen aus anderen Arbeiten und kennzeichnet x diese Passagen nicht als Zitat, dann begeht x einen gravierenden Fehler.
- › OS 3: Für alle x gilt: Wenn x Minister ist, dann darf x nicht betrügen.
- › OS 4: Für alle x gilt: Übernimmt x in seine Dissertation Passagen aus anderen Arbeiten und kennzeichnet x diese Passagen nicht als Zitat, dann begeht x einen Betrug.

Beide Geschichten beginnen damit, dass die *Süddeutsche Zeitung* am 16. Februar 2011 auf ihrer Titelseite einen Sachverhalt meldet, der nach OS 2 als Fehler und nach OS 4 als Betrug einzustufen ist und der damit entweder nur OS 1 oder auch noch OS 3 verletzt: «Nach Informationen der *Süddeutschen Zeitung* gibt es in Guttenbergs Dissertation einige Passagen, die wörtlich mit Formulierungen anderer Autoren übereinstimmen, ohne dass er dies wie vorgeschrieben gekennzeichnet hat» (SZ 16.2.2011). Diese Meldung, die als Situationsbeschreibung zu betrachten ist, ist aus gutem Grund so umständlich formuliert. Jede einfachere Formulierung brächte die Gefahr mit sich, einseitig Partei zu ergreifen. Die Fehlergeschichte endet dann am 21. Februar 2011 mit der Rückgabe des Dokortitels in Kelkheim, was die Verletzung von Ordnungssatz OS 1 behebt. Die Betrugsgeschichte endet mit dem Rücktritt Guttenbergs am 1. März 2011, womit die Verletzung von OS 3 beseitigt ist.

Methodisch lassen sich Ordnungssätze aus Textaussagen ableiten, die mehr oder minder deutlich als allgemein gültige Feststellungen und Regeln formuliert sind.²⁰ Etwa wenn Guttenberg in seiner Rede sagt: «Ich bin ein Mensch mit Fehlern und Schwächen» (FAZ 22.2.2011) oder wenn der CSU-Vorsitzende Horst Seehofer feststellt: «Ein Minister stürzt nur, wenn es die eigene Partei will» (SZ 22.2.2011). Zum anderen sind Ordnungssätze auch indirekt fassbar, wenn Regelverletzungen formuliert werden oder wenn Sachverhalte eine besondere Aufmerksamkeit erregen. Beispiele sind die Formulierung Guttenbergs, er habe «gravierende Fehler» gemacht, die dem «wissenschaftlichen Kodex» nicht entsprechen (FAZ 22.2.2011), und der jubelnde Applaus, den beide Reportagen in Kelkheim verzeichnen. Die Situationsbeschreibungen wiederum lassen sich relativ einfach aus Berichten und Meldungen

²⁰ Zur methodischen Anwendung von Lotmans Sujetkonzept und Grenzüberschreitungstheorie vgl. Kraß 2006, 285–349; Renner 2012, 55–65; Titzmann 2013; Müller & Grimm 2016.

ableiten, da diese die Dinge auf ähnliche Weise registrieren.

Ein Vergleich aller drei Guttenberg-Geschichten ergibt, dass die Hetzjagdgeschichte einen anderen Weg einschlägt, um die Sachverhalte zu einer abweichenden Geschichte zu verbinden. Hier werden nicht identische Sachverhalte divergierend klassifiziert, sondern hier wird der zeitliche Rahmen so gewählt, dass sich dadurch eine andere Geschichte ergibt.²¹

Die Hetzjagdgeschichte wird von den Guttenberg-Anhängern erzählt, um zu erklären, warum die Guttenberg-Gegner die Ungereimtheiten der Dissertation nicht als Fehler, sondern als Betrug einstufen. In den Medien wird sie von der BILD-Zeitung favorisiert (vgl. Renner, 2013, 280–283). Aber auch Berthold Kohler spielt in seinem Kommentar auf diese Geschichte an, wenn er schreibt: «[J]eden, der einen eigenen Kopf habe und aus dem Einheitsbrei der politischen Korrektheit herausrage, wollten Parteien und Medien kaputtmachen, schreit die gequälte Volksseele» (FAZ 23.2.2011). Unter Berücksichtigung der Artikel in der BILD-Zeitung lässt sich damit als Basis der Hetzjagdgeschichte Ordnungssatz OS 5 formulieren:

- › OS 5: Für alle x gilt: Wenn x zum Berliner Politikbetrieb gehört, dann ist x keine herausragende Persönlichkeit, sondern gehört zum Einheitsbrei.

Dieser Ordnungssatz OS 5 wird nicht durch die Entdeckung der Plagiate, sondern durch den kometenhaften Aufstieg Guttenbergs verletzt. Das liegt zum Zeitpunkt der Plagiatsaffäre bereits zwei Jahre zurück. Guttenbergs Blitzkarriere begann 2009, als er im Alter von 38 Jahren zum Wirtschaftsminister berufen wurde. Darum werden jetzt nach der Logik der Hetzjagdgeschichte die Fehler in der Dissertation dazu benutzt, um ihn wieder klein zu machen.

Guttenberg beruft sich in der Kelkheimer Rede ebenfalls auf die Hetzjagdgeschichte und er transformiert sie in ein

²¹ Vgl. dazu die Ausführungen von Hans Krahe zur «Grenzsetzung» (Krahe 2006, 327–330).

Bewältigungsnarrativ (vgl. Lucius-Hoene & Scheidt, 2017). Seine Metapher von der Wettertanne, die den Stürmen trotz, operiert mit der gleichen vertikalen semantischen Struktur wie Ordnungssatz OS 5. Als «Wettertannen», so schreibt die FAZ vom 23.2.2011 in einem eigenen Erklärkasten, werden «allein stehende Nadelbäume bezeichnet, die in exponierten Hochlagen Wind und Wetter trotzen» (frs. FAZ 23.2.2011). Guttenberg erklärt damit die Plagiatsaffäre zu einem Extrempunkt seiner Karriere und behauptet zugleich, dass sie nicht den Endpunkt seiner Karriere bildet, sondern einen Wendepunkt, von dem aus es weiter aufwärts geht, sobald der Sturm vorbei ist.

Dass die Plagiatsaffäre zu diesem Zeitpunkt nicht als Endpunkt von Guttenbergs Karriere erscheint, ist auch der Äußerung der Kanzlerin zuzuschreiben, sie habe ihn als Minister und nicht als wissenschaftlichen Assistenten berufen. «Sie achte darauf, ob er seine Arbeit als Minister erfüllen könne. Und da sage ich ja» (FAZ 22.2.2011). Damit versucht sie die Fehlergeschichte zum verbindlichen Masternarrativ der konkurrierenden Skandalgeschichten zu erklären und die Betrugsgeschichte durch eine Ordnungstransformation ausser Kraft zu setzen.²² Das gelingt aber nicht, weshalb in Kelkheim die Fehlergeschichte, jedoch nicht die Betrugsgeschichte ihr Ende gefunden hat.²³

²² Zur Ordnungstransformation durch eine zentrale Figur vgl. Renner 2004, 379, und Renner 2012, 73–79.

²³ Eine wesentliche Rolle für die nicht nachlassende Überzeugungskraft der Betrugsgeschichte spielt die Online-Plattform Guttenplag, wo sich jedefrau und jedermann selbst ein Urteil darüber bilden können, ob die Dissertation als fehlerhaft oder als versuchter Betrug zu bewerten ist.

4 Das «Wie» des journalistischen Erzählens

4.1 Journalistisches Erzählen und journalistische Textsorten

Das «Wie der Erzählung», so definieren Lahn und Meister den discours einer Erzählung, «ist die sprachliche Mitteilung, die uns der Erzähler von diesen Gegenständen und Ereignissen [dem «Was des Erzählung», knr] liefert» (Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 14). Während also das «Was der Erzählung» auf der semantischen Achse «Erzähltext-Geschichte-Welt» zu verorten ist, ist das «Wie» auf die pragmatische Achse «Erzähler-Erzähltext-Rezipienten» bezogen. Daher ist es über die Anforderungen der Kommunikationsgattung Journalismus hinaus noch von den spezifischen pragmatischen Funktionen der jeweiligen journalistischen Textsorten geprägt.

Exemplarisch für das journalistische Erzählen im engeren Sinne ist die Reportage. Ihre perlokutionäre Funktion ist es, «die Zuhörer/Leser am Geschehen geistig und emotional teilhaben, sie miterleben lassen durch die authentische Erzählung» (Haller, 1995, S. 62). Eine solche Vermittlung von «Erfahrungshaftigkeit» (experientiality) ist, wie Monika Fludernik unter Rückgriff auf die soziolinguistischen Untersuchungen von William Labov und Joshua Waletzky schreibt, eine wesentliche Funktion des alltäglichen Erzählens und eine zentrale Wirkungsabsicht vieler literarischer Texte. «Handlung, Intentionen und Gefühle sind alle Teil der menschlichen Erfahrung, die in Erzählungen berichtet und gleichzeitig evaluiert wird» (Fludernik, 2008, S. 122). Daher ist es nur folgerichtig, wenn die Autoren journalistischer Reportagen bei ihrem Storytelling weitgehend die gleichen Erzähltechniken verwenden wie die Autoren literarischer Texte.

Die perlokutionäre Funktion von Nachrichten und Berichten besteht dagegen darin, die Rezipienten über das aktuelle Geschehen auf dem Laufenden zu halten. Deswegen bestimmt die Aktualität bei diesen journalistischen Textsorten nicht nur die Auswahl der Themen, son-

dern auch die Gestaltung des discours. Nachrichten und Berichte sind nach dem Leadprinzip aufgebaut, sie informieren über das Wichtigste zuerst. Das erlaubt ein zeitsparendes Lesen und eine flüchtige Rezeption (vgl. Pöttker, 2003, S. 425). Anders als die Reportage dient diese Form des journalistischen Erzählens nicht der Vermittlung individueller Erfahrungen, sondern der nüchternen Darstellung der Fakten.

Die Ausdifferenzierung der verschiedenen kommunikativen Leistungen des Erzählens in den unterschiedlichen journalistischen Textsorten macht es weiterhin erforderlich, neben den informationsbetonten Textsorten auch die meinungsbetonten zu berücksichtigen. Denn die Evaluation des erzählten Geschehens durch den Erzähler ist, wie Labov und Waletzky zeigen, ein Grundbestandteil des alltäglichen Erzählens (vgl. Labov & Waletzky, 1967, S. 33–39), ebenso ist sie ein fester Bestandteil des literarischen Erzählens (vgl. Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 104). In (informations-)journalistischen Erzählungen kann der Erzähler das dargestellte Geschehen jedoch nicht bewerten, das würde dem Prinzip der Trennung von Information und Meinung widersprechen. Hier werden die darstellende und die bewertende Funktion des Erzählens voneinander getrennt. Nachrichten und Berichte dienen der Darstellung des berichteten Geschehens, Kommentare, Glossen und Karikaturen seiner Evaluation. Damit ist auf der Ebene der einzelnen Texte die Trennung von Information und Meinung gewahrt und die evaluative Funktion des Erzählens wird auf die Ebene des journalistischen Diskurses verlagert, wo informationsbetonte und meinungsbetonte Beiträge miteinander interagieren.

4.2 Die Gestaltung zeitlicher Zusammenhänge

Journalistische Erzählungen im engen und im weiten Sinne unterscheiden sich bei ihrer erzählerischen Gestaltung deutlich voneinander, so bei der Wahl von Erzählperspektiven oder bei der Anlage der Figuren (vgl. Renner & Schupp, 2017, S. 126–127). Hier soll lediglich die Gestaltung der

zeitlichen Zusammenhänge besprochen werden, da bei ihnen der Einfluss des Aktualitätsprinzips auf das journalistische Erzählen besonders deutlich wird. Inhaltlich lässt sich die Zeitgestaltung anhand der Beziehungen von erzählter Zeit und Erzählzeit erfassen (vgl. Martínez & Schefel, 2012, S. 32–49; Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 136–151), formale Aspekte der Zeitgestaltung sind der Gebrauch der grammatischen Zeiten und die Datumsangaben (vgl. Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 151–154).

Bei den Datumsangaben der Beispieltex-te fällt auf, dass sie alle – Berichte, Reportagen und Kommentare – ausschließlich relationale Zeitangaben verwenden, besonders häufig ist dabei der Bezug auf die Wochentage. Kalendarische Zeitangaben finden sich nur in den Kopfzeilen der Zeitungsseiten und manchmal in der Autorenzeile. So weist der Bericht in der *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung* vom 22. Februar 2011 in der Autorenzeile mit den Angaben «oge./ban./kau. BERLIN / KELKHEIM, 21. Februar» (die Jahreszahl fehlt) die Verfasser sowie Ort und Zeitpunkt des berichteten Geschehens aus. Im Fliesstext ist dann zu lesen, was Guttenberg «am Montagabend» gesagt hat und was die Universität Bayreuth «am Montagabend» mitgeteilt hat. Die *Süddeutsche Zeitung* vom 22. Februar 2011 berichtet über die Veranstaltung «am Montagabend» und erwähnt, dass «bereits an diesem Dienstag» in Bayreuth eine Kommission zusammentreten will. Der Referenzpunkt all dieser relationalen Zeitangaben ist also Dienstag, der 22. Februar 2011, der Publikationstermin der Zeitungsausgaben. Dieser Termin markiert die Hier-Jetzt-Ich-Origo (vgl. Bühler, [1934] 1999, S. 102) der journalistischen Sprecherinstanz und bildet den gemeinsamen Bezugspunkt von Erzähler und Leser, um die mitgeteilten Geschehnisse zeitlich zu verorten.

Als grammatikalische Zeit benutzen Erzählungen üblicherweise das Präteritum, da das Erzählte bereits vergangen ist (vgl. Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 151). Hier-von weichen die Kelkheim-Reportagen deutlich ab, bei ihnen dominiert das Präsens. Das ist auf die Wirkungsabsicht von Reportagen zurückzuführen, auf das Er-

möglichen eines Miterlebens. Ihr Präsens ist ein historisches Präsens, wie es auch in literarischen Texten zur Imagination des Geschehens und zur Intensivierung des Erlebens verwendet wird (vgl. Lahn & Meister, 2008, S. 153).

Die Berichte sind dagegen im Präteritum gehalten, mit einer bemerkenswerten Ausnahme: Ihr erster Satz steht im Perfekt oder im Präsens. Exemplarisch ist der Leadsatz im Bericht der FAZ vom 22. Februar 2011: «Bundesverteidigungsminister zu Guttenberg (CSU) hat schwerwiegende Fehler bei der Verfassung seiner Dissertation eingestanden, will aber als Verteidigungsminister im Amt bleiben.» Diese Besonderheit beruht auf einer konventionellen Norm des Zeitungsjournalismus, die Volker Wolff in seinem praktischen Handbuch folgendermassen wiedergibt: «Gilt das Berichtete noch (...), steht der erste Satz im Präsens. (...) Ist das Geschehen abgeschlossen, sind die Taten vollbracht, ist der Schaden eingetreten, das Wort gesprochen und hat das alles noch einen Gegenwartsbezug, dann steht der erste Satz im Perfekt» (Wolff, 2011, S. 60). Erzähltheoretisch gesehen bedeutet das, dass der Leadsatz die Funktion einer Situationsbeschreibung erfüllt, die den aktuellen Zustand des erzählten Geschehens für den Zeitpunkt registriert, an dem es erzählt wird.

Dieser formale Aspekt der Zeitgestaltung von Nachrichten und Berichten korrespondiert mit ihrer inhaltlichen Gestaltung. Da sie nach dem Leadprinzip organisiert sind, ist bei ihnen die natürliche Abfolge der erzählten Geschehnisse, die *ordo naturalis*, in eine textsortenspezifische *ordo artificialis* (vgl. Lahn & Meister 2008, S. 138) transformiert. Die Reihenfolge, in der Nachrichten und Berichte das Geschehen erzählen, entspricht nicht dessen zeitlichem Nacheinander, sondern der Relevanz. Dabei sind Nachrichten nach dem Drei-Satz-Schema und Berichte nach dem Fünf-Absatz-Schema aufgebaut. Sie fassen ihre Informationen zu drei bzw. fünf Paketen zusammen, die zunächst die aktuelle Lage, dann die Details inklusive der zurückliegenden Geschehnisse und

schliesslich zukünftige Sachverhalte behandeln (vgl. Wolff, 2011, S. 54 und 70).

Auch die Berichte über Kelkheim entsprechen diesem Schema. Titelzeilen und Leadsätze skizzieren die aktuelle Lage: «Guttenberg gibt «gravierende Fehler zu», ist die Überschrift in der FAZ vom 22.2.2011, «Guttenberg gibt seinen Dokortitel zurück» schreibt die SZ. Danach berichten sie im Einzelnen, was sich in Kelkheim zugetragen hat und welche Politiker sich jetzt zur Plagiatsaffäre geäussert haben. Nähere Informationen zum zurückliegenden Skandalgeschehen gibt es nicht, das ist den Lesern bereits bekannt. Im Zukunftsabsatz schreibt dann die FAZ, die SPD habe angekündigt, «es werde eine Aktuelle Stunde im Bundestag zu der Affäre geben», und die SZ berichtet über den aktuellen Stand von Guttenplag, wonach «mindestens ein Fünftel der Dissertation aus anderen Werken übernommen» wurde und diese Zahl «weiter steigen» dürfte, da die neuesten Funde «hier noch nicht berücksichtigt» seien.

Ruft man sich in Erinnerung, dass Nachrichten und Berichte aufgrund des Aktualitätsanspruchs des Journalismus dazu dienen, zukunfts offene Makrogeschichten zu erzählen, so erscheint das Leadprinzip von Nachrichtentexten mit seinem Tempus-Vorgaben für den ersten Satz wie eine Kollision der erzählten Zeit mit dem Zeitpunkt des Erzählens. Das Erzählen zukunfts offener Geschichten ist kein übliches Erzählen, bei dem der Erzähler aus der Distanz auf ein abgeschlossenes Geschehen zurückblickt. Es ist ein gleichzeitiges Erzählen, das mit der aktuellen Situation des Erzählers unmittelbar verkoppelt ist. Dabei verschwimmen «die Grenzen zwischen handelndem Helden und schreibendem Erzähler, zwischen erlebendem und erzählendem Ich» (Martínez & Scheffel, 2012, S. 77). Diese Entgrenzung ist der Ansatzpunkt der Pressionen, denen Journalisten immer wieder ausgesetzt sind. Und sie ist die Ursache eines dem aktuellen Informationsjournalismus immanenten Dilemmas: Da die Funktion des Journalismus die Selbstbeobachtung der Gesellschaft ist (vgl. Meier, 2007, S. 28), können Journalisten nur als Beobachter

aktiv werden und dürfen sich nicht als aktiv Handelnde in das Geschehen einmischen. Genau das steht beim gleichzeitigen Erzählen in Frage.

4.3 Journalistisches Erzählen und journalistischer Diskurs

In diesem Dilemma verspricht die Trennung von Information und Meinung den Anspruch des aktuellen Informationsjournalismus einzulösen, als Beobachter der Gesellschaft zu agieren. Betrachtet man die Trias von Nachricht/Bericht, Reportage und Kommentar, wie sie in den überregionalen Tageszeitungen üblich ist, so leisten Nachrichten, Berichte und Reportagen die Beobachtung der aktuellen Ereignisse. Die einen informieren über das Geschehen und die anderen ermöglichen es, dies mitzuerleben. Die Kommentare greifen dagegen aktiv in den weiteren Fortgang des Geschehens ein. Sie bewerten es und zielen damit auf eine Veränderung oder eine Bestätigung der Einstellungen ihrer Rezipienten (vgl. Lüger, 1995, S. 28) mit den entsprechenden Konsequenzen für deren weitere Handlungen. Die logische Voraussetzung, dass diese intertextuelle Konstruktion zukunfts offener Geschichten gelingt, besteht darin, dass journalistische Texte übereinstimmend auf die reale Welt als ihre gemeinsame Storyworld bezogen sind. Die publizistische Voraussetzung, dass die diskursive Auseinandersetzung über die Realisation von Handlungsalternativen mit dem journalistischen Anspruch vereinbar ist, neutraler Beobachter der Gesellschaft zu sein, besteht wiederum darin, dass in diesem journalistischen Diskurs die Meinungsvielfalt der Kommentare das Meinungsspektrum der Gesellschaft repräsentiert.

Ein Vergleich der verschiedenen Beiträge zur Kelkheim-Episode zeigt die besondere Bedeutung, die dem Leadprinzip für die diskursive Konstruktion zukunfts offener Geschichten zukommt. Denn die Sachlage, die in den Leadsätzen der Nachrichten und Berichte als aktueller Stand der Makrogeschichte ausgewiesen ist, bildet zu einem den konstruktiven Rahmen der Mikrogeschichten, die in den Reportagen erzählt werden, und zum an-

deren ist sie die argumentative Grundlage für die Evaluation des Geschehens in den kommentierenden Beiträgen.

So beginnt die Reportage in der *Süddeutschen Zeitung* mit einer Schilderung, wie Guttenberg am Tag nach Kelkheim von seinen Fraktionskollegen im Bundestag empfangen wird: «Sie wollen seine Hand schütteln, wollen ihn persönlich begrüßen; und wenn man sieht, wie viele das an diesem Nachmittag in Berlin wollen, dann sagt das schon einiges über die Frage, wie es dem Politiker Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg geht» (Schmitz & Braun, SZ 23.2.2011).

Die Reportage erzählt das (vermeintliche) Ende der Plagiatsaffäre als Geschichte einer Heimkehr. Genauer gesagt, sie stützt sich auf das Handlungsschema (vgl. Martínez & Scheffel, 2012, S. 27) der Heimkehr des verlorenen Sohns. Guttenberg ist von seinem Irrweg heimgekehrt, er ist von seiner Position abgerückt, seine Dissertation besäße keine nennenswerten Fehler, und hat in Kelkheim öffentlich Busse geleistet: «Guttenberg kreuzigt sich jetzt selbst. Nimmt Schuld auf sich, wodurch ihm das Kunststück gelingt, an Achtung bei den Menschen zu gewinnen. Guttenberg bekennt demütig, Fehler gemacht zu haben» (Schmitz & Braun, SZ 23.2.2011). Diese Geschichte kann man nur erzählen, wenn man glaubt, dass sich die Fehlergeschichte als die verbindliche Geschichte der Plagiatsaffäre durchgesetzt hat. Auch der Autor der Reportage in der *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung* ist davon überzeugt, dass Guttenberg nunmehr die Plagiatsaffäre überstanden hat, und schreibt als Überschrift: «Die fränkische Wettertanne nach dem Sturm» (Georgi, FAZ 23.2.2011). Aus heutiger Sicht weiss man, dass die richtige meteorologische Metapher die «Ruhe vor dem Sturm» gewesen wäre und dass es besser gewesen wäre, anstatt auf das Gleichnis aus der Bibel auf Thomas Manns Roman *Die Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull* zurückzugreifen.²⁴

Der analysierende Beitrag von Günter Bannas in der *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung* vom 23. Februar 2011 zeigt exemplarisch, welche Bedeutung der Sachverhalt, den die Berichte in ihren Leadsätzen formulieren, für den Argumentationsaufbau kommentierender Beiträge, ja für den gesellschaftlichen Diskurs insgesamt besitzt. Sein Artikel beginnt folgendermaßen: «Die Bundeskanzlerin findet die Entscheidung Karl-Theodor zu Guttenbergs, auf den Dokortitel zu verzichten richtig, hat Regierungssprecher Seibert am Dienstag offiziell die Haltung Angela Merksels beschrieben» (Bannas, FAZ 23.2.2011). Diese Sachverhaltsfeststellung ist auch die Prämisse des Kommentars von Berthold Kohler, der die nunmehr entstandene Situation negativ bewertet, da sie den Grundsätzen seines Weltbildes widerspricht:

Noch aber ist Deutschland eine Republik, und noch ist ein Plagiat Diebstahl geistigen Eigentums. Die Kanzlerin mag aus naheliegenden Gründen über Letzteres hinweggehen, wenigstens nach aussen hin. Den Schaden im Kosmos der bürgerlichen Werte, den die Operation zur Rettung des gestrauchelten Bannerträgers nach sich zieht, kann aber auch Frau Merkel unmöglich übersehen. Die Aktion, so sie denn gelingt und schon alles am Licht ist, wird Spätfolgen haben. (Kohler, FAZ 23.2.2011).

Wie am Beispiel der Kelkheim-Berichterstattung deutlich wird, stellt sich also das intertextuelle Zusammenspiel der journalistischen Textsorten, die auf der Ebene des journalistischen Diskurses die darstellende und die bewertende Funktion des Erzählens übernehmen, so dar, dass die (im engen wie im weiten Sinne) erzählenden Textsorten die informierende Funktion des Erzählens und die argumentativen Textsorten die evaluative ausführen. Dabei nehmen Nachrichten und Berichte eine vermittelnde Position ein. Denn die besondere kommunikative Potenz des Leadprinzips, Öffentlichkeit herzustellen (vgl. Pöttker, 2003, S. 425), besteht nicht nur darin, rasch über das Wichtigste zu informieren. Sie besteht auch darin, dass es die

²⁴ Das wäre jedoch zum Zeitpunkt der Veröffentlichung dieser Reportage ein Verstoß gegen die Regeln der Verdachtsberichterstattung gewesen.

Darstellung des aktuellen Geschehens so komprimiert und abstrahiert, dass dieser Sachverhalt in der argumentativen Auseinandersetzung des gesellschaftlichen Diskurses als Fall klassifiziert und evaluiert werden kann.²⁵ Das ist die spezifische Leistung des aktuellen Informationsjournalismus. Er organisiert das Erzählen zukunftsöffener Geschichten so, dass sich die gesellschaftliche Diskussion über den Fortgang dieser Geschichten auf beobachtbare Fakten stützen kann und nicht auf ein blindes Vertrauen in die Meinungsführer angewiesen ist.

5 Schlussbemerkungen

Es war das Ziel dieser Studie, am Beispiel der Berichterstattung über die Kelkheim-Episode aufzuzeigen, was die literaturwissenschaftliche Erzähltheorie zum Verständnis des journalistischen Erzählens beitragen kann. Ein wesentliches Ergebnis ist, dass sich diese Auseinandersetzung nicht auf das Storytelling, auf das Erzählen im engen Sinne, beschränken kann. Vielmehr erscheinen Storytelling und Leadprinzip als zwei komplementäre Erzählverfahren, die der Informationsjournalismus zur Darstellung und Konstruktion seiner zukunftsöffenen (Makro-)Geschichten verwendet. Dabei garantiert das intertextuelle Zusammenspiel der verschiedenen narrativen und argumentativen Textsorten, dass dieses journalistische Erzählen den Anforderungen des Journalismus entspricht.

Es bedarf keiner eigenen Begründung, dass die Ergebnisse dieser Fallstudie noch in weiteren Untersuchungen empirisch zu überprüfen sind. Auch müssen diese Untersuchungen über das journalistische Erzählen in überregionalen Tageszeitungen hinausgehen. Wie gestaltet sich das journalistische Erzählen in jenen Formen des Journalismus, die wie der Boulevardjournalismus oder der Sportjournalismus keine Trennung von Information und Mei-

nung kennen? Welchen Einfluss haben die Medien auf das journalistische Erzählen? So kombiniert die charakteristische Textsorte des Zeitschriftenjournalismus, der Magazinbericht, narrative und argumentative Passagen miteinander (vgl. Wolff, 2011, S. 83–94), und die Moderatoren von Fernsehnachrichten erscheinen geradezu als «Nachrichtenerzähler» (Hickethier, 1998, S. 187; Köhler, 2009). Dann ist aber auch zu fragen, inwieweit die Rezipienten journalistischer (Makro-)Erzählungen diese im Sinne der berichtenden Journalisten verstehen oder ob sie die einzelnen Bruchstücke des nach und nach erzählten Geschehens zu eigenen Geschichten zusammenfügen, die den von den Journalisten erzählten nicht entsprechen.²⁶

Schon jetzt ist aber zu sagen, dass sich diese Fragen nicht mit punktuellen Erklärungen einzelner Phänomene beantworten lassen. Denn die Besonderheiten des journalistischen Erzählens sind, wie das diese Studie deutlich zeigt, das Ergebnis eines systemischen Zusammenhangs zwischen den kommunikativen Leistungen des Erzählens und den Anforderungen der Kommunikationsgattung Journalismus.

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²⁵ Hier bestehen deutliche Übereinstimmungen mit dem Verhältnis von Erzählen und Argumentieren im juristischen Diskurs (vgl. von Arnould 2009, 37; Hübner 2017).

²⁶ Ein aktuelles Beispiel ist die Fernsehberichterstattung über die Flüchtlinge im Herbst 2015 (vgl. Herrmann 2018).

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Fragmentary narrative reasoning. On the enthymematic structure of journalistic storytelling

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Abstract

Journalists worldwide conceive of their work mostly as writing stories, because the narrative mode is extremely effective in delivering information to all social categories. Nonetheless, journalists hardly ever tell a whole story that complies with the criteria contemplated by narratology. Instead, they tell parts of a story and let the audience supply the rest, an operation made possible by the fact that narrative patterns are culturally shared by newswriters and their audiences. In this paper, we investigate some examples of fragmentary narratives as well as the journalists' strategic reasons for using them, combining approaches to storytelling and to argumentation. The case studies are taken from *Corriere del Ticino*, the main Italian-language newspaper in Switzerland.

Keywords

storytelling, journalistic writing, argumentation, narration, enthymeme

1 Introduction

Journalists worldwide conceive of their work mostly as *writing stories*. They look for the story in an event, focus on getting the story to the audience, and worry about stories in their texts not being clear enough (e.g., Luginbühl & Perrin, 2011). But do journalists actually write stories? Narrative studies have long envisaged a series of characteristics for a text to be a story¹, such as its structure and participants (e.g., Fludernik, 1996; Greimas, 1966; Herman, 2009). Indeed, what journalists hardly ever do is tell a whole story that complies with these criteria – both due to time and space constraints that are inherent in journalistic writing, and to the role of journalists in the public sphere. Rather, they tell parts of a story and evoke narrative patterns in the audience (Perrin & Wyss, 2016), which allow the addressees to complete the narration-themselves.

To what purpose then do journalists make this effort? Because stories are the

most effective and understandable form of communication across social groups (Perrin & Wyss, 2016). This effectiveness results from focusing on recent aspects of socially relevant topics according to the basic narrative structure (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). As these patterns are well known in a given culture, journalists do not need to illustrate all the details and stages of the story. Instead, they can rely on the collaboration with the audience for making sense of what they are saying.

From the perspective of argumentation theory, this evocative operation consists in triggering unexpressed premises in the audience, thus creating enthymemes – the typical syllogisms of rhetoric. Some premises can remain unexpressed, because they are already shared between the arguer (in this case, the journalist) and the audience of an argumentative communicative act (Aristotle, 1954; Bitzer, 1959). Indeed, leaving something implicit is widely considered an act of faith towards the rationality of the interlocutors (Jackson & Jacobs, 1980). This form of fragmentary narrative reasoning is particularly powerful, because it makes the audience actively

1 Due to space limitations, the key concepts of narratology cannot be discussed in depth here.



participate in the process of supporting a given standpoint: the audience supplies itself the premises that make sense of what is being said, which eventually leads to self-persuasion (cf. Bitzer, 1959).

In this paper, we claim that there is a rhetorical purpose behind the use of fragmentary narration in journalistic writing. Journalists, despite not always being aware of it, exploit the rhetorical mode of narration for its impact on the audience and leave narratives fragmentary as a strategic choice. To prove this claim, we analyze fragmentary narration in two editorials and in the corresponding reports. Building upon previous studies that consider journalistic texts enthymematic (López Pan, 2015; Zampa, 2015, 2017), we reconsider studies on journalistic writing as storytelling from an argumentation theory perspective.² This approach shows how the two rhetorical modes of narration and argumentation – together with description and exposition – are intertwined in everyday journalistic writing, opening up to a research line that will broaden the still limited scope of studies in argumentation dealing with narration, and deepen the widespread and often superficial understanding of journalism as storytelling.

In what follows, we first outline our theoretical framework (Section 2), divided between studies on storytelling in journalism (2.1) and on argumentation (2.2). Then we explain the research methodology and describe the corpus (3). We show the argumentative power of enthymematic storytelling with the help of examples from *Corriere del Ticino*, the main Swiss Italian-language newspaper (4). We conclude by outlining the narrative arc as a concept to understand the interplay of rhetorical modes in public discourse, which is to a large extent stimulated by journalistic contributions (5).

2 Theoretical framework

In this section, we present a concise literature review of elements from the field of narrative (2.1) and argumentative (2.2) studies that are relevant to the investigation of newswriting as fragmentary narrative reasoning.

2.1 Storytelling in journalism

Storytelling is an addressee-oriented semiotic activity which focuses on the process of making the communicative reconstruction of a complex discursive object understandable and thrilling by, at the same time, entertaining, informing and educating the audience. For this reason, storytelling has always played a significant role in the production of news. From ancient times on, bards and ballad mongers have wandered around from community to community, reporting events. In contemporary society, this function has been taken up by the media, so that journalists are considered the “professional storytellers of our age” (Bell, 1991, p. 147).

Why do journalists stick to the narrative mode? Because “storytelling is effective in bringing about a sense of community – that in which listeners can easily understand and find common ground with their fellow listeners” (Barker & Gower, 2010, pp. 305–306). A story can be indeed followed by a broad public, often regardless of the background of the individual. It is, thus, a genre that enables communication across different social layers and domains. Given that the function of journalism is exactly to synchronize society (Perrin, 2016), i. e., to communicate across diverse social groups information that is relevant for them, helping the audience to broaden their knowledge of reality (Pan & Kosicki, 1993), it becomes clear why narratives play such a key role in journalistic text production.

For a story to be understood by an audience as wide as possible, it must be based on some fundamental elements that are shared by all members. The core features that make a discursive object a narrative are diverse. On the communicative level, they involve narrator and addressee;

2 The complementary interplay of argumentation and narration has already been discussed by Bruner (1986), who speaks of two modes of thought, the narrative and the logico-scientific (or paradigmatic) mode.

on the representation level, they include a human or anthropomorphic protagonist with intentions, a chain of events underpinned or not by a form of suspense, a depicted world (Herman, 2009). According to classical approaches, a narrative is structured in several phases. In the Labovian tradition, they entail: 1) orientation, which introduces the addressee to the whereabouts of the story; 2) complication, the events that start action in the described scenario; 3) evaluation, “that part of the narrative that reveals the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative by emphasizing the relative importance of some narrative units as compared to others” (Labov & Waletzky, 1967, p. 32); 4) resolution, the section concluding the story; 5) coda, a facultative addition “for returning the verbal perspective to the present moment” (Labov & Waletzky, 1967, p. 33).

From these core elements and following the outlined structure, basic narratives such as *small and clever beats giant and clumsy* are put together to the purpose of categorizing happenings and processing them cognitively in an easier way. Basic narratives are extremely powerful cognitive schemata, for they are deeply rooted in a culture and continuously reproduced in discourse (Bruner, 1991). This repetition confirms and strengthens their role in that culture. Questioning basic narratives from within the culture is thus hard to conceive, as it would mean weakening the cohesion of elements that tighten a culture together. In fact, as Lakoff (2003, p. 137) notices, “the shared rules of storytelling bind a culture together.” As we will explain in Section 2.2, the same happens with endoxa.

2.2 Argumentation

Argumentation theory investigates how humans reasonably discuss in case of disagreement, how they express their standpoint on a given controversial issue and how they support it (cf. van Eemeren et al., 2014). Besides a long tradition in reconstructing the formal structure of argumentation (starting in ancient times with Aristotle and reviving again from the 1950s on), nowadays, studies on the actual functioning of argumentation in its contexts of

use are flourishing. Journalism is one of these, with work being done especially on argumentation in the newsmaking process (Burger & Delaloye, 2016; Luciani, Rocci & Zampa, 2015; Zampa, 2015, 2017; Zampa & Bletsas, 2018; Zampa & Musi, 2016; Zampa & Perrin, 2016). For what concerns the news product, the editorial has been at the center of scholarly attention (Gauthier, 2002; López Pan, 2015; Zampa, 2015, 2017).

The editorial is the argumentative journalistic text par excellence, featuring a commentary by an editor about a relevant event, with one or more standpoints supported by arguments based on facts and observations. Here, the journalistic pundit voices the opinion of the editorial office more than his or her own. Interestingly, although providing background information within the editorial itself would help the audience understand the position defended, editorials tend to avoid doing so. Consequently, the conclusion ends up being supported by one (or more) unexpressed premises. Editorials, as mentioned in the introduction, function thus as enthymemes (López Pan, 2015).

The enthymeme “is a syllogism based on probabilities, signs, and examples, whose function is rhetorical persuasion. Its successful construction is accomplished through the joint efforts of speaker and audience, and this is its essential character” (Bitzer, 1959, p. 408). Enthymemes are “social productions” (Jackson & Jacobs, 1980, p. 262), which tightly bind the two parties in a communicative exchange. In the case of the editorial, the actual text constitutes the journalist’s effort, whereas the readership’s effort lies in providing the premises that remained implicit.

In order for this cooperation to be possible, the missing premises must be shared by both the journalist and his/her audience, i.e., they must be endoxa. Endoxa are propositions that are “in the common opinion” and thus “generally accepted within a community” (Tardini, 2005, p. 281). As such, they are strongly bound to a specific context, and would not function as premises elsewhere. Belonging to a community indeed means

sharing its endoxa, or – vice versa – the identity of a community or of an institution (such as a newspaper or a television channel) is defined by the endoxa its members share. Therefore, not only would outsiders not understand the reference to endoxa, but members of the community are not prone to question them, for that might mean putting themselves outside the community (cf. 2.1 on questioning basic narratives). In this perspective, López Pan's (2015) interpretation of news texts as having an epideictic function in the sense of promoting adherence to shared values and creating a sense of community is particularly fitting.³ Endoxa often remain implicit, because they are taken for granted by both parties – in Aristotle's words, “for if any one of these is well known, there is no need to mention it, for the hearer can add it himself” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I, 1357a). This is in line with the Gricean Maxim of Quantity (1975). As Tardini (2005) notices, it would even be detrimental to verbalize these already shared premises. It would a) go back to something already established instead of going forward with discourse; b) presuppose that the audience is somehow “slow”; c) increase disagreement space. Basic narratives can be considered part of the endoxical background (see also Bird & Dardenne, 2009).

As it emerges from this explanation, fragmented narrative communication functions only if the audience shares with the author the basic narratives according to which the story is developed. Only in this case can a reader make sense of what is written and complete the story. In order for the story to result in a felicitous communicative effort (i. e., one that informs the audience in an understandable and effective way, and that eventually also convinces it of a given position), it has to activate endoxa. We illustrate and explain such fragmented narrative communica-

tion in Sections 4 and 5 respectively, after outlining the research tools.

3 Research methodology and corpus description

The data analyzed in this paper were collected within the framework of Progression Analysis (Perrin, 2003), which investigates news products as they emerge from text production processes in complex and dynamic environments. This multi-method approach (Beaufort, 1999; Dor, 2003; Sleurs, Jacobs, & Van Waes, 2003) focuses on “the socially embedded cognitive and manifest processes of writing by individuals: their situated activity in context” (Ehrensberger-Dow & Perrin, 2013, p. 81). The situated activity is investigated mainly by ethnographic observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. With Progression Analysis, data can be obtained on three levels, combining ethnography with computer-based tools. These levels are: a) the work situation, described on the basis of interviews and participatory observation; b) the text production activity, recorded with cameras at the workplace and on the screen of the journalists via a logging program; c) the writing strategies, verbalized upon reviewing the own writing process in the so-called cue-based Retrospective Verbal Protocols (from now on, RVPs), which are conducted immediately after writing is completed. Despite being an ex-post reconstruction – which might raise criticism about self-justificatory behaviors on the writers' part (Perrin, 2013, pp. 63–64) – we favor it to think-aloud protocols, which are produced during writing. The latter indeed have proven to intensively interfere with the writing itself (Janssen, Van Waes & Van den Bergh, 1996; Levy, Marek & Lea, 1996; Pitts, 1982; Smagorinsky, 1994, 2001).

Our team has been collecting data according to the Progression Analysis method in various Swiss newsrooms over the past twenty years. In this paper, we consider data from the latter section of the corpus, gathered in 2013 at the Swiss

3 On this issue, see also Conboy (2007) who, relying on Toulmin's model (1958), underlines that the warrants proposed in media products correspond to the knowledge shared between newsmakers and audience, and thus make standpoints acceptable for the latter.

Italian-language newspaper *Corriere del Ticino*.

4 Data analysis

Editorials are an exception among journalistic products, for not only are they explicitly argumentative, but they also tend to include a complete basic narrative structure (Labov & Waletzky, 1967), a so-called “narrative arc.” Yet, to be understandable and effective, they rely on endoxa shared with the readership, featuring thus an enthymematic structure. This claim will be justified by means of the following two case studies.

The case studies considered,⁴ which include also the editorials’ RVPs and the reports on the same topic, are the RAID⁵ case, on a confused international news event (4.1) and the CAME⁶ case, on a planned speech regarding political economy (4.2). In 4.3, the narrative structure of the editorials is enhanced and compared with that of the corresponding reports.

4.1 From both a fragmentarily reported⁷ event ...

The RAID editorial⁸ regards an alleged air-strike by Israel against Syria, in an early phase of the Syrian war. It is entitled “It’s already red alert in Israel” (orig. it. “In Israele è ormai allarme rosso”), written by an experienced international news journalist, OM, on January 30, 2013, and published the day after.

This text has been chosen because it well mirrors the difficulties that can occur in the journalists’ daily business of reconstructing events in a coherent and truthful journalistic way. In winter 2013, Israel was worried that a collapse of the al-Assad’s regime would bring about a strengthening of Hezbollah, its historical enemy. OM’s task is particularly complex, because he keeps receiving information regarding the air-strike, some confirming, others denying it. It is, therefore, difficult for him to form a well-founded opinion, for the sources are often contradictory. As a consequence, it is all the more difficult to produce an accurate and well-narrated piece. OM is aware of the difficulties that inhere in these kinds of events, which are, per se, not very suitable for an editorial, due to continuous updates and modifications.⁹

How does this story come into being? OM wanted to write a report on the Syrian situation in the International News page (see 4.3), but halfway through the afternoon the co-editor in chief requests him to write an editorial. He, thus, decides to use the topic for this purpose too.¹⁰ At

4 The original language of the quoted documents is Italian, translated into English by Marta Zampa and other members of the research project for previous publications. The translations can be found in the appendix.

5 The RAID case, *cst_cdt_130130_0000_OM_attaccoisraeliano_verbal_1.docx*; *cst_cdt_130131_0000_OM_attaccoisraeliano_item_1.pdf*; *cst_cdt_130131_0000_OM_raid_item_1.pdf*. This case has been analyzed also in Zampa (2015, 2017) and Zampa and Musi (2016).

6 *cst_cdt_130123_0000_MB_cameron_verbal_1.docx*; *cst_cdt_130124_0000_MB_cameron_item.pdf*; *cst_cdt_130124_0000_referendum_item_1.pdf*. The CAME case has been analyzed in greater detail in Burger and Delaloye (2016), Zampa (2015, 2017) and Zampa and Perrin (2016). The report, though, was not taken into consideration in these publications.

7 It is not the event itself what is fragmentary, it is the sources who provide fragmented and contradictory information to the journalist.

8 Full text translated into English in Appendix A.

9 0053–0065: there are cases that I don’t know eh/votes in italy votes in france/where the commentary is much easier/because usually you try to play when all cards are on the table/ [...] /you can rarely make a commentary on exit polls/lest they are cristal clear/ [...] / eh while other situations like the one of today/are very risky for a commentary/exactly because eh during the day there were/many changes so that eh/it has to be continuously updated and say.

10 0012–0018: I already had in mind/to do

this stage, the situation is very confused, with news about an Israeli attack at the Lebanese-Syrian border being reported by some media.¹¹ As he has to begin writing despite the uncertainty, the journalist starts from the only confirmed event: a meeting in Kuwait City, where the international community discussed fund raising for humanitarian purposes.¹² During the afternoon, various sources provide contradictory information: Israel denies having performed the attack; Lebanon denies an attack took place on its territory; Syria confirms that an air raid happened, and that it was conducted by Israel.

In addition to the piling up of information from various sources, the interpretations OM's colleagues give to the event add another layer of complication. They indeed vouch for the option that the attack might be just a rumor, spread by the Israeli government for political reasons. OM though does not follow this path, relying instead on the signs he has been collecting, which all build evidence that the attack happened.¹³ Indeed, a confirmation

eventually comes from the Syrian army.¹⁴ Thanks to it, OM is able to put together all the pieces of the puzzle into a story that makes sense, and what seemed to be contradictory at the beginning is eventually consistent.¹⁵

Nonetheless, the standpoint expressed in the editorial turns out to be rather weak and focused on the evaluation of Israel's behavior (D.1–D.6).¹⁶ The standpoint is expressed as plausible but not sure: "The Jewish state *seems to be* thus the country that is best prepared, at all levels, to face the consequences of a possible collapse of Al-Assad's regime." (D.9). Indeed, the situation is still too unclear for taking a stronger stance. Furthermore, this standpoint applies only to the first half of the text (D.1–D.9). The second half regards the humanitarian red alert discussed in Kuwait City, which is evaluated as a mere "plaster" onto a far too big wound. In spite of being the initial core of the article – and for a while the only confirmed event – this point ends up relegated to the closing.

4.2 ... and a coherently reported event ...

Let us take for comparison the CAME case, in which a pundit from the *Corriere del Ticino*, MB, writes an editorial¹⁷ on a speech by the British Prime Minister David Cameron. The speech – sadly relevant now, after Brexit – regards the UK's participation in the European Union, and the conditions under which it could be continued. The journalist, who is specialized in writing editorials and masters the topic well, knew beforehand that the speech was to be held, and wished to write about it. Therefore, as soon as Cameron performed it, MB proposed the topic himself during an edito-

something about syria/ [...] /and then around four o'clock the co-editor in chief came/and asked me if I could write an editorial today/and I told him I could do it on – on syria/he asked me say what's new and exactly.

11 0019–0025: there were these rumors very say inaccurate/in the sense that some media ehm like le – le figaro/spoke about this israeli attack in the night/between yesterday and today/ [...] /ah ehm/ on the lebanese-syrian border/but it was all very vague.

12 0212–0217: therefore eh well I – I started from the most certain thing/ [...] /that was this meeting in kuwait city/ [...] /to – to raise funds/to be destined to the humanitarian field.

13 0376–0390: my colleagues and a colleague suggested me/to be say less drastic/that is he was much more cautious on this attack/he said that it might perhaps be part of/a strategy by netanyahu/now that they have to build a new government/ [...] /to do a – say favour again/the say the – the strong wing of/ [...] /of the israeli party system/while I was not so cunning/in the sense that I thought that there were too many – /too many signs that went in the same direction/that this attack actually took place.

14 0392–0396: tonight the eh/the statement by the syrian army/has confirmed that/ [...] / that the attack took place.

15 0408–0410: when you have all puzzle pieces/ you manage to understand also those statements/that seemed to contradict each other at the beginning.

16 0277–0280: there is a stance ehm yes let's say/it is not as straight as in other commentaries/ [...] /a bit the – the evaluation of this move by israel.

17 Full text translated into English in Appendix C.

rial conference. He already, as usual, even had a title in mind.¹⁸ Accordingly, he starts from his own hypothesis on Cameron's message and looks for confirmation in the actual speech. In argumentative terms, he collects data supporting his conclusion on Cameron's position about staying in the European Union.

For the purpose of the present article, it is particularly significant to look at how the journalist consciously appeals to the endoxical knowledge he shares with the readership. In the RVP, when reviewing the part in which he writes about behaviors that could push British citizens to reject the European Union,¹⁹ he explains that this point applies also to the Swiss. He underlines that not all readers will grasp the connection, but those who are politically more aware will. They will make a parallelism between the two countries and understand the importance of keeping track of British politics and of reading the editorial. This part of the story is not told though; it is triggered in the reader by appealing to "a series of expectations" and "a series of schemes for the interpretation of reality" (0970–0971) that are already present in the readers' minds. In argumentative terms, these schemes are endoxa that can be activated by providing the adequate data and conclusions. The case thus demonstrates how the construction of argumentation in an editorial results from the collaboration of the author and his/her audience.

4.3 ...to fragmented stories

Why do our two journalists tell only fragments of a story? The reasons can be found in the empirical data. Practical reasons play an obvious role. Journalists often lack time: OM, for example, finishes writing late at night and keeps changing the text because of the continuous flow of information on the airstrike. Moreover, constraints of space on the page play an

important role, as MB notices.²⁰ More importantly, keeping storytelling fragmentary is a strategic choice. MB is aware of the rhetorical power of retrieving premises from the audience, because this makes the reader identify with the situation depicted and be willing to read the whole text.²¹ Furthermore, he chooses the parts of the speech that serve the purpose of building a narrative that is relevant from the Swiss viewpoint, thus adapting a foreign event to the needs and interests of his Swiss readership. To this aim, for instance, he deletes a sentence about the UK's relationship with Denmark²², but inserts a quote about a possible collaboration between the UK, Norway and Switzerland. Moreover, this latter reference seems to have not been noticed by press agencies.²³ Including it serves *Corriere del Ticino's* goal to affirm itself as a quality newspaper at the national level, a paper capable of a little scoop.²⁴

The narrative arc is skillfully represented in the CAME editorial. Section B includes the orientation, describing the political economic conditions that create relevance for Switzerland with respects to the UK's choices. The complication (covering all Section C) is introduced in B.12, with an explicit appeal to its meaning for Switzerland in B.13. D.1 to D.4 feature an evaluation of the speech's contents, whereas D.5 to D.6 (and the title "We have an ally in London") are an exhorting resolution. A

20 1221–1226: and here I realized/that I got to the end of the text/ [...] /therefore here one needs to do something/one needs to cut.

21 0984–0985: and obviously this arouses a – a on the reader's side/an – an identification process; 0988 you keep him stuck to the text don't you.

22 1298 because the reader denmark he couldn't care less.

23 0713–0717: then I discovered one thing/that agencies clearly had not discovered/and that he took stance/eh how do you say it/explicitly on the issue of switzerland.

24 0731–0739 it is simply that if the corriere del ticino/wants to be a national newspaper/at the height at the qualitative level of other swiss newspapers/particularly my reference point/usually is the nzz [...] /it is clear that one has to make a job of this kind that is/would not do it always but in some cases/so I believe that it is useful to do it.

18 0102–0105: and therefore the first thing I did/according to my – my usual procedure/me when I write an article/I have already in mind that is to say an idea.

19 0965–0966: "if one does not want to drift the british people/to vote against the adhesion."

coda is present as well, in the closing sentence “We must be able to exploit this bonus properly.”

The report²⁵ on Cameron’s speech, written by a colleague from the International News page, deals with the speech and the reactions by European politicians. The latter are inserted between a summary of the speech itself (which functions as orientation) and further quotes by Cameron. They both constitute the complication. The other parts are missing, although the opening sentence – “Well, he did it” – entails an evaluative component, a tone of surprise with respect to the announcement of the referendum.

For what concerns OM, the hazard of the airstrike makes it difficult for him to tell a complete story, even in an editorial: from a fragmentarily reported event, a fragmented narrative derives. The fact that he speaks of his work as putting together puzzle pieces signals his awareness of the nature of journalistic writing. Moreover, it can be hypothesized that he avoids taking a stronger stance in an attempt not to risk compromising himself (and the newspaper) over such a delicate matter of international politics.²⁶ For this reason, in the first half of the editorial the resolution phase is lacking. The text contains a detailed evaluation of Israel’s behavior (D.1–D.8),²⁷ which makes it possible to express a plausible standpoint. The standpoint is included in the coda (D.9), which, by mentioning the critical situation in Syria, builds a direct connection to the first sentence of the editorial (B.1). For what the second half of the RAID editorial is concerned, the orientation is limited to the minimum (E.1), but a resolution phase is present: it coincides with the ascertainment of the humanitarian red alert and with the exhortation to intervene (E.9).

25 Full text translated into English in Appendix D.

26 On the relationship between leaving information implicit and objectivity, see Zampa (2015, 2016).

27 0277–0280: there is a stance ehm yes let’s say/it is not as straight as in other commentaries/ [...] /a bit the – the evaluation of this move by israel.

The corresponding report,²⁸ written by OM as well, is focused on the air raid and does not mention the meeting in Kuwait City. Almost the whole text is devoted to the complication. The orientation is synthetically presented in the title (“Siria. Damascus accusation: Israeli air raid”) and in the first line of the report (“Israel takes action in Syria”). Later on, two evaluative sentences are featured, addressing how the possession of Russian anti-aircraft missiles could affect the status quo in the area (in sections D and E). The events are accounted for with a higher degree of certainty (“the Syrian army *has officially denounced* a raid by Israel,” “what *is sure*, is that the attack *took place*”). In the RVP, OM explains this by saying he had the chance to check the report again late that night, once a confirmation of the air raid had reached the newsroom.²⁹ OM wrote the same story twice: the difference of genre and the circumstances of production have influenced how he recounted what happened.

5 Conclusion

The RAID and CAME cases are exemplary for what we found in our corpora. Based on this data, conclusions can be drawn on the interplay of narration and argumentation in journalistic work. We argue that journalistic storytelling is essentially fragmentary, with the exception of editorials, and that – in all genres – this structure is not only motivated by practical limitations, but also exploited to produce more rhetorically effective items. Besides, fragmentation is inherent in the production of journalistic texts. A journalist has to collect puzzle pieces (data) about an event, understand why and how they make sense with respect to the context in which they occur, and take a – more or less explicit –

28 Full text translated into English in Appendix B.

29 0473–0478 in the end I had to change also the – the article inside the paper/again because it was the same topic/ [...] /exactly yes eventually it arrived/the whole chronicle of the day.

stance (Perrin, 2012) on the event (conclusion) (see also Merminod, 2016). It is in this phase that his/her – again, mostly tacit – professional knowledge comes into play: the journalist does not simply explain what happened but creates a rhetorically effective story. The story needs to follow all the requirements of the genre and its temporal and spatial limitation, with particular attention devoted to weighing which background information should be included in the text and which left implicit, trusting the audience’s ability to provide it themselves. The item, thus, results in an enthymeme, whose premises are supplied by the audience to make sense of the standpoints expressed (or suggested) by the author. As can be seen in Figure 1, in general the endoxical premise remains at least partially implicit in both genres (within a dashed line). Furthermore, reports lack the conclusion (in grey).

As the data analysis has shown, the narrative structure tends to be fully present in editorials. The lack of the resolution phase in the first half of the RAID editorial can be explained with the impossibility to take a strong stance on what is reported because of the uncertainty of the events, a fact that – conversely – explains the broad evaluation of the situation. In cases where a lot of background information is needed to understand the message (such as the CAME editorial), long descriptive sections are included, so that the reader can

better understand the pundit’s conclusion and possibly also get to it on his/her own. In reports, on the other hand, the biggest space is devoted to the complication, with a more or less extended orientation and sometimes an evaluation – either hinted at (as in the CAME report) or drawn from ascribing an interpretation to the listed facts (as in the RAID report). Resolution and coda are lacking. Indeed, reports are enthymemes with a non-verbalized conclusion.

Figure 1 depicts the enthymematic structure with its always expressed (in white) and mostly non-expressed parts (in grey), both for editorials (left) and reports (right). Figure 2 depicts the fragmentary narrative arc, with non-expressed parts in grey and sometimes expressed ones included within a dotted line. The evaluation is represented above the arc, because it results from the external view of the author, from his/her interpretation of the facts.

The strategic reasons behind the fragmentation of the narrative structure cannot be fully revealed by looking only at the final product, where the role of the endoxical knowledge applied by the journalist as well as his/her professional skills remains overshadowed. Thorough understanding of this phenomenon results only from a joint investigation of the product and its production process. This is true all the more for cases like RAID, where the task of matching the “puzzle pieces” to build

Figure 1: Enthymematic structures

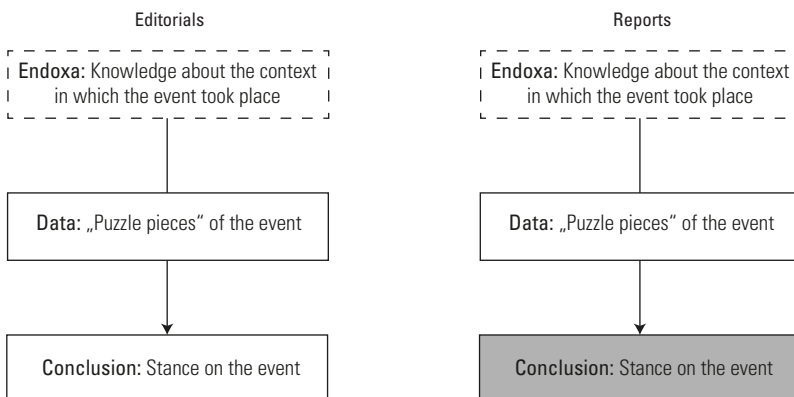
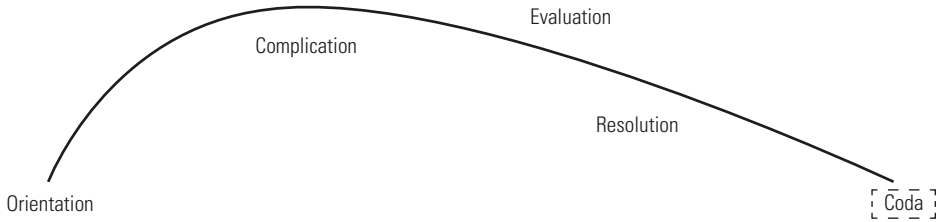
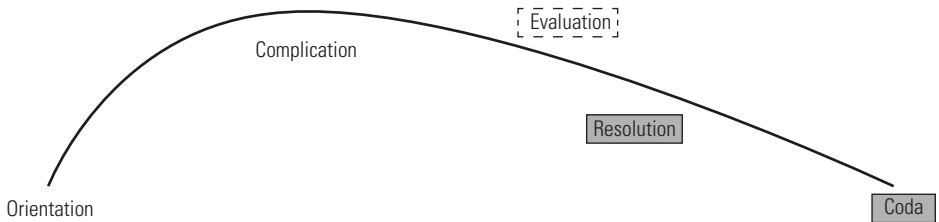


Figure 2: Narrative arc in editorials (a) and reports (b)

a) Editorials



b) Reports



a truthful story is complicated by the uncertainty of the event and the delicacy of the topic; whereas it can be exploited more to the advantage of the writer in cases like CAME, where the storyline is well defined and the journalist can concentrate on the nuances and on addressing different levels of readership.

Despite what is custom in journalistic practice, the interplay of narration and argumentation in newswriting as a relevant source of public discourse remains a mostly unexplored territory in both fields. It is the authors' aim to pursue this line of research and attempt at unraveling the mechanisms behind and the purposes of this underestimated combination of modes³⁰.

³⁰ Work on the interplay of the two modes has been conducted for other professional discourse, for example for judicial discourse (e.g., Hannken-Ilijes, 2006; von Arnould, 2009).

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Appendix

a) The RAID editorial

- A (A.1) Syrian crisis
 (A.2) **It's already red alert in Israel**
- B (B.1) The Syrian crisis is getting worse and worse every day, for both the number of casualties and the brutality of the deeds, and the country, according to what stated on Tuesday by Lakhdar Brahimi, UNO and Arab Alliance delegate for Syria, is falling into pieces. (B.2) A rising chaos that worries the Israeli authorities a lot. (B.3) The risk indeed is that chemical weapons, but also other more sophisticated ones that constitute the equipment of the Syrian army, will end up in the hands of fearsome Islamic extremists.
- C (C.1) In the night between Tuesday and Wednesday, according to sources of the Jewish state's security interviewed by the daily “Le Figaro,” military airplanes bearing David's star would have launched various air raids on targets located along the Syrian-Lebanese border. (C.2) Following “Le Figaro” correspondent in Jerusalem, possible targets of the attacks could have been some convoys that carried military equipment from Syria

to Lebanon, intended for the Islamic extremists' group Hezbollah.

D (D.1) There are contrasting versions on the events; yesterday the Lebanese state agency NNA denied news regarding an air raid at the border between Syria and Lebanon. (D.2) On the other hand on Tuesday night the same Lebanese authorities denounced the violation of their air space by Israeli airplanes. (D.3) Yesterday evening, finally, the Syrian army denounced an Israeli raid that took place at dawn against a military research center in the Damascus district. (D.4) Israeli authorities did not confirm it, but in recent days Prime Minister Netanyahu had warned on the "significant threats" that menace Israel, mentioning Iran and Syria. (D.5) Besides chemical weapons, military experts point out that Damascus' army is endowed with sophisticated weapons too, like for example ground-to-sea and ground-to-air missiles. (D.6) If this highly precise destruction tools would end up in Hezbollah's hands, vital Israeli targets like the Haifa harbor or the natural gas search wells could easily become a target. (D.7) Given the excellent intelligence capacities of the Jewish state, the red alert that went off in Israel following the worsening of the Syrian crisis has to be taken seriously. (D.8) Given Israel's determination in neutralizing serious dangers, one should not be too surprised about air raids against Syrian targets. (D.9) The Jewish state seems to be thus the country that is best prepared, at all levels, to face the consequences of a possible collapse of Al-Assad's regime.

E (E.1) From its side the international community, which until now has not been able to agree on a peaceful way out of the dramatic civil war ongoing in Syria, convened yesterday in Kuwait to offer concrete aid, at least from the humanitarian viewpoint, to the worn-out Syrian population. (E.2) Donations of more than one and a half billion dollars have been announced. (E.3) Little more than a

plaster, considering the huge scourge produced by the fratricide war that has been devastating the country for more than a year. (E.4) Anyway it is a due solidarity act towards the Syrian population, brought to its knees by uninterrupted combats that, besides thousands of casualties and injured, are causing a rising flow of refugees to the neighboring countries. (E.5) But it is not only refugees who move across the frontiers of neighboring countries. (E.6) As mentioned, there is the risk that traffic of lethal weapons takes place, towards Lebanon for the benefit of Hezbollah. (E.7) Furthermore, there are numerous Islamic combatants arrived in Syria from Afghanistan and other countries in the area to fight against the Al-Assad regime. (E.8) In such a scenario it is not easy at all to urgently deliver aids to the population. (E.9) Therefore there is another red alert, the humanitarian one, that the international community is called to face up to.

b) The RAID report

A (A.1) Syria
(A.2) Damascus' accusation: Israeli air raid

(A.3) The bombardment is supposed to have taken as a target an important center for military research

B DAMASCUS (B.1) Israel takes action in Syria. (B.2) After various alerts concerning the risk that chemical weapons or other kinds of weapons could get into the hands of the Lebanese Shiite militias of Hezbollah have been launched in the last days, yesterday at dawn fighter planes of the Jewish state attacked some targets in Syrian territories. (B.3) During the whole day yesterday, various sources from diplomacy and security – which stayed anonym – have reported a bombardment on a convoy close to the border, which was shipping weapons from Syria to Lebanon.

C (C.1) Meanwhile, yesterday evening the Syrian army has officially de-

nounced an Israeli raid – that took place early at dawn – against a military research center that had caused two casualties and five injured. (C.2) Other witnesses have earlier on reported an attack – that took place Tuesday night – to a site for the development of “non-conventional weapons” in al-Hameh, 15 km North-West from Damascus. (C.3) Information is confused and the Jewish state keeps silent. (C.4) But what seems certain is that the raid took place, and that between Tuesday afternoon and yesterday many Israeli jets have violated the Lebanese and Syrian air space. (C.5) An ordinary activity, yet this time on a much larger scale than usual. (C.6) At least 12 fighter planes, according to Beirut’s military sources, flew across the Lebanese sky in three subsequent waves between Tuesday at 16:30 and early yesterday morning. (C.7) A circumstance confirmed also by UNO forces from Unifil in Lebanon. (C.8) This would confirm a reconstruction that the Israeli mass media have tried to make, partially slipping through the net of military censorship. (C.9) According to the Maariv and Haaretz websites, indeed, the raid took place close to the road between Damascus and Beirut. (C.10) Maariv believes it is probable that Israeli fighter planes have flown over the Golan Heights and then have headed towards the North, along the Syrian-Lebanese dividing line.

- D (D.1) The state agency NNA from Beirut anyway excludes that the raid took place on Lebanese territory. (D.2) The sources that support the thesis of a raid against the cargo of weapons exclude anyway that it was the much-feared chemical weapons: it was a branch of a Russian-made anti-aircraft missiles, probably SA-7. (D.3) A weapon that, in Hezbollah’s hands, could significantly alter the power balance with Israel.
- E (E.1) If during the war in summer 2006 Hezbollah had fired more than 4000 rockets on the Northern part of Israel, the aviation of the Jewish state did not encounter significant obsta-

cles in its repeated raids until the suburbs of Beirut. (E.2) On the contrary, an effective anti-aircraft weapon in the hands of the Shiite militians would considerably reduce the Israeli firepower. (E.3) On Sunday, Prime Minister Netanyahu had warned from the “significant threats” hanging over Israel, mentioning Iran and Syria. (E.4) Meanwhile, the army said to have repositioned two sets of anti-rocket interception systems in the Northern part of the country. (E.5) Exactly in this region, the military radio said yesterday, a high alert level is maintained, due to the fear that the “sophisticated,” and not necessarily chemical, weapons are transferred from Syria to Hezbollah.

c) The CAME editorial

- A (A.1) Switzerland-Europe
(A.2) We have an ally in London
- B (B.1) Concerned as we are, with good reason, over the deterioration of our relationship with France and the strong Red-Green German opposition (which hold the majority at the Bundesrat and leads some strong Länder); absorbed in renegotiating the fiscal relationship with Italy, and the institutional matters with the European Union, we risk underestimating the political weight of the fiscal agreement settled with the United Kingdom last year, which came into force (together with a similar one with Austria), last January 1st. (B.2) This agreement in fact represents the revival of an old partnership with the United Kingdom as founding member of the European free trade association (EFTA) in 1960; based on a common pragmatic approach to the co-existence of the European states: first and foremost, free-trade oriented and able to preserve national sovereignty as much as possible. (B.3) EFTA has been established as a free-trade area for European countries that were not members of the European community. (B.4) Besides Switzerland and the

United Kingdom, it encompassed the neutral Sweden and Austria (Finland since 1986), Norway, Denmark, Portugal and Iceland (member since 1970). (B.5) Great Britain left EFTA forty years ago by joining the EU in 1973, but without abandoning its own currency, the pound sterling, and refusing to belong to the Eurozone. (B.6) Despite being a full member of the European Union, London not only didn't take the step of accepting the currency, but it has also always signaled that it intended to preserve a series of national prerogatives, especially in the financial and fiscal field. (B.7) This last position has now again become topical. (B.8) In a recent article in the Herald Tribune, the previous secretary to British foreign affairs David Miliband urged the citizens of the United Kingdom (and primarily – even without mentioning him – David Cameron) not to give in to the temptation to “start a circle external to the EU one, together with Norway and Switzerland.” (B.9) It's significant that he quotes Norway. (B.10) In fact, as it is well known, this country is still a member of the EFTA and the Norwegian citizens twice refused to join the EU. (B.11) Miliband's appeal is important, since the pressure on the British Prime Minister Cameron for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union's club intensified as the financial crisis in the Eurozone persisted and worsened. (B.12) Yesterday, the British Prime Minister David Cameron took a stand. His answer is important for Switzerland's interests as well, thus it deserves a close examination.

C (C.1) What did Cameron say? (C.2) That the British approach to the EU is more pragmatic (“not an end in itself”) than emotional, according to the nature of the country, and that the future purpose of the European Union is not to secure peace anymore (to which the United Kingdom actively contributed, by defeating Nazism and Communism) but to secure prosperity in an extremely competitive global world. (C.3) The British Prime Minis-

ter underlined that there is a gap today between the citizens and the EU, and that this crisis of democratic legitimacy has to be regulated if Europe united wants to have a future and if one does not want to drift the British people out of the EU. (C.4) “We need a structure that can accommodate the diversity of its members. Let us welcome that diversity, instead of trying to snuff it out. We cannot harmonize everything.” (C.5) “The EU has consistently supported greater centralization, whereas the United Kingdom needs to safeguard its interests, its sovereignty and democratic legitimacy.” (C.6) “I intend to ask that power must be able to flow back to member states” and that it is not taken away from them, “This was promised by European leaders at Laeken a decade ago. But the promise has never really been fulfilled.” (C.7) Cameron undertakes to negotiate their membership with the EU to regain some national power. (C.8) At the end of the exercise, if he will be re-elected in 2015, he will announce a referendum so that the British people can decide. (C.9) “We believe in a flexible union of free member states.” (C.10) If the renegotiation succeeds in protecting this principle – Cameron promised – he will commit himself with all his heart and soul to maintaining the United Kingdom within the EU, to serve the interests of Great Britain and of the EU. (C.11) For what concerns the possible partnership with Norway and Switzerland in the single market outside the UE, the British Prime Minister positioned himself in the perspective of the preminent interests (nowadays) of the United Kingdom (C.12). “I admire those countries and they are friends of ours but we are in a different position (...). Switzerland, especially, has to negotiate access to the single market sector by sector, either accepting EU rules – over which they have nothing to say – or renouncing to get full access to the market in key sectors, for example financial services.”

- D (D.1) From Cameron's speech, one can deduce that London's exiting from the EU club is not in the United Kingdom's interests (nor the United States', for whom it is useful to have an historical ally in the Union that defends the Atlantic interests). (D.2) But the UK's efforts to renegotiate the conditions of its membership so as to defend the sovereignty and freedom of the member states (by regaining some rights) and its request that the EU respects those who have a less centralistic vision, more flexible and respectful of diversity, seems to be very useful for Switzerland too. (D.3) All the more at a time when allies with pragmatic, free-trade oriented visions based on respect for democratic legitimation and civil rights are lacking. (D.4) As of now, for instance, (but for how long?) only Luxembourg keeps defending a large fiscal autonomy and what remains of bank confidentiality. (D.5) Under siege from several sides and with a somehow weak willpower to unite on the inside to defend our privileges as well as our historic and institutional identity, such a position on the UK's side is entirely welcome to us (even though they are a rival financial market) and provides our agreement on many points. (D.6) We have some historical affinities and common interests with London. (D.7) We must be able to exploit this bonus properly.
- d) **The CAME report**
- A (A.1) London
(A.2) **Cameron has decided: the referendum has to be done**
(A.3) Britons inside or outside the EU? We will know it after 2015
- B LONDON (B.1). Well, he did it (B.2). The British Prime Minister David Cameron has promised a referendum in which the Britons will be able to clearly choose whether to remain "inside or outside" of the European Union – so in his awaited, many times postponed speech on Europe, performed in the City early yesterday morning (B.3). However, the vote will be possible only after London has "renegotiated" its relationship with Europe and after the 2015 elections, under the condition that the Conservatives, and Cameron, continue in the government (B.4). Thus spoke the Tory Prime Minister to the Britons, reassuring them, but warning them that it would be a definitive choice they could not walk away from, a "one-way ticket" (B.5).
- C From Brussels, in a Twitter message, the president of the European Parliament Martin Schultz informed that "Europe 'à la carte' is not an option: we have to focus on work and growth more than getting lost in discussions on treaties" (C.1).
And while yesterday the British tabloids exulted, the former Labour Premier Tony Blair commented from Davos, where he is a guest of the WEF: "It is like shooting in one's head" (C.2).
"I am confident that, if a referendum will take place, the United Kingdom will decide to stay in Europe and will share the future with us," said on the contrary the Italian Premier Mario Monti, again from the WEF in Davos (C.3).
Cameron, though, from his side has assured that he wants to stay in Europe (C.4). "I want the European Union to be a success. And I want a relationship between Great Britain and the EU that sees us in the Union," he said (C.5). "I am no isolationist" and, stating his vision for a "more flexible" Europe, he said he wants "a better agreement" for London, "but also for Europe" (C.6). Which has to be different, with "power that can go back to the member states, not only get away from them" (C.7). And he continued "Countries are different. They make different choices. We cannot harmonize everything." (C.8). Because frustration grows, and today "the disappointment towards the EU is higher than ever," he warned (C.9). "I am speaking as a British Prime Minister with a positive view of the future of the European Union. A future

in which Great Britain wants to play an active and engaged part. If we do not face the challenges, the risk is that Europe will fail and the Britons will drift towards the exit. I do not want this to happen, I want the European Union to be a success. And I want a relationship between Great Britain and the EU that sees us in the Union” (C.10).

Data stories. Rethinking journalistic storytelling in the context of data journalism

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Abstract

This paper addresses the increased use of data and data visualization in newsrooms, which has yielded a new form of storytelling: data stories. In journalism, data stories or storytelling with data are the new buzzwords. What journalists mean by data stories, however, remains blurred. We use the emergence of data stories as an opportunity to describe the changing understanding of journalistic storytelling. Based on interviews with editorial leaders, data journalists, developers, and designers in 26 major news organizations in Europe, we focus on practitioners' perspective on data stories. In our empirical study, we identified seven key features of journalistic data stories: data, communicative function, the textual-visual relationship, structure and design of a story, interactivity, and the meta-story. These findings contribute to rethinking the narrative approach to journalism.

Keywords

data stories, data visualization, narrativity, storytelling, data journalism, newsroom

1 Introduction

The way journalists understand and do journalism is changing. Digital technologies, big and open data, and the datafication of many aspects of life are permeating newsrooms and have led to new forms in journalism. One of these forms is data journalism. Data journalism affects professional practices in newsrooms and thus the artifacts produced within this professional domain. Today, "(j)ournalists, data scientists and computational journalists are all storytellers" (Marconi, Siegman & Machine Journalist, 2017, p. 6). This statement is indicative of changes in journalistic storytelling: from writing as the main semiotic mode to coding and visualizing as pivotal elements of digital storytelling.

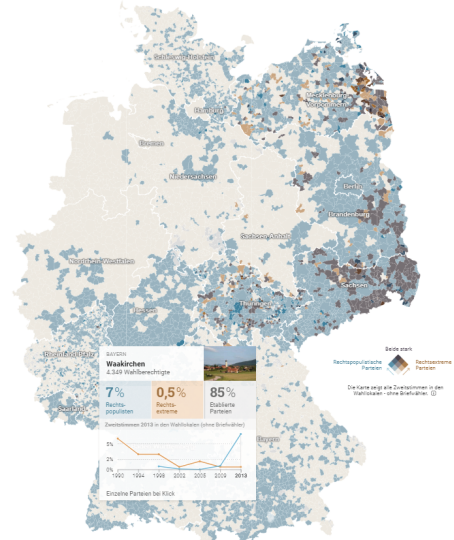
One key definition of data journalism, often cited in the relevant literature, blogs, and websites is that data journalism involves "gathering, cleaning, organizing, analyzing, visualizing and publishing data to support the creation of acts of journalism" (Howard in Hamilton, 2016, p. 297;

Sunne, 2016). Rinsdorf and Boers (2016, p. 1) define data journalism as "a qualitatively new way of reporting which gains insights about relevant societal trends by analyzing open datasets using (semi-)automatized methods to detect meaningful patterns in data structure." In this sense, data journalism is understood as both a process, i. e., analyzing large datasets and telling stories with data, and a product, including data visualization and other textual outputs based on data (Ausserhofer, 2017, p. 4). Arguably, data journalism as a process has the ability to reveal the story within data, and data visualization as a product – a visual representation – enables its users to see this story.

With the emergence of data journalism, there is also an increased use of data visualization in newsrooms (Rogers, Schwabish, & Bowers, 2017), and data visualizations are at the heart of data stories. Usually, data visualization plays a significant role in data stories (although it is also possible to build data stories on a purely textual and numeric basis). Like info-



Figure 1: Interactive map about “It wasn’t always the East – where Germany votes for the far-right” combined with a timeline slider and text (courtesy of Berliner Morgenpost)^a

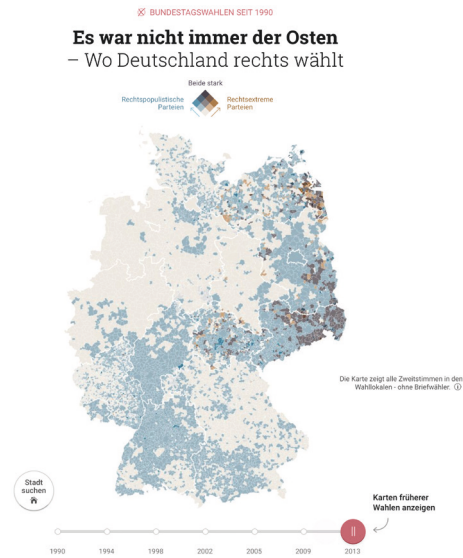


^a Berliner Morgenpost (23.01.2017), <https://interaktiv.morgenpost.de/wo-deutschland-rechts-waehlt/>

graphics, data stories can be described as multimodal hybrid artifacts that weave together numbers, words, images and design into a coherent whole (Weber, 2017; Engebretsen & Weber, 2017; Kennedy, Hill, Aiello, & Allen, 2016; Cairo, 2016, 2013; Weber & Rall, 2016). The close relatedness of data visualization and data story might explain why these terms are often used synonymously by practitioners.

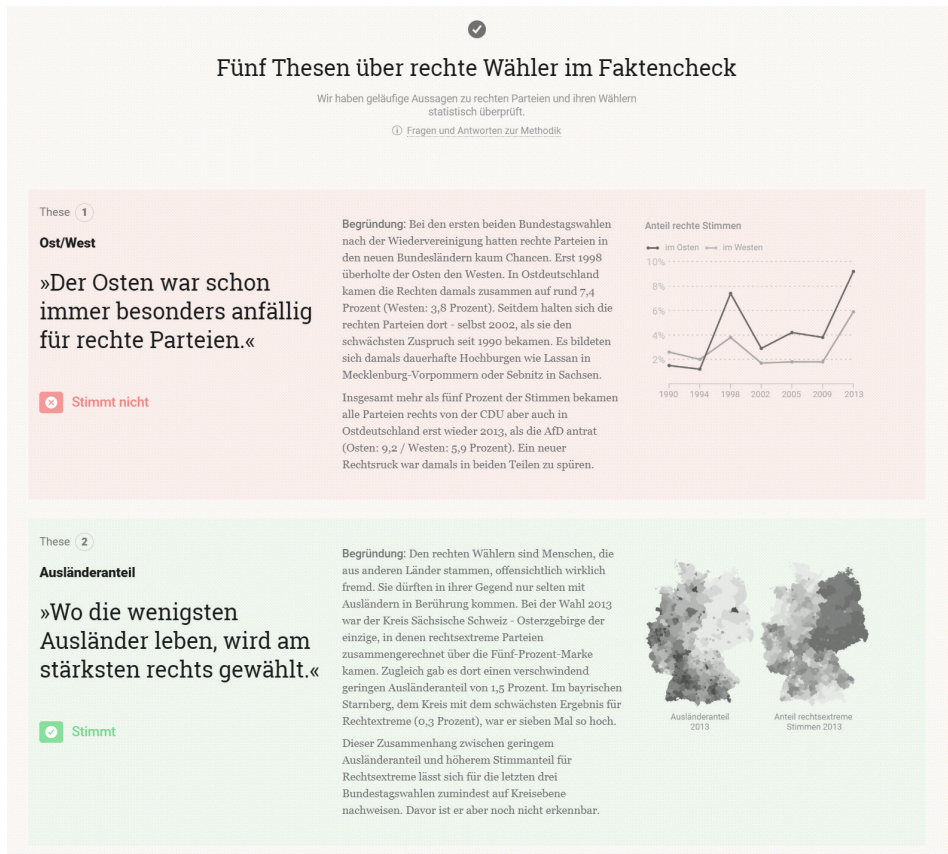
In this article, we focus on data stories based on data visualizations that range from simple bar charts to complex multimodal and interactive stand-alone graphics. The article is informed by a qualitative interview study on uses of data visualization in European newsrooms. The study included 60 interviews conducted in 26 newsrooms (see Section 3). In the study, we investigated the extent to which data visualization represents a significant change in the practices of journalistic storytelling. The overarching questions of this article are: What are the key features of journalistic data stories as seen from the newsroom and to what extent does the emergence of data stories require us to rethink under-

Figure 2: Mobile version of the interactive map “It wasn’t always the East – where Germany votes for the far-right” combined with timeline slider and search option (courtesy of Berliner Morgenpost)^a



^a Berliner Morgenpost (23.01.2017), <https://interaktiv.morgenpost.de/wo-deutschland-rechts-waehlt/>

Figure 3: Fact check boxes with a claim (left side), the written argument (middle) and data visualizations (right side) providing the facts. Excerpt taken from “It wasn’t always the East – where Germany votes for the far-right” (courtesy of Berliner Morgenpost)^a



^a Berliner Morgenpost (23.01.2017), <https://interaktiv.morgenpost.de/wo-deutschland-rechts-waehlt/>

standings of journalistic storytelling? The aim of this paper is threefold: (i) to develop understanding of the hitherto vague term “data stories” by merging theoretical and empirical perspectives on journalistic storytelling, (ii) to identify key features that characterize “storytelling with data,” and (iii) to contribute to the research field of journalistic storytelling through our focus on data visualization by showing that a narrative approach does not necessarily fall short, but that it needs revision.

Figure 1 illustrates what we mean by data story. The multimodal feature titled “It wasn’t always the East – where Germany votes for the far-right” is about the development of right-wing populism, far-

right parties and extreme right parties in Germany between 1990 and 2013 and was published 2017 by the Berliner Morgenpost, a regional daily newspaper.

The core of the feature is an interactive choropleth map linked to a time slider to reveal changes in voting behavior over the years. Readers can also browse through the map looking for cities they are interested in. The data visualization can be regarded as a stand-alone graphic (a story map) that contains a narrative in itself: a beginning, a change, and an ending. At the same time, the data visualization works as the starting point for the multimodal feature. As such, it appears at the top of the web page and the mobile page (Fig. 2). The whole feature

consists of a video, texts, further graphs with annotations, five fact check boxes (Fig. 3), and a clickable icon that links to the data collection and analysis methodology, what we call the meta-story.

In the following sections, we first outline theoretical approaches and studies related to our research focus (Section 2). This is followed by a description of the methodology applied in our study (Section 3). Then we present the findings: the key features of data stories that lead to rethinking the narrative approach in journalism (Section 4). The article concludes with a summary of the main findings and an outlook on further research questions (Section 5).

2 Related work and theoretical approaches

As a relatively new phenomenon the term “data stories” is widely used on blogs, websites, and podcasts (e.g., Bertini & Stefaner, n.d.). However, seen from a scholarly perspective, it lacks a clear definition. Data stories are based on *numerical and/or categorical data*¹. So, the starting point of the journalistic work is collecting data or searching for open datasets and analyzing them with the aim of finding patterns, clusters or statistical outliers that are newsworthy and worth sharing. The findings are mostly presented in data visualizations. Based on several definitions, we define data visualization as a visual representation of data created to amplify the cognitive processing and the social application of the data represented (Borgo et al., 2013; Card, Mackinlay, & Shneiderman, 1999). Classic data visualizations are graphs, charts, maps and timelines, or a combination of these.

The term “data stories” suggests that we are dealing with narrative. A narrative is defined by Alan Bell (1991) as a sequence of events that are temporally structured and coherently related to each other with bonds of (strong or weak) causality. Jahn (2017) defines story in a similar way, as “a

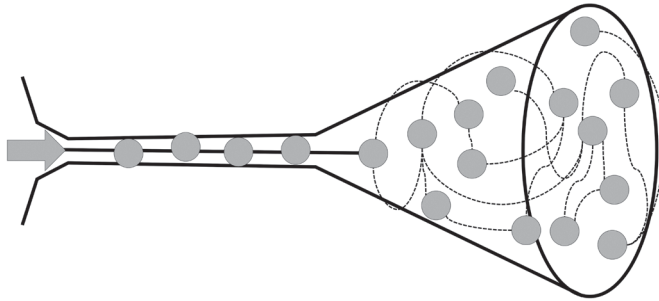
sequence of events involving characters”; he further describes events as “natural and non-natural happenings.” An example of a minimal story given by E.M. Forster (1974, p. 93f.) is “The king died and then the queen died.” For that we need a beginning, an end, and a change in between. However, we know from ethnographic studies in the field of newsmaking that journalists often use “story” and “news” synonymously because both refer to happenings (Merminod, 2016; Perrin, 2015). When journalists talk about storytelling, they mean not only “*narrating*” but also other text-linguistic practices such as *describing*, *explaining*, and *arguing* (Perrin, 2015, 2011). These text-linguistic practices have been described by Brinker (2010), who distinguishes between four basic ways in which a topic can be presented: descriptive, narrative, explicative, and argumentative. Thus the distinction researchers make theoretically between describing, narrating, explaining, and arguing remains blurred in the field of practice.²

Similar terminological slippage can be found in a report on data journalism by Rogers, Schwabish and Bowers (2017). Based on a survey, they provide a classification of data stories that is “based on the types of news produced from it” (Rogers, Schwabish, & Bowers, 2017, p. 6). The three main types are: “(i) stories that are enriched by data; (ii) stories that use data to investigate; (iii) stories that explain data.” The classification and the report’s use of the term “story” address the work of data journalists in general, rather than understanding stories as defined in the field of narratology. That is why, seen from the theoretical perspective of narratology, journalistic storytelling often appears fragmentary. In this regard, Kosara (2017) states that in the field of data visualization, many so-called data stories only present facts without a story arc. In his case study, he describes different narrative patterns and argument structures in data stories. Segel and Heer (2010) also identified dif-

² Describing means showing by giving answers to the four Ws “who,” “what,” “when,” “where.” Explaining and arguing addresses questions concerning the “how” and “why.”

¹ The concepts and techniques relevant to the coding process are highlighted in italics.

Figure 4: Narrative pattern of the linear-nonlinear type: the Martini glass structure. (Source: W. Weber)



ferent narrative structures in data stories. They distinguish between an “author-driven” and a “reader-driven” approach by connecting two inherent components that characterize data stories: *narrativity and interactivity*. According to Ryan (2006, p. 99), a *linear structure* enables the producers to tell a story (“top-down-design”). This is what Segel and Heer (2010, p. 1146) call the “*author-driven*” approach, which fits best “when the goal is storytelling or efficient communication.” In contrast, a highly interactive *nonlinear dramaturgy* requires a “bottom-up-input from the user” (Ryan, 2006, p. 99). Segel and Heer call this nonlinear type the “*reader-driven approach*” (Segel & Heer, 2010, p. 1146). In this case, the user is given maximum information to explore and the data visualization turns into “a tool for readers to analyze what’s being presented to them” (Cairo, 2013, p. 73).

Experts and practitioners in the field of data visualization and data journalism often refer to the terms “reader-driven” (or user-driven) and “author-driven” as *exploratory* and *explanatory* (Bradshaw, 2017; González Veira, 2017). The journalist Paul Bradshaw discusses this point on his blog: “At the heart of this move from the exploratory to the explanatory is a problem that game designers have grappled with for years: how much do you let someone explore a world (of information, in this case), and how much do you exercise editorial control in order to create an experience that larger groups are going to

want to engage with?” He continues, “How much responsibility to [sic] we have for the stories that people tell with our information? And how much responsibility do we have for delivering as much information as someone needs? This is the story vs information problem in a nutshell” (Bradshaw, 2017).

A third category of data story exists that results from the hybridization process of the two types: the *linear-nonlinear type* (Weber, 2017, 2013). The main story line is given by the author, but the user may explore datasets at a certain stage of the story. The advantage for users is that the information is conveyed in a structured way with the option to explore the data to a certain degree. A variation of this linear-nonlinear type is the “*Martini glass structure*” (Segel & Heer, 2010), where the users are guided step by step through the visualization and at the end they can explore the data by themselves (Fig. 4).

Further research has recently been conducted to advance the discussion on narrative visualizations. Brehmer, Lee, Bach, Riche, and Munzner (2016) found that timelines and time series, which offer a sequence of narrative points, and visualization sequences (e.g., small multiples) seem to work better to transform data into stories (according to Bell’s definition) than simple charts or exploratory data visualizations (Hullman, Kosara, & Lam, 2017; Brehmer et al., 2016). According to Brehmer et al., smooth animated transitions between narrative points can foster the co-

herence of a story. Stolper, Lee, Riche, and Stasko (2016) looked for narrative techniques that data-storytellers use today and compared them to those identified by Segel and Heer (2010). Informed by an analysis of a large dataset of visualizations with a focus on asynchronous, author-driven data stories, Stolper et al. present several new storytelling techniques such as *linking between text and chart*, creatively constraining the reader through scrolling, brushing and linking between visualizations, linking elements through color or animation, or the *scrollytelling technique*. The simplest narrative technique they found is using a textual narrative and interspersing visualizations throughout. Timelines, slide shows, and data videos are often used to trigger storytelling because of their inherent linear structure. Scrollytelling involves a story unfolding as the user scrolls down the page and the visualizations that are embedded in the article appear at the appropriate time. Scrolling also triggers changes in the visualization itself, e.g., zooming out from the visualization (Stolper et al., 2016). In this case, both the visualization and text form the narrative.

From these theoretical considerations and empirical studies, we are able to deduce criteria for our analysis of our interviews. The methodology we used to produce these findings will be explained in the following section, which is followed by a presentation of the findings themselves.

3 Methodology

To understand practitioners' perspectives on storytelling with data we interviewed 60 data journalists, designers, developers, and newsroom leaders in 26 major news organizations in six European countries: Norway (NO), Sweden (SE), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Switzerland (CH), and the United Kingdom (UK). The interviews took place from March 2016 to February 2017. The newsroom types range from national broadcasters, national broadsheet and tabloid newspapers to regional broadcasters and newspapers and

online news providers. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the respective newsroom or via video conferencing according to a semi-structured interview guide. Each interview took about one hour, was recorded as audio file and then transcribed and anonymized. To aid comparison, the main aspects of the Scandinavian and German-speaking interviews were translated into English.

The results presented here are one of several outputs of the interview study (see also Engebretsen, Kennedy, & Weber, 2017). For the purposes of this paper, the focus of our analysis lies on journalistic storytelling and narrative data visualization. For the qualitative content analysis of the data corpus (Mayring, 2000), we used the software tools MAXQDA and Nvivo. Five coding categories were developed deductively based on the literature review in section 2: *data*, *communicative function*, *textual-visual relationship*, *structure or architecture*, and *interactivity*. Two further categories emerged inductively from the interview data: *design* and *meta-story*. By design we mean – in a very simplified definition – the dimension of the visual performance. By meta-story, we mean text elements produced in order to make the journalistic methods transparent which is regarded as crucial in data journalism (Rinsdorf & Boers, 2016; Matzat, 2016), such as a “How-we-did-it”-story.

We coded our interviews by looking for these features:

- 1 *Data*: statements regarding how the respondents deal with data as a basic element of data stories.
- 2 *Communicative function (purpose)*: key words indicating the communicative intention of the producers, e.g., to tell, to explain, to argue visually.
- 3 *Textual-visual relationship*: the inter-relationship or interplay between text and visualization.
- 4 *Visual Design*: keywords like aesthetics, style, performance, looking good, attractive.
- 5 *The structure or architecture*: linear and nonlinear ways of storytelling.

- 6 *Interactivity*: users' involvement and engagement with the story and the option to interact with the data visualization (e.g., "search for," "find out," "explore").
- 7 *The meta-story*: transparency concerning data sources and data analysis.

In what follows, we summarize the findings from our analysis of the interviews.

4 Results

The coding process has led to seven key features that characterize journalistic data stories. These key features are corroborated by anonymized excerpts taken from the interviews. The origin of each citation is indicated by the respective country in parentheses after the quote to underline that this is not a single statement or phenomenon in only one news organization but a trend we have identified in several newsrooms across different countries.

4.1 Data: the core of data storytelling

Our study clearly indicates that data is increasingly used to find a story and often shapes the core of a story. As mentioned above, story is defined as a coherent sequence of events. In data journalism, data teams first have to find these "events" in the data by data mining, scraping websites, filtering and analyzing datasets. Many interviewees stressed the possibility of finding new stories that could not be told without the analysis and visualization of data.

Sometimes the data is almost a story and sometimes the data supports a story. (...) All the stories they do have the data almost as a starting point; the data is really interesting and from there they reveal things or they find interesting things, so in that case the data is the start of the story. (UK)

And so [text-centric journalism] is what we're trying to fight against now, is the idea that actually if you do data and graphics properly, (...) it might help you to find the stories in the first place, and people like (ANONYMIZED)

here are great data journalists who are actually finding stories by deeply diving into data in the first place. (UK)

Numbers and statistics are not completely new in journalism, but new software tools and the opening up of public data help journalists to use them more analytically. Now, data journalists consider data as an essential semiotic resource in news reporting, similar to verbal texts, images and audio.

Someone described it quite nicely as it being like a lump of clay and you've got to get a good feel for it before you decide whether it's going to be a bowl or a vase. (...) I definitely would say that with numbers, it's good to explore them and turn them on their heads and try them in different ways and see where the story is. (UK)

An important aspect of modernizing our journalism is to dig into large databases, understand what they tell us and present it visually for the reader. (NO)

A question, a problem, or an idea can precede the data search.

At the beginning, you have an idea or a dataset or a data source from which the story emerges. Both are possible. If the idea is at the beginning, it takes the most effort to search for data; it often takes weeks or months for data collecting. If you already have the dataset at the beginning, then it's easier. (DE)

One point that is striking is that coding from scratch can be seen as a new element that forms the story and a highly valued skill for journalistic storytelling (cf. Rogers et al., 2017, p. 9).

We, the interactive team, set up our own system. That means, we are right in the code. (DE)

4.2 The communicative function: the act of showing

Data stories based on data visualization show something visually that is hard to

explain verbally. They intend to make the reader see and facilitate understanding (Kirk, 2016, p. 21). Our analysis of the interviews has shown that data teams employ narrative, explanatory, and argumentative techniques, even though they do not use such terms.

Saying, look, here you can see the way in which something has developed – this works as an argument. (CH)

I believe that this is the core of our mission, to try to mediate what is correct and true. To find the facts. And facts are often represented by numbers. How many inhabitants are there in our city? That number is a fact, and it does not lie. (NO)

We're trying to say look, we've looked at this, it's difficult data but we've done that and now we can communicate quite a simple story to you. (UK)

Common terms interviewees used to describe their communicative intentions are “to offer insight” (UK), “to explain more easily” (SE), “to communicate clearly, more clearly than words can” (UK), “to tell several facets in detail, which in text is only possible in an aggregated form” (DE), to make stories “more accessible” (DK), “to reveal deplorable state of affairs” (CH), “to help people understand the world” (UK).

These statements corroborate the assertion of Rinsdorf and Boers that new practices of data journalism may be seen as a “part of a general switch in journalism from a focus on news and scoops to background information and the explanation of current trends” (Rinsdorf & Boers, 2016, p. 2). Thus, data stories can work as background stories in order to give more detailed explanations.

Moreover, data visualization is used to argue visually by providing empirical evidence. Thus, it gives support to the claims made verbally in the text (Kosara, 2017).

It's when the work you're doing explains things that are perceived in different ways, so it's when you are trying to communicate something new, something that is hidden

behind the data, something that most of the people perceive in different ways, then you feel like you're really trying to communicate truth. (UK)

Visualizations help to convey things in a better way, to interpret things and to learn things. Visualizations are tools, visual arguments, and in this regard they do better than text. (DE)

In data stories, with large amounts of visual-verbal content, the scrollytelling technique is often employed for the interplay between visualization and text, which will be discussed further in the next section.

4.3 The textual-visual relationship

Many interviewees see potential for new narrative techniques through their use and visualization of data. Two main patterns of text-visualization relationship can be identified from the interviews. The first is data visualization as a stand-alone graphic, which represents a single multimodal unit and coherent whole or a story in itself, usually followed by an article that provides additional information and further aspects. This kind of visualization is often placed at the top of the page as an eye-catcher and starting point of a longer feature or long-form article. In this way, one interviewee argues that the data visualization is more than an add-on; it plays a role in defining the structure of the story:

So, in fact it would be completely wrong to do the graphics at the end of the process because, if you do them well enough, they should be influencing the structure of your text. So, we're on a journey towards that. (UK)

The second pattern is text alternating with data visualization and other elements (e.g., video, audio) in a sequential structure.

A new trend is that we divide an article up in distinct sections, instead of just a wall of text. And a graph can here work as a nice break in the reading, and it can be placed exactly where it belongs in the story. (NO)

It is easy to insert the visualization into the text – exactly at this place where the text talks about the issue. So, we cut the print graphic in several pieces and scatter it over the online text. (CH)

We are now developing a new template, more flexible than the standard news template. (...) Here we can insert images, citations, diagrams, videos etc. in addition to text elements. I think it will inspire us to think in new ways about news stories. (SE)

Many interviewees stated that data visualization is the driving force of a data story, even when it is a simple graphic or diagram. According to click-through rates, visual data stories are more attractive than text-based stories.

The editor-in-chief of Al Jazeera emphasizes: give the people broccoli and ice cream. That's their principle. Ice cream is the lead, the teaser, that is the visualization; and broccoli is the hard stuff below, for those who are interested in it, but if you want you can skip it. (DE)

The reader stats tell us that when we insert a simple data visualization in a story, readers stay on the page a little longer. (SE)

So, the copy is written – so we decide together on the structure and on the story itself, and then the story flows and the visuals are really integrated in the story. So, they are part of the story. They are the story. And the copy is integrated as well. So, you know, it's visuals and text. (UK)

Often in our stories we use the scrolling technique. It is not necessary to click but to scroll, if you scroll down, something will happen in the story. That's how we tell the story, how we do it – maybe the correct term for this is scrollytelling. (DE)

However, to keep readers interested and hooked, it is not enough to develop a visual data story. Most interviewees acknowledged that the story necessarily has to look good. As we will outline in the next section, an attractive and engaging design

therefore plays a central role in data storytelling.

4.4 Visual design matters

In the context of a data story, design concerns all the visible elements that create the visual performance of the data story: *how* the data is presented. Visual design plays a major role in data stories and in multimodal artifacts in general (e.g., van Leeuwen, 2005; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). Design elements such as font, color, size, alignment, form, position, texture, lines and spacing work as organizers, providing orientation, cohesion, and coherence to a journalistic artifact (Engebretsen & Weber, 2017; Weber & Rall, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2016; Hullman & Diakopoulos, 2011).

There was a near consensus among the interviewees that aesthetics is more than “nice to have.”

It is getting more and more important. Nobody looks at a graphic that looks bad. (DE)

When I read a story that is well designed and embedded in an aesthetic context, I consider the story more reliable. (DE)

Obviously we've got to get the informative done after we engage them, so they've got to look pretty to engage. (UK)

You have a much better chance to attract the younger readers if you present them with an image and some kind of dynamics. Maybe it is more aesthetic than it is actually pedagogical, but it might still be a good thing to do, because you reach a group not very interested in news. (SE)

And sometimes our readers will use some more time on the story because the graphic looks good. (DK)

Simply because aesthetics, you know, they help you get the story in a better way. So, you know, if it looks nicer, then you will spend more time with it, basically. (UK)

According to the interviewees, an attractive and user-friendly design is a prerequisite for capturing the readers' interest

and drawing them into the story. Then, the structure of the story is the crucial point in establishing whether the data visualization is engaging or not.

4.5 The structure: tending towards the Martini glass structure

As mentioned in Section 2, there are three main patterns for developing data stories: (i) the linear, author-driven approach with a step by step dramaturgy; (ii) the non-linear exploratory reader-driven approach; (iii) the hybrid linear-nonlinear pattern known as the Martini glass structure. It emerged from the interviews that some data teams are tending towards the Martini glass structure, first to tell the basic story in a linear way and then to open up the data visualization for exploration.

There's that old Martini glass theory about data visualisation, which is: give somebody something to hold onto and then hit them with the broader stuff later, and I think there is something in that, certainly this is one of our most successful ways of telling stories. (UK)

And you could offer the content step by step – first show one sample in the news story and then say: please, you are now welcome to explore the rest of the data! (NO)

It depends on the story we want to tell and it depends on how much we expect the reader to spend because most of the time readers don't have the time to play with the stuff we produce, so we have to find the right balance and to produce some work that helps the reader to understand at the first glance but also gives the possibility to dig more into the content so in that way we cover both. (UK)

One interviewee outlined that sometimes they offer a series of Martini glass-structured data visualizations.

We used a structural principle I found works well. It was linear on the story-level, but with numerous openings for further exploration at different points in the main story. So, it was both linear and networked. (NO)

While the stem of the Martini glass – the step by step pattern – symbolizes a sequential structure, the bowl enables users to interact with the graphic, which leads us to the next key feature: interactivity.

4.6 Interactivity: find *your* story

The main difference between text-based stories and visual data stories with non-linear exploratory elements is that the latter comprise potentially manifold narratives embedded in one single data visualization. They possess the ability to foster engagement, i. e., to encourage users to look for further stories on their own. Thus, interactive data stories create a modern form of dialogic journalism (cf. Engebretsen, 2006). One interviewee called it “You-journalism,” and many confirmed this point, as seen in the following quotes:

We sometimes have a large dataset underlying our news stories, and sometimes we give them an interactive interface for the reader to explore by herself. That creates a modern form of “You-journalism,” as it gives you the opportunity to check out your own neighborhood or something similar. In that way, we can offer much more information than just the one example we select to angle the news story. (NO)

We found the best way to connect with the audience and get them to really engage and understand the story is to make it personally relevant to each individual one of them. (UK)

To attract users’ interest, data teams usually demonstrate in the basic story how to use the data visualization (“this is what the data can tell you here”) before leaving the data to the users. Thus, they expect a higher level of interest than in text-based stories.

When we say to the readers “Here you can check out your own local area,” it means that the story becomes stronger than when we pick out one case to illustrate the general topic. (NO)

So sometimes we put the data out there in the visual, but in a more exploratory way. So, peo-

ple can look for their own – you know, if it's geography, they can search by their location and they can get the micro stories. They can get into the stories through their location and through their own interests. (UK)

This could be a map, which tells one possible story very concisely, and at the end the reader has the option to look for his or her own location, how does it affect me. But the basic story is already told. (DE)

Sometimes this kind of data story is built on a quiz format to increase engagement.

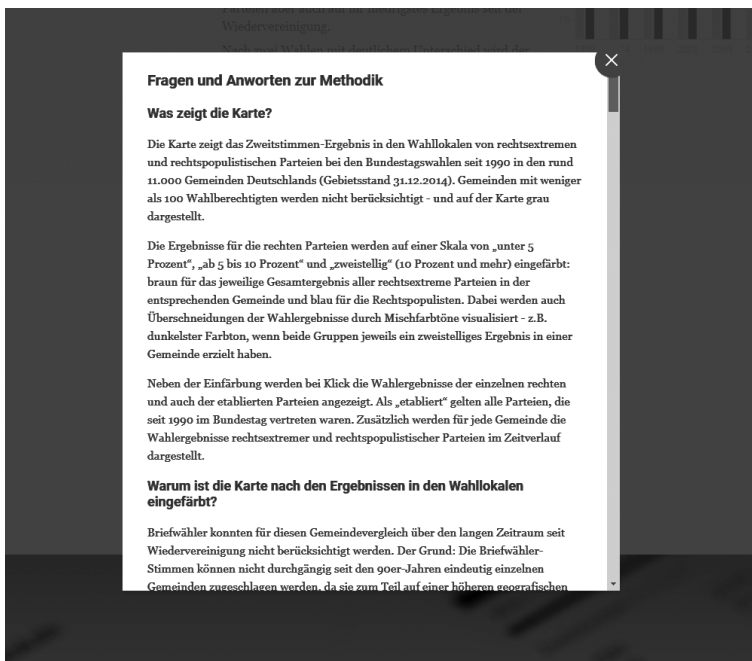
In the last months, we try some new things, not very big and not the classical visualizations, but interactive, such as quizzes. We think they are a good way because they are playful and they are well suited to conveying complex content. (CH)

To communicate their journalistic practices clearly, data stories are usually linked to a meta-story, which will be taken up in the next section.

4.7 The meta-story: making processes transparent

The process of producing data visualizations is a more complex and non-transparent one than producing verbal texts and photos – and thus calls for a stronger awareness of transparency and trust-building. In data journalism, transparency has become a common principle (Sunne, 2016). For most of the interviewees, transparency is a sine qua non. Transparency means: stating the source, including a link to the data sources, providing access to the raw data (e.g., downloadable as Excel files or on platforms like Github), explaining the methodology, or all of these (Fig. 5).

Figure 5: Questions and answers concerning the methodology of “It wasn’t always the East – where Germany votes for the far-right.” In addition, a link is provided to download the data (courtesy of Berliner Morgenpost)^a



^aBerliner Morgenpost (23.01.2017), from <https://interaktiv.morgenpost.de/wo-deutschland-rechts-waehlt/>

It is important to include verbal explanations and we say what has been omitted and for what reason. Sometimes we publish an extra article to explain: what can data tell us and what not. (CH)

It's important to explain how and why you decided to go that way so you make things clear and you explain to the reader there is also another side of the story, like being clear by explaining methodology, by giving the proper scales, by giving the proper legends, annotations and data sources, all of them together will help the reader understand, and reassure actually the reader also that what you're showing is not something built on just some perception. (UK)

Interviewees regarded the meta-story as an important part of the data story. This "how-we-did-it"-element can be integrated into the story, but usually it appears at the end of a story in a fact box or as a link (Figure 5).

We need to make room for an explanation, typically a fact box. Sometimes the issues we are working on can be so controversial that we need to make a separate story about what we have done with the data. (DK)

Sometimes, this is a part of the story: to explain the methods applied. There are also cases where the methodology must be described very clearly and in detail, so it is not possible to incorporate the methods in the story because it would take up too much space. Therefore, we create a special box where we explain the methodology. And in the story, we refer to the box. (CH)

For almost every story we have a "read me" file that kind of explains, this is what we reported, this is what data we used. And sometimes it'll have extra contextual stuff where we've had those sorts of discussions; there will be an explanation of the methodology if you like. But that isn't in the body of the article (...). (UK)

Rinsdorf and Boers (2016) regard transparency – in addition to fact checking – as a strategy of quality management: allowing readers to sift through the data, check

what journalists have done, evaluate the methods applied, and verify their findings. Even readers who will not spend time on such activities may appreciate being positioned as qualified for doing so (cf. Engebretsen, 2017).

Sometimes we publish the complete source code, the analysis script to show how we processed the data so that the user can understand our approach and maybe detect errors. (CH)

What we are doing in this project for the first time is that we make the R-code available with R Markdown, in addition to the raw data. And we explain why we do this. (DE)

Another thing is to be open in a manner that makes readers actually eager to check out what we have done. One possible way is, I guess, to state clearly how we have used the data, and what we have chosen as an angle to the story. And we could also approach this similar to what is done in research, constantly ask ourselves, "Is this correct?," and then show alternative ways to interpret and visualize the numbers. (NO)

Another aspect of the meta-story is how data stories are shared, re-shaped and continued in discussions and commentaries on social media. Most of the interviewees agreed that social media are an essential part of their work. They produce special graphics or animated gifs for social media to draw people into the data story, to increase click rates and to trigger discussions.

We always distribute a gif or a screenshot on Twitter or Facebook to promote our interactive visualizations so that people realize: hey, here is something visual to discover. (CH)

It should have a wow effect! Something that has come lately is the explainer in video format, presented on Facebook or Youtube. Here, the graphics are embedded in the video and it is all perceived as a linear narrative. It happens more and more. An important reason for this is that video is so easy to share on social media. (NO)

However, the benefits or effects of sharing graphics on social media are not part of this study.

5 Conclusion

New technologies and the opening up of public data have brought data into newsrooms, inviting journalists to tell stories with data and through data visualizations. The current prevalence of data in Western culture is pushing numbers as a semiotic resource – besides text and images – towards the center of journalistic practices. In data stories, data plays a core role, and the patterns, outliers, relationships, correlations, or differences found in the data act as a stimulus to initiate the process of storytelling. The interviewees called this kind of stories “data-driven, data-informed stories.” To see and show what is striking in the dataset, journalists need to visualize the data. Kirk (2016, p. 21) calls this process of making data visible “the act of representation.” This process of visualization can lead to a simple bar chart, a map, a stand-alone visualization, or a combination of text and visualizations.

Data journalists aim to convey a clear message through the act of showing through visualization. This act of showing consists of narrative, explanatory, and argumentative elements and structures. In addition, data stories often enable users to choose their own story, their individual angle on the story by exploring the data by themselves. As the interviewees pointed out, one single data visualization “can tell different stories, not only one.” Looking for the story most personally relevant triggers involvement. Offering multiple micro stories, the Martini glass structure with its linear-nonlinear dramaturgy, exemplifies this, a compromise between an author-driven and a reader-driven structure: Firstly, data journalists handle datasets more from distance, which means from an authorial point of view offering one or *the* basic story; the aim is to show the users how to read the visualization and not to overwhelm them with data. Secondly, the data visualization opens up many

possible individual stories with a more personal narrative point of view. Providing data through data visualizations calls for transparency regarding journalistic practices and editorial processes. Transparency as a qualitative management strategy and an ethical standard in data journalism means explaining the process of data collection, analysis, and presentation and allowing users to check the data work of the journalists. Last but not least, another aspect of visual communication is gaining center stage in journalistic storytelling: design – how the data is presented. To attract readers’ interest on a website or on social media, data stories with a compelling visual design are more successful than text-centric stories. By tweeting or posting a screenshot of a data visualization on social media, the visibility of a data story, and thus, of a news organization, can be increased.

Although data visualizations often constitute or are included in textual structures with elements of narrativity, there are reasons to discuss whether narrative is the most relevant term for the conceptualization of exploratory data visualizations. A basic characteristic of narrative in a traditional sense, is, as earlier noted, the unbroken chain of events, where temporal and causal relations create the coherence of the story (Bell, 1991). This is hardly the case when the communication is user-driven rather than author-driven. Further, the term narrative will, in traditional text theory, often be related to a distinct voice, a narrator. Genette (1980) refers to the platonic distinction between diegesis and mimesis when he talks about “pure narrative” and “perfect imitation” in literary works. This distinction is closely related to what we in everyday speech refer to as “telling and showing,” and which in the context of journalism education is often found in the form of normative advice: “Show, don’t tell!” (e.g., Mencher, 1997, p. 154). Following this line of thought, we can suggest that data-driven news stories structured around the Martini glass model result in a mix of telling and showing, diegesis and mimesis, although the mimesis

part – the imitation of the world – is of a highly abstracted kind.

To sum up, we identified seven key features of journalistic data stories. These are: data as the core of a story, the diverse communicative purposes, the new textual-visual relationships, new structures and forms of story design, different kinds of interactivity, and the increasing importance of the meta-story. Given these key features, it is definitely the case that understandings of journalistic storytelling need to be re-thought. We might not want to go as far as saying that a narrative approach to journalistic practice is not at all useful. But our interview analysis has shown that besides narration there are other textual practices, visual elements, structural patterns, and interactive techniques in journalistic artifacts today which require us to rethink what we understand as journalistic storytelling such that we have to either (i) update our understanding of what counts as a story or (ii) stop calling journalism stories. Either way, it is clear that traditional definitions of stories do not apply in the contemporary news production landscape.

Our empirical findings can be seen as a first step to rethinking the narrative approach. It can also be seen as a contribution to understanding a bigger picture of the significant changes that journalistic practices and newsmaking are undergoing. To enlighten the discussion on whether data stories fulfill the criteria for a story as discussed in narrative theory, and in what ways they represent new narrative forms and functions, we need further analysis of the artifacts themselves, the data stories. This is the next step for research in this area.

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