

Zeszyty PRASOZNAWCZE

Kraków 2014, T. 57, nr 2 (218), s. 145–161

doi:10.4467/2299-6362PZ.14.007.2328

www.ejournals.eu/Zeszyty-Prasoznawcze/

COMMUNICATIVE FIGURATIONS: RESEARCHING CULTURES OF MEDIATIZATION¹

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ABSTRACT

Communicative figurations: Researching cultures of mediatization

In this article the author indicates the necessity of application of transmedia perspective in mediatization research. He understands mediatization research as a kind of analysis that investigates the interrelation between the change of media and communication on the one hand and culture and society on the other, reflecting the transforming role of media within this interrelation.

The author emphasises that the idea of communicative figurations makes a mediatization research in a transmedia perspective possible. Communicative figurations are patterns of processes of communicative interweaving that exist across various media and have a “frame” that orients communicative action and therefore the sense-making practices of this figuration.

Key words: mediatization research, communicative figurations, culture and society

¹ This article was originally published at: L. Kramp, N. Carpentier, A. Hepp, I. Tomanic-Trivundza, H. Nieminen, R. Kunelius, T. Olsson, E. Sundin, R. Kilborn (eds.): *Everyday Media Agency in Europe. The Researching and Teaching Communication Series*. Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana Press, 2014.

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The necessity of a transmedia perspective within mediatization research

If we follow the recent discussion about mediatization, one argument is striking: The increasing interest in mediatization is related to the fact that the media has been gaining relevance in all social and cultural spheres. Various metaphors are used to describe this phenomenon. Some authors talk of the “media saturation” (Lundby 2009a: p. 14; Friesen, Hug 2009: p. 80) of present lives. Other academics use different metaphors like for example the “mediation of everything” (Livingstone 2009: p. 1), the media as “integral part” (Hjarvard 2013: p. 3) of culture and society, or just “media life” (Deuze 2012). This increasing relevance of technical communication media in various spheres of culture and society becomes linked with a certain paradigm shift in media and communication research. As Sonia Livingstone writes, it “seems that we have moved from a social analysis in which the mass media comprise one among many influential but independent institutions whose relations with the media can be usefully analysed to a social analysis in which everything is mediated, the consequence being that all influential institutions in society have themselves been transformed, reconstituted, by contemporary processes of mediation” (Livingstone 2009: p. 2). If we follow this line of argument, the original approach of mass communication research – to understand mass media as separate institutions of their own accord and to ask for their “influence” or “effect” on other spheres of culture and society – falls short. If all parts of culture and society are interwoven with media of various kinds, the main question is a different one: How do we “articulate” or “construct” these spheres of culture and society by our increasingly media-related practices?

Taking a move like this makes it evident that it is not just *one* medium which has to be considered, but *various kinds* of media. We can therefore regard different phenomena as “the family” or “the public sphere” to explain this. At present, families as well as public spheres are not simply constructed by just one medium but by various kinds of media. For families this might be (mobile) phones and the social web, (digital) photo albums to share pictures, letters and postcards, or watching television together. And if we think about present national or transnational public spheres we also have to take into account a number of different media to describe them. Among these media are not only traditional media of mass communication but increasingly also so-called new media like Twitter and blogs.

In media and communication research we find various concepts to describe this relevance of a variety of different media in our (present) processes of social construction. Just to name some of these concepts: Mirca Madianou and Daniel Miller (2012, 2013) use the concept of “polymedia” to analyse “new media as a communicative environment of affordances rather than as a catalogue of ever proliferating but discrete technologies” (Madianou, Miller 2013: p. 169). Being sceptical against such a pure emphasis of plurality, Nick Couldry prefers the concept of

“media manifold” to describe the “linked *configuration* of media that is crucial” (Couldry 2012: p. 16). Coming more from film and television studies, Elizabeth Evans (2011) introduced the idea of “transmedia television” to explain that even television nowadays has to be understood as reflecting various other digital and non-digital media. And if we go back to medium theory, there we also find the argument not to consider just one single medium but rather the “communication environment” (Meyrowitz 2009: p. 520) at a certain moment of time and place.

We can call such an access *transmedia perspective*. The argument behind this perspective is not to say that a certain medium does not have an individual specificity that we have to consider if we want to reflect its role in communication. The argument goes further and says: Even if we want to understand the specificity of any one particular medium we cannot do this by focusing solely on it in isolation from other media. We have to grasp its position in the overall media “environment” or “configuration” of various media. And as a consequence, if we want to understand the role of media in the processes of our “communicative construction” (Knoblauch 2013b) of culture and society – our articulation of family, public spheres etc. – we have to do this by analysing the variety of media within this process.

It is obvious to what extent such a move to a transmedia perspective is highly helpful for mediatization research. If by mediatization research we understand a kind of analysis that investigates the interrelation between the change of media and communication on the one hand and culture and society on the other, reflecting the transforming role of media for communication within this interrelation (Couldry, Hepp 2013; Lundby 2014a), it is obvious that such a transmedia perspective is necessary: If present life is “media-saturated” (Lundby 2009a: p. 2), we must be in a position to analyse this “saturation” across a variety of different media. Moreover, the transmedia perspective is linked to a long-standing plea for a “non-media centric” media research (cf. for example Hepp 2013a; Moores 2012; Morley 2009). This is a plea for a kind of media research that doesn’t blindly take “the media” as the “driving forces” of every change in society. Rather, it is a kind of research starting with certain social and cultural phenomena, asking more openly for the role of media (and communication) within them. A transmedia perspective is linked exactly with this point of departure: As soon as we argue for an investigation into how certain media altogether are related to the processes of constructing certain social phenomena, it makes no sense to take “a medium” as a starting point. Rather, we must investigate the phenomenon as such, and then move to an analysis of the role of media communication within that particular context.

However, if we follow these arguments we are confronted with practical challenges. How can we conceptualise such a research in a transmedia perspective? And how can this be done in practice? As I shall argue within this article, the concept of “communicative figurations” offers a possible starting point to handle these two challenges.

Communicative figurations as a starting point

What is a communicative figuration? To answer this question, it is helpful to move back to the two examples already used within this article: families and public spheres. Families can be described as a communicative figuration since they are sustained as communitizations through various forms of communication: conversations, communication via (mobile) telephones and the social web, (digital) photo albums, letters and postcards or by watching television together (Hasebrink 2014). Also (national or transnational) public spheres are a communicative figuration sustained via different kinds of media and confronted with special normative expectations. Among these media are not only the traditional media of mass communication but increasingly also so-called new media like Twitter and blogs. We are, however, also dealing with communicative figurations of learning when schools, for example, use interactive whiteboards, software applications or intra- and internet portals in order to teach in a ‘contemporary’ manner (Breiter 2014). Generalising such examples leads to the conclusion that: Communicative figurations are patterns of processes of communicative interweaving that exist across various media and have a “frame” (Goffman 1974) that orients communicative action and therefore the sense-making practices of this figuration.

Such an approach to communicative figurations picks up reflections as formulated by Norbert Elias, but takes them a step further. For Elias, figuration is “a simple conceptual tool” (Elias 1978: p. 130) to be used for understanding social-cultural phenomena in terms of “models of processes of interweaving” (Elias 1978: p. 130). For him, figurations are “networks of individuals” (Elias 1978: p. 15) which constitute a larger social entity through reciprocal interaction – for example, by joining in a game, or a dance. This could be the family, a group, the state or society. Due to this kind of scalability, his concept of figuration traverses the often static levels of analysis of the micro, meso and macro (Hepp 2013b).

The figuration as developed by Elias is considered to be one of the basic description concepts of social sciences and cultural studies and was adopted in different ways in theoretical as well as empirical works (for an overview: Bauman 1979; Esser 1984; Emirbayer 1997; Krieken 2007; Treibel 2008; Morrow 2009). The significance of the figuration concept for media and communication research has been increasingly emphasised (Ludes 1995; Krotz 2003; Couldry 2010; Willems 2010). The relationship between figuration analysis and current media and communication research can be found in the common interest to describe actors and their interweaving which, according to Simmel (1984), can be conceptualised as a common pattern of interdependency or reciprocation. Unlike the also widely discussed current developments of structural network analysis (see, for example, White 2008), the figuration concept is better suited to enabling the integration into research of not only the dimension of communicative “meaning”, but also of historical transformation. The concept of communicative figuration therefore becomes an ideal starting point for investigating communicative interweaving and its change across time.

When claiming that *transmedia* communicative figurations exist, I mean that a communicative figuration is based on different communication media – hence often on different basic “types of communication” (Hepp 2013a: p. 65). Which of these types of communication and, based upon them, which communication media must be taken into consideration when describing a specific communicative figuration depends on their characteristics: The communicative figuration of a political commission is different from that of a national public sphere. The transformation of *both* communicative figurations is, however, connected and refers back to that of their communication media. Consequently, it can be assumed that the communicative figuration of political commissions changes as soon as the direct communication of everyone involved does not rely only on the documents carried along but also on instantly-accessible online information and the possibility to transmit decision-making “live” (Auslander 2008) to the national public via smartphone. Integrating people in the public sphere is, due to the diffusion of digital media, no longer a “two-step flow” (Katz 1957) from produced or standardised mass communication to direct communication (if it ever has been). These days it is much more a case of creating “public connections” (Couldry, Livingstone, Markham 2007) through various forms of reciprocal media communication on the internet. If we want to grasp these current changes, we must adopt a transmedia approach. The concept of communicative figuration offers this.

Why is the concept of communicative figurations innovative for mediatization research? As argued, the mediatization approach advances the expansion of the traditional perspective of media and communication research analysing media contents, their uses and effects towards an approach that promotes a research focus on the entire transformation of media and communication (for an recent overview cf. Couldry, Hepp 2013; Hepp 2013a; Hjarvard 2013; Lundby 2014b). At the beginning, mediatization research assumed a growing expansion of a “media logic” (Altheide, Snow 1979; Asp 1990; Altheide 2013) towards which other spheres of culture and society would be “geared” increasingly. The current mediatization research has been able to show that such a thesis does not reach far enough (Couldry 2012; Esser 2013; Hepp 2013a). In compliance with this, calls have been heard to expand the concept of media logic (Hjarvard 2013; Landerer 2013), to put an emphasis on the role of different media during the process of interaction (Lundby 2009b; Hepp, Hasebrink 2014), or to focus on communication instead of media and, in the latter case, to take into consideration the contextual “moulding forces” of different media as “institutionalizations” and “reifications” of communication (Hepp 2012; Krotz, Hepp 2013). This was also the basis to investigate various “mediatized worlds” (Hepp, Krotz 2014). On the one hand, this research on mediatized worlds demonstrates how mediatization has developed not as a linear process but in different “waves”. On the other hand, it becomes clear that mediatization has substantiated itself very differently in the various “life-worlds” and “social-worlds”.

Nevertheless, this research does not yet offer an integrating approach which is able to grasp the significance of mediatization for the ongoing communicative

construction of social and cultural realities (Berger, Luckmann 1967; Knoblauch 2013b). Consequently, the guiding idea of researching communicative figurations is the assumption that characteristic interrelations between the change of media and communication and culture and society as described by the term mediatization substantiate in specific communicative figurations and their transformation. With the alteration of communicative figurations, processes of communicative constructions of socio-cultural reality are changing. This is the transformation process we should focus on.

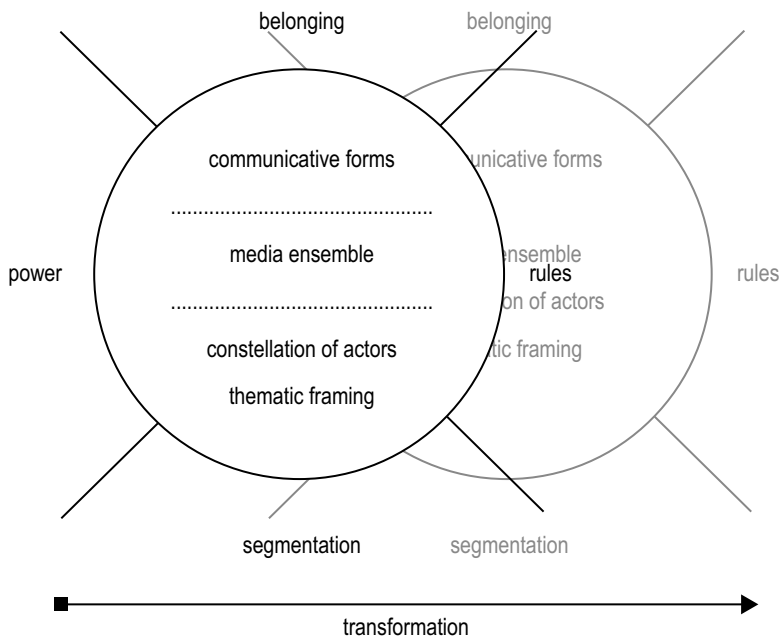
When viewing change as a sequence of communicative figurations, it is important to avoid simple causality models which assume the existence of effects or contents or materiality of individual media. Far more complex models are necessary in order to answer the following question: How significant is the transformation of media and communication for culture and society? Such a statement must not be misunderstood as giving up the perspective of interrelating an “interpretative understanding” with a “causal explanation” (Weber 1978: p. 4). It is much more about overcoming assumptions of the coerciveness of the effects of media and communication change on our culture and society. It is useful to refer back to Norbert Elias, who discusses the “problem of the ‘inevitability’ of social developments” (Elias 1978: p. 158). Elias reminds us that “in studying the flow of figurations there are two possible perspectives on the connection between one figuration chosen from the continuing flow and another, later, figuration” (Elias 1978: p. 160). The first perspective regards the earlier figuration, from the view of which the later one is one out of many possibilities for change. In the second perspective – that of the later figuration – “the earlier one is usually a necessary condition for the formation of the later” (Elias 1978: p. 160). Norbert Elias argues accordingly that the (yet to be empirically proved) fact of one figuration arising from an earlier one “does not assert that the earlier figurations had necessarily to change into the later ones” (Elias 1978: p. 161). Describing the transformation of communicative figurations as well as the transformation of communicative constructions of social and cultural realities means to work out multi-layered patterns of transformation, which calls for a more integrated theory on communication change yet to be developed. The term “transformation” then implies a certain position: We can typify certain patterns of this change – beyond a linear explanation of change.

How to analyse communicative figurations

But how can we investigate communicative figurations in practice? To answer this question it is helpful to sum up the arguments developed so far: As argued, we can define communicative figurations as patterns of processes of communicative interweaving that exist across various media and have a “thematic framing” that orients communicative action and sense-making. In and through these communicative figurations, we as humans construct our symbolically meaning-

ful social and cultural realities. Consequently, communicative figurations are no static phenomena but must rather be observed in their constant state of motion – as a “process”: They are realised in communicative practice, thus re-articulated and, hence, they continuously transform to different degrees. Therefore we can consider communicative figurations, in the sense of sociology of knowledge and a social-constructivism (Berger, Luckmann 1967; Knoblauch 2013a), as the basis of the communicative construction of social and cultural realities: The realities of cultures or societies are “constructed” in or through the different communicative figurations.

Figure 1. Heuristics on the examination of communicative figurations



- This said, we can argue that each communicative figuration has four “features” and four “construction capacities” (for the following see in detail Hepp, Hasebrink 2014). The *features* of a communicative figuration are more or less a sum-up of the arguments developed so far:
- First, each communicative figuration is marked by its *forms of communication*. This is a more general way to describe the different convention-based kinds of “communicative actions” or “practices”, which develop into more complex patterns (patterns of communicative networking or discourses, for example).

- Second, in relation with these forms of communication, each communicative figuration has a characteristic *media ensemble*. This describes the entire media through which a communicative figuration exists.
- Third, a typical *constellation of actors* can be determined for each communicative figuration which constitutes itself through their communicative action.
- Fourth, every communicative figuration is characterised by a *thematic framing*; thus there is a certain frame of sense-making which also defines the communicative figuration as a social and cultural “entity”.

To elucidate these four features further, it is helpful to link them to a more general reflection on mediatization and communication. If we take the argument that symbolic interaction is the core anchor to describe mediatization (Lundby 2009b; Hepp, Hasebrink 2014), it becomes obvious how far “communication” builds the first aspect of each communicative figuration. However, if we consider communication as part of figurations, we are less interested in the “individual utterance” but more in the “forms” (Simmel 1972) of communication as “practice” (Couldry 2004; Reckwitz 2002) which are characteristic for a certain communicative figuration. Families as communicative figurations, for example involve different typical *forms of communication* than political public spheres do.

In addition, each communicative figuration is located in a certain “media environment” (Morley 2007; Meyrowitz 2009), here understood as the totality of technical communication media which are accessible within a certain culture and society at a certain time. Characteristic for a communicative figuration is a certain subset of this totality, namely its *media ensemble*. At this point it becomes possible to integrate media specificity into the analysis of communicative figurations. As outlined, in present mediatized cultures and societies it is not one single medium that shapes the communicative construction of a certain entity, but rather a group of (different) media in their entirety. This means we are not analysing one single “media influence”, but how the “institutionalizations” and “reifications” of different media altogether “mould” communicative figurations (Hepp 2013a). Focusing on media ensembles – which correlate in individual perspective with “media repertoires” (Hasebrink, Popp 2006; Hasebrink, Domeyer 2012) – seems to be the appropriate way to analyse the complexity of present mediatization.

With reference to *constellations of actors*, I have in mind that each communicative figuration is also defined by a certain intertwined group of typical actors. These can be either individual actors (humans) or collective actors (organisations of different complexity). The term “constellation of actors” as I use it is influenced by the theory of social action developed by Uwe Schimank, who in his approach also refers back to Norbert Elias (Schimank 2010: pp. 211-213). In such a view we are confronted with a constellation of actors as soon as we have an interference of at least two actors who themselves recognise this interference as being such (Schimank 2010: p. 202). The argument at this point is that each communicative figuration has one specific constellation of actors who perceive themselves as

part of this communicative figuration. There is no need that this constellation is “harmonic” or “friendly”, it can also be “conflicting” and “struggling”. However, the involved communicative actors are aware of each other as being part of this communicative figuration.

Maybe the most complex point about communicative figurations is their *thematic framing*. Using this term, I refer less to the “framing analysis” as it is well known in media and communication content research. The terming is much more grounded in fundamental social theory, and here the “frame analysis” as it was outlined by Erving Goffman (1974: pp. 21-40). Frames in his understanding have an interactionist as well as a cognitive moment: On the one hand, frames orientate our interaction as it becomes understandable, for example if we consider a teaching situation in a classroom as a frame: We “produce” this situation by our interaction being aligned to a shared frame of action. On the other hand, recognising “frames” makes it possible for a person who enters a room to understand “what’s going on”. In such a more general sense, also communicative figurations have a certain thematic framing: Their communicative forms, media ensemble and constellation of actors build up a “unity of meaning” which orientates the ongoing procedure of “producing” as well as the “perception” of this communicative figuration.

By describing the features of forms of communication, media ensemble, constellation of actors and thematic framing, we can describe a communicative figuration on a fundamental level. However, to gain a deeper understanding of communicative figurations a further contextualisation is necessary. This is the point where the four *construction capacities* come in that we have to have in mind when describing communicative figurations. They can be described in a first approach with the help of four questions: How do communicative figurations construct our different “belongings”? How are certain “rules” created through communicative figurations? How does a communicative figuration produce characteristic “segmentations”? How do communicative figurations create or maintain “power”?

The construction capacity of *belonging* picks up the work on inclusion, communitization and socialization through processes of media communication. This includes issues of a mediated construction of national communities. Here, for example, the present research presumes that only with continuing mediatization was a comprehensive communicative integration into a nation possible, and an implementation of national culture (cf. Anderson 1983; Schlesinger 1987; Billig 1995; Hjort 2000; Morley 2000). From the viewpoint of political communication research, a debate on mediated relationships is about integrating people into national and transnational public spheres, which may also happen through conflicts (Dahlgren 1995; Gripsrud 2007; Wessler et al. 2008; Koopmans, Statham 2010). Especially with an increasing mediatization, the possibilities for relationships in and through media communication have increased; complex forms of “citizenship” are emerging which are much more based on popular culture than on political affiliation (García Canclini 2001; Dahlgren 2006). Different communitisa-

tions and socialisation should be mentioned which also contribute to the gains of relevancy of media and communication change. This concerns transnational diasporas (Dayan 1999), fan communities (Jenkins 2006), religious communities (Hoover 2006) or new social movements (Bailey, Cammaerts, Carpentier 2008). It also concerns commercialised belongings with companies and associations as to be found in or through PR, or changing links on the level of personal networks and groups (Rainie, Wellman 2012).

The construction capacity of *rules* does not only concern political and legal regulations of media communication but also social and cultural rules as they are discussed for example in communication and media ethics. Consequently, this question of perspective is about all processes of setting and changing rules, ranging from a “top-down-regulation” and a “co-” and “self-regulation” to “spontaneous negotiation of rules”. In today’s communicative figurations, processes of rule-making change as the national frame, which for a long time was the primary vanishing point for regulations, is losing this role as a consequence of the self-transformation of the state (Chakravarty, Zhao 2008). But not only regulations are constructed in communicative figurations. The same is the case with our everyday rules of action, our habits and ethics (cf. for example Weiß 2001). On top of this, digital media demonstrate that especially media-ethical and aesthetical rules are reified through “code” – the software-technical or algorithmic architecture of platforms or communication services (Lessig 2006; Zittrain 2008; Pariser 2011). If we are to investigate communicative figurations, we also have to have this construction capacity of rules in mind.

The construction capacity of *segmentation* is more or less related to the tradition of investigating inequalities in media and communication research. One of the questions of research on “knowledge gaps” is about whether the distribution of certain media increases the difference between the “information-rich” and the “information-poor” (Tichenor, Donohue, Olien 1970). Such a discussion was picked up by the so-called digital-divide research (Norris 2001), which investigates to what extent, with the expansion of digital media, socially existing segmentations increase in respect of certain criteria like age, gender, education, etc. Issues about media and inequality, however, reach a lot further (Bilandzic, Patriarce, Traudt 2012). From the point of view of mediatization research such descriptions appear to be problematic if they exclusively depart from the diffusion of an individual medium. Especially in the case of the “digital divide”, a trans-media perspective is just as central as the consideration of direct communication because insufficient “access” and “ways of use” of one medium can generally be balanced with other forms of media – while this is, however, not an automatism (Madianou, Miller 2012). In this sense, the “digital divide [...] has to be understood as a dynamic multi-level concept” (Krotz 2007: p. 287) which takes into account the different “equalities” and “inequalities” in their potentially reciprocal enforcement and their possible compensation. From this point of view, the “digital divide” as well as other segmentations in changing communicative figurations

refer to the very basic question of the extent to which, according to Pierre Bourdieu (2010), communicative figurations and their growing mediatization increase “economic”, “cultural” and “social capital”.

Finally, the construction capacity of *power* is of high importance also to describe communicative figurations. The change of communicative figurations thus involves a change of the possibilities for “empowerment” and “disempowerment”. Manuel Castells discussed this in great detail for the establishment of comprehensively mediatized “network societies”, in which social movements are able to unfold a new form of power with the help of their “project identities” (Castells 1997). Yet he increasingly refers also to opposing moments due to the roles of companies and governments as “switches” between power-networks (Castells 2009). In addition, even communicative figurations related to the audio-visual are about power. Thus, hegemonic concepts of “individualised life styles” in consumer societies are communicated through transmedia productions, such as can be found in nomination shows and make-over formats (Ouellette, Hay 2008; Thomas 2010): The paradigm of “individualised choice” and “selection” is legitimised through the (e.g. internet-based) voting and the representation of an individually-selectable life in such programmes.

If we take these four construction capacities – belonging, rules, segmentation and power – together it becomes obvious how we have to contextualise our analysis of communicative figurations further: If we are to understand communicative figurations as the structured ways by which the communicative construction of social and cultural realities take place, they are also the means by which power, segmentation, rules and belonging are produced. And therefore we have to consider this in our investigation of communicative figurations.

Mediatization research as an analysis of “changing” and “remaining” communicative figurations

To sum up: The idea of communicative figurations outlined so far makes a mediatization research in a transmedia perspective possible. We have a clear unit of analysis, viz. a communicative figuration where various actors are interwoven by their forms of communication and the related media within the process of constructing certain social and cultural “entities”: a family, a public sphere, a certain organisation, or – if we think of intertwined communicative figurations – a whole social field such as politics or religion. To analyse such a figuration, we can start with its features: its forms of communication, media ensemble, constellation of actors and thematic framing. And all this is compatible with the various methods we have at our disposal in media and communication research, reaching from content and discourse analysis to media ethnography and network analysis.

However, the most striking aspect of such an approach is that we don’t blindly take the media to be the “driving force” of change. Beside the media ensemble we

investigate also the other features of a communicative figuration. Therefore, we can describe how far the “change” of certain media results in a “further change” of a communicative figuration or its “remaining” (Elias 1978: p. 147). To explain this, I want to refer once more to the example of the communicative figuration of the family: The media ensemble of families obviously changed in the 1980s and early 1990s when the video recorder became part of it (Gray 1992). However, it is an open question whether the family as a communicative figuration changed as result of that. Looking back, it seems to be quite arguable that the forms of communication, the ensemble of actors and thematic framing of the family remained quite stable (cf. for example Morley 1986). This said, the media ensemble changed but the communicative figurations only rarely.

Taking this argument further we can distinguish three basic patterns of transformation in relation to communicative figurations. This is first the “*break*”, that is a total break of existing communicative figurations including their thematic framing. One reason for such a break might be media change, but also other reasons are imaginable. Second, the “*new formation*” of a communicative figuration might take place, that is the emergence of new communicative figurations by a stepwise change of communicative forms, media ensembles and constellation of actors. And, third, we might have the “*variation*”, that is the maintenance of existing communicative figurations with different media, i.e. an alternation of the media ensemble with existing communicative forms, constellation of actors and thematic framing – the “remaining” of a communicative figuration with changing media. This latter type I have discussed on the example of the family.

As I have argued elsewhere (Hepp 2013b), investigating these patterns of transformation can be done in a “diachronous” way, that is by comparison over time (either by historical studies or repeat studies). But very often we do this kind of research in a “synchronous” way, that is by focusing on a certain moment of time. This is evident if we are interested in certain “breaks”, media related or not. In such a case we are investigating an “event” (Sewell 2005: pp. 197-224) or a (media) “revolution”. This might be the case if change transforms communicative figurations in a very dramatic way, which was for example the case with online stock markets (Knorr-Cetina 2012) or online poker gaming (Hitzler, Möll 2012). But very often we rather research another “eventfulness”, that is when the change of media results (only) in the stepwise “new formation” or even “variation” of communicative figurations.

As I hope this concluding example demonstrates: It is worth to move within mediatization research towards more complex approaches of analysing change. In my view, investigating communicative figurations is a highly promising starting point for this. This concept is able to “ground” mediatization research in very concrete empirical studies.

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STRESZCZENIE

Komunikacyjne figuracje – badając kultury mediatyzacji

W niniejszym artykule autor wskazuje na konieczność zastosowania perspektywy transmedialnej w badaniach nad mediatyzacją. Badania te rozumie jako rodzaj analizy wzajemnej relacji pomiędzy zmianą dotyczącą mediów i komunikacji z jednej strony oraz kultury i społeczeństwa z drugiej (analizy, która odzwierciedla przeobrażającą rolę mediów w tej relacji).

Autor podkreśla, że koncepcja komunikacyjnych figuracji umożliwia badanie mediatyzacji w perspektywie transmedialnej. Komunikacyjne figuracje to wzory procesów połączeń komunikacyjnych, które istnieją poprzez różne media i posiadają „ramy” nakierowujące działanie komunikacyjne, a tym samym praktyki nadawania sensu tych figuracji.

Słowa kluczowe: badania nad mediatyzacją, komunikacyjne figuracje, kultura i społeczeństwo