

Research Space
Conference paper

Media and the transformation of “reality”. A critical discourse analysis of BBC Panorama’s “Slumdogs and millionaires”

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Media and the transformation of “reality”: A Critical Discourse Analysis of BBC Panorama’s “Slumdogs and Millionaires”

Canterbury Christ Church University
PGRA Conference 2019

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Overview of the presentation

- My research
- Introducing a *mediation analytical framework*
- Case Study
- Conclusion and future steps of the research

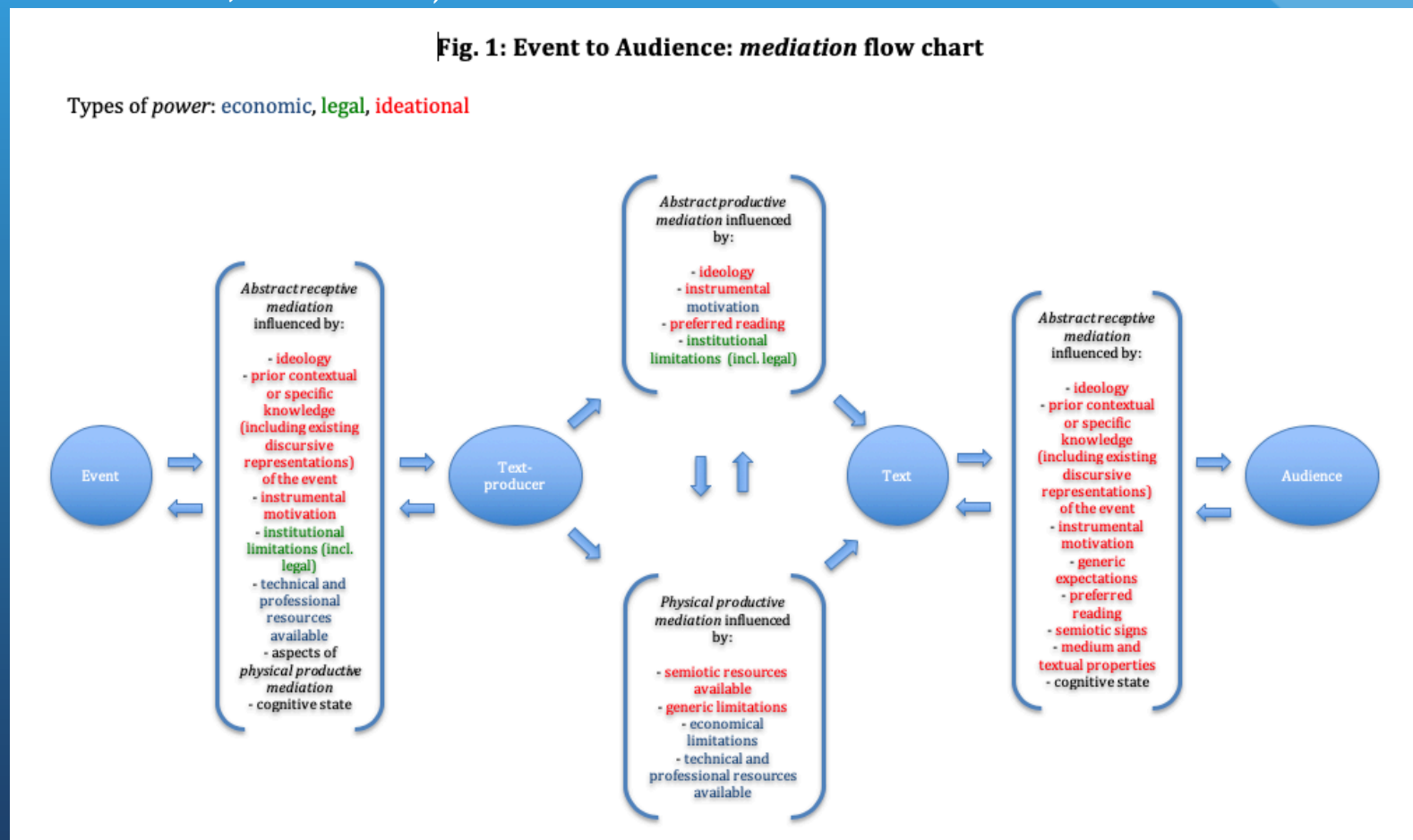
My research

- Critical Discourse Studies (e.g. Fairclough, 1995; Wodak, 2001; Jancsary, Höllerer and Meyer, 2016)
- Socio-economical and intercultural issues
- TV Travel and Cultural programmes
- Focus on the reception/ perceptions of audience

Introducing a *mediation analytical framework*

The *Mediation Analytical Framework* (after Hall, 1980/2005: 119 and Charaudeau, 1997: 72)

Fig. 1: Event to Audience: *mediation flow chart*



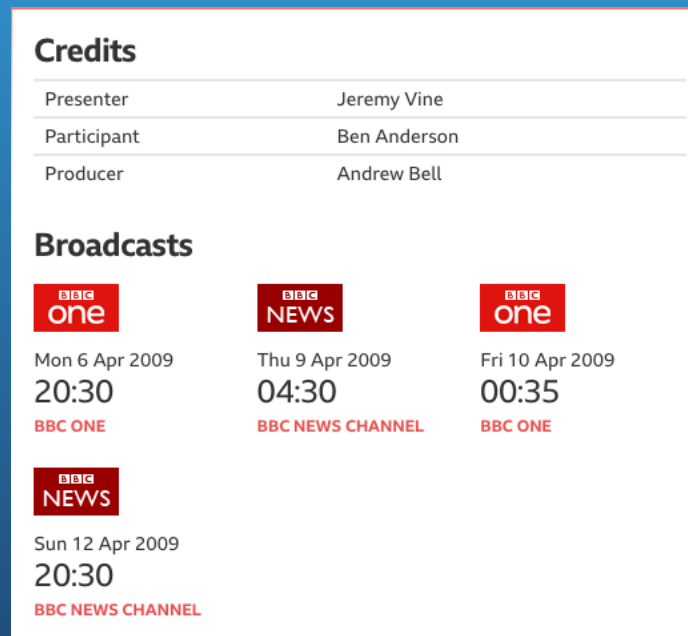
Case study: Panorama's *Slumdogs and Millionaires* (BBC)

Some background information:

- Made between the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009







The screenshot shows the BBC Panorama website interface. At the top, there is a red navigation bar with the text 'one Panorama' and links for 'Home', 'Episodes', 'Clips', 'Contact us', and 'Information and Support'. Below the navigation bar is a large image of a city skyline with construction cranes. A message below the image states 'Sorry, this episode is not currently available'. Underneath the image, the episode title 'Slumdogs and Millionaires' is displayed, followed by a brief description: 'Panorama goes undercover in the millionaires' playground of Dubai to look at luxury developments. Reporter Ben Anderson discovers that behind the glossy sales brochures is an army of construction workers living in appalling conditions.' and a duration of '30 minutes'.



The screenshot shows the BBC website interface for the episode 'Slumdogs and Millionaires'. It features a 'Credits' section with the following information:

Presenter	Jeremy Vine
Participant	Ben Anderson
Producer	Andrew Bell

Below the credits is a 'Broadcasts' section with the following information:

 Mon 6 Apr 2009 20:30 BBC ONE	 Thu 9 Apr 2009 04:30 BBC NEWS CHANNEL	 Fri 10 Apr 2009 00:35 BBC ONE
 Sun 12 Apr 2009 20:30 BBC NEWS CHANNEL		

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00jgww>

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0V22z2t6Lw> (from 5:07)

Case study: Panorama's *Slumdogs and Millionnaires* (BBC)

Summary of *power analysis*

<i>Economic and legal Power</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - problems accessing the sources and censorship, <i>receptive mediation</i> - care with allegations, <i>receptive and productive mediation</i> - legal context of UAE (journalists can fined or jailed), <i>receptive mediation</i> - right to reply, <i>productive mediation</i>
<i>Ideational Power</i>	
<i>Prior Contextual Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nick McGeehan and the work of Mafiwasta, <i>receptive mediation</i> - Almass Pardiwala and her campaign, <i>receptive mediation</i>
<i>Instrumental Motivation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - address construction workers' condition, <i>receptive and productive mediation</i> - question celebrities regarding their role and involvement with immoral practices, <i>receptive (and productive?) mediation</i> - raise audience awareness of the issues above, i.e. fulfill one of the public service duties of the BBC, <i>receptive and productive mediation</i>
<i>Preferred reading</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workers' conditions are awful - the behaviour of employers are despicable from a moral point of view - there may be some legal wrongdoings connected to labour legislation and legal responsibilities by employers - celebrities (especially Jamie Oliver) should not support or invest in such practices
<i>Outcome of the representation</i>	
<i>Actual</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some employers forced to defend themselves against allegations - Jamie Oliver reconsidered how to affiliate himself with the Dubai partners
<i>Potential</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - audience challenged about the ethical legitimacy of going to Dubai - public opinion made aware of potential wrongdoing with regard to labour and employment laws towards male, 3rd world country individual

Case study 2: Vice's *Slaves of Dubai* (Vice Media)

Some background information:

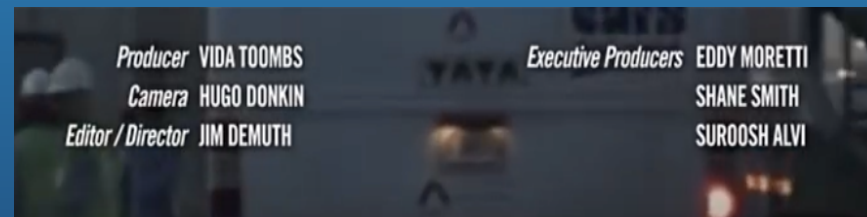
- Made in 2009
- Vice was then an independent media company with 2 co-founders and owners, Shane Smith and Suroosh Alvi.

ALL THE WRONG PLACES | By VICE Staff | 06 April 2009, 1:00am

The Slaves of Dubai

The BBC's Ben Anderson travels to Dubai, the jewel of the Arab world, and discovers that it's almost entirely built upon imported slave labor.

SHARE  TWEET 



https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/4waq9n/the-slaves-of-dubai

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMh-vlQwrmU> (first 2 minutes)

Case study 2: Vice's *Slaves of Dubai* (Vice Media)

Summary of *power analysis*

<i>Economic and legal Power</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - same as Panorama for the BBC footage used, <i>receptive mediation</i> - open allegation of slavery, <i>productive mediation</i>
<i>Ideational Power</i>	
<i>Prior Contextual Knowledge</i>	- Panorama's documentary and sources, <i>receptive mediation</i>
<i>Instrumental Motivation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - address construction workers' condition, <i>receptive and productive mediation</i> - address the issue of passport retention and de facto slavery, <i>productive mediation</i> - address the issue of possible wrongdoing on the part of the UAE government, <i>productive mediation</i>
<i>Preferred reading</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workers' conditions are awful - illegal practices are widespread amongst employers <u>and</u> - illegal practices are also carried out by governmental agencies (e.g. the 50-degree anecdote) - violation of human rights are alleged: passport retention, slavery
<i>Outcome of the representation</i>	
<i>Actual</i>	N/a
<i>Potential</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - audience made aware of potential wrongdoing with regard to labour and employment laws - audience made aware of potential human rights violations towards male, 3rd world country individuals - action required on the part of Governments as businesses from their countries could be contributing to the issues above

Possible reasons for the different preferred readings

- “The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is the UK’s largest export market in the Middle East and the 13th biggest globally. The UK exported £9.8 billion of goods and services in 2016. This was a 37% increase since 2009. The UAE is the UK’s fourth largest export market outside the EU.”
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exporting-to-the-united-arab-emirates/exporting-to-the-united-arab-emirates>
- Businesses could even see an opportunity in the cheap labour:
<https://en.portal.santandertrade.com/establish-overseas/united-arab-emirates/foreign-investment>)
- Potential violation of human rights would call for the UK government to take some sort of action - see what happened with the TOEIC scandal uncovered by Panorama
<https://www.independent.co.uk/student/news/theresa-may-wrongly-deported-48000-students-after-bbc-panorama-exposes-toeic-scam-a6958286.html>
- BBC relationship with the UK Government and its role in the neoliberal marketplace (Castaldi 2019)

A third representation

Other people are connected to the issue of passport retention, bonded labour, slavery and potentially, human trafficking:

- domestic workers (Human Rights Watch, 2006, 2007, 2014; Keane and McGeehan, 2008; Mafiwasta, 2009)
- sex workers (Human Rights Watch, 2014)

Conclusion and steps to take

- The framework seems to be useful to identify power nodes in the first two stages of the media text production process, i.e. reception of the event and production of the the text
- The *physical production* stage and the *abstract reception* stage are still to be tested
- I'm currently analysing the data from my pilot study and will present the results at the *Cutting Edges* conference at the end of June

Thank you

A large, white, stylized question mark is centered on a blue gradient background. The background transitions from a light blue at the top to a dark blue at the bottom, with a curved, layered effect on the right side. The question mark is simple and bold, with a circular dot at the base.

?

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