Doctoral School of

Social Communication

SUMMERY OF THESIS

Kornél Myat

Collaborative - social media theory

Collaboration and participation in the late modern media environment

PhD Thesis

Consultant:

Péter Bajomi-Lázár, PhD

Lecturer

Budapest, 2016

Institute of Behavioural Sciences and Communication Theory

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1. Background of the research

The examination of late modern media environment (lmme) in a social scientific framework is considered to be a popular and productive research area in communication and media science (see Table 1). This is not surprising because the media environment of the 21st century is interactive, hybrid, convergent and network-based. It brings about substantial changes and has an impact upon the structure and the members of the media industry, and on the production and distribution of its content.

Due to the complexity of the topic, media research examines wide range of phenomena in the late modern media environment. For example, researchers study the changes of the institutional system, the structure of the media, the methods to create media content, the role of the users, the technological innovations and their social impact. The following areas are popular fields of investigation: networks, information society, e-democracy, e-administration, copyright, internet privacy matters, online activism, media citizenship, media violence, political propaganda versus online decision making, new forms of public spheres, online journalism versus blogosphere, digitalisation, interactivity, convergent media, mobile technology and online community platforms.

1. Table 1. Hungarian researchers of the late modern media environment

Examined phenomenon	Research issue, topic	Authors, workshops	Most important works
Role of media institutions	Decentralisation, politics and media, media economics, media law, media regulations, e-democracy, propaganda, influencing, manipulation, media panic, media rhetorics	Aczél Petra, Bodó Balázs, Bajomi-Lázár Péter, Gálik Mihály, Polyák Gábor, Urbán Ágnes, Síklaki István, Sükösd Miklós	Aczél (2012); Bajomi-Lázár (2005; 2009; 2010); Cseh – Sükösd (1999) Gálik (2002); Gálik–Urbán (2010); Merkovity (2009; 2010); Polyák (2010); Síklaki (2008); Urbán (2000)
Technological change and social change	Digital changeover, mobile communication, internet, web 2.0, social media, information society, citizens' participation, e-democracy, community problem-solving	ITTK/ MOKK, Dessewffy Tibor, Fehér Katalin, Nyíri Kristóf, Szakadát István, Pintér Róbert, Ropolyi László, Z. Karvalics László	Dessewffy (2002); Fehér (2015); Halácsy et al. (2007); Ropolyi (2006); Pintér (2007); Z. Karvalics (2007); Z. Karvalics–Dessewffy (2003)
Changing media structure	Cconvergence, hybridisation, changing media: interactive television, new, online social media, printed press vs. online journalism	Bajomi-Lázár Péter, György Péter, Jenei Ágnes, Csigó Péter	Bajomi-Lázár (2008; 2014); György (1998); Jenei (2006; 2008); Csigó (2009)
Method of content creation and changing content	Blogosphere, interactivity, new content types, tabloidization, memes and media rituals	Antalóczy Tímea, Császi Lajos, Terestyéni Tamás	Antalóczy (2006); Császi (2002); Ughy (2007); Terestyéni (2006)
Changing role of media users	Media users, media citizenship, media literacy, media violence, cyberbullying, digital identity	Császi Lajos, Fehér Katalin, Tardos Róbert, Urbán Ágnes	Angelusz–Tardos (1998); Császi (2002); Fehér (2015); Urbán (2003)
Media theory	Research on mass communication, media theories, impact study, research on publicity, audience	Bajomi-Lázár Péter, Hammer Ferenc, Terestyéni Tamás	Bajomi-Lázár (2005; 2008); Hammer (2006); Terestyéni (2006)

Source: Own resources

In this thesis, I focus on the late modern media environment which is usually differentiated from its modern and post-modern versions in many of its attributes (see Table 1).

My starting hypothesis is that not only the methods of creating and distributing the media content went through on a substantial change in late modern media environment – e.g. changes in the classic institutional system of the media, the roles and strategies of media users – but new online spaces have been also created through online social platforms based on web 2.0 technology. These platforms have satisfied the diverse needs of media users (communication, entertainment, information) and have also been suitable to thematize and even to solve social problems and public issues through the participation and collaboration of the users. In my thesis, the objective is to provide a full and comprehensive analysis of the main attributes of the late modern media environment with the help of theory and empirical research. In particular, the focus is on social collaboration and participation in the online platforms of late modern media environment.

The major contribution of the thesis to the recent literature is the functional framework in which the online social media of late modern media environment is studied. In this framework, the online social media is regarded *as a social platform based on collaboration*. Based on the results of the research, the thesis aims to establish the foundations of a *collaborative-social media theory*. The starting points of this theory are the ritual model of communication (Carey 1989/1992), the uses-gratification model (Katz et al. 1974/2007) and participation theory of communication (Horányi 2009).

2. Objectives and research methods

The objective of my thesis is to provide a map and description of the principal phenomena which determines the late modern media environment from a media researcher's perspective. The study is based on a meta-analysis of literature in communication and media research, on desk research and on semi-structured interviews.

I am convinced that basic issues related to late modern media environment are complex and cannot be solely explained as the consequences of technological or economic changes. An analysis of internet and online media without their social context is not sufficient to describe all changes and their impact on society. These trends need to be mapped in light of the interaction between social and cultural environment. Therefore, my research is interdisciplinary and examines late modern media environment in a social scientific framework, using the disciplines of communication, media theory, sociology and political sciences.

First, I analyse the late modern media environment based on critical meta-analysis of modern literature and desk research. I provide a complex analysis of the institutional system and media, the consumption trends, the ways of content generation and distribution, and the role of the recipient. I am looking for an answer to the question how technological features of media environment and the strategies of media usage can change the relations between modern and post modern media and its content, and the relations between media and the Western societies.

Second, I test my hypothesis based on a meta-analysis of the literature, on 3 case studies (using semi-structured interviews) and on content analysis. My case studies examine social collaboration during the Parliamentary Election Campaign in 2014, the Milla-movement, international online movements and collaborative decision-making platforms.[1]

The third main objective of my thesis is to lay the foundations of a media theory which can explain the main characteristics of collaborative online social platforms typical of late modern media environment. Following the meta-analysis, I attempt to define the foundations of *collaborative-social media theory* relying on the ritual model of communication (Carey 1989/1992), the gratification model (Katz et al. 1974/2007) and the problem-centered starting point of participation theory of communication (Horányi 2009)

The following areas are not covered in my work:

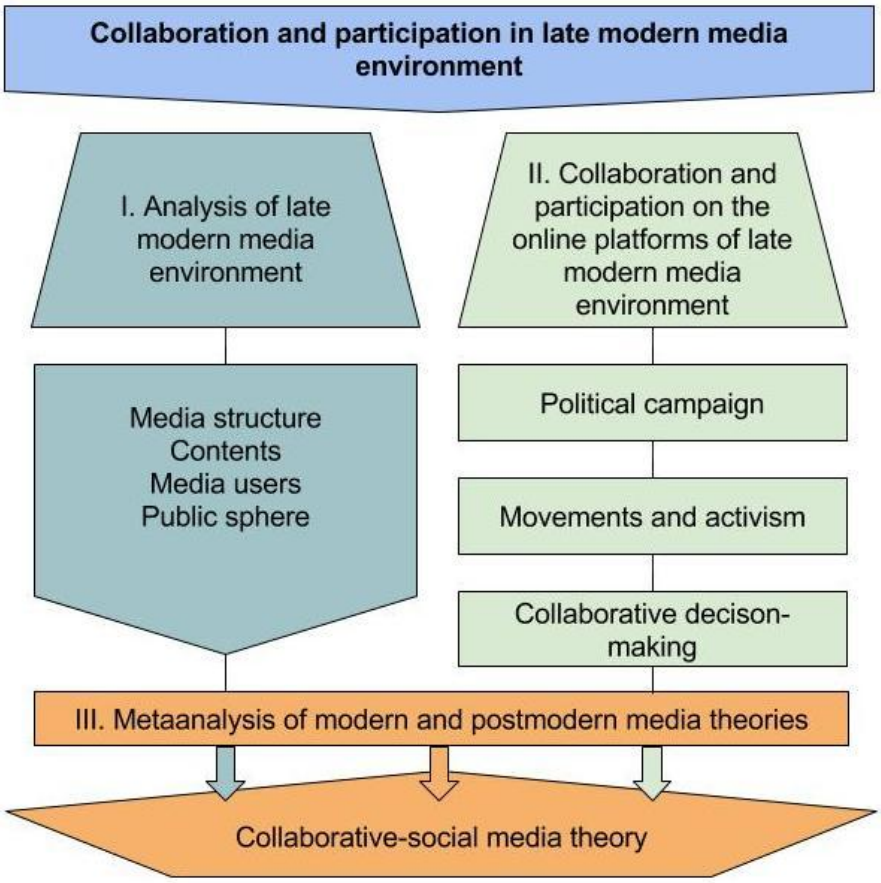
- The technological processes which establish late modern media environment, the technological background of media.
- Detailed elaboration of the infinite research areas, research issues, literature related to the internet.
- Detailed explanation of the information and network society, of e-democracy and e-administration.
- Meta-analysis of the full spectrum and range of media theories.
- A critical overview of the literature related to publicity, public opinion and democracy.
- Comprehensive and overall overview of political theory and political communication.
- Analysis of the trends and processes of media industry and the media market.
- Description of the complex relations between media and power.

[1] Participation and activism (7 interviews), late modern media environment and collaborative decision-making (5 interviews + 2 questionnaires), community level problem solving (4 interviews).

3. Structure of the thesis

With regard to the content of the thesis, its structure can be divided into three main parts. In the first block, I examine late modern media environment in detail. I analyse changes in the institutions of media and in the creation of contents, and media use in the field of technology and publicity.

1. Figure 1. Structure of the thesis



In the middle part of the thesis, I examine the role of the most important social media and how social media has changed the structure of publicity. For this, I use case studies with interviews and content analysis. I am going to focus on the following research issues: do the online social platforms of late modern media environment promote the establishment of publicity based on democratic participation, collaborative decision-making? Do online social platforms promote collective debate regarding public affairs? Do they facilitate the solution of these issues through their public platforms? Thus, can they be regarded as collaborative social platforms of late modern media environment?

In the first case study, I am going to examine the role of Facebook in the parliamentary campaign for elections of 2014 in Hungary. The main issue is how political communication used online social platforms and what its purpose was.

The second case study deals with the Milla-movement (One million people for the freedom of the press in Hungary) which was launched on Facebook in December 2010. In the offline space, the movement mobilized a mass of people exceeding several ten thousands against the government in 2011-2012. This case study examines collaborative online social platforms as tools that support social participation and online activism.

In the third case study I am going to present political participation in late modern media environment: the platforms promoting collaborative decision-making and the expression of opinion. My analysis focuses on the main challenges these platforms are facing.

The third part of my thesis contains the meta-analysis of modern and post-modern media environment. The objective of the work is to highlight the essence of the relations existing between media environment and social relations and to disclose the patterns of thinking about media. I am looking for starting points to establish a common ground explaining the operation of online platforms of late modern media environment and *collaborative social media theory* along modern and post-modern theoretical cornerstones.

4. Results

4.1. The main features of late modern media environment

The analysis is based on media structure, main trends related to media and media use, the role of a media user, the contents of the media and the aspects of publicity. It provides a comprehensive picture about how late modern media environment is organised and about the main issues related to this environment.

Media environment composed of the network of hybrid, convergent media constitutes a change for the whole of the media industry primarily through its online social platforms. This means that the role of classic media has also been modified.[2] Television, radio, printed press have become hybrid and convergent content provider platforms, their mutual cross-

[2] When global trends are presented it is very important to note that 60% of the Earth's population continues to use offline media, that is, 4 billion people do not have access to internet (World Bank 2016), therefore the statements primarily concern developed Western societies. Besides this, we are going to see that there are huge differences in one region, too, that is, in the Hungarian media environment belonging to East-Central Europe.

section is located on online social media platforms that also broadcast digital, multimedia contents.

The role of online media changes the role of the stakeholders in the media industry and the composition of the market. A greater role is ascribed to huge media companies broadcasting competitive contents with the contribution of media users, late modern media monopolies such as Facebook, Google and Twitter. Besides the institutional, professional content, the contents created by media users are also broadcasted on these companies' online social media platforms. Media users actively participate in creating, consuming and distributing media content, authenticating them by their active media use and by their contribution on online platforms. Thus, the role of political and economic groups who create and authenticate central content is less and less significant.

During my research I examined the extent to which the global trends of late modern media environment are present and predominant on the Hungarian media market. The analysis showed that the role of television is still predominant and that online media users still play a passive, "recipient" role in consuming and receiving media content (TNS-Hoffmann 2014). It is evident that the predominantly conservative media consumption is combined with a less innovative, partly centralized media system that is dominated by political and economic groups of interest.

4.2. Campaign and participation on the online platforms of Social Media

My analysis concerning the campaign for the 2014 parliamentary elections has shown that the platform of the campaign was focused on Facebook. The campaign was mainly based on paid advertisements which reflected the overall balance or imbalance of political forces very well. As far as its tools are concerned, it was conservative and of low intensity. The entire campaign activity of the political parties and their commitment to the government was reflected in the social media campaign, too.

By the spring of 2014 Facebook could no longer be considered as a new, innovative or alternative campaigning tool. However, due to its role in distributing news it became more and more significant, even inevitable since it had an elevated number of users.

Taking into consideration the mix of campaign tools it can be concluded that online social media do not get a special or dominant role besides other campaigning tools. Expecting wonders from online social media has come to an end. In Hungary television is still considered as the primary source of media. Besides television, the campaign was centred around the outdoor elements (such as huge posters and city-light).The advantages that were

offered by the use of online social platforms for smaller parties in 2010 due to being open to innovation and the related expertise, have disappeared by today. Small parties could not repeat the success of their forerunners.

The analysis of the 2014 parliamentary election campaign proved that online social platforms do not function as wonder weapons of political communication adapted for the manipulation of mass of voters. Besides this, applying them as marketing tools did not constitute a big breakthrough.

The lessons and conclusions to be drawn from the 2014 campaign is that the online platforms of the late modern media environment function as new spheres of publicity in Hungary only to a certain, limited extent. None of the political players were interested in channelling the voters' opinion into the political discourse which was based on power relations in any way. Similarly to daily politics, the campaign was not about public issues or about real, matter-of-fact arguments and social consultation, thus the online platforms also became a mouthpiece for political players to transmit their messages. These messages were of course received in accordance with voters' political sympathy.

Alternative opinions, arguments and initiatives expressed on online platforms can only scarcely influence the political agenda. If online social platforms did not bring a breakthrough in the campaign, they continuously form the relation between political players and citizens. The most important such impact is content distribution related to online social platforms which results in very quick and efficient flow of information. Smart phones are becoming more and more popular, technology makes it possible for media users to be present everywhere, thus participation and collaboration is plausible. The platforms and spheres where citizens are present increase the power of publicity by making information and communication more effective between citizens (see for example Rheingold 2002, Shirky 2010).

However, we have to keep in mind that the platforms filter the available information in line with the content using habits of users. Thus, media users often avoid encountering newsfeed or information that they are not interested in or that they dislike or disagree with.

The other phenomenon of media activity is related to alternative civil movements and creative media use. These independent groups or organisations are able to mobilize masses with their actions organised on online social platforms. In some cases the number of people mobilized is similar to the amount institutionalized parties are able to mobilize. Their conscious, proactive strategies, communication strategies and creative media contents contribute to their success. Memes – as late modern multimedia content – used by the Two-Tailed Dog Party and the Milla-movement managed to reach online media users very

efficiently and very quickly, thus they helped the opposition on several occasions to strengthen their power.

4.3. Online movements and activism in late modern media environments

In the third part of my thesis I examined the main issues of online movements through the analysis of several international initiatives and the Hungarian Milla-movement.

Social initiatives on online social platforms, online activism (see slacktivism) are areas that researchers like to analyse and examine in late modern media environments. Opinions differ as far as the political and social impact of social platforms are concerned. There are some who emphasize the successful applicability of technology (see: Benkler 2011, Bowen 1996, Browning 2001, Couto 1999, Donk et al 2004, Rheingold 2002, Shirky 2010). They regard online platforms as a new tool that can renew collaboration and community cooperation by a new type of political participation. They believe that these platforms can serve the purpose of renewing the entire society and creating democracy. Howard Rheingold emphasizes the revolutionary role of new online communication platforms in collective collaboration and mentions the example of Wikipedia.org. He argues that instead of competition collaboration to a certain extent might be advantageous and beneficial for participants (Rheingold 2005). Clay Shirky mentions the example of GitHub created by open source software developers during the development of the Linux system. Based on the development of GitHub he concludes that collaboration without coordination could be used as a tool to make political decisions. This could be a cheap and efficient tool to ensure participation in democracy (Shirky 2010).

However, sceptics and realists warn us that online social platforms are only suitable for achieving this goal to a limited extent (see Papacharissi 2003, 2010, Morozov 2011, Tufekci 2012). In his book, Evgeny Morozov examines case studies and refutes that new technologies instantly foster the democratisation of society. He states that internet is a technological tool and it can be used by both a revolutionary movement and an authoritarian government. Social media can not only be a tool for making a society more democratic – as it is presumed in modern societies - but it can also help rebut dictatorships a well, as the examples of China and Iran demonstrated (Morozov 2011).

It is evident that the distribution of information and the mobilization of people are definitely a strength in social media. For example, Twitter and Facebook played an important role in several important political actions and movements. Dozens of studies dealt with the role of social media in the Egyptian April 6 Youth Movement (2008) and Revolution, the

Arab Spring (2011), the Spanish Indignados-movement (2011), the American Occupy movement (2011), the Italian Five Star, the Moldovan, Iranian Twitter revolution. The above mentioned movements seemed to have integrated the online social platforms in their set of tools with success, and they were successful in organising and mobilising groups of citizens. They changed the agenda of mainstream media and with its help they managed to mobilize groups of citizens. They could not only influence the agenda of mainstream media but also them political agenda. The organisers and their movements temporarily became political agent who had an impact upon the actual political agenda. They weakened the political party and their monopoly by showing them in a new light. The analysis in the previous section of my thesis, the lessons drawn from the case of the Milla-movement and my interviews with the organisers and activists strengthen my belief that the social platforms of late modern media environment (such as Facebook events, groups and sites) alone – without the attempt of the media users – are not capable of transforming the actual political culture and its democratic institutional system. Politically relevant debates and actions rarely emerge on online social platforms, thus the public debate formulated by Habermas, that is, the idea of political publicity is rarely possible.

However, online platforms make space for publicity much more than ensured earlier by the media. Media users enjoy a wider variety of participation. These platforms make it possible that media users (groups) of online platforms establish and operate new groups around a certain topic or social issue through their collaborative social media strategies. As a result we can declare that the media users' strategy is a decisive and determining factor in the usability of online platforms.

Initiatives organised online related to a certain topic of common public interest (such as demonstrations against the internet tax) could break out of the framework of online social media and be suitable in an appropriate political environment (the level of social tension) to reform political agenda and public opinion. This requires the active contribution of media users and results in thematizing mainstream media.

Actions with the participation of masses, quick mobilization of people with a loose tie and weak commitment to real political issues (see slacktivism) can only be transformed into real political actions with real impact if these movements can become more professional (see the demonstrations against the internet tax and the Milla-movement). However, this is a very rare phenomenon and the dissolution of initiatives and the quick depletion of actions are more common (see Tufekci 2012).

The popularity of the Milla movement was put down to a high level of social tension, a common concept of the enemy and heterogenous mass of supporters organised on a protest

basis. The movement eroded quickly and the most important factor why this happened was that the organisation was a platform representing several interests, but then it came under the rule of a left-wing political direction that could be well-defined. With this step it gave up its status as an independent platform and it simultaneously lost the majority of its supporters. Its online base had just enough power to provide a position for Péter Juhász (the founder of the movement) in the opposition's league beside Gordon Bajnai's Együtt 2014 and Párbeszéd Magyarországért (PM) political group that withdrew from LMP. In the increasing opposition's league it lost its leading role and character. Following the failure at an electoral turn, the dissolution of the movement took place on 30 March 2014 in a public announcement of the members.

The fact that the heterogenous mass of supporters organised on a protest base could not formulate a mutual objective contributed to the final dissolution of the Milla-movement. The movement could not professionally institutionalize its forces along a set of values formulated collectively and could not present a team of experts, thus its existence as an independent political power in Hungary failed.

4.4. Online platforms of collaborative decision-making

In the third case study of the thesis I examined the possible role of online social platforms in late modern media environment. Especially, I studied citizens' collaborative decision-making[3] on special platforms which deal with public issues on social level. My objective was to map the Hungarian situation and to disclose the actual problematic points.

Based on the detailed analysis of the late modern media environment it is evident that online social media are not really suitable for the expression of political opinions and for debates about public issues. They primarily function as social and entertaining media. Although they can be sometimes used for mobilizing forces and organising events with success, they do not really allow for real participation in politics. Collaborative decision-making platforms aim to remedy this situation. These are specialised online social platforms where citizens' participation, social decision-making and the expression of opinion is facilitated.

Among international collaborative decision-making platforms there are several mutations of open source software which have been employed in important collaborative decision-making processes. Examples for this: the Argentinian DemocracyOS during the constitution debate in Tunisia or the Mexican federal government during the elaboration of

[3] collaborative decision-making

the open government policy. Your Priorities platform operated by Citizen Foundation was used by Jón Gnarr, mayor of Reykjavík, the representative of the joke party for the social operation of the city, and the Delib platform was used by the Scottish government during the consultation process to become independent.

EVoks is a Hungarian clone of DemocracyOS, launched in July 2015. In my case study, it is examined in detail. However, the platforms established to solve public issues have not been operated long enough to draw foregone conclusions. Nevertheless, it seems evident now that the tools offered by the new technology will not be sufficient alone to create a more participative, democratic system. Participation has to be stimulated by citizens' consciousness and self-esteem. A substantial change in political culture is required that places new and serious challenges for citizens, the civilian sphere and the political players as well.

The use of online platforms is becoming more and more frequent, similarly to online social and political initiatives, depending on the favourable coexistence of several factors. We can generally state that the required political environment and an appropriate case can launch processes. Several other factors have also an impact upon collaborative participation of citizens, among other things, the living standards of a specific community, the education level, political structure, the development level of society.

The future of platforms depends on whether we can have a substantial impact on the actual social and political discourse by involving critical masses and/or thematizing mainstream media. Thus, politicians' attention must be drawn to the intention of citizens through online (and offline) tools, otherwise these platforms just get suffocated in apathy and will contribute to the stabilization of the political institutional system. One thing is evident: any kind of online tools are useless without conscious, active citizens who are willing to take steps for themselves and willing to cooperate..

The Hungarian system is a traditional representative democracy where passive and disillusioned citizens and the political elite (distant high above) are not interested in fostering participation. In such a political system a strong civilian sphere might be an effective catalyst. Education and community organizing tailored to local needs based on best practices are indispensable for mastering collaboration and elaborating its culture that serves as a solid base for political participation. Without projects aimed at restoring citizens' motivation and trust, platforms fostering collaborative decision-making cannot achieve the sufficient impact level, they only provide an alternative opposition base for a narrow layer of society which is not efficient alone.

4.5. Collaborative-Social Media Theory (starting points)

I am convinced that the theoretical approaches based on television as media no longer serve as a substantial basis for explaining the main phenomena related to the online platforms of late modern media environment (see Table 2.). In order to describe the functioning of online social platforms it is necessary to elaborate a new *collaborative-social media theory.* In the fourth chapter I intend to lay down the foundations of this theory relying on the main features and the meta-analysis of theories about earlier media environments. Possible starting points are indicated and provide a good base for further researching this area.

2. Table 2. The main phenomena of the media environments

	Modern media environment (latest media)	**Post modern media environment (neomedia)**	**Late-modern media environment (hypermedia)**
Decisive medium	Paleo television (Eco 1992)	Neo television (Eco 1992) commercial television, thematic television	Hybrid, connecting, convergent media: such as internet and television
Receptive	Passive, exposed-vulnerable, unmotivated, recipient	Meaning attribution, selection between contents, motivated consumer	Content creation, content sharing, selecting, motivated media user
Focus of research and theories	Media impact and mass culture critique	Limited impact, semiotics, cultural studies, reception studies	Strategies of media use
Typical contents	Centrally regulated, ideological, cultural	Commercial, popular	Complex, hybrid, popular
Reality	Media's reality is compared to the outer objective reality	Media does not reflect objective reality but it offers a framework which it fills with meanings depending on the motivation level of the recipient.	The media users construe it from diverse media content and cultural meaning surrounding them
Theoretical environment	Marxist critical direction (Frankfurt school), (post) structural theories, classical reception research	Cultural studies (Birmingham school); ritual communication, research on publicity and reception	Possible starting points: post-modern approaches supposing an „active" recipient, theory of performative impact, critical approach to the Birmingham school, research on publicity and reception
The most important theories	hypodermic needle or magic bullet theory (Lasswell 1927), cultivation theory (Gerbner 1969/2000), agenda-setting theory (McCombs – Shaw, 1972), uses-gratifications model (Katz et al. 1974/2007), framing theory (Herman – Chomsky 1988)	encoding-decoding model (Hall 1980), performative model (Dayan – Katz 1992)	
Communication model	Transmission	Ritual	Ritual, based on participation and collaboration

Source: Myat (2010)

Collaborative-social media theory intends to provide theoretical starting points for the study of online platforms of late modern media environment.

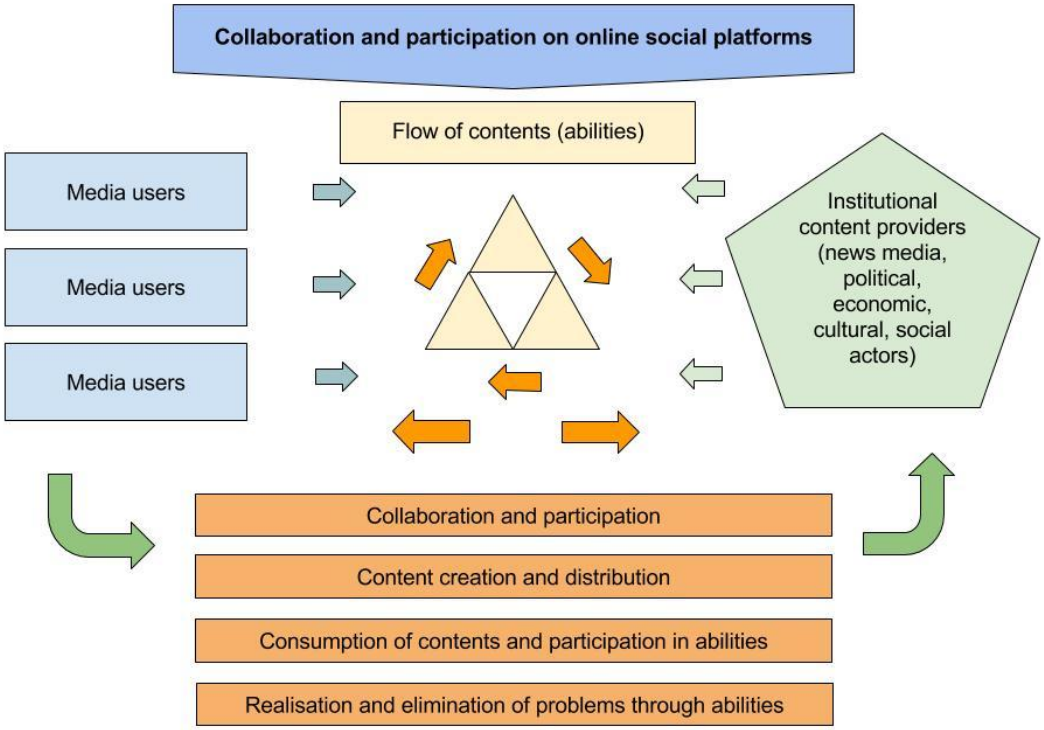
According to the starting point of the theory, the main feature of the late modern media environment is the collaboration of media users. This collaboration with cooperative and competitive strategies characterizes the changes in media industry, the relations of media users between each other and the media contents, the distribution of media content and the operation of sharing economy enterprises based on online platforms (such as Uber, Airbnb).

This is tangible in the spreading of the news. For example, photos, images and videos are immediately shared on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram when a disaster occurs. Media users transmit this information to millions of other online media users in seconds, and so, information arrive before the broadcasts of institutionalized mainstream media. (These contents are available for many users legally or illegally by the sharing of professional media content on Facebook, on online portals or on other websites with multimedia upload (such as Torrent)).

Moreover, this online social collaboration makes the online versions of political participation that I mentioned earlier in my thesis work., Online social collaboration can take shape in many forms, from the phenomena of online solidarity (terrorist attacks in Paris - profile photos changed to photos of tricolour background) through diverse forms of social collaboration (posts aimed at finding lost persons, pets, submitting online petitions) to the organisation of social and political actions.

Collaborative-social media theory is functional, descriptive and non-normative and based on the collaboration of media users and social cooperation. According to its core idea, the online platforms make available and broadcast information, knowledge, values, attitudes, cognitive patterns, briefly abilities in the form of interactive media content which is independent of multimedia platforms. The distribution of contents (abilities) takes place by active collaboration and participation of media users. Media users participate in the exchange of their own abilities (cultural codes, inherited and mastered patterns of interpretation), their needs (see use – satisfaction model: Katz et al. 1974/2007) to exchange cultural content (see Figure 2)

2. Figure 2. Flow of content and the model of social collaboration



The objective of media use is to share cultural assets encoded in abilities and the share of these assets by communication between media users in which late modern media environment takes place by broadcasting ritualized content. The meaning of media content shall not be taken as a given, the meaning depends on the existing abilities of the media user (such as physical features; perception, cognitive, etc. capabilities and depending on the knowledge mastered during cultural code socialization) during collaborative social media use (see Carey 1989/1992).

Through collaborative social media use strategies media users are able to satisfy their needs (such as social, entertainment and information) through sharing media content between each other. Besides these, users have the chance to recognize and eliminate individual and social problems through individual collaborations with other media users, groups and institutions (see Horányi 2009). This collaboration is the basis for online activism, social initiatives and movements realized on online platforms. In online collaborative, social formations agents are capable of collaborating with each other (following cooperative and competitive strategies) with the aim of achieving a common objective. This collaboration is able to impact collective agents and their systems in offline space (political players and economic stakeholders), through the mediation of mainstream media, thus it is able to impact the political agenda as well.

5. Usability of the results of the thesis

By mapping the phenomena of late modern media environment and by laying the foundations of a *collaborative-social media theory* I would like to initiate and promote a fruitful discourse which breaks a new ground for scientific thinking of media. The discourse can foster the definition of new issues and methods in media research, and deconstruct the dominant modernist concepts which a usually define public discourse about media and the mentality of political decision-makers.

The empirical research of online social media platforms provides a framework which is suitable for explaining the phenomena of *collaborative-social media theory.* Based on this framework, I intend to provide up-to-date knowledge regarding the operation of late modern media environment for citizens, civilians and institutions interested in promoting collaborative decision-making and participative democracy.

6. Further development potential and directions for the thesis

My thesis can be developed further in the following areas:

- Empirical, qualitative and quantitative analysis of the strategy of late modern media use (international and Hungarian comparative study).
- Study of the competitive and cooperative strategies of social collaboration, comparative study during media use.
- Processing the afterlife of international social movements realized on online platforms in the form of case studies.
- Empirical examination of the phenomena related to online activism, including case studies
- Negative phenomena on the online platforms of late modern media environment (copyright and privacy issues, cyberbullying, hacktivism, cyberterrorism).
- Mapping the relations of the social, cultural, political and economic environments which have an impact on the media environment, comparative study of the features and specificities of diverse media environments (on global, European and national level).
- Further development, refinement of *collaborative-social media theory*, testing its adaptability.

7. Main references

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