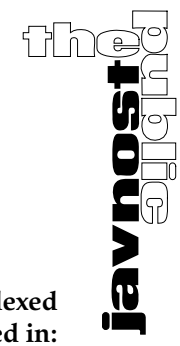

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ARTICLES

BREAKING THE SPELL OF WAR: PEACE JOURNALISM'S DEMOCRATIC PROSPECT

ROBERT L. IVIE

Abstract

This essay examines and extends peace journalism's critique of mainstream news media in order to articulate a model of an enriched news narrative resistant to war propaganda and consistent with democratic praxis. It discusses the potential of political myth to delimit demonising projections that otherwise debilitate democratic deliberation and suggests that news media would advance democratic culture by enhancing the public archive on which deliberative practices depend. Critical attention is focused on two factors that reduce the democratic potential of news narratives: (1) the persistent omission of key information and (2) a chronic imbalance in interpretive frames. Whether or not professional conventions and market considerations render corporate media incapable of correcting truncated and unbalanced news narratives, the capacity of the public archive to support democratic deliberation corresponds to the knowledge and perspective it accrues to curtail alienating projections. We must ask, then, if democracy's deliberative prospect can be realised short of correcting the shortcomings of news media.

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How might media strengthen democracy in the foreseeable future? This important but loaded question supposes a democratic prospect, presumes democracy entails a public sphere, and suggests media's untapped potential for enhancing democratic deliberation. A degree of scepticism about any one of these premises is warranted even though the intriguing possibility of media contributing to a healthy democratic discourse might stimulate our imagination.

Democracy requires media to constitute a public, but media do not necessarily construct a deliberating public, even within democratic states and especially on issues of war and peace. News media are inclined instead for a variety of reasons to propagandise war in the service of the state and as an instrument of executive rule. As CBS news anchor Dan Rather put the matter six days after 9/11, "George Bush is the president, he makes the decisions and you know, just as one American wherever he wants me to line up, just tell me where"(History Commons 2001). Such is the default condition of war journalism and, it has been argued, of the journalism enterprise more generally.

Peace journalism's answer to the question of media's latent democratic aptitude is perhaps more revealing than one might initially expect. Especially since peace journalism is considered to be a fringe movement – an incipient project on the periphery of the field of journalism – it is usually ignored outside its own relatively obscure realm of discourse. It attracts only occasional flak from conventional journalists who dismiss it for violating the professional canon of objectivity. At best, it is classified as a type of preventative journalism and a complement to investigative reporting focused on social problems.[1] It is easily dismissed as a journalistic misnomer, a heartfelt complaint that conflates war reporting with peace advocacy. What could a rhetorical enterprise such as this possibly add to a serious discussion of journalism as a medium of democracy?

My answer, in short, is that attending to peace journalism's critique of mainstream news media exposes constitutive properties of war's demonising mythos, a mythos that debilitates democratic deliberation. Simply put, peace journalism's critique identifies missing pieces required to round out the generic war story that stifles democratic praxis. It envisions an enhanced narrative that would break the spell of war by elevating public discourse to a level of complexity and awareness that confounds demonising images. In this way, it points to what John Paul Lederach calls the "exponential potential" of what is made available and out of which, in the present context, something we consider more democratic might emerge (Lederach 2005, 100).

My purpose is to dwell on peace journalism's critique for its democratising insight, that is, as a corrective to present media practices more than a substitute for mainstream journalism's coveted conventions. In this regard, Susan Dente Ross calls for "a dialogue about peace journalism as a reformation of contemporary journalistic practices" (Ross 2007, 77). As a theory and a research perspective (as well as a practice), peace journalism's critique of war journalism invites us to consider how news media might foster democratic deliberation "within the context of globalised communications, politics, and economies" (Ross 2007, 77). By constructing more complete narratives, it is suggested, journalists are more likely to tell the best possible stories and less likely to perpetuate demonising stereotypes that degrade public deliberation. The first question to address, therefore, is what makes for a

more complete or ample news story, especially about war, from the perspective of peace journalism.

Enhancing the Narrative of War

No news story about war can report everything. Constraints of culture, language, and perspective, limitations of time, space, and other professional resources, the influence of power/knowledge, and additional factors prevent the elimination of all bias and the production of a definitive chronicle of war or of any other topic. Even the *New York Times*, as a self-proclaimed journal of record, purports to print all the news that is fit to print, which is decidedly different than printing all the news. Judgment is endemic to the gate-keeping process of news gathering and news dissemination regardless of how many media outlets are involved. Diverse news media and independent ownership, which could contribute to good journalism, would not supplant editorial judgment or eliminate the influence of narration itself as a discursive form.

If journalism is largely a practice of telling stories and constructing narratives, it follows that the challenge is to compose good stories – stories that are designed to be as honest, accurate, balanced, fair, complete, and critically aware as possible, but also timely, interesting, coherent, and credible within a prevailing socio-political framework of interpretation, including but not limited to cultural expectations, presumptions, value orientations, and assumptions about what counts as fact and appears to be reasonable. Any journalistic claim to objectivity and truth has to be assessed against the rhetorical complexities of composing narratives for specific audiences and adapting them to particular circumstances from a necessarily delimited perspective. Publics and journalists alike are readily desensitised to the constitutive properties of a demonising discourse that too easily becomes literalised and self-sealing.

By this reckoning – that is, by taking into account the filters of language, culture, and circumstance and the rhetorical dynamics of narrative form, all of which influence news production – the measure of a story is not whether it is true or objective in some narrow or isolated sense but instead how much and in what ways it is incomplete. What is overemphasised, underemphasised, missed, and otherwise distorted regardless of how compelling the story might be? What is the bias and limit of its perspective? What is ignored in order to make one party in a conflict appear legitimate and sympathetic and another party appear illegitimate and unsympathetic, one heroic and the other demonic, one present and another absent, one humanised and the other dehumanised? How would shifting the story's focus alter what is seen and how it appears, who is victim and who is victimiser, where interests converge and diverge, etc.? What actual or potential interdependencies and complementarities between the opposed parties are missing from the story as it is spun? By this standard, news stories are assessed according to what is absent more than what is present. Thus, Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick consider peace journalism to be an "analytical model" for identifying "shortcomings in reporting" (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005, 7; see also Galtung 2000a, 14-15).

To determine what is missing from a war story, we need a theory of what it should encompass. Peace journalism offers such a theory by asking what the public needs to know in order to deliberate the possibilities of building peace where war

threatens or prevails. In this way, as Graham Spencer argues, peace journalism resists the "trivialisation of political life" and "seeks to locate politics more firmly in the public sphere" (Spencer 2005, 183-184). This "small but significant body of work" considers how news media might enrich democratic participation by "moving away from exclusive frameworks of interpretation" (Spencer 2005, 165-166). It does not, Ross attests, "seek to distort the facts [or] manipulate the truth" but instead to report "the world more fully, openly, and inclusively" (Ross 2007, 80). This goal varies from present journalistic practices that, according to Gadi Wolfsfeld, too often and too readily "reinforce ethnocentrism and hostility towards adversaries" (Wolfsfeld 2004, 2).

To achieve a less exclusive and more inclusive framework of interpretation in an era of globalisation, peace journalism theorises an articulation of diversity that would expand the perceived parameters of contestation between all parties in a given conflict. Rather than eliminate conflict from the political equation, the news story should broaden the "arena of contestable positions" reported by "allowing more viewpoints to enter debate" than the usual over-simplifying practice of representing only "two dominant oppositional voices" (Spencer 2005, 168). This move toward holding multiple perspectives accountable to one another depolarises and complicates the narratives, providing additional materials from which points of potential convergence might eventually be inferred. In Johan Galtung's view, this version of "objective" journalism means that journalists "cover all sides of the conflict"; whether or not journalists like one party or another, they should tell the stories in each of the adversary's own words. Similarly a "truth-oriented" journalism "would expose truths from all sides and uncover all cover-ups" (Galtung 2000b, 163).

Peace journalism proposes a number of ways to compose enriched war stories that expand the arena of contestation. According to Lynch and McGoldrick, these reporting practices include seventeen points, three of which are: (1) disaggregating the stereotypical two-party conflict (and its corresponding zero-sum logic in which one party must lose for the other to win) by asking who else is involved and what are their needs, aspirations, interests, etc.; (2) resisting "stark distinctions between 'self' and 'other'" which tend to degrade into dichotomies of good and evil; and (3) "*treat[ing] as equally newsworthy* the suffering, fears, and grievances of all parties" (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005, 28-29). These three points, together with the other fourteen, represent aspects of an elaborated narrative that, when missing or underdeveloped, diminish the public's aptitude for deliberation and increase the story's propaganda quotient. Accordingly, an elaborated narrative, more than its abridged counterpart, will address questions such as:

- Who is affected by and has a stake in a given conflict?
- What are the power relationships among the various parties to the conflict?
- What circumstances and unresolved issues trigged the conflict?
- What is the geographical reach and political jurisdiction of the conflict?
- What are the purposes (rationale, needs, interests, fears) of the conflicted parties?
- What are the potential means, costs, and benefits of resolving the conflict?
- What common ground currently and/or potentially exists between the conflicted parties?[2]

These are easily recognised as the basic who, what, when, where, why, and how questions of good journalism applied to the subject of war and peace. Each question has heuristic value for uncovering important nuances, such as: (1) finding alternatives to the language of victimisation and demonisation in order to avoid suggesting the impotence of a "devastated," "defenseless," and even "pathetic" victim while constructing a stereotypical villain who can only be coerced into submission; (2) covering the full range of harms perpetrated and suffered, including the less visible and longer-term consequences of the conflict; (3) reporting the perspective of everyday people, not just political leaders, caught up in the conflict and the conditions of their everyday life; and (4) increasing coverage of peace initiatives (drawn from Lynch and McGoldrick 2005, 28-31).

Incorporating these added complexities increases the difficulty of imputing malevolence singularly and assigning malfeasance exclusively and decreases the ease with which complicated conflicts are reduced to a crude narrative of good versus evil.[3] In complicating the narrative, pressure is increased and resources are added for formulating and deliberating constructive proposals in the public sphere. This, at least, is the theory of peace journalism and its corresponding model of a well rounded news narrative, which articulates criteria for determining how news reporting can strengthen or weaken democratic deliberation.

Projection and Demonisation

These same criteria have informed peace-journalism scholarship and its critique of mainstream journalism's failure to meet its responsibilities to the public in its coverage of specific conflicts and wars.[4] Most immediately, news reporting on the nebulous war on terror has been scrutinised in its various manifestations from the perspective of peace journalism and with an eye toward implications for public deliberation. The operative question is whether the news narrative of this open-ended war in its various episodes has been sufficiently elaborated and, if not, what in the narrative has not been adequately developed to support constructive public deliberation. Answering this question should help to gauge journalism's democratic prospect by the potential of its news narrative to break the spell that war propaganda has cast over public deliberation. Thus, from the perspective of peace journalism, the acid (negative) test of journalism's democratic aptitude is the degree to which its omissions constitute a demonising narrative.

One particular property of propaganda – projection – is especially pertinent to evaluating journalism's contribution to democratic praxis. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005, 121) observe that a preferred national identity can be constructed and reinforced by assigning unwanted qualities to a designated enemy. Who a people are becomes a function of what they profess not to be. Thus, for example, American virtue is crafted in the image of evil terrorists (see Ivie 2007). This tendency to project negative traits outward can be exacerbated by perceptions of national peril and sharp distinctions between "us" and "them." This "fantasy of enmity," wherein "we seek self-definition through constructing our antithesis," is so fundamental that Nicholas Jackson O'Shaughnessy (2004, vii) makes it central to the definition of propaganda, just as David Campbell (1998, 3) considers dehumanising representations of the enemy – represented as alien, subversive, dirty, and sick – to be fundamental to the articulation of danger and construction of national identity.

Demonisation – as a function of projection, enemy construction, and the formulation of national identity – marks the boundary between propaganda and journalism, if journalism is to inform democratic deliberation. Thus, peace journalism's corrective speaks directly to war journalism's tendency to demonise (Spencer 2005, 175). To reduce this tendency toward dehumanisation and demonisation, peace journalism cautions against adopting stereotypes, promoting dichotomies, utilising the language of victimisation, and resorting to other over-simplifications and under-representations of conflict situations that create and maintain narrow frames of reference. News coverage of the war on terror is a case in point.

Spencer observes, for example, that in the pre- and post-9/11 Gulf wars, "the demonisation of Saddam Hussein helped to personalise the reasons for war and keep the emotive level of debate away from those who challenged this narrow frame of reference" (Spencer 2005, 144). The mainstream American and British press after 9/11, he argues, made themselves into instruments of propaganda by relying almost exclusively on official sources and largely ignoring voices of opposition and peace, by rendering the war clean and masking civilian casualties with the euphemism of collateral damage, by homogenising Muslims into a singular Islamic threat to the free world and disengaging from the complexities of radical Islam, and, quoting Justin Lewis and Rod Brookes, by a "focus on the progress of war to the exclusion of other issues, the tendency to portray the Iraqi people as liberated rather than invaded, the failure to question the claim that Iraq possessed WMD [weapons of mass destruction], and the focus on the brutality or decadence of the regime without putting this evidence in a broader historical or geopolitical context" (Spencer 2005, 145-59; see Lewis and Brookes 2004, 298). Oil as a reason for the U.S. invasion of Iraq is an example of a major issue that was shunted to the margins of the news, at least within the U.S. (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005, 10-11; see also Hodgson 2009, 171). O'Shaughnessy adds that: "The print media had a vigorous and partisan war. So also did television. Increasingly the mass media seemed to forget their role as self-appointed fearless inquisitor after truth and became instead merely appendices of some vast semi-visible propaganda machine" (O'Shaughnessy 2004, 226).

As appendices of the war machine, news media transformed the so-called war on terror into the propaganda of "militainment," in which war reporting was intermingled with entertainment formats to create a hyper-reality show (Andersen 2006, xxvi-xxvii, 314). As Robin Andersen argues, an "anesthetised hyperrealism" detached Americans from the consequences of war, sheltered them from its horrors, positioned them as victims, and agitated them through demonisation, thereby removing substance from democratic discourse by the failure to report important facts and check official pronouncements and by the practice of silencing dissenting voices (Andersen 2006, 302, 314-315).

Research on news coverage of other wars confirms that demonising narratives are not a journalistic anomaly of the war on terror. The pattern of war journalism is to omit, or otherwise restrict and seriously bias, information that could invigorate democratic deliberation and impede simplistic projections of evil. Indeed, war reporting consistently takes its cue from political elites and dramatises warfare from their perspective. Conflict is dramatic and therefore newsworthy, but it is also politically savvy for a profit-conscious journalism establishment to operate within

the comfort zone of conventional wisdom and the narrow frame of elite opinion when crafting war dramas, rather than allow itself to be guided by its responsibility to inform public deliberation more broadly and deeply.

This is a point well made by Spencer in his overview of news coverage of wars ranging from Vietnam to Bosnia and Kosovo, the Middle East, Rwanda, Northern Ireland, and Iraq. In the Vietnam War, he observes, reporting did not become more sceptical and critical of official discourse, even given the presence of a strong anti-war movement, until official sources began to reappraise the viability of the war (Spencer 2005, 61; see also Caruthers 2000, 108, 147, 150). Until that time, U.S. news reporting caricatured the domestic anti-war movement within frames and narratives that trivialised its aims, language, and values, emphasised disagreement within the movement, underestimated turnout for its demonstrations, characterised it as subversive, etc. (Spencer 2005, 62-63; see also Gitlin 1980, 27-28). Spencer concludes that this "indicates the political bias of news coverage and its tendency to see opposition to state power in terms of a threat rather than public objection to policy, conducted within the realms of what may be seen as reasonable conflicting differences" (Spencer 2005, 67-68).

The absence of key elements in a news narrative imputes evil all too readily in one direction or another for sufficient public deliberation to occur, whether or not such deliberation ultimately results in a resort to arms. A nonviolent resolution is not the inevitable outcome of an enhanced news narrative, but as the prospect of democratic deliberation is increased by enhancing the news narrative, the potential for creating constructive alternatives is increased. Complicating the story of conflict can provoke a new synthesis of meaning and lead to a fresh perspective on problematic relations, whereas reducing complexities to simplistic sound bites inevitably narrows debate.

Yet, news media default to a narrative of dramatic conflict that constructs politics in antagonistic terms and thereby fails to inform adequately a deliberative public sphere on questions of war and peace. This may seem obvious to all but those who still wish to profess journalism's faithfulness to objectivity and truth. Perhaps it is too obvious to make a difference, not so much because the field of journalism – in all its occupational conventions and market imperatives – is impervious to change but because as a place of cultural production news narratives operate on a mythic plane beyond the current reach of peace journalism's incipient critique.[5] Democracy, understood as a form of agonistic politics, requires a transformation of the mythos of antagonism, not the explosion or abandonment of political myth. Toward that end, demonising narratives cannot be defused by debunking them, for they function as foundational myths that societies rely on to make sense of otherwise disorienting experiences. The remaining challenge for journalists and other cultural workers concerned with enriching democratic practices is to determine what kind of knowledge is required for a deliberating public to recognise and retrieve demonising projections. Here we enter the domain of political myth.

Peace journalism gestures to the need to attend to news narratives as a corrective to projection when, for example, Lynch and McGoldrick exhort journalists to "*seek the 'other' in the 'self' and vice versa"* by "*asking questions which may reveal areas of common ground,* and leading your report with answers which suggest that at least some goals, needs and interests may be compatible, or shared" (Lynch and McGoldrick

2005, 28-29; emphasis in original). Perhaps the most important information missing from typical war narratives, then, is that which provides the public with a basis for retrieving demonising projections. Without sufficient information to de-literalise dehumanising caricatures, publics cannot recognise themselves in the other and the other in themselves. They cannot turn the outward gaze reflectively inward.

The problem, therefore, becomes one of determining what kind of knowledge resists the demonising projections of war propaganda. Here is where peace journalism's critique has not yet fully engaged the role of political myth. The challenge of articulating common ground consistent with the agonistic character of democratic politics entails a different kind of conjuring than the displacement of difference. Nor is it enough to recognise that images of the self and other are socially constructed and therefore subject to repair and revision, for these are lived images from which the citizenry forges national identities. Conducting a genealogy of this political mythos can expose its troubled origins to critical reflection but not to self destruction. Debunking foundational myths of identity and difference – whether they are myths of national exceptionalism or some other defining vision – produces an agonising void. Acknowledging salient myths instead opens possibilities for, or at least removes obstacles to, transforming perceived incompatibilities and prevailing antagonisms into humanising narratives about complementarities.

Democratic Culture and Political Myth

Peace journalism's call to defuse demonising narratives by reporting on existing or potential common ground between antagonists cannot hope to enrich the democratic public sphere by displacing agonistic political relations. Agonism, as distinguished from antagonism, is a condition of robust democratic culture. Identification that is compensatory to division does not abolish political hierarchies or efface differences of political identity (Ivie "Hierarchies," forthcoming). Nor does democracy, as a politics of contestation, require more than a shared symbolic space to, in Chantal Mouffe's terms, "transform antagonism into agonism" (Mouffe 2005, 20). Democratic discourse respects and negotiates difference and is more or less inclusive, even border spanning in a globalising context, according to its ability to articulate a common symbolic space akin to Lederach's (2005, 35) notion of spinning webs of interconnectivity or Douglas Fry's (2007, 215-216) idea of promoting "cross cutting ties." While both Lederach and Fry envision this kind of convergence in the language of interdependency, an even more apt expression of a democratising and peace-building intersection may be complementariness, wherein contesting parties are constituted as mutually enabling in their differences. Such interdependencies and complementarities can only be articulated through the public's existing framework of interpretation – its mythos. They must express a degree of symmetry or "scynchronicity" between the inner and outer worlds to achieve meaningful articulations of complementary relations (Segal 1999, 79).

Constituting a synergic space out of syncretic myth in order to facilitate democratic deliberation is a paradigm of peace-building discourse. Yet, the modern mind resists myth as an unfounded and false notion, a primitive mode of thought that is erroneous and misleading, a persistent and pernicious falsehood that should be exposed and subjected to rational critique. Modernity knows only the dark side of myth and fears the seductive pull of allegorical, parabolic, fictitious storytelling

on the political will of a credulous democratic public. In its modern construction, myth is reduced to fable, to "a widely propagated lie" and thus an expression of false consciousness subject to debunking (Hendy 2002, xii). Accordingly, political mythology in America is relegated by Michael Parenti, for example, to living in a land of idols, where democracy is corrupted without benefit of critical examination (Parenti 1994). Mythos is utterly opposed to logos from a modern standpoint (Flood 2002, 6).

Joseph Mali's conception of "mythistory," however, recognises both the necessary presence and constructive force of myth as a modern narrative (Mali 2003, 1-35). Giambattista Vico's insight was that myth is a story that places human history in the present to construct political identity and constitute a people. It is the foundational narrative that shapes cultural knowledge by explaining the present in terms of a living past. As William Doty observes, myths are "framing stories" that provide the "frameworks for human consciousness" (Doty 2000, 44). A people's most important meanings and guideposts are embedded in its metaphors and corresponding myths (Daniel 1990). Accordingly, myth can be recognised but not escaped in any narrative construction of reality, whether in historical narratives or news stories. It is poetic logic in which image shapes perception, reason, explanation, and argument and therefore where the potential for human understanding resides. Rather than opposing myth to reason, we might say instead that myth is necessary fiction, that is, fiction in the service of nonfiction for good or ill purposes. It can take the form of a demonising projection or a humanising image of complementarities.

As agents of cultural production, news media necessarily are implicated in the operation of political myth. News narratives either enrich or impoverish public archives of what Bruce Lincoln considers to be culturally credible paradigms or narrative blueprints used to construct and negotiate socio-political boundaries (Lincoln 1989, 21-25). Just as reaching across the boundary line that has been discursively drawn by war propaganda between an "us" and a "them" is rendered improbable by ignorance of how adversaries make sense of their circumstances, discovering culturally viable ways of articulating interdependencies can be facilitated by increasing awareness of political myth.

A mythically inflected news archive about a Western war on Islamic terror, for example, might confound demonising projections with culturally contextualised stories of Iranian, Afghan, Iraqi, and other Middle Eastern peoples, movements, and states. Western publics would know more of how their so-called Islamist adversaries think in various ways and from different standpoints about the Western military, economic, political, and especially cultural presence in the Muslim world. They would understand Islamism better as a religious and political movement, including the differences between radicals and reformers as well as the conditions of poverty and displacement that motivate political Islam, and the place of religious discourse in the popular imagination. Such culturally relevant information might raise public understanding enough to prompt the question of whether and how Western states, given the living legacy of Islamic resentment over its historical struggle with the West, could respectfully (rather than patronisingly) address current grievances and facilitate remedies. Asking such a question could very well elicit additional information about Islamic framing stories relevant to further consideration and deliberation.

This sketchy hypothetical example is meant to serve only as a place marker for the kind of culturally inflected information generally missing from the public archive in circumstances of radical pluralism and political alienation. It gestures to the kind of knowledge of the estranged other that, consistent with the theory of peace journalism, might render demonising projections increasingly problematic, but it also signals the need for acknowledging the estranged self that is the projected shadow, which requires pushing beyond modernist inhibitions to reconsider the mythos of a healthier democratic culture.

Bringing political myth into focus, I am suggesting, is an extension of peace journalism's critique of war journalism and is consistent with a commitment to peace journalism's culturally grounded process of what its guiding theorist Johan Galtung (1996, 81) calls "conflict transformation." "Deep culture," Galtung (1996, 81) argues, conditions conflict through the operation, and as a manifestation, of the "collective subconscious." It is crucial to understand "deep texts," he insists, if we wish to transform conflict formations in which, following Carl Jung's conception of the "shadow" archetype, "the attitudes we do not acknowledge" are projected (Galtung 2004, 145-146). Charting this difficult-to-access cultural substructure of conflict formations is the necessary process of increasing cultural awareness of archetypal myths (Galtung 2004, 148-159). Myths express archetypes obliquely through symbols (Segal 1999, 71-72), the meaning of which can never be fully exhausted but is highly relevant to the potential reframing of public deliberations so that they might become resistant to demonising projections and, by extension, receptive to compensatory images of complementarities between adversaries.

The narrative of people's inner life, their mythic dream world, is the source of public politics (Ellwood 1999, 37). Just as ignorance of the power of archetypal symbolism is a recipe for political disaster, knowledge of a society's "mythological tradition" provides access to "the treasure houses of resources in story and symbol that souls need to complete themselves" (Ellwood 1999, 38). This is the realm where societies, nations, and states must wrestle with their inner angels and demons when seeking to achieve a therapeutic "balanced pattern" that allows for "the gradual withdrawal of projections" (Ellwood 1999, 45, 47). The extreme differentiation between good and evil is moderated mythically with the "recognition and assimilation of the Shadow archetype" (Ellwood 1999, 52, 69). Myth is an interpretive channel, giving access for those who are sufficiently receptive to a level of transformative consciousness, which can bring them into a more "balanced harmony" (Ellwood 1999, 70).

As the cultural vehicle for expressing archetypal forces, myth has spawned hatred and horrendous warfare. It is not necessarily a force for peace, but it can lift to a level of consciousness the projection of an unconscious complex of energy. The flexibility of myth is crucial to the resilience of democratic culture insofar as mythos articulates mandalic images of heroism, nurture, wisdom, fertility, and other forces balancing one another. The balance achieved in framing stories, when it is achieved, weakens the collective impulse to demonising projections. An imbalance produces the opposite effect. This is the significance of attending to the architectonics of news narratives that comprise the public archive.

The underlying mythic design of enriched news narratives is accessible to critical cultural workers, including journalists, through the metaphors embedded

in political and popular discourse. Metaphors can be regarded as "myths in miniature" insofar as "complexes of metaphors . . . constitute myths" and provide the "dynamic tension" that "permits change in the interpretation of the text" (Daniel 1990, 10, 12, 14). Here the journalist as cultural worker encounters the living heritage of political myth.

Engaging these cultural texts invokes the spirit of Vico, Nietzsche, and Foucault in search of foundational narratives as they construct problematic national identities.[6] Vico understood that we have to grasp these constitutive myths in order to understand the social and political world as it is constructed by humans (Mali 1992, 5, 13, 129, 151). Metaphorical and symbolic language suffuses the commonplaces of politics to form a signifying code that guides interpretation and fuses knowledge with power. Yet, cultural heritage is itself, as Foucault argues, "an unstable assemblage" because it is fraught with discontinuities and full of dynamic interconnections (Foucault 1984, 82).

Genealogy, Foucault famously observed, is "grey, meticulous, and patiently documentary," requiring "knowledge of details" (Foucault 1984, 76). It looks to dispel the "chimera" of a troubled cultural origin, to exorcise the "shadow" of a pious soul, and thus to relieve a debilitating drag on the present (Foucault 1984, 79-80). In this way, it scrutinises the politics of memory by identifying and de-literalising, in Nietzsche's famous words, "a movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding." These troublesome truths, he continues, "are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins" (Nietzsche 1873/1999, 84). Returning these metaphors to life in public discourse brings back into play myth's capacity to speak to imbalances that produce demonising projections.

The Myth of American Exceptionalism

With this understanding of the contemporary relevance of political myth, journalists might be expected to augment the interpretive capacity of the public archive. Such an expectation expands on peace journalism's model of the enriched news narrative in a manner that is consistent with Galtung's guiding conception of conflict transformation. Attending to the living legacy of the myth of American exceptionalism, for example, could release interpretive resources for deliberating anew the nation's war on terrorism. American exceptionalism is a mythic formation not only of longstanding relevance to U.S. political culture but also with immediate bearing on a transformation of U.S. foreign policy under President Barack Obama's leadership – that is, the potential transition away from coercive unilateralism and toward an attitude of diplomatic multilateralism (Ivie "Depolarizing," forthcoming; Ivie and Giner 2009a; Ivie and Giner 2009b). The mythos of American exceptionalism thus bears special attention from news media.

As a complex mythic formation, American exceptionalism is an enduring yet dynamic assemblage of discontinuities within a narrative of national virtue. It both inclines the nation toward an attitude of domination and, Godfrey Hodgson

observes, motivates "wise and courageous conduct" on behalf of noble values such as "the sovereignty of the people, the rule of law, the subordination of political conflict to jurisprudence and the protection of rights" (Hodgson 2009, xvi). The danger of the present moment, as reflected in the continuing fallout of the nation's enraged martial reaction to the tragedy of 9/11, is that the imbalances of this mythos will "overemphasise the exceptional nature of the American experience and the American destiny" (Hodgson 2009, 9).

Within this mythic formation, Americans tend to equate their richness and power with uncommon virtue – that is, with political and moral superiority – and to minimise their interdependencies with other nations. Thus, they can imagine that their heroic destiny is to expand America's power and that their duty is to dominate the world. Americans perceive themselves all too readily to be a chosen people with a mission to save the world by spreading freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and capitalism (Hodgson 2009, 10, 27-29). Such national hubris is the product of an imbalance, a disproportionate emphasis on the nation's distinctive experience and a corresponding exaggeration of its democratic virtue, which impels Americans to project evil in order to preserve their national identity "as redeemers of a sinful world" and inclines the nation toward militarism and war (Hodgson 2009, 22). This was the attitude of George W. Bush and his neoconservative coterie (Hodgson 2009, 171-172), which marks the nadir of the myth of American exceptionalism. As Godfrey Hodgson, historian of American exceptionalism, has observed:

> *The point at which the principles of American democracy are reduced to mere boasting and bullying, justified by a cynical "realism," is the point at which the practice of American democracy, at home as well as abroad, is in mortal danger. It is also the point at which the best of the exceptionalism in the American tradition has been corrupted into the worst* (Hodgson 2009, 190).

Of course this myth of exceptionalism is a gloss of American experience, which ignores and even represses the blemishes of the nation's social, economic, and political history. Moreover, the complexity of the myth is such that it has not always been inflected toward hubris. Indeed, it has also spoken in a "gentler and more consensual" voice and served as a myth for motivating national reform (Hodgson 2009, 161). As Richard Hughes attests, the myths that America lives by have a "great potential for good" when expressed in their "highest and noblest form": as a "chosen nation," America can be goaded to consider its responsibilities over its privileges; as a "millennial nation," it can be reminded that it must remain faithful to the principles of liberty and equality, which it purports to extend to all humankind; it can even teach "humility" and "encourage Americans to learn to see the world through someone else's eyes" (Hughes 2003, 191, 195).

The foundational myth of a divinely chosen nation with a God-given mission, which is the heart of American exceptionalism, is a powerful theme, Hughes observes, that has been put to constructive purposes when it is taken to imply responsibility to other human beings: "But when shorn of the notion of covenant and mutual responsibility, the myth of the Chosen Nation easily becomes a badge of privilege and power, justifying oppression and exploitation of those not included in the circle of the chosen" (Hughes 2003, 41). Thus, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke out in the spiritually laced language of American exceptionalism in

the midst of the Vietnam War, on April 4, 1967, to reconnect the nation to its sense of responsibility to others at home and abroad. Black Americans, he observed ironically, were being sent to Vietnam in disproportionate numbers to fight for liberties they did not enjoy in their own homeland. America would be well served, he insisted, to consider the moral weakness of its position from the enemy's standpoint and with the benefit of Christian compassion and humility (King 1967).[7]

King's metaphorically charged rhetoric reunited American exceptionalism with the sacred covenant of mutual responsibility. He balanced expressions of national virtue and power with culturally resonant images of wisdom and prudence. Speaking as a preacher, citizen, and civil rights advocate at Riverside Church in New York City, "this magnificent house of worship," King was called as if to a "mission." He was "pressed by the demands of inner truth" to oppose his government's policy in a time of war. He summoned "the human spirit" of his fellow citizens to move against the "apathy of conformist thought," to "speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision," and to "break the silence of the night" in order to assume with courage and determination "the high grounds of a firm dissent [from war] based upon the mandates of conscience." His was a "passionate plea" addressed, not to America's enemies, but to his "beloved nation" and "fellow citizens" who carried "the greatest responsibility" to end the war.

America had floundered in the darkness to become like "a society gone mad on war," and the war in Vietnam, "like some demonic destructive suction tube," was destroying the life and soul of the people. When America's soul was "poisoned," the "deepest hopes of men the world over" were lost. King's Christian faith was "brotherhood" beyond the limits of "race or nation or creed." The nation must respond to the "madness of Vietnam" with "compassion" in order to break free of "deadly Western arrogance" and to hear the "broken cries" of Vietnamese who "must see Americans as strange liberators." The "true meaning and value of compassion," King allowed, is that "it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves." Looking back at themselves from the enemy's view, "mature" Americans might be able to perceive the basic weakness of their condition and thus "profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition."

If communism was "a judgment against [America's] failure to make democracy real," King suggested, the nation's only hope was to recapture its revolutionary spirit "and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism." With such a powerful recommitment to its true mission, America would "speed the day when 'every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.'" This, he proclaimed, was "the calling of the sons of God."

By retelling the sacred story of American exceptionalism through metaphorical allusions, King turned the myth on its own terms toward serving a higher sensibility. He walked the fine line between the arrogance of being God's chosen people and the humility of serving a loving God. He invoked the nation's better angels consistent with the sacred mythos of the public's collective identity as an exceptional people. The turn on American exceptionalism, which King took in his speech to the assembled listeners that momentous day in Riverside Church

– exactly one year before he was murdered on April 4, 1968 – was much like the message of the sermon delivered by Reverend Eric Erickson to his Presbyterian congregation in Bloomington, Indiana, on All Saints Sunday, November 1, 2009. All human saints, Pastor Erickson observed, must remember the crucial difference between their own works and God doing His work through them. This is, indeed, a fine line to walk in a land of God's chosen people between a self-righteous mission – which elevates Americans above, and alienates them from, the rest of the world – and a sacred calling to reach out to all of humankind. This tension is also the dynamic of the mythos of American culture that King drew upon to minister to the nation's political conscience. He conjured this special sense of mission to call upon his fellow citizens to "make the right choice," to heed the "creative psalm of peace," and to "transform the jangling discords of our world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood." In so doing, he affirmed the nation's spiritual wisdom and its nurturing strength in order to balance the dark forces of arrogance, fear, and hatred so that the American public might better recognise the shadow they had projected onto their enemies in Vietnam.

Conclusion

My initial answer to the question of how peace journalism's critique of mainstream news media might advance democratic culture was that by enhancing the public archive it would generate exponential potential for constructive public deliberation. In developing a model of enriched news narratives, peace journalism has identified the omissions of the typical war story that reinforce war propaganda's demonising projections. Further consideration of peace journalism's critique, consistent with Galtung's concern with the deeper texts of culture, reveals the relevance of cultural knowledge to democratic deliberation. Even though myth is barely indicated in the peace-journalism model, the presence of political myth in news narratives and public deliberations is inescapable. Exposing this presence is crucial to understanding the demonising projections that debilitate democratic deliberation. Recognising the imbalances in the mythos of such projections is a step toward withdrawing the shadow that produces them. Thus, if the initial measure of the democratic potential of news narratives was a matter of how much and what kind of information they omit from the public archive, the cultural counterpart to that critical criterion is the degree to which the mythos embedded in news narratives goes unrecognised and remains unbalanced. A persistent omission of key information together with a chronic imbalance in the interpretive frame of a public archive results in demonising distortions that diminish democratic deliberation.

Among the questions this observation raises about political critique of democratic culture is whether journalism is a necessary and/or appropriate medium for addressing the mythic imbalances of demonising projections. Surely myth is accessible to attentive journalists who monitor the metaphors within the political discourse that is subject to their news narratives. Whether running for election to the U.S. presidency, addressing the Muslim world about mutual respect, or speaking to the United Nations about a new attitude of global engagement and partnership, Barack Obama's interpretive frame of American exceptionalism is manifestly about restoring the American dream (Ivie "Depolarizing," forthcoming; Obama 2009, June 4; Obama 2009, September 23). His discourse of American mission is laced

with the language of transparency, openness, cooperation, burden sharing, civil society, and human rights as he speaks of a spirit of sacrifice, service, responsibility, cooperation, and global partnership. What, if anything, are journalists to make of this mythos? Is it journalism's responsibility to notice when a Martin Luther King, Jr. or a Barack Obama give voice to the balancing and harmonising themes of their culture's framing stories or when a George W. Bush does not? And what of the mythos of other, less noted parties who are caught up in the violence of nations but too often missing from news narratives and the public archive they construct? Would greater public awareness enhance democratic deliberation? And if the news media are not the proper vehicle for informing the public of missing information and unbalanced interpretive frames, what is journalism's democratic purpose and by what other means is democracy's deliberative prospect to be realised?

Notes:

1. Other names given to peace journalism include post-realist journalism, solutions journalism, empowerment journalism, conflict analysis journalism, change journalism, holistic journalism, big picture journalism, open society journalism, analytical journalism, reflective journalism, constructive journalism, and process journalism. From Lynch and McGoldrick (2005, 240).

2. This is a selected and paraphrased version of the original list by Schmidt (1994), quoted in Lynch and McGoldrick (2005, 53-54).

3. For a brief discussion and example of peace journalism from this perspective related to the war in Afghanistan, see Lynch (2008, January 29).

4. As an example of peace journalism research, see Lynch (2006) for a content analysis of coverage of the Iran nuclear crisis.

5. On the concept of the field of journalism, see Bourdieu (1998).

6. This oblique reference to what might be termed critical genealogy is based on Ivie and Giner (Forthcoming).

7. All quotations of King's words and references to his themes are from King (1967, April 4).

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A PUBLIC WORLD WITHOUT PUBLIC RELATIONS?

NIKOLAY NAYDEN

Abstract

The term "*public relations*" (PR) has long gained currency as meaning the practice of producing a positive public image. This article argues that *public relations* should be released from the prison of "PR" and, instead, reconceptualised as relations which define the public realm much as economic relations define the economy. From this point of view, three main levels of public relations can be distinguished: (1) relations between public institutions, (2) relations between citizens and public institutions, and (3) relations between single citizens who communicate as strangers. Relations on the last level are qualified as "basic public relations" because they are the simplest, reproduce at all levels, do not need institutional mediation, and are the nucleus of all political roles and meanings. Freeing the term "public relations" from its restricted usage to mean "relations in public" makes it possible to discover the common roots of political institutions and the public sphere and to explore the innate kinship between politics and all other segments of public life. The overall effect is a re-conceptualising of politics as quintessentially stemming from public relations and of democracy as the very essence of politics.

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Freeing Public Relations from the Prison of "PR"

The term "*public relations*" (PR) has long gained currency as meaning the practice of producing a positive public image. This image is moulded by selecting arguments, suggestions, and visualisations that fit and/or change a relevant public's attitudes. The aim is to produce the public as a consumer of a particular view. Hence, when PR strategies improve the public image of an entity they confer upon that entity the status of a private subject, even if it is a public institution such as parliament or the presidency. This explains why PR strategies can successfully serve both private and public subjects and why the successful results of these strategies are not necessarily the best choices for society as a whole. Ironically, the general public is the only subject not in a position to establish public relations (PR). General public summarises the entire range of particular interests in a society and therefore cannot yield a single, particular interest that can be articulated, opposed, or favoured as a possible aim of PR strategies. Thus, PR practices can perfectly function at cross purposes with the nature of public (P) and misappropriate "the public" for particularistic interests.

PR practices are also at cross purposes with the nature of "relations" (R). The acronym "PR" is typically used to denote departments and persons who specialise in conducting PR strategies. Expressions such as "I met with the PR of …," "the PR told me," etc., would be unthinkable if we took public relations seriously. Nobody can meet or talk with "public relations." The outright fetishism in this use of the term "public relations" raises a number of counter questions such as, which relations are, in fact, public; how do public relations refer to political relations; or is PR actually public relations?

Such a narrow use of the term "PR" has little to do with the nature of the public realm as whole or with particular relations within this realm. This paper intends to reconceptualise "public relations" as those relations which define the public realm much as economic relations identify the economy. It is in this foundational sense that the term "public relations" is used in the following analysis.

The Nature of Public Relations

A New Approach to the Public

The opposition of public vs. private is perhaps the oldest and most traditional way of *defining the public* and its derivatives. Splichal distinguishes three semantic dimensions of publicness connected with the public-private boundary (Splichal 1999, 17-20). The opposition public-private has various aspects but primarily puts forward arguments about *what is not public* rather than "what is public." This result may well serve ordinary interpretations but is limited in scope theoretically. Childs, whose views are close to the fundamental view of public relations suggested here, affirms that "to define public relations is to define private relations, to draw a line between personal freedom and social responsibility" (Childs 1940, 1). Personal freedom, however, is among the greatest concerns of social responsibility and we turn back to the problems of public-private boundary this definition aimed to solve.

The opposite approach, defining *what is public*, raises the problem of tautology. Some political philosophers counterbalance this definitional uncertainty by offering additional views and ideas. Arendt proclaims that the term "public" "means, first,

that everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity" (Arendt 1989, 50). The cognate terms, "public, " "in public," and "publicity" do not, however, provide better conceptual clearness and Arendt offers a second definition of the "public" as "the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it" (Arendt 1989, 52). Kelman equates "*public* spirit" with "the wish to choose good *public* policy" (my italics) but immediately leaves this vicious circle by specifying that "public spirit" means "evaluating options against a standard of general ideas about right and wrong" and showing "concern for others, not just oneself" (Kelman 1990, 31). John Rawls backs out of the same theoretical pitfalls by arguing in terms of the greater good and fundamental political justice in the larger society or general public:

> *Public reason, then, is public in three ways: as the reason of citizens as such, it is the reason of the public; its subject is the good of the public and matters of fundamental justice; and its nature and content is public, being given by the ideals and principles expressed by society's conception of political justice, and conducted open to view on that basis* (Rawls 1996, 213).

As far back as the1920s, Dewey took a small analytical step that opened a large theoretical horizon, which still remains unexplored. He recognised "the germ of the distinction between the private and the public" in the difference between actions which affect persons "directly engaged in a transaction" and actions which affect persons "beyond those immediately concerned" (Dewey, 1927, 12). Unfortunately, Dewey applied this idea as a ready-for-use concept. It is, however, hard to specify an action between two persons which does not affect anybody else. *The bigger number of people does* not always testify to a public quality though the more people affected by an action, the larger its public potential. Dewey himself acknowledges that public actions cannot necessarily be identified with the social or as socially useful (Dewey 1927, 13-4). Therefore, the primary question – exactly which actions that indirectly affect others are "public" – remains unanswered.

To break new ground in this discussion, it is not enough simply to oppose "public" and "private" or to define "public" in isolation from "private." Rudder alarmingly argues the need of a paradigmatic shift toward a broader category of public policy, "one capacious enough to capture the relevant instances of both private and public-private governance, in addition to actual government decisions" (Rudder 2008, 908). The concept of the "public" can become an important key to many social processes if conceived as a permanent process of the public emerging from the "private" or merging into the "private." As a preliminary step, it will be useful to find the lowest common denominator of all the practical uses of the term "public." For that purpose, I have generated a list of more than 100 phraseological units in English, which contain a subject predicated as "public." This list is not exhaustive but it is enough long to show that analyzing every single case will not lead to a lowest common denominator for all these uses. This task can be carried out only by reconceptualising what basically identifies everything predicated as "public," i.e. by reconceptualising *public relations.* These relations can be differentiated on three levels according to subject. The analysis begins with the most indisputable level, that of the relations between public institutions.

Relations between Public Institutions. Modern history has established public institutions, such as parliament, the presidency, executive government, law courts, and each of their subdivisions, as the most telling and emblematic entities predicated as "public." They have been designed to be consistent with the activity of the general public as the final source of democratic legitimacy and as a final argument in reasoning by state institutions. Thus, it is natural to presuppose that relations between these institutions are, by definition, "public." Public relations on this level are marked by three partly overlapping and complimentary principles – *impartiality*, *neutrality,* and *anonymity*. These principles assure citizens equal access to the services of the state and contribute to the distribution of "fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation" (Rawls 2001, 7).

Of primary interest here is whether a reciprocal attitude of impartiality, neutrality and anonymity between public institutions is reproduced at the other levels of public relations. If these principles remain valid, then they are principles of public relations as a whole. In looking for the answer, we should consider the next level.

Relations between Public Institutions and Citizens –

Mediated by Political Parties and Other Organisations. Parties attempt to formulate the needs of the general public in a politically relevant way. In return, the public legitimates the parties' claims to political power. However, each party may also emphasise some particular interests that conflict with general public interests. The depth and effects of such conflicts depend upon how parties mediate the political participation of citizens. The longer a party remains in power, the stronger the tendency toward transformation into a "semi-state agency" and the greater "the ascendancy of the party in public office" (Katz and Mair 2002). From that point, parties may enter the frames ascribed to public institutions. This explains a current tendency towards the gradual evaporation of political parties' abilities to construct collective identities and opens room for some "voluntary associations" which address public needs directly to institutions (Della Porta 2004, 29).

Mediated by Other Citizens. An ordinary citizen can also, in exceptional cases, gain a contextual/temporal public relevance as an embodiment of particular attitudes of the general public toward official institutions. A case in point is Joe Wurzelbacher, an unknown plumber before his mention by John McCain in the final presidential debate of 2008 made him the international phenomenon known as "Joe the Plumber." In similar contexts, every ordinary citizen can temporarily play the role of politician or public servant and exert influence on other citizens and even official institutions. This exceptional public role of an ordinary citizen hints at the public potential of the daily roles of ordinary citizens and approaches us to the basic meaning of what is public.

Direct Relations. Here, we put aside the question of initiatives, whether by institutions or by citizens, and any reasons for such initiatives. Our emphasis is upon the founding principle of relations between public institutions and citizens.

The rule of law requires public institutions not to contact single individuals but the publicly relevant groups to which these individuals belong. Literary institu-

tions, of course, daily contact private individuals for things like citizens' needs for state protection and services, special merit cases, citizens' debts, violations of public order, etc. The essence of such practices is a policy of individual rights. In these cases, however, institutional provisions address all the persons of the same kind and in the same manner, i.e. institutions solve the problems of a whole social group in order to solve the problem of a single member of this group.

Hence, when solving the problems of single citizens, a public institution basically abstracts from their identity and biography. This is perfectly embodied in forms of public address, as defined by Warner: "I never speak to you without speaking to a thousand others … any character or trait I depict typifies a whole social stratum" (Warner 2002, 105). Only then an institution could be predicated as "public."

Analogically, citizens resort to the services offered by the state as part of a social group or category to which they belong – voters, taxpayers, owners, etc. On these grounds, rank-and-file citizens might successfully defend their personal interests. What happens, however, when a private person puts aside her/his particular place in the social world and leans argumentation toward belonging to a publicly relevant group or range of cases? – S/he de facto stands for her/his status as a *public* subject.

There is nothing personal within this frame of relations between institutions and individual citizens where both sides communicate/interact as public subjects. This frame is based on legal norms and standards which assume the citizen's group belonging beforehand. These norms and standards reflect permanent political rivalries between competing political parties and social groups they represent and, naturally, treat a large range of societal and group interests.

Therefore, democratic state, by definition, disregards differences in economic status, race, religion, language, sex, age, etc., and typifies vs. individualises the particular social problems to which it responds. Public institutions settle personal problems while treating them the same as all other cases of the same type. The best thing that public institutions/representatives can offer citizens is an unbiased attitude toward each of them and toward the cases they administer. Thus, *abstraction* is the essence of democracy and the most appropriate approach in a theoretical analysis of democracy (Nayden 2007).

In practice, however, communication between public institutions and single individuals could vary depending on factors such as (1) the status of the respective group in which the individual falls, (2) the degree to which the individual's problem is representative of the group, (3) the social distance between ordinary citizens and public leaders/officials, and (4) the degree to which the public official follows institutional norms. In this context, an apparent institutional impartiality might also mask an indifference towards problems of the community-at-large and, at the same time, make room for a public institution's meeting extraordinary interests of particularly favoured groups or individuals.

When elected party members and public officials begin to systematically give personal preferences to particular groups/individuals/cases, i.e. when representatives of public institutions begin to individualise instead of typifying concrete cases, they infringe upon equal access to the state. When they differentiate (favour or tolerate) particular persons, public responsibility shrinks away below a set of interpersonal relations and considerations. This *personification* either injures concrete

individuals in favour of other (casual or selected) citizens, or privileges them. As a result, institutional activities penetrate a non-public zone and may give impetus to conspiracies and/or corrupt practices. If this occurs, official institutions and servants remain "public" *de jure*, but lose their public character *de facto*.

When public institutions lose their public character, citizens still have opportunities to: (1) begin discussing political problems publicly in order to exert pressure on public/political institutions, and/or (2) initiate public protests/actions against official institutions. Through both opportunities, though in different ways, citizens can proclaim themselves public subjects outside of any mediating public institutions. In the first case, citizens assert public opinion, which pressures public institutions to render an open account of their activities and to re-establish their legitimacy (Habermas 1989). In the second case, citizens form a mass public, the bodily presence of which itself explicitly demands political powers to resume their public duties.

Relations between Citizens. As shown in this discussion, democratic public institutions must by definition treat concrete citizens as if each is like everybody else, i.e. consider them as typified members of a society. The last step in defining the public is to analyze opportunities individuals may have to establish public relations without mediation by official institutions, parties or politically emblematic persons. Let's take a familiar example – a tourist generalises about people from a different city, state, culture, or civilisation based upon casual expressions of defiant, surly, cordial, or reverent attitudes by a couple of natives s/he has met. What makes this generalisation possible? In communicating, anonymous citizens may easily go beyond their own individual identities and play the "Other," symbolising their respective cities, states, cultures, etc. Respectively, these casual contacts may turn into encounters between these cities, states, cultures, etc. This cumulative public effect becomes systematic when the anonymous character of interpersonal communication pervades society.

Basic Public Relations. Relations between single citizens who communicate as strangers and symbolically represent relevant categories of people to which they belong, are not simply *public*. These relations are also *basic* because they: (1) are the simplest (associate individuals who are by definition anonymous); (2) do not presuppose mediation by any political institutions or parties, and (3) underpin all levels of the public. These basic public relations epitomise "equal respect for everyone" which "extends to the person of the other in his or her otherness" (Habermas 2001, xxxv). Such equal respect is a primary abstract foundation upon which modern democracy rests. Even vote buying is targeted to this quality of an equality-that-unifies-all-citizens regardless of their status and importance for society.

These qualities make basic public relations an identification code for everything predicated as "public," its *differentia specifica*. Even the state, which presupposes and summarises the activities of all its citizens/publics, is not the final source for determining what is public but, rather, highest reification and emanation of basic public relations. This throws new light on why "civic context matters for the way institutions work" (Putnam 1993, 120) or citizen-centred values are fundamental to effective accountability in public services (Brewer 2007, 554).

As an identification code for what is public, basic public relations are the nucleus of all political roles and meanings. Historically, basic public relations (under the

shape of bourgeois public sphere) engender civil rights before they engender political rights. Marshall assigns the formative period of civil rights to the eighteenth century and the formative period of political rights to the nineteenth century (Marshall 1964, 74). Turner deepens Marshall's theory by putting "a particular emphasis on the notion of social struggles as the central motor of the drive for citizenship." It is violence or threats of violence that bring the state "into the social arena as a stabiliser of the social system" (Turner 1990, 193-4).

Indirectly, Turner supports our view of the spread of the basic public relations by discriminating between active vs. passive citizenship depending on whether citizenship has grown from above or from below (Turner 1990, 206-7). When citizenship grows from above, this is due to the actions of the publics at an earlier stage of history. If, in a certain moment, the state and its apparatus follow citizens' attitudes, this means the state has already adopted these same attitudes under citizens' pressure at an earlier stage and/or is adopting these attitudes at present. If all concerns for citizens' rights were entrusted entirely to the state, it would not take long for democracy to become a meaningless word.

Seemingly, the concept of basic public relations disconnects people in the public from their particular situations, interests, and perspectives in the world and, in so doing, could block efforts to tackle the problems of unprivileged groups such as women, blacks, etc. This is a wrong conclusion both historically and theoretically. The emancipation of women, blacks and others began precisely when the universal disconnection of people from particular situations of dependency and/or inferior status began to occur both in widespread practice and theory. Critics of universalistic concepts such as "basic public relations" from an emancipative point of view would be a contradiction in terms since these concepts, by emphasising what is common among people, represent the very foundation of emancipation.

Self-Abstraction

With the principles laid by discussion of basic public relations, we can now see how basic public relations are generated by a process of self-abstraction.

Definition

The concept of basic public relations joins the observations of many perceptive explorers of the public realm. As shown for Dewey, public actions affect persons "beyond those immediately concerned." Sennett differentiates two aspects of public behaviour: (1) action "at a distance from the self, from its immediate history, circumstances, and needs," and (2) an "experiencing of diversity" (Sennett 1996, 87). For Kelman "public-spirited behavior shows concern for others, not just oneself" (Kelman 1990, 31). Warner characterises the moment of apprehending something as public as one in which we imagine, however imperfectly, indifference to our own particularities of culture, race, gender, or class. "We adopt the attitude of the public subject, marking to ourselves its nonidentity with ourselves" (Warner 1992, 377). Warner also points out a principle of negativity axiomatic in the bourgeois public sphere, such that "what you say will carry force not because of who you are but despite who you are. Implicit in this principle is a utopian universality that would allow people to transcend the given realities of their bodies and their status" (Warner 1992, 382).

All these observations testify that the public draws its strength from the sacrifice of individual identity at the altar of a relevant group, society, culture, or civilisation. Hannah Arendt stands with the best of this public-spirited tradition in accepting the Lessing Prize:

> *In awards, the world speaks out, and if we accept the award and express our gratitude for it, we can do so only by ignoring ourselves and acting entirely within the framework of our attitude toward the world, toward a world and public to which we owe the space into which we speak and in which we are heard* (Arendt 1970, 3).

The question arises, however, of whether self-abstraction is devoted to the general good or serves private interests of the individual including male dominance, race inequalities etc. The answer can be complicated and presupposes a theoretical reconstruction of primary public structures and practices based on self-abstraction, as we shall see below.

Historical Prerequisites of Self-Abstraction

The process of self-abstraction underpins interpersonal communication in bourgeois society as a result of two fundamental historical changes: (1) the abolishment of feudal dependencies, and (2) the rise of market relations. The first change gives way to social mobility and migration. The second makes this migration possible by providing goods for the masses of people concentrated in limited territories. World city centres spring up. An increasing number of people start depending upon the anonymous hand of the market and upon no one particular person. "The historical development of citizenship requires certain universalistic notions of the subject, the erosion of particularistic kinship systems in favour of an urban environment which can probably only flourish in the context, initially, of the autonomous city" (Turner 1990, 194).

The abolishment of feudal dependencies and the rise of self-abstraction are mutually interdependent processes. The self-abstraction of a dependent person is a contradiction in terms – one cannot abstract from an identity or self which already depends upon another. Certain level of personal independence presupposes the formulation and realisation of the political goal of abolishing feudal dependency. This profoundly changes the social parameters of the human environment. As an axiomatic principle of bourgeois society, self-abstraction expands public relations from the bottom to the top of society as a whole. This expansion starts from the way citizens address each other:

> *In its Jacobin phase, the revolution is best understood as an effort to establish citizenship as the dominant identity of every Frenchman - against the alternative identities of religion, estate, family, and region. The replacement of the still honorific title "Monsieur" with the fully universal "citoyen" (and also, though less significantly, "citoyenne") symbolizes that effort* (Walzer 1989, 211).

One of the first visible signs of progress in the rise of public relations was that "ruling elites grew beyond the size of personal retinues and extended households" (Johnston 1996, 327). Subsequently, the plebeian culture ceased being "a passive echo of the dominant culture; it was also the periodically recurring violent revolt

of a counterproject to the hierarchical world of domination, with its official celebrations and everyday disciplines" (Habermas 1992, 427). Specifically, "the language of courtly behaviour and refinement, though initially applied merely to the English court, was transferred in the late seventeenth century to the English gentlemen … and other cultural matrices (most notably, the West End of London) were becoming dominant" (Klein 1989, 585).

These and similar changes are reinforced by a rising market that radically enhances productivity, enlarges spare time, and loosens the constraints of daily concerns. Individuals are allowed to develop intellectual, aesthetic, moral, and political interests and relations. These new interests/relations in turn are conducive to the positive reception, easy politicisation, and internationalisation of ideas of freedom, equality, and human rights.

Thus, a revolution in the very geography of a population brings about deep social changes in a communication environment with the following far-reaching consequences: (1) the anonymous individual becomes the main personage in social communication; (2) human masses become the basic communicative environment; (3) communication among strangers begins to predominate; (4) differentiation of individual positions multiplies reasons for communicating among strangers; and (5) a single individual distributes her/his attention among multiple concrete individuals while devoting less attention to each.

As a result, private problems are more easily recognised as problems of groups who may look for public legitimacy and solutions. Neglecting individual identity turns from a possible into a necessary communicative strategy. As Habermas observes, "Here inclusion does not imply locking members into a community that closes itself off from others. The 'inclusion of the other' means rather that the boundaries of the community are open for all, also and most especially for those who are strangers to one another and want to remain strangers" (Habermas 2001, xxxvi).

These changes are comparable to what Arendt calls "the rise of the social" but cannot be treated as a decline of the public sphere. Instead, these new processes illustrate the rise of basic public relations, which change the shape of society. Such change occurs when identification of the general public with certain institutions and public personages has been denied and opened to discussion in the public sphere.

In conclusion, *communication between anonymous individuals* in urban areas arises as an inexhaustible source of basic public relations and multiplies opportunities to render aspects of the social space indeed "public." This is the context in which the claim that "public-relations problems are essentially public-opinion problems" (Childs 1940, v) can be justified. The reproduction of this communicative context increases the need for democratic political changes by (1) loosing the personal dependencies, (2) deepening the need for an impartial government, and (3) hinting at how such a government may be established. Significantly, the term "citizen," as an inhabitant of a city, becomes an identifier for members of modern states entitled to civil rights and civic responsibilities. In this way, the early bourgeois city is truly the cradle of modern democracy. This is not an idealisation of urban settings but emphasis on the most influential changes in modern society which puts aside the asylums of social structures from the past.

Self-Abstraction and Public Culture

The dynamic and relatively free populations of cities include many overlapping one-dimensional groups – such as citizens, voters, taxpayers, owners, etc. – based on separate, one-dimensional characteristics. Each group equalises its members from an abstract point of view and puts everybody into the role of the others. The person as a unique individual is obscured. Hence, the "trace of strangeness" so penetratingly described by Simmel (1950, 402-8).

This kind of equalisation begins to pervade relations between citizens and politicians with a moral cast that encourages interpreting political behaviour in terms of truth and fairness. The process is twofold. On the one hand, a new way of responding to the public behaviour of politicians appeared and was first "strikingly manifest in the revolutions of 1848. What was perceived when people watched someone behave in public was his intention, his character, so that the truth of what he said appeared to depend on what kind of person he was" (Sennett 1996, 25). On the other hand, people often used defence mechanisms "against their own belief in involuntary disclosure of character and against the superimposition of public and private imagery. By an odd route, these defences came to encourage people to elevate artistic performers to the special status as public figures which they occupy today" (Sennett 1996, 26).

Communication in crowded urban settings takes increasingly place *in front of* a public, *with* a public, and *on behalf* of a public. Relations that structure communication in anonymous publics allow particular individuals to gain distinction and begin to represent others. In this way, self-abstraction results in what I call a "genealogy of the public forum" and a "genealogy of the public representative" seen as the structural result of communication between unlimited masses of anonymous individuals (Nayden 2008). Abstract equality within one-dimensional groups, however, might facilitate raising particular claims based on group membership and these same claims can be imposed in the name of equality. Equality and particularistic claims cross each other in public speech and adumbrate the space for the future democratic collisions.

Self-Abstraction, the Public Sphere, and Public Institutions

For a long time, the process of self-abstraction has gained academic acceptance in terms of the bourgeois public sphere. This process has influenced politics by (1) formulating the most urgent political issues and suggesting the most popular decisions, (2) putting into question the legitimacy of official institutions, and (3) encouraging citizens' political participation.

Public opinion, as the main weapon of the bourgeois public sphere, originates from the medieval English practice of writing petitions (Zaret 2000). During the English Revolution, printing pushed petitioning and other traditional communicative practices in new directions that altered the *content* as well as the *scope* of political communication. Petitioning appealed to an anonymous body of opinion, a public that was both a nominal object of discourse and a collection of writers, readers, printers, and petitioners engaged in political debates (Zaret 2000, 1996, 1498).

Public opinion played different roles in the French and American revolutions. According to Arendt, this was the difference between the "potential unanimity of all" (the French case) vs. the "multitude of voices and interests" (the American case)

(Arendt 1968, 88-9). This difference does not, however, change the role of public discussions (public relations) in the political constitution of bourgeois society. The primary contribution of the public sphere is to refresh recognition of existing political representatives and, more importantly, to allow some political representatives to be recognised by, or even to emerge from, the citizenry. In this way, the public sphere advances basic public relations to prominence from street talk all the way to institutional representation.

The process of self-abstraction results not only in the genesis of the bourgeois public sphere but also in the parallel changes in official institutions. "Explicitly public roles endowed with limited powers and bound by impersonal obligations" (Johnston 1996, 327-9) have been developed. The office holders cease identifying their office with either the personality of the sovereign (president, parliament, party) or with their own personality. The result is a universal accessibility of services offered by the state.

Thus, the emergence of the early bourgeois public sphere progresses alongside the transformation of public institutions. The causes and spirit of these changes are similar and determine the shape and level of democratisation in modern society. The very nature of the changes testifies to the public having conquered society and to society permanently generating multiple points of departure whereby each citizen can play the role of a public subject.

This is precisely the missing part of Habermas's work where it is concerned with the genesis/impact of the bourgeois public sphere but takes for granted the public nature of official institutions. By contrast, the concept of public relations, as a general identifier of the public realm, explains the affinity of the public sphere with public institutions, the similarity of their historical changes, and the strivings of each to monopolise the other. This new concept of public relations opens the door to a unifying interpretation of all of the processes in the public realm, including the dominant process of political representation.

Political Representation – Norms and Pathology

A person who speaks in front of a public gains a new identity based on her/his abstract community with all of the participants in that public. When this new identity adheres to a speaker's profile, this heralds the transmutation of a stranger from the modern city into a new type of personage – a public/political representative. A public representative embodies the face and the body of all the faceless and bodiless participants in the relevant public. According to Bourdieu, functionary depersonalises ("the ordinary individual should die") in the name of universal values such as God, Truth, Freedom, etc. in order to speak on their behalf (Bourdieu 1987, 193, 200). The entire transition from public discussion to political representation is the essence of what Tönnies calls transition from gaseous to fluid and solid "aggregate states" of public opinion (Splichal and Hardt 2000 137-138).

As a side effect, the human body disappears in its function as a main target of punitive force in bourgeois society (Foucault 1975). This looks opposite to Warner's assertion that:

> *now public body images are everywhere on display, in virtually all media contexts. Where printed public discourse formerly relied on a rhetoric of abstract disembodiment, visual media, including print, now display bodies*

for a range of purposes: admiration, identification, appropriation, scandal, etc. (Warner 1992, 385-6).

This is not, however, a triumph of personification, but an extreme degree of depersonalisation, where the body now functions as a symbol of the mass of bodies and denotes an inaccessible and elite circle of people and goods.

These transformations exemplify an emerging complicated interplay between what is concrete and what is anonymous. Anonymity (remoteness) in mass publics creates a deeper need for closeness among individuals. Closeness, however, is possible only through the symbolic representation of anonymous members of society by concrete individuals. This psychological need for closeness among members of the mass or general public allows politicians to refresh their political image on the eve of elections, by reaching down and mingling with the public. During the period between elections, politicians can more formally represent and personify anonymous others because past accumulations of public energy allow them not only to speak, but also to live, "in the name of" and even "instead of" the others. Anonymous masses get used to being brought under the sway of impersonal powers and, in some historical circumstances, grow to accept an alien "I" to a degree tantamount to "escape from freedom" (Fromm 1994).

The Public as Community and Modern Democracy

In pre-modern history, people formed a public and gained collective strength mainly in connection with territorial rivalries. Field superiority required the support of armed forces. This indicates that military organisation was a general frame for pre-modern publics, even when the aim was primarily religious in nature. In the Middle Ages, the permanently active "public" is the army. Actions against feudal aristocracies and their armies reproduced the form of military actions, and publics subsequently took the shape of military organisation. Only armed publics (solders or rebels) could intimidate and influence the institutional hierarchy. For this reason, Warner ascribes the term "public" only to modern society:

> *Strangers in the ancient sense – foreign, alien, misplaced – might of course be placed to a degree by Christendom, the ummah, a guild, or an army, affiliations one might share with strangers, making them a bit less strange. Strangers placed by means of these affiliations are on a path to commonality. Publics orient us to strangers in a different way. They are no longer merely people whom one does not yet know; rather, an environment of stranger-hood is the necessary premise of some of our most prized ways of being* (Warner 2002, 75).

The public, in this last sense of an environment of strangers, plays a dominant role in structuring the public realm in bourgeois society. For decades, however, this role has escaped the theoretical attention it deserves. As early as the 1920s, Lippmann qualifies as "indisputable" the need in the Great Society for "uninterrupted publicity" but ascertains that state machine and media have restricted the public to the role of "bystander" or "phantom," ready for political uses and misuses (Lippmann 1927). Dewey acknowledges this unenviable political position of the public but, nevertheless, conceptualises the public as a key concept in interpreting the state (Dewey 1927). Unfortunately, he considers the public and the state to be

two sides of the same coin and, worse, treats the public as a self-organisation of the state. As a result, Dewey's public plays the same role theoretically that Lippmann's public plays in practice. This observation explains (1) the recent revelation that Lippmann and Dewey were not originally adversaries in the great debate about "the vitality of participatory democracy," and (2) why their dialogue was reframed as such a debate much later, mainly in the 1990s" (Janson, 2009, 226, 230). The 1990s were a time of full-blown debate about the bourgeois public sphere which has renewed an interest in the political role of the public.

Generally, every public is cantered on a particular event. In traditional societies, natural cataclysms and exceptional social needs form publics *incidentally* while, in modern societies, the social environment of anonymous individuals is a permanent source of publicly relevant events. The life of the modern citizen is led, literally and allegorically, in front of an unlimited multitude of real and imaginary publics which determine individual fortunes. For the anonymous mass in bourgeois society, to form a public is as natural as for primitive man to organise a tribal rite, or for a totalitarian citizen to take part in the ideological construction of society. This allows modern publics to exert *systematic* influences upon political institutions and officials, i.e. anonymous masses to gain political effectiveness.

The unique social status of the public was felt as early as during the time of the first taverns, coffeehouses, and the like. The Earl of Clarendon disapprovingly confided that visitors in coffeehouses "had charter of privilege to speak what they would without being in danger to be called in question" (Hyde 1760 cited in Pincus 1995, 832). The political importance of this unprecedented phenomenon is summarised by Warner in the following manner:

> *Speaking, writing and thinking involve us – actively and immediately – in a public, and thus in the being of the sovereign. Imagine how powerless people would feel if their commonality and participation were simply defined by pre-given frameworks, by institutions and laws, as in other social contexts they are through kinship. … Such is the image of totalitarianism: non-kin society organized by bureaucracy and law* (Warner 2002, 69).

To paraphrase the opening line of Marx's *Capital*, the wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears both as an "immense collection of commodities" and as "collection of people" – i.e., masses, crowds, publics, groups, etc. These "heaps of people" are not a mere passive echo of the collection of commodities but are generated by a set of public relations which define the political shape of society. The interpretation of the public realm as a mere function of commodity relations obscures the internal logic of the public/political realm. For example, all aspects of freedom in bourgeois society are treated in the conditionality of capital production and, therefore, as limited in scope and functions. Hence, the "eclectic ideas" of Marx about freedom of the press and the lack of discussion on that subject in his principal works (Splichal 2002, 113). Missing the concept of public relations, Marxism subsequently encountered unsolvable theoretical and practical difficulties.

However misguided it may be to equate them, the parallel between a collection of commodities and a collection of people is more than significant. Both determine and produce each other and depend equally upon the same historical factors – the

abolishment of feudal dependencies, population growth, new modes of settlement, and progress in industry, transport, communications, science, and so forth. Warner points out one important aspect of this parallel:

> *Public discourse and the market were mutually clarifying, then, in both their positive and negative characters: positive, because both public and market were metonymically realized in printed, mass-produced artifacts; negative, because the private subject finds his relation to both. … only by negating the given reality of himself, thereby considering himself the abstract subject of the universal (political or economical) discourse* (Warner 1990, 63).

Access to a public is principally open to all, regardless of their individual identities. The systematic political influence of modern publics carries the principle of open access into politics and explains why the equal rights and duties of modern citizenship are, "by definition, national" (Marshall 1964, 72). Open access to public discussions heralds a new social and political organisation by (1) making the process of self-abstraction immanent for the early bourgeois public sphere, (2) attaching a symbolic representative character to the public sphere, and, hence, (3) crystallising into democratic structures of power. Ultimately, democratic representation is a political function of the principle of open access.

Political representation depends upon the activities of a variety of publics in various ways. Political changes since early modern times have always been preceded or initiated by impressive public actions, under strong public pressures, and/or have occurred in the context of multiple public addresses to an undefined public. The less people's discontents take the shape of public discontent, the more probably official institutions neglect their public responsibilities and the easier private interests become a dominant inspiration and criteria for effectiveness of these institutions. Those institutions and organisations which adopt the principles and aims of the relevant public accumulate the public's energy and, as a result, gain the power/legitimacy to use that energy. In fact, protests by affected publics addressed to official institutions often represent a clash between the energy of institutions (provided by publics of previous generations) and the living energy of present publics. This approach throws new light upon the basis of democratic leadership and denounces the myths of exceptional personal/political capabilities ascribed to some, mainly totalitarian, leaders.

Conclusion

I have argued that the time is ripe for a new and all-inclusive interpretation of the term "public relations" as relations which define the public realm in the same manner as economic relations define the economy. What is now known as "public relations" (PR) is relations *with* the public (RP) organised and carried out by various private and public institutions, profit and non-profit organisations, celebrities, and legal entities. I do not question the need for this practice represented by the acronym "PR." However, public relations are far more than merely a means for influential public and private subjects to improve their image. That is why public relations should be released from the prison of "PR," i.e., freed from limitations of prior understandings to make room for a more comprehensive concept. This new concept of public relations indicates how the predicate "public" and the subject "relations" are best suited to their historical precedents and potentials.

The internal logic of public/political interactions differentiates three levels of public relations: (1) relations among public institutions themselves; (2) relations between citizens and public institutions, directly or indirectly mediated by collective entities – parties and other organisations; and (3) relations between single individuals who communicate as strangers, where everyone plays the role of the Other as a personification of a particular region, group, culture, or civilisation.

I called relations on the third level "basic public relations" because they are the simplest, reproduce themselves at all levels and do not need any institutional mediation. Basic public relations are, the lowest common denominator of all relations predicated as "public" and the nucleus of all political roles and meanings in democratic societies. This "common denominator" has been established in society through the rise of publics since the dawn of modernity – a process that has determined both the appearance of the bourgeois public sphere and the democratisation of public institutions.

It is possible to find instances of basic public relations in pre-modern societies, but these were exceptional cases of general social upheavals as, for example, when political intrigues overflowed the king's court. By contrast, in modernity, the process of self-abstraction becomes all-embracing and public affairs turn into a question of everyone. In this context, verbal and nonverbal individual behaviours acquire public importance and aspects of physical space turn into public space.

Freeing the term "public relations" makes possible (1) discovering the common roots of both public (political) institutions and the public sphere as open spaces for discussion, and (2) exploring the innate kinship between politics and other segments of public life. In this way, we can reach a deeper understanding of the strong, sometimes dramatic influence of politics on all kinds of public entertainment and, conversely, the hidden erosion of undemocratic political systems through subterranean influences such as music, cinema, theatre, and literature.

This paradigmatic shift toward a new concept of "public relations" requires a new introduction to politics based on the move from public to political. Public activities are easily transformed into political activities; public figures and celebrities provide a ready source for recruitment of new politicians; public discourse exerts pressures upon politics; and, mostly, basic public relations are the nucleus of all political roles and meanings. The overall effect of this introduction is a reconceptualisation of politics as quintessentially stemming from public relations and of democracy as the very essence of politics.

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COVERING THE EUROPEAN UNION

FROM AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL TOWARDS A SUPRANATIONAL PERSPECTIVE?

ANNA VAN CAUWENBERGE

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WILLEM JORIS

Abstract

This article investigates the cross-national prevalence of five news frames in quality papers' coverage of the Treaty of Lisbon (EU Constitution). Three frames were identified in earlier studies: economic consequences, conflict, and human interest. Two additional frames were identified and composed: power and nationalisation. During the seven-month period leading up to the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon (December 2007), we analysed 341 articles from four quality papers: *Le Monde* (France), *De Volkskrant* (The Netherlands), *De Standaard* (Dutch speaking community of Belgium), and *Le Soir* (French speaking community of Belgium). Our results show that although significant differences between newspapers were found in the amount of framing, overall they reflected a similar pattern in the adoption of the news frames. The economic consequences frame, followed by the power frame, appeared most prominently in all of the newspapers' coverage. However, the conflict and nationalisation frames recurred in a significantly lesser degree. These findings indicate that the meaning behind the EU Constitution as a symbol of supranational unity could have led to a shift from a domesticated, conflict oriented coverage as found in previous studies to a more unified portrayal of the EU *within* and *between* the quality papers under study.

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This article examines the portrayal and use of frames in reporting on the European Constitution (Treaty of Lisbon). With this flagship treaty incorporating all existing EU treaties, the European Union's intention was to construct a coherent and flexible set of rules to cope with further enlargement and complexity of this supranational, multi-level political institution. The Constitution was intended to become the ultimate symbol of a united European Union, a "Constitution for European citizens" (European Council 2001, 23-24). However, French and Dutch referenda made it clear that the EU Constitution (then called The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe) was not perceived as a "Constitution for European citizens" with results of 54.9 percent and 61.5 percent against. In this exploratory study, four quality newspapers from three countries that were in the centre of this EU Constitution debate will be examined: France and The Netherlands, the first countries to hold up the ratification process based on the results of the referenda, and Belgium, which hosts the capital of the EU, Brussels.

In the aftermath of the Irish rejection of the European Constitution (Treaty of Lisbon) in June 2008, a survey[1] was conducted among the Irish assessing, among other things, the reasons for non-participation in the referendum, the respondents' views about the campaign and the reasons for the "yes" or "no" vote (European Commission 2008). One of the most noteworthy findings is the statement that a lack of information is the main reason expressed by a quarter of the "no" voters to explain their preference. Over half of the people who did not vote in the referendum said this was due to a lack of understanding of the issue. These findings confirm the tendency, indicated by several surveys, that although a minority of the European citizens considers support to the EU negative (14 percent in 2008), only half trusts the EU and feels engaged with it (European Commission 2008; 2007).

Several authors refer to this lack of interest and active support in terms of a democratic deficit (Meyer 1999; Schlesinger 1999; Ward 2001; 2004), legitimacy deficit (Meyer 1999; Baetens & Bursens 2005) and communication deficit (Brüggeman 2005) of the EU. It comes down to the fact that European citizens do not define their rights and citizenship on the European level, but within the boundaries of their own nation. Despite the increasing transfer of economic and political policies from the national to the European level, there does not seem to exist a "European public sphere" (for example Kleinstüber 2001; Trenz 2004; Wimmer 2005). In this discourse a public sphere is considered vital for the healthy functioning of a democracy. Curran (1991) describes a public sphere as "the space between government and society in which private individuals exercise formal and informal control over the state: formal control through the election of governments and informal control through the pressure of public opinion" (Curran 1991, 29). Crucial in this process is the role media play in the construction and (re)presentation of a public sphere, by the distribution of information and the provision of an independent forum for public debate (Meyer 1999; Risse & Van de Steeg 2003). Basic criteria are described for the construction of a European public sphere, and comprise communication in different countries, on identical topics, at the same time, and with the use of the same frames (Brüggeman 2005).

These findings raise questions regarding the European Constitution's portrayal in the media. Previous national and cross-national studies investigating media coverage of the European Union draw largely on media analyses that measured a

relatively limited set of content features. The scarce amount of EU news, concentrated around major European "eye-catching" events such as European summits and the introduction of the Euro, reported mainly through the national view; are the most commonly identified characteristics of EU news (Peter et al. 2003, 2004; de Vreese et al. 2006; Meyer 2005; Drieskens & Fiers 2005). However, the way in which EU news is framed in news media (Semetko & Valkenburg 2000; de Vreese et al. 2001; d'Haenens 2005) plays a significant role in how news users reflect on these topics (Valkenburg et al. 1999). Besides an important influencing factor on opinion formation, greater visibility of EU topics in the news is also related to increased knowledge about the EU and an increase in political participation (de Vreese & Boomgaarden 2006a, 2006b). As political elites and journalists make sense of reality by providing certain ways to think about politics (Kinder 2007), researchers are not only interested in *what* news is covered, but also *how* this news is covered.

Framing the EU

Entman formulated a much cited definition of framing that defines framing as "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman 1993, 52). To grasp structure and organise large and complex streams of information, journalists use *media* frames to highlight certain aspects by excluding others, encouraging citizens to understand events and issues in a particular way.

Obviously, news can be framed in a variety of ways. A distinction is made between *issue-specific frames* and *generic frames*. Where issue-specific frames appear in relation to specific issues or topics, generic frames have a more general application ranging from different topics, time, and cultural contexts (de Vreese 2003). This article studies the frequency of generic frames dealing with the EU Constitution. As stressed by de Vreese et al. using a common event to investigate frames in a cross-national manner brings not only better measures for cross-national comparison of framing of a common European event but also a reinforcement of the frame as a generic frame (de Vreese et al. 2001, 110).

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) point out that when focussing on media frames adopted in the portrayal of EU affairs, literature seems to indicate five commonly-used generic frames: conflict, economic consequences, responsibility, human interest, and morality. The conflict frame stresses conflicts between individuals, groups and institutions. Although this frame is typically applied in election coverage, portraying candidates and campaigns in terms of winning and losing, it is also one of the most commonly used frames in EU reporting. This frame is found especially in serious news outlets due to the more frequent coverage of economic and political news in these outlets. The economic consequences frame is often used in EU coverage as it approaches an issue by drawing attention to the consequences it will have economically on an individual, group, institution, or geographical entity. The responsibility frame presents an issue by attributing responsibility for its cause or solution to an individual, group or institution such as the government. A frame regularly connected with tabloid news is the human interest frame. Specific to this frame are the personal and emotional touches given to a specific issue, event, or topic. In search of more public attention, emotional, dramatic and

personal angles are brought into the narrative of a news story. The morality frame gives a religious or moral swing to a news issue. Given the professional code of journalistic objectivity, news media mostly make indirect use of the morality frame by quotation or inference.

In this study, two frames are analysed research identifies as commonly used in relation to the coverage of news and more specifically news about the EU, namely the conflict and the economic consequences frames (de Vreese et al. 2001; Semetko & Valkenburg 2000). We also added the human interest frame to investigate to what degree coverage of the European Constitution is made more accessible and comprehensible, by inserting more emotional and/or personal elements. Still this frame is expected to recur less frequently in quality papers' coverage of the EU Constitution.

An inductive method was chosen to identify and compose two supplementary frames: power and nationalisation. Discourse analysis revealed the power discourse to be dominant in news about the European convention (d'Haenens 2005). We expect the power frame to be also prominent in news about the EU Constitution. The power frame can be defined as a frame that emphasises relations between parties/persons/states and the mutual power division. Previous research monitoring news content on the European Union also revealed the clear presence of a domestic angle. However, in-depth interviews with journalists of the EU press corps revealed that the tendency to nationalise EU-related news was reversed when reporting on the Constitution (Gleissner & de Vreese 2005). To test this indication we composed a nationalisation frame. This frame focuses on the own country / national politicians / national parties.

This exploratory study will analyse the five above mentioned frames in four high-standing quality papers from three different countries: *Le Monde* (France), *De Volkskrant* (The Netherlands), *Le Soir* and *De Standaard* (respectively the French and Dutch speaking community of Belgium). Quality papers' less volatile character, compared to audiovisual media, and their better suited platform for elaborate, in-depth coverage of political news are the main reasons for choosing for this medium. Even though the influence of television news can not be underestimated, high-standing quality papers remain a key reference, not in the least for other media outlets. France, The Netherlands, and Belgium as "EU capital" were, after the rejection of the European Constitution in the French and Dutch referenda, in the middle of the European Constitution debate. Hence, we expect a significant amount of coverage in the four selected quality papers. Although all three are original EU member states geographically located in the centre of the EU, they historically differ in their attitude towards the Union. France tends to be rather negative and critical towards the EU whereas Belgium has a more positive attitude. The Netherlands are positioned somewhere in between (European Commission, 2006).

Research Question and Method

The goal of this study is two-fold.

First, we want to assess the prevalence of five generic news frames in four quality newspaper's coverage of the EU Constitution (Treaty of Lisbon) during a seven-month period leading up to the establishing of the Treaty of Lisbon (June-December 2007) in multiple countries. During this period, an agreement was made

on the content replacing the rejected EU Constitution (The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe). On 21 and 22 June 2007, European leaders decided to install an Intergovernmental Conference to further amend the temporarily so-called "Reform Treaty." At the beginning of October, the draft version was completed and by mid-October, heads of state and government gave their approval after a final round of negotiations and concessions. In all three countries studied, a large majority of political parties were in favour of the Treaty of Lisbon. Based on previous findings on the framing of EU-news, we expect the conflict frame, economic consequences frame and power frame to be more present in the coverage of the EU Constitution than the human interest frame and nationalisation frame. Our first hypothesis is: The conflict frame, economic consequences frame and power frame are more frequently used in quality paper's coverage of the EU Constitution, than the human interest frame and nationalisation frame.

Second, we want to examine whether the use of these news frames varies significantly between the selected quality papers from France (*Le Monde*), The Netherlands (*De Volkskrant*) and Belgium (*Le Soir* and *De Standaard*). Selection of these national quality news papers is based on the perceived position as a prominent quality newspaper, a high circulation rate, and regular reporting on EU affairs. Of the four newspapers, *Le Monde* is the most well-known. With an average circulation of 340,131, it is one of France's most prominent newspapers (OJD 2009). Perceived as a liberal, centrist-left newspaper, it is most commonly known for its international outlook and grounded political and economic analyses. With its focus on world news, foreign news covers 25 percent of the total newspaper coverage. In The Netherlands, *De Volkskrant* has a circulation of 263,845, the highest circulation rate among the Dutch quality papers (Cebuco 2009). This progressive leftist newspaper is appreciated for its mix of idiosyncratic news choice and original angles. The two Belgian quality newspapers have a similar circulation rate: 90,535 (*Le Soir*) and 95,940 (*De Standaard)* (CIM 2009). Both can be described as having no clear affinity towards the right or left. *Le Soir* and *De Standaard* are the leading quality newspapers in the French speaking community and the Dutch speaking community, respectively, of Belgium.

Because of the different stances the three countries traditionally take on the EU, we could expect the power frame, conflict frame and nationalisation frame to be more used by *Le Monde*, than by *De Volkskrant*, *Le Soir* and *De Standaard*. These three frames focus on relations, power division, and conflicts between the own nation and other member states. The emphasis lays on an intergovernmental approach, instead of a supranational one which portrays the EU more independent of the different member states' interests and mutual relations. However, a European overview of the news coverage of the 2004 European parliamentary elections (de Vreese et al. 2006) showed that in the French press 45 percent of protagonists were EU actors, compared to less than 30 percent in Belgium, and 10 percent in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the coverage in Belgium and France turned out to be rather neutral, whereas a more negative tone appeared in the Dutch press. These contradictory findings make it difficult to formulate clear predictions about differences in the adoption of frames by the quality papers under study. Therefore we chose to formulate a research question: Do the French, Dutch and Belgian quality papers vary in the use of frames when covering the EU Constitution?

We selected the articles by consulting the newspapers' online archives. A keyword search with the words "Reform Treaty," "Treaty of Lisbon," "EU Constitution," "European Constitution," "Constitution Europe," "EU Treaty" and "European Treaty" yielded 341 articles published within the seven-month period (June 1, 2007–December 31, 2007). We subjected the total 341 articles to a content analysis instrument that contained 27 closed questions by measuring article characteristics, visibility, tone, and framing of the articles. Inter coder reliability tests (Krippendorff's α) were conducted on a randomly selected sample of 10% of the news articles and ranged between .80 and 1.00 inter coder agreement.

News Frame Measurement

To measure the extent to which frames recurred in the news articles, we used a list of five sets of questions (17 in total). Each set of questions was meant to measure one of five news frames: human interest, conflict, economic consequences, power and nationalisation (see Table 1). The measurement of the conflict, economic consequences, and human interest frames is based on the categories developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). To measure the power frame, we used a set of questions based on the power discourse scale as used by d'Haenens (2005) and tested by Van der Schoot (2002). The power discourse starts from the principle that "every community wants to achieve power and therefore needs to serve certain political interests" (d'Haenens 2005, 425). To measure the nationalisation frame, we composed a scale of two questions: (1) Does the article mention a connection between the EU and the country in question? (2) Does the article quote or articulate the ideas of national politicians or persons active on a national level? All the above questions had to be answered with "totally agree" (1), "more or less agree" (2), or "do not agree" (3).

To investigate the extent to which the framing questions reflect underlying dimensions, we conducted a principal component analysis with varimax rotation on the 17 framing questions. The component analysis provided us with five clear-cut news frames: human interest, conflict, economic consequences, power and nationalisation. The component analysis of the recurrent news frames explaining 66 percent of the total variance in the articles under study ($N = 341$), can be seen in Table 1. Only the component loadings higher then .50 are withheld for inclusion in the scales.

To assess the internal consistency of the five frame scales, we used Cronbach's alphas. The alpha values were as follows: human interest frame scale, $\alpha = .69$ (3 items); conflict frame scale, $\alpha = .68$ (3 items); economic consequences frame scale, $\alpha = .81$ (3 items); power frame scale, $\alpha = .81$ (3 items); and nationalisation frame, $\alpha = .82$ (2 items). Inter-item correlations among the five frames ranged from $r = -.047$ between the nationalisation and power frames and $r = .475$ between the power and conflict frames. An overall average inter-item correlation of .258 was found.

Five multi-items scales were composed by averaging the scores on the individual items in each component and transforming them into a scale ranging from .00 (frame not present) to 1.00 (frame present).

Table 1: Varimax Rotated Component Analysis of Articles in *Le Monde, De Volkskrant, Le Soir and De Standaard (N = 341)*

Framing items	Human interest	Conflict	Economic Consequences	Power	National
Human interest					
1. Does the story provide a human example or "human face" on the issue?	**.817**	-.057	.061	.142	.055
2. Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy/caring, sympathy, or compassion?	**.771**	.180	.057	-.027	-.032
3. Does the story emphasise how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?	**.664**	.411	.090	.107	.035
4. Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?	**.415**	-.329	.028	.211	.194
5. Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy/ caring, sympathy or compassion?	**.215**	-.025	.086	.423	-.039
Conflict					
6. Does the story reflect disagreement between parties/individuals/groups/countries?	.098	**.606**	.391	.285	.263
7. Does one party/individual/group/country reproach another?	.150	**.807**	.145	.068	.073
8. Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?	.031	**.590**	.161	.243	-.116
9. Does the story refer to winners and losers?	.098	**.370**	.670	.183	.183
Economic Consequences					
10. Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?	.044	.165	**.845**	.125	.084
11. Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?	.073	.133	**.745**	.235	.239
12. Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?	.061	.034	**.847**	.112	.007
Power					
13. Does the article mention the relationship of one or more EU states with one or more states (EU or otherwise)?	.009	.131	.202	**.761**	-.369
14. Does the article mention the power of one state within the EU regarding decision-making?	.025	.234	.201	**.869**	-.020
15. Does the article mention relative power?	.080	.358	.189	**.687**	.346
Nationalisation					
16. Does the article mention a connection between the EU and the individual country?	-.013	-.013	.225	-.023	**.852**
17. Does the article articulate the ideas of or led the word to national politicians or persons that are active on a national level?	.107	.060	.116	-.116	**.881**

Results

Characteristics of Format and Content

Between 1 June 2007 and 31 December 2007, 341 articles were published by the four quality newspapers under study. *Le Monde* published the most articles (*n* = 107), followed by *De Volkskrant* (*n* = 93), *De Standaard* (*n* = 71), and *Le Soir* (n = 70). The coverage concentrated on key moments in the EU Constitution debate. On 21 and 22 June, articles increased significantly when EU leaders at a European summit decided to hold an intergovernmental conference for the renegotiation of the EU Constitution. This resulted in 117 articles (34 percent) published between 15 and 27 June 2007. The second time a significant number of articles were published occurred at the time of the European summit on 18 and 19 October. This yielded 36 articles (11 percent) within a period of three days (18, 19 and 20 October). The signing of the Treaty of Lisbon on 13 December was covered by 23 articles (7 percent) published between 13 and 19 December. These results confirm earlier findings of EU news concentrating around major European events.

Of the 341 articles, 215 articles (63 percent) are long (more than 400 words) and 75 percent of the articles are written by the newspapers' own journalists. Only a quarter of the news articles make use of illustrations, of which two-third are coloured photographs. When looking at the placement of the articles, 212 (62 percent) appeared in the foreign section of the newspaper and 89 (26 percent) under the heading of opinion/analysis. Thus, a majority of the articles (57 percent) are news reports with background briefing. However, an analysis of the four newspapers individually revealed that *De Volkskrant* differs from the other newspapers by publishing more articles under the opinion/analysis section (*n* = 34; 36.6 percent) than in the foreign section (*n* = 31; 33.3 percent). This can largely be explained by the specific character of this newspaper, reserving proportionally more space for opinion than the other newspapers under study. When focussing on the tone of the coverage, most of the articles (*n* = 286; 84 percent) are neutral, a tendency also found in former research.

Use of News Frames

To investigate whether the conflict frame, economic consequences frame, and power frame are more frequently used in quality paper's coverage of the EU Constitution than the human interest frame and nationalisation frame, we conducted t-tests on the overall mean scores of the five frames. As shown in the bottom row of Table 2, all frames differ significantly from each other ($p < .000$)[2].

To analyse variation in the use of frames by quality papers from France, The Netherlands, and Belgium, we conducted a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with the framing condition as a within-story factor and the quality newspaper as a between-story factor, as illustrated in Table 2. The Wilks Lambda of overall differences among groups was statistically significant ($p < .000$, F (15, 920) = 10.383, $\eta^2 = .65$) indicating that the use of news frames varies significantly between the quality papers under study. Furthermore, univariate between-subjects tests revealed that the use of each news frame, except for the power frame, significantly differs between the different quality papers[3]. To detect differences in the adoption of the five frames by the different newspapers, post-hoc pair wise tests with Games-Howell were conducted.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Cross-National Recurrence of Five News Frames in Four Quality Newspapers

Newspaper		Human interest	Conflict	Economic	Power	National
Le Monde (n = 107)	*M*	.16a	.49a	.89a	.68	.47a
	SD	.21	.25	.18	.31	.36
De Volkskrant (n = 93)	*M*	.29b	.55	.91a	.67	.66b
	SD	.26	.24	.15	.31	.39
De Standaard (n = 71)	*M*	.31b	.64b	.86	.70	.26c
	SD	.24	.28	.23	.36	.30
Le Soir (n = 70)	*M*	.16a	.46a	.79b	.67	.17c
	SD	.24	.27	.27	.31	.27
Total (n = 341)	*M*	.23v	.53w	.87x	.68y	.42z
	SD	.25	.26	.21	.32	.39

Note. Adjustment for multiple comparison Games-Howell

* Column values with different subscripts (a, b, c) were significantly different from each other at least at $p < .05$.

** Row values with different subscripts (v, w, x, y, z) were significantly different from each other at least at $p < .000$.

We expect the conflict frame, economic consequences frame, and power frame to be more recurrent in quality papers EU coverage, than the human interest frame and nationalisation frame. When comparing the mean scores of recurrence of five news frames in the quality papers, in the bottom row of Table 2, we see that overall the four newspapers used the economic consequences frame significantly more ($M = .87$; $p < .000$) than the other frames under study, attributing financial and economic losses or gains to the introduction of the EU Constitution. The power frame ($M = .68$; $p < .000$), followed by the conflict frame ($M = .53$; $p < .000$), are the second and third most used frames. This means that in the portraying of the EU Constitution regular reference was made to the different stances member states took during the long-standing rounds of talks and negotiations leading up to the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon, focussing on the disagreements and tensions between the different actors, exercising power to make their national interests safe. As expected, we found the nationalisation frame ($M = .42$; $p < .000$) and human interest frame ($M = .23$; $p < .000$) to appear in a far lesser degree in quality papers' coverage of the EU Constitution. When the human interest frame did appear, it was mostly through photographs of smiling and hand-shaking politicians next to the newspaper article. Our hypothesis, namely, that the conflict frame, economic consequences frame, and power frame would be more used in quality papers' coverage of the EU Constitution is hereby confirmed. When interpreting these results however, one can determine a remarkable discrepancy between the economic consequences frame on the one hand, and the conflict and power frame on the other. We will come back on this in the conclusion and discussion section.

Our research question asked whether there were differences between French, Dutch and Belgian quality papers in their use of frames when reporting on the EU Constitution. To analyse this, we must look at the column values of the four quality papers in Table 2. Post-hoc comparisons revealed that, when analysing the four quality papers separately, the economic consequences frame was the frame most adopted by all quality papers under study. *De Volkskrant* (M = .91; p < .05) and *Le Monde* (M = .89; p < .05) used this frame significantly more than *Le Soir* (M = .79; p < .05). The second most-used frame in the portrayal of the EU Constitution was the power frame. However, no significant differences were found in the adoption of this frame by the four newspapers meaning that all four newspapers made similar use of the power frame. Taking a look at the conflict frame post-hoc comparisons revealed significant differences in the adoption of this frame between *De Standaard* (*M* = .64; *p* <.05), and *Le Monde* (*M* = .49; *p* <.05), and *De Standaard* and *Le Soir* (*M* = .46; *p* <.05). This is the third most adopted frame by all four quality papers separately. Attribution of the nationalisation frame reflected large differences among the newspapers. *De Volkskrant* used this frame most frequently (*M* = .66; *p* <.05), *Le Soir* made the least use of it (*M* = .17; *p* <.05). Significant differences were found between all newspapers, except between *De Standaard* (*M* = .26) and *Le Soir* (*M* = .17), meaning that the two Belgian newspapers did not differ significantly in the use of a national touch in their articles on the Constitution. The human interest frame appeared in all quality papers to a minor degree. *De Standaard* (*M* = .31; *p* <.05) and *De Volkskrant* (*M* = .29; *p* <.05) made significantly more use of this frame than *Le Monde* (*M* = .16; *p* <.05) and *Le Soir* (*M* = .16; *p* <.05).

Our results show that *Le Monde* can be perceived as a quality paper which, by using mostly the economic consequences frame, emphasises financial and economic consequences the introduction of the European Constitution brings with it. In addition, the power frame appears also frequently in the coverage, as is the case for all quality papers. Mutual relations between EU member states and division of power (for example the seat division of the European Commission) recur prominently in the coverage of *Le Monde*. Attribution to the nationalisation frame and conflict frame is made less often, and the human interest frame is almost non-existent in the coverage of *Le Monde.* The Dutch quality paper *De Volkskrant* differs from *Le Monde* in its frequent use of the nationalisation frame, which appears almost as often as the power frame. The conflict frame is also more prominent in the coverage than is the case for *Le Monde*. Hence, we can ascertain that in its portrayal of the EU Constitution *De Volkskrant* focuses in large part on the own nation, and relations and division of power between the member states, instead of using a more supranational angle, as found in the coverage of *Le Monde*. The two Belgian quality papers, *Le Soir* and *De Standaard,* display a similar use of the nationalisation frame which is significantly less than *Le Monde* and *De Volkskrant*. However, *De Standaard* does differ significantly from *Le Soir* and *Le Monde* in its use of the conflict and human interest frame, two frames that by use of a conflict or emotional/personal angle try to grasp the attention of the reader. For both frames *De Standaard* has the highest scores in comparison with the other three quality papers. The two Belgian newspapers thus demonstrate clear differences in the use of frames when covering the EU Constitution. *De Standaard* shows more similarities with *De Volkskrant*, *Le Soir* tends more to *Le Monde.* Implications of and explanations for above findings are discussed in the conclusion and discussion section.

Despite the significant findings between the four quality papers, they all display a more or less similar pattern in their use of the five news frames. The economic consequences frame was the most utilised frame in the newspapers studied, followed by the power frame, the conflict frame, the nationalisation frame, and the human interest frame. Only *De Volkskrant* differed slightly from this pattern in that the nationalisation frame appeared almost as frequently as the power frame in this newspaper's reporting on the EU Constitution.

Conclusions and Discussion

The aim of this study was to analyse the recurrence of five news frames in the coverage of the European Constitution on the one hand, and to cross-nationally examine differences in the adoption of news frames of four quality papers: *Le Monde* (France), *De Volkskrant* (The Netherlands), *De Standaard* (Dutch speaking community of Belgium) and *Le Soir* (French speaking community of Belgium) on the other. To this end, we formulated one hypothesis and one exploratory research question. First, we expected, in line of previous research, the conflict frame, economic consequences frame, and power frame to be more frequently used in quality papers' coverage of the EU Constitution, than the human interest frame and nationalisation frame. Second, we wondered in what way differences in framing could be found between the French, Dutch and Belgian quality papers. The component analysis of the five recurrent news frames, for the first time examined in this combination, explained 66 percent of total variance in the 341 articles under study.

Our results monitoring characteristics of format and content clarified that *Le Monde* devoted considerably more attention to the EU Constitution than Dutch and Belgian quality papers, a finding which is in accordance with the substantial higher visibility of the 2004 EP elections in France media outlets when compared to the Belgian and Dutch media (de Vreese et al. 2006). A possible explanation for this finding could lay in *Le Monde's* trademark as an outward, international focussed newspaper with foreign news covering a quarter of the total news coverage. *De Volkskrant* differed from the other newspapers by publishing significantly more opinion and analysis articles about the EU Constitution rather than news reports with background briefing, as was the case for the other newspapers.

Our hypothesis was validated: the economic consequences frame, conflict frame and power frame appeared more frequently in the quality papers under study than the human interest frame and nationalisation frame, which we found back in a far lesser degree. These results confirm the indication based on in-depth interviews with EU journalists (Gleissner & de Vreese 2005) of a reversed tendency to nationalise EU related news in case of reporting about the EU Constitution and consequently the possible impact the symbolic meaning of unity, that goes behind the EU Constitution, could have on the way it is covered. In contrast with findings from previous research, the conflict frame appeared less often in the coverage of the EU Constitution. This is surprising since this is one of the most frequently found frames in political and economic news, especially in serious media outlets (Semetko & Valkenburg 2000), and one of the most dominant news selection criteria (Galtung & Ruge 1965). The symbolic meaning of the EU Constitution could be an explanation for the moderate use of the conflict frame. The economic consequences frame, mainly used in relation to financial and economic issues, such as the introduction

of the Euro, recurred most prominently in the articles. This finding reinforces the generic character of the economic consequences frame as it confirms that this frame is also prominently used in relation to non-financial and economic news. Hence, this demonstrates that overall economic considerations could be one of the most important evaluation criteria when judging and reporting about the EU. It also shows that coverage was mostly focussed on content related aspects of the EU Constitution, than is the case for more attention drawing frames such as the human interest frame, conflict frame and nationalisation frame.

The second part of our analysis, differences in framing between the four quality papers, leaded to some interesting findings. *Le Monde* and *Le Soir* on the one hand, and *De Standaard* and *De Volkskrant* on the other displayed on some points remarkable similarities. *Le Monde* and *Le Soir* were characterised by a minimal use of the human interest frame and conflict frame, in contrast with *De Standaard* and *De Volkskrant*. Hence, the latter made more use of attention drawing elements in the coverage such as emotions, personalisation, and the outlining of conflicts between member states and politicians. Apart from that, *Le Soir* and *De Standaard* showed a limited use of the nationalisation frame, compared to *De Volkskrant,* which applied this frame frequently in its coverage of the EU Constitution. This could be partly explained by the fact that the rejection of the EU Constitution (The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe) in the Netherlands in 2005 still caused a lot of public debates during the renegotiation of its successor, the Treaty of Lisbon. This was less the case in Belgium and France.

Our results show that, although significant differences were found in the amount of framing between the different quality papers, they all resemble more or less an identical pattern in the adoption of the news frames. The economic consequences frame was the most used news frame by all quality papers separately, followed by the power frame, conflict frame, nationalisation frame, and human interest frame. This illustrates that the meaning behind the European Constitution as a symbol of supranational unity could not only have led to a shift to a more unified portrayal of the EU in the news *within* the newspaper, but also *between* the newspapers we analysed.

Since we analysed only one quality paper for each country (and two for Belgium), some caution is required when interpreting and generalising our findings. Whether these findings could also be translated to other quality papers' coverage of the EU could be subject of further research. As Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) pointed out, the prevalence of news frames in the news depends largely on the sensationalist or serious nature of the outlet. Consequently, it would be interesting not only to investigate serious media outlets but also to examine the portrayal of the EU Constitution in sensational media, thereby identifying possible differences between these two types of media outlets. The political/ideological identity of a newspaper could also be connected to the frames that are used; an explanatory factor we didn't analyse in our study. Finally, the nationalisation frame we used in our study is just one first step in the construction of a measurement scale. Hence, further refinement and testing is required.

The results of this cross-national study deliver evidence for the possible development of a European public sphere. During the same period we found in the selected quality papers *Le Monde, De Volkskrant, Le Soir* and *De Standaard* a similar use of frames in the coverage on the same topic: the EU Constitution (Treaty of Lisbon). Coverage on the same topic, within the same period, and with the use of

identical frames, is considered a basic requirement for the development of a European public sphere (Brüggeman 2005). The importance of these findings lays in the meaning a European public sphere could have for the functioning and further evolution of the European Union. Mass media as pillars of the public sphere which form the connection between citizens and the EU, play an influencing role in the knowledge acquisition and opinion-making about the EU on the one hand, and the political participation in the EU on the other. The cross-national recurrence of the same set of frames in our study illustrates the possibility of a launch of a supranational public sphere which, by the diverse use of frames, could also provide a pluriform coverage, necessary for the developing of a balanced and pluriform opinion on EU topics.

Notes:

1. The Flash Eurobarometer survey was conducted from 13 to 15 June 2008, at the request of the European Commission Representation in Ireland. 2000 respondents, selected randomly, aged 18 and older, were interviewed by telephone (Eurobarometer 2008).

2. Conflict frame – human interest frame ($t = 18.677$, $df = 340$, $p < .000$), conflict frame – power frame ($t = 9.145$, $df = 340$, $p < .000$), conflict frame – economic consequences frame ($t = 24.502$, $df = 340$, $p < .000$), conflict frame – nationalisation frame ($t = -4.656$, $df = 340$, $p < .000$), human interest frame – power frame ($t = 23.789$, $df = 340$, $p < .000$), human interest frame – economic consequences frame ($t = 41.019$, $df = 340$, $p < .000$), human interest frame – nationalisation frame ($t = 8.145$, $df = 340$, $p < .000$), power frame – economic consequences frame ($t = 11.668$, $df = 340$, $p < .000$), power frame – nationalisation frame ($t = -9.362$, $df = 340$, $p < .000$), economic consequences frame – nationalisation frame ($t = -21.582$, $df = 340$, $p < .000$).

3. Power frame ($F = .134$; $df = 3, 337$; $p < .940$), economic consequences frame ($F = 5.710$, $df = 3, 337$; $p < .001$), conflict frame ($F = 7.213$, $df = 3, 337$; $p < .000$), nationalisation frame ($F = 34.747$, $df = 3, 337$; $p < .000$), human interest frame ($F = 10.281$, $df = 3, 337$; $p < .000$).

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NGOs AND GMOs

A CASE STUDY IN *ALTERNATIVE* SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

PIETER MAESEELE

Abstract

This article seeks to understand how and why we find local NGOs performing a role as *alternative* science communicators in the social conflict concerning agricultural biotechnology. First, a literature review points out that in the face of modernisation risks techno-scientific development has become contradictory, an evolution exemplified as well as driven by interdisciplinary antagonisms. This creates opportunities for a scientifically supported public critique of science and technology by new social movements. In addition, the commercialisation of science has brought forward a "science-industrial complex" united by economic interests in the promotion of biotechnology on the one hand, and has contributed to a practice of science communication using the logic of public relations and corporate communication on the other. Once institutional science communication becomes hard to distinguish from corporate communication, NGOs are found to contest and reframe scientific knowledge by aiming at instigating epistemic shifts in institutionalised scientific conceptions and discursive changes in the social values underlying science. Second, I report on the findings of six in-depth interviews with spokespersons for these NGOs, the aim being to achieve an understanding of how these NGOs make sense of their encounters with science in the GM debate and how they situate themselves in their role as *alternative* science communicators. Finally, I conclude by making some recommendations for journalism in general and science journalism in particular.

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Introduction

In December 2007, Vilt (the Flemish Information Centre on Agri- and Horticulture)[1] asked both a spokesperson for Greenpeace and the scientific director of the Flanders Interuniversity Institute for Biotechnology (VIB) to participate in a dual interview on the polarised issue of genetically manipulated (GM) crops and food for its weekly e-zine. The latter, however, refused to participate. In a published interview of December 10th the interviewee states that as scientific director of VIB he is expected to judge on the basis of "hard facts" (Vilt 2007). He further points out the conviction of "99.99 percent of his colleagues worldwide" that gene technology not only offers "fantastic possibilities" but is at the same time also "harmless." And he mentions how not only has nobody reported ill after ten years of growing millions of hectares of GM crops, quite on the contrary, studies have shown genetic modification to improve the quality of food crops. Therefore, he refuses to tolerate that organisations like Greenpeace ignore the science and continue "to scare people for the purpose of bringing in new members." When the interviewer subsequently asks him why dialogue is not an option, the scientific director answers he has no time to spend on such useless conversations as "[T]he arguments of Greenpeace are based on semi-scientific and unreliable information." Several weeks later, on February 4th, the spokesperson of Greenpeace replies that "all claims made by Greenpeace are based on scientific studies" (Vilt 2008), and she points out that she has not found a consensus on GM crops in the scientific community to date. She adds that many molecular biologists who focus on the level of the cell might think that these products are perfectly safe and healthy, but "more broadly educated" researchers that focus on interactions with, for instance, the ecosystem, reach "different conclusions."

These are the central themes of this paper. We find that in the case of the GM debate two science communicators confront one another: on the one hand, science communication from scientific institutes or "institutional" science communication, and on the other, science communication from new social movements/NGOs (non-governmental organisations), which I put forward as "alternative" science communication. The aim of this paper is twofold. First, I will seek for potential factors that may have contributed to this evolution by means of a literature review, and second, I will report on the findings of six in-depth interviews with spokespersons for NGOs from the NGO-platform against GM food in Northern Belgium, the aim being to achieve an understanding of how these NGOs make sense of their encounters with science in the GM debate and how they situate themselves in their role as *alternative* science communicators.

Reflexive Modernisation

Modernisation Risks

Social theorists such as Ulrich Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1990) have argued that instead of living in a post-modern world (with the corresponding end of epistemology), we are witnessing a period of late modernity in which the consequences of modernity have only intensified. In his thesis on the "Risk Society" Beck (1992) elaborates on why the concepts and power relations of industrial society are no longer valid in the advanced industrial societies of late modernity.

Industrial society was the result of the *modernisation* of traditional (feudal) society, and Beck argues that the mere continuity of modernisation, i.e. the *modernisation* of industrial society, results into the social organisation of a(n) (industrial) *risk* society. In Beck's terminology, the former process is called *simple* and the latter *reflexive* modernisation. In these processes, Beck finds a corresponding change in the relationship between scientific practice and the public sphere: from primary to reflexive scientisation. In the model of *primary* scientisation, scientific results could be advanced in an authoritarian fashion in the public sphere under the conditions of a sharp distinction between tradition and modernity, lay person and expert, and an unbroken faith in science and progress. But whereas an unbroken faith in science and progress was characteristic for modernisation in industrial society in the 19th and first half of the 20th century, science is now confronted with its own products, negative side-effects and risks which subsequently become the object of scientific analysis (i.e. *reflexive* scientisation). The advance of human knowledge and its ensuing intervention into society and nature has created (high-consequence) modernisation risks such as nuclear and genetic engineering risks, and all kinds of toxins and pollutants, which are imperceptible unless in terms of physical and chemical formulas and therefore inevitably render us dependent on the instruments of science for their (risk) definition. Techno-scientific development, then, has become contradictory, as science not only creates these risks but also serves as the medium for their definition, as well the source for possible solutions. The competitive relations between scientific disciplines that lead them to target one another as producers of risks are an important factor driving reflexive scientisation. However, although the critique of science, progress, experts and technology is supported by scientific results, Beck argues that only public debate forces science to recognise these modernisation risks.

> *The social recognition and treatment of risks will run aground on the competitive problems that erupt here and the unresolvable conflicts between schools of thought, so long as the public sensibility with regard to certain problematic aspects of modernization does not grow, turn into criticism and perhaps even social movements, articulate itself and discharge itself as protests against science and technology. Modernization risks, then, can only be "forced on" the sciences, "dictated to them," from the outside, by way of public recognition. They are based not on intrascientific but on overall social definitions and relationships. Even within the sciences they can only develop their power through the motives in the background: the social agenda. This in turn presumes a so far unknown power of the critique of science and culture, which is based at least in part on a reception of alternative expertise. With reflexive modernization, public risk consciousness and risk conflicts will lead to forms of scientization of the protest against science* (Beck 1992, 160-1, emphasis in the original).

Paradoxically, this means that the expansion of science is inevitably linked to its demystification on the one hand, and to public critique on the other. The apparently counter-modernistic scenario of a broad coalition of (new) social movements and others who voice their critique of science, technology and progress then is – unlike often claimed – not a feature of irrational fears of modernisation but, on the contrary, an expression of the success of modernisation (i.e. *reflexive* modernisation).

The scientific community, however, struggles to hold on to the power relationships of the model of primary scientisation (that have come under increasing pressure) and refuses the consequences of reflexive modernisation. The result is a conflictual constellation with a multiplicity of risk definitions based on competing rationality claims, values and interests.

Giddens (1990, 139-70) makes a similar observation when he concludes that the extreme dynamism of modernity makes living in the modern world like riding a juggernaut that threatens to rush out of our control. He nonetheless finds hope for being able to steer this juggernaut in the growth of social reflexivity in late modernity which allows us to envisage alternative technological futures. Here, he refers to social movements as being at the vanguard of defining these alternatives. Joining the older social movements (labour, free speech/democratic and peace movements), Giddens refers to the ecological/counterculture movements for whom the site of struggle is the "created environment": the world of nature transformed by modern industry and its associated constant revolutionising of technology. These movements are characterised by a heightened awareness of the high-consequence risks following industrial developments. Weingart (2004), for instance, refers to how protesting social movements in the nuclear power controversy proved to be right after the Three Mile Island (US 1979) and Chernobyl (Ukraine 1986) accidents, despite a general condemnation from scientists and engineers of "irrational behaviour." Nuclear power stands as a symbolic example for the high-consequence risks of modernity. Since then, it has become harder for technocratic elites to claim a monopoly on introducing new technologies: social movements demand safety guarantees first, thereby challenging the legitimacy of governments and their experts. Risk definitions, then, have become social constructs to be negotiated in a (sub-)political process in which social movements gather expertise in revealing "controversial and unsettled issues in the dominant knowledge, thus bringing internal conflicts and uncertainties into the open" (Weingart 2004, S53). Eventually, Beck (1992) considers public discussion of modernisation risks to be the necessary condition for the latter's transformation into opportunities for the expansion of science, and he finds the environmental movement to exemplify this interplay between the critique of progress, interdisciplinary antagonisms and protest movements. But what are these interdisciplinary antagonisms in the case of agricultural biotechnology?

Interdisciplinary Antagonisms and Epistemic Cultures

Krimsky (2005, 316) has identified two ways of understanding the effects of inserting foreign genes into organisms: a Lego- and Ecosystem model. The former starts from the assumption that genes function in isolation, which is a "highly mechanistic and reductionist" framing of the consequences of producing genetically modified organisms (GMOs), whereas the latter refers to a non-reductionist framing that starts from the assumption that adding a gene possibly affects the other genes. This distinction materialised into a schism between molecular biologists/geneticists and ecologists, respectively. These two scientific (sub-)disciplines can further be differentiated as two distinct *epistemic* cultures (Knorr Cetina 1999): "[t]hese consist of and are constituted by sets of specific practices of generating, validating, and communicating knowledge, each of which is characteristic of its

respective (sub-)disciplinary field" (Böschen et al. 2006, 296). Epistemic cultures can be characterised not only as scientific cultures of knowledge but also as scientific cultures of non-knowledge, referring to the fact that these cultures of knowledge also include specific practices of dealing with and producing non-knowledge. Applied molecular biology merges genetics with plant breeding and is characterised by de-contextualised laboratory experiments under controlled conditions. Through interviews with molecular biologists, Böschen and collaborators find that their expertise in controlling experimental conditions allows them to avoid unforeseen and unintended results as much as possible:

> *A paradoxical result of this is that the controlled research setting in the laboratory appears to be a source of both reliable knowledge and non-knowledge. The better the system is defined, the more variables tend to remain out of focus* (Böschen et al. 2006, 297-8).

Their attitude towards risk is a "semi-blind confidence" derived from everyday experience in the lab and a claimed lack of contradictory evidence. Summarised, molecular biology is characterised as a control-oriented scientific culture in which uncontrolled situations are avoided, complexity is reduced and replaced by "hard" facts, and scientific knowledge is de-contextualised *in vitro*. And last but not least: it is focused on product marketability. On the other hand, ecologists aim less at producing these reliable and reproducible results by taking part in inter- and intradisciplinary projects using observation techniques, idiographic description, comparative analysis, field experimentation, but also laboratory research and computer modelling. In contrast to molecular biologists, an unrestricted view is highly valued precisely to avoid an inadvertent reduction of unrecognised information:

> *In ecology, non-knowledge is seen as the result of the contingent experimental research strategy and the problematic (re-)transfer of experimental results to open, complex, and dynamic natural systems. This attitude is underlined by recurrent failures in forecasting the behavior of natural entities. Particularly in ecosystem ecology, major epistemic strategies appear to consist of maintaining an unprejudiced openness towards surprise and of a paradoxical effort "to expect the unexpected" in order to test and modify prevalent theoretical assumptions* (Böschen et al. 2006, 299).

In risk situations, ecologists adopt a precautionary attitude precisely because they refuse to reduce the object world to its observable and predicted traits. Summarised, ecology is characterised by an uncertainty-oriented scientific culture with a methodological sensitivity to unforeseen and unexpected results, observation *in situ*, by the acknowledgement of complexity, and a focus on ecosystem conservation. Both cultures of (non-)knowledge are equally "scientific" and "rational" and "associated with specific (implicit/explicit) motives and based on specific (known/unknown) implications and limitations" (Böschen et al. 2006, 300). This leaves society to choose between a control-oriented and an uncertainty-oriented approach in situations of unknown risks.

Commercialisation of Science

Universities, science organisations and individual scientists have increasingly become players in the *commercial* arena and the emerging biotechnology industry

in the 1980s is generally regarded as the driving force behind this development (Baskaran and Boden 2004; Meyer 2006; Bauer and Gregory 2007; Andersson 2008). Two elements have been decisive in this respect. First is the issue of university patenting. The Bayh-Dole Act was passed by the United States Congress in 1980 which allowed publicly funded research to be privately owned and exploited, and it thereby provided financial incentives for universities to commercialise basic research, in terms of licensing patents to industry or have scientists start up (spin-off) companies themselves (Jasanoff 2005; West 2007). That same year, the Supreme Court of the United States extended intellectual property ownership to all varieties of living organisms in the Diamond vs. Chakrabarty case:

> *The reduction of all genetically altered life forms to products of manufacture or patentable discoveries was a boon to the commercial investment in biotechnology and to the growth of university – industry partnerships. In addition, a single genetic alteration could transform an organism from being non-patentable to becoming patentable subject matter. Molecular biology departments became private enterprise zones practically overnight* (Krimsky 2005, 321).

Similar legislation has been introduced worldwide, such as the EU Directive 98/44/3C (European Communities 1998; Meyer 2006). A second decisive element has been the shift since the end of the 1970s and early 1980s from public to private patronage of scientific research, as Western governments framed the *privatisation* of scientific research as another interesting condition for stimulating economic growth within a context of global economic competitiveness. Programs were set up to reduce public expenditure on the one hand, while relocating scientific research within either the private commercial sphere or marketised public sector on the other. This has increased financial and market pressures on public scientific institutions and universities who have increasingly turned into public-private hybrids. Meyer (2006) has argued that biotechnology has developed its technological tools in a political and cultural climate in which the market-place and the ideals of competition are promoted as the most "efficient" guiding principles in the social organisation of society and therefore she asks whether the straightforward orientation towards the market in this area of science has been shaped by the social context in which it has been nurtured. Other authors (Bauer and Gaskell 2002; West 2007) have concluded that science and private business have blended together into a "science-industrial complex" united by powerful economic interests in the promotion of biotechnology. University campuses have become sites for industrial development, exemplified by biotech-valleys worldwide that group the biotech-departments of universities together with biotech-industries in one geographical location, as for instance in Ghent, Belgium. Governments – for whom technology has become an important export commodity as its contribution to trade and national development has been widely acknowledged – are usually broadly supportive of this evolution. West (2007, 133-4) further argues that this development is global in nature and largely independent of state control and as such has undermined the power and autonomy of the state in regulating biotechnology, which has led to a virtual deregulation of biotechnology in some parts of the world on the one hand, and a liberation of innovation from geo-political constraints on the other. In the end, scientific research and scientific knowledge have increasingly become "private goods" with the con-

comitant *commercialisation* and *marketisation* of science as an inevitable consequence. The ideal of the independent scientist that serves the "public interest" and provides disinterested knowledge has become much less credible, further weakening the claim that science provides a universal authority (Levidow 1999; Meyer 2006). This constitutes a challenge for science communication.

The Challenge for Science Communication

Science communication has predominantly been defined in terms of a *transmission* view that perceives the relation between science and society as a matter of transmitting information from the (unitary and consensual) scientific realm to the public (Lewenstein 1992; Bucchi 1996; Van Dijck 1998; Salleh 2004; Meyer 2006). This traditional model regards the public appreciation and acceptance of science and technology simply as a matter of overcoming resistance, for instance, by more science diffusion and by "educating" the public. It relies on an unproblematised notion of scientific consensus in debates about technological risk. This model has been given renewed vigor in the form of the "public understanding of science (PUS)"-movement initiated in the 1980s as a response of the scientific establishment to a perceived crisis of public legitimacy in a context of both reflexive modernisation and the commercialisation of science. Moreover, several authors have argued that the trend towards the commercialisation and privatisation of scientific knowledge has created a fertile context for a logic of marketing, advertising and public relations to thrive with respect to science (Bauer and Bucchi 2007; Bauer 2008). They conclude that today there is a new regime of science communication, PUS Inc., which stands for a practice of science communication using the logic of public relations and corporate communication:

> *Universities now function within a context where governmental, industrial, and financial milieus become less and less distinguishable. This privatised production of knowledge inevitably brings with it the logic of professional communication, of marketing, advertising, and public relations for science* (Bauer and Gregory 2007, 43-4).

For instance, media research has linked the recent advances in biotechnology to discourses of "genohype." This refers to media discourses that "hype" benefits and downplay risks, carrying headlines that proclaim the next big breakthrough. This hyping has been related to the increasing pressure on researchers and research institutions to justify their work in economic terms which creates a particular spin in terms of an optimistic picture (Caulfield 2004, 2005). Within this context of commercialisation, and the associated logic of corporate promotion in science communication, Meyer (2005; 2006) considers the consequences for journalism and wonders whether "a scientific researcher [should be considered as] just another power broker to be treated on par with any other power-broker?" (Meyer 2006, 239). Especially in the GM debate, scientists have been presented as "guided by vested interests." David (2005, 141-2) provides an account of how the support and rejection of the Hungarian scientist Arpad Pusztai's work on the effects of GM potatoes on the immune system of rats was directly related to which fellow scientist possessed financial links to the ongoing development of GM crops or food and which did not. As institutional proponents of the technology, science and industry prefer to foreclose debate over the problem of unforeseen consequences. They are

aided by the traditional transmission model which serves as a powerful tool in public discourse, for it sustains the social hierarchy of expertise and it preserves a role for the media as the secondary validators of institutionally validated "facts" or dominant risk definitions (Gamson 1999). Moreover, by conceptualising the relation between science and society in terms of transmission and communication, it forecloses any problematisation of the social uses of science or the trend towards corporate communication in the overall context of science communication, both of which are potentially problematic in the case of new technologies such as GM crops or food that come with many known and unknown risks. An illustrative example of these trends is the special September 2007 issue of the peer-reviewed *Biotechnology Journal*, dedicated to the public GM debate. In the opening editorial, Dr. Kristina Sinemus (PhD in agricultural biotechnology), CEO of "Genius Science & Communication," a German public relations consultancy company, laments the "scared, anxious and fearful" public and the emotional tone of the debate before writing:

> *Especially in the light of economic prosperity, which is highly dependent on science, hostility to innovation is counterproductive. The question is not whether societies want new technologies – there is simply an economic requirement for them. This in turn means that public understanding and a thorough exchange with scientists need to be methodically enforced* (Sinemus 2007, 1047).

First, the observation that a CEO of a PR-firm writes the editorial of a peer-reviewed scientific journal not only demonstrates how closely industry and science are entwined in the case of agricultural biotechnology, but also how its science is "sold" for private interests. Secondly, a crude economic rationality is invoked as the only important motivation for supporting agbiotech or science in general. Scientific progress is equalled to economic growth, and any sceptic is up for re-education.

Social Movements as *Alternative* Science Communicators

Democratising Science Movements

Worldwide, the promotion of GM crops and food has been challenged by a broad coalition of new social movements/NGOs (environmental, nature, north-south/Third World and farmer movements together with consumer organisations), often supported by independent (dissenting) scientists. There is, however, little literature to date on the relation of these organisations with science communication. Most of the literature focuses on the relation between movements and media (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Benford and Snow 2000; Ferree et al. 2002), sometimes specifically in the context of environmental risks (Hansen 1993; Allan et al. 2000; Anderson 2000). Nevertheless, several studies have indicated how social movements have organised in response to the control of governmental decision-making by expert knowledge influenced by corporate entities (Parajuli 1991; Epstein 1995; McCormick 2007). By empowering (certain kinds of) experts, while marginalising lay people, this process has often been found to contribute to social inequality. McCormick (2007) provides one of the most interesting studies to date on the relation between social movements and science. She has defined social movements that challenge scientisation as "democratising science movements" that (1) contest existing re-

search, (2) generate new research to counter it, (3) demand an enlarged scope of participation in government institutions, and (4) re-frame scientifically codified objects. They contest the seeming objectivity and neutrality of science by framing it as biased and politically driven and by forming alliances with sympathetic experts (lay-expert collaborations) who provide them with the necessary scientific information and back-up or who are asked to conduct new studies. These movements use scientific research as a material and discursive resource and often aim at instigating an epistemic shift in current institutionalised scientific conceptions on the one hand, and at discursive changes in the framing of the social values underlying science (in society) on the other. They emphasise social and environmental justice and equality, call for improving democratic practice by means of increasing the possibilities for participation, and promote the public understanding of *alternatives*. McCormick concluded from her study that "democratising science movements" can only change official discourse and governmental decision-making to make it respond to their interests by reshaping a dominant paradigm in terms of epistemic shifts and discursive changes.

A second interesting study is provided by Mormont and Dasnoy (1995) who have studied the source strategies of scientists and environmental movements in the mediatisation of climate change. They argue that the primary role of these movements is not necessarily an expert role in terms of publishing their own scientific reports, but a role as mediators between public opinion and scientific expertise. In this respect, their first function is publicly testing the credibility of scientists and their diagnoses, either by organising second expert-conferences, by seeking to reveal scientists' implicit commitments (are they close to industry?), or by intervening as genuine science communicators in providing additional information to public issues. The performance of this function comes close to helping laypeople contextualise the intrinsic value of research and the discourse of experts. Secondly, they provide their own risk definitions and they are found to do this mainly by seeking to define the widest range of potential consequences that may have some significance for each audience they address (health, ecological, economic, etc.). Generally, they do this much more explicitly than scientists, mixing the messages with (emotional) appeals to the preoccupations and daily experiences of regular people, or exposing the resistance of those who do not want any preventive policies. According to Mormont and Dasnoy (1995), when it comes to the matter of control of the public communication process, the roles and strategies of scientists and movements should be characterised as an interplay of complementarity and competition which can take on different configurations depending on the context. Whereas mainstream science and environmental organisations are found to be on the same side on the issue of climate change, the case is different with GM products. Yearly (2008) points out this dilemma by explaining that in the case of climate change the efforts of environmental organisations have been directed at emphasising, restating and publicising official messages while countering the claims of climate-sceptics, which implies that they align themselves with the scientific establishment whose claim to objectivity is thereby strengthened. Exactly the opposite is the case in the GM debate in which these organisations confront that same scientific establishment and its claim to objectivity when they address the limits of available scientific knowledge in terms of known and unknown risks

of genetic engineering. The dilemma then becomes how these organisations are able to distance themselves from the scientists' conclusions in cases such as the GM debate, without losing credibility and appearing arbitrary or tendentious.

The GM Debate

Several studies have found social movements/NGOs in the European GM debate to have either instigated epistemic shifts or succeeded in discursively reframing the values at stake. Concerning the former, the key has been the broadening of initial institutionalised scientific conceptions from the control-oriented approach of molecular biology/genetics to a more uncertainty-oriented approach of ecology in risk assessment and policy-making in general. In the case of France, organisations such as Greenpeace, Confédération Paysanne (farmers trade union) and Friends of the Earth were found to have played a large role in turning what had been a technical-agricultural debate limited to plant breeders and geneticists into a public controversy (Fillieule and Marijnen 2004; Roy and Joly 2000). These organisations not only carried out widely reported demonstrations and field trial destructions, but they also appealed to the French State Council to have an authorisation on the cultivation of GM maize revoked. Their argument was that the French government had neglected to apply the precautionary principle by not covering all potential impacts on the environment and public health, leading the state council eventually to appeal to the European Court of Justice about revoking its earlier authorisation. Backed by scientific studies, these organisations eventually succeeded in changing the links between scientific expertise and regulation: what had first been a risk assessment concerned with the intrinsic characteristics of the genetic modifications, assessing safety on the basis of molecular aspects only, changed in terms of broadening the range of uncertainties that would be taken into account. This refers, for instance, to risks concerning cross-pollination or multiple herbicide-tolerance. Backed up by media coverage, the organisations had not only succeeded in promoting broader definitions of "adverse effects" and unforeseen consequences, but the scope of participation was also broadened to include expertise in ecology and environmental NGOs in advisory committees. Furthermore, they challenged the implicit assumptions underpinning scientific risk assessment (for instance, agricultural productivism and an increasing dependence on multinationals in opposition to small-scale agriculture). Levidow (1999) has found NGOs similarly challenging the initial expert basis of safety claims in Britain. Schenkelaars (2005) has shown how in the Netherlands NGO-opposition did not only lead to new priorities for risk assessment but also to tighter criteria for evidence, and has contributed to analytical rigor in general. Their actions have further challenged the distinction between scientific-technical and societal-ethical aspects of safety regulation. Eventually, the successful mobilisation of counter-expertise to question the adequacy of the science in regulatory decision-making (see also Purdue 2000; Schurman 2004) is always found to be the most important element in this respect.

NGOs have also been very successful in reframing the (values at stake in the) debate on agricultural biotechnology in Europe (Bauer and Gaskell 2002). Previous research into the media representation of this debate in Northern Belgium between 2000 and 2004 has shown how the local NGO-platform succeeded in reframing the debate from a matter of "scientific progress" and "economic prospects" to a

matter of "public accountability" and "unforeseen consequences" (Maeseele and Schuurman 2008). NGOs have eagerly employed the discursive weapon and have communicated many alternative frames for people to interpret this technology (GMOs as time bombs, as irreversible threats with unpredictable effects) as well as mobilising metaphors such as "genetic pollution/contamination," "Frankenfoods," "killing fields," "pandora's box," etc. (Levidow 1999; Hellsten 2002; Schurman 2004; Wagner et al. 2006).

NGOs in Northern Belgium's GM Debate

In Northern Belgium, a region of approximately six million inhabitants, an NGO-platform of over a dozen organisations arose by the end of 1999 campaigning around the country against agricultural biotechnology. This happened in a context where they confronted a very dynamic "science-industrial complex," as northern Belgian scientists developed the technique to transfer foreign genes into the plant genome in the seventies (Van Larebeke et al. 1975), and subsequently founded Plant Genetic Systems (PGS) in the eighties which was the first company to develop genetically engineered plants with insect tolerance. To make a long history short, these events further developed into a "Biotech Valley" in the university city of Ghent that today hosts, on the one hand, VIB which unites the research departments of four universities and was established by the regional government with as its main objective "to turn [its scientific research] into new economic growth" (VIB 2003) for the region, and on the other, agro-biotech multinationals such as Bayer CropScience (formerly PGS), BASF Plant Science (formerly VIB spin-off CropDesign) and deVGen (VIB spin-off; 4th most important shareholder is Monsanto). In 2006, there were 140 biotechnology companies in Northern Belgium that make up for seven percent of the European industry and deliver 16 percent of total European biotech output, which makes it a significant and important industrial sector (VIB 2008). Confronting industry and VIB in Northern Belgium was a very active NGO-platform which for the purposes of this study has been limited to the five NGOs which have played the most visible role during the GM controversy and debates: Greenpeace, JNM, Velt, Wervel and BBL. Greenpeace is a well-known international ecological movement with regional and national sections. JNM is the Dutch abbreviation for Youth Organisation for Nature and Environment and is a youth-movement for youths until the age of 25. Velt stands for Ecological Living and Cultivation and profiles itself as a (alternative) consumer organisation for organic food and agriculture. Wervel is the Working Group for a Just and Responsible Agriculture. Although not an ecological organisation, their explicit aim is to bring together farmer, environment, consumer and the Third World (Wervel 2009). And last we have BBL, the League for a Better Environment, which is the federation that unites more than 140 environmental and nature organisations in Northern Belgium. There is a clear division of labour between these NGOs: Greenpeace and JNM are the militant protest organisations with a clear aim at media attention, but whereas Greenpeace goes for more spectacular campaigns to reach the national ("quality") media, JNM and its numerous regional sections go for local protest actions and local ("popular") media. As a federation BBL takes part in legislative discussions with government and industry, and as such it takes a more moderate view than many of its member organisations. Wervel and Velt are less visibly present in the

media, but have taken part in many debates around the country representing the NGO-platform from a content point of view. Media research has shown that these NGOs, despite their powerful opponents, have not only succeeded in becoming the number one media source between 2000 and 2004 (at the height of the controversy) in popular newspapers but also in reframing the debate from a matter of scientific progress and economic prospects to a matter of public accountability and unforeseen consequences (Maeseele and Schuurman 2008).

Methodology

The in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured expert interview was singled out to obtain a nuanced insight into the thinking of an NGO as a collective actor. Organising the interviews around a number of topics allowed the respondents to talk freely and at length and created the necessary space to allow them to give meaning to their social experiences as an actor in the GM debate using their own words. Topics and specific questions were decided during group discussions with students who took a seminar on this topic. The eventual interview was structured around four topics: (1) an introduction of their NGO and its position in the field, (2) the NGOs' goals and strategies in the GM debate, (3) the role of science and scientific information, and the claiming of epistemic authority by scientists in universities or business, and (4) the role of ideology. The interviews were conducted by the author together with two students for every NGO, this to make sure that all the necessary topics would be addressed and to create a maximum space for elaborating on particular elements or possible unarticulated assumptions. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed, and lasted between 90 and 255 minutes. Of the five initial interviews, there was one which was rather unsatisfactory because the spokesperson for Greenpeace would only be interviewed for 90 minutes, which was far too short for our topic list to be addressed. However, we succeeded in retracing the individual who had been the campaign director of Greenpeace during the comprehensive campaign in the "years of controversy," bringing our total to six interviews[2]. The interviews were conducted in February and March 2008. Through these interviews, we wanted to know how these NGOs make sense of their encounters with science in the GM debate and how they situate themselves in their role as *alternative* science communicators. The results have been paraphrased and structured in five topics, of which each is introduced by a quote from the interviews.

Adversaries in the Public Forum: Not Industry, but the Public Scientific Institute

> *Between 1996 and the moment European legislation got underway we were amazed to find a debate between scientists and consumers instead of between industry and consumers. Their strategy, from a corporate point of view, was to leave the debate to the scientists as they thought these had better odds in winning the debate against us. They went underground themselves and didn't show anymore* (Jan Turf, ex-Greenpeace).

When discussing the role and strategies of their foes on the public stage, Wervel, Velt, Greenpeace and JNM look at the debate as involving only them and VIB, whereas the industry itself is perceived as sending out the university scientists to do its work. There is a general feeling that the industry has shied away from pub-

lic debate and has chosen to keep a low profile as its agenda does not necessarily need public attention: it is are perfectly fine waiting until the social debate fades out or evolves to its advantage. What we find here are the social consequences of the principle of cumulative inequality that NGOs in general face (see Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993): institutional actors, such as industry, do not need the media for mobilisation purposes or for validating their existence as influential actors. They have automatic access to institutional channels of influence as they are part of achieving government's goals in economic development. And for controversial industries like agbiotech-corporations, it is often more worthwhile to lobby in private than to seek public debate.

Science and Scientific Credibility

> *VIB-people are academics who enjoy a certain social esteem. Sometimes they make slippery statements they get away with because these people are considered to be knowledgeable. Recently, there was that scientist that refused to do the Vilt-interview claiming that Greenpeace is unscientific. This is difficult for us to respond to, since he's a scientist and people are inclined to believe him, whereas we try to do as much scientific research as possible* (Jonas Hulsens, Greenpeace).

It is clear from our interviews that a scientific basis and scientific credibility are a *condition sine qua non* for each NGO. The GM-debate is not perceived as an anti-science debate, quite the contrary, the science comes first. The interviewees relate this to a basic notion of credibility without which it would be impossible as an organisation to appear on the public stage without being marginalised. Each NGO emphasises that fundamental scientific research in laboratories (so-called "contained use") is not its target: only the release of GM products in the environment or their circulation in the food chain is, thereby implying that the scientific community should not feel attacked. Referring to the Vilt-incident, Greenpeace emphasises that VIB usually accuses them of hampering scientific developments, not of being unscientific, and considers the former to be true in respect of undermining the financial basis for the application of VIB's scientific achievements. This implies, however, that the scientific institute conceives public debate in terms of its financial ramifications for the private sector. Greenpeace further refers to a VIB-exhibition ("Let's eat Genetic") taking place in 2001-02 in which it succeeded in agreeing with VIB-scientists on a common definition of the ecological risks of GM products. The scientists acknowledged those risks, but simultaneously insisted that these were only temporary problems, which differentiated their position from Greenpeace's again. In deploring VIB's refusal for the dual Vilt-interview, several spokespersons refer to the fact that VIB is a public institute, for which science communication is a core mission. The epistemic and cultural authority which the science institute is able to draw from is clearly interpreted as a problem for the NGO-sector in general.

Science Communication

> *In addition to the biotechnology of VIB, you find biologists who study the potential impact of GMOs on biodiversity and in biotopes, and who have been the first to warn us that something was wrong, because Greenpeace*

of course didn't invent that. We're just some people that come together to protect the environment and it is only when the science comes up and says: there is a threat there, that we can do something with that. In that sense, the fundamental relationship of Greenpeace with science is that Greenpeace tries to popularise existing scientific knowledge, popularise it for decision-makers. … So what we did was communicate a different science. They communicated about the biotechnology of annotating genomes and the cut and paste of adding properties to plants. But that was not what our debate was about; our debate is and has always been that when you take a plant with that kind of property into an existing biotope, what happens then? They didn't care about that, so what they did was some kind of niche communication, but not science communication. They communicated about their own little domain, they were not interested in a broader type of science communication, and in that sense, you could say, they were the allies of those who were making money [with GMOs], and didn't care otherwise (Jan Turf, ex-Greenpeace).

Among our interviewees, there is a general perception that "independent" science is increasingly put at the service of industry, and VIB and the agbiotech-sector in general are considered to exemplify this evolution. Therefore, the role of the scientific institute VIB is under fire. Each NGO has had different experiences with the institute during the GM debate. For Velt and Wervel it is impossible to consider VIB as an independent scientific institute referring to their previous experiences with VIB in debate panels. JNM elaborates on this point when confirming the scientific merits of the institute, but the many links to industry and the fact that their public communication is always supportive of the technology, makes VIB into the voice of industry for JNM. Although acknowledging that VIB takes care of the public communication of the local industry (each one of which were originally VIB spin-offs), BBL takes a more moderate view in emphasising that VIB does this without taking resort to the kind of "hype" arguments that are often used to promote biotechnology.

The quote above clearly refers to the interdisciplinary antagonisms that exist when it comes to the risks of agricultural biotechnology and how the local biotechnology institute (with a public mandate to communicate on biotechnology) only communicates from the control-oriented perspective to unknown risks of molecular biology. We find different references in the interviews to the epistemic differences between molecular biology and ecology and how this relates to how their communication differs from "institutional" science communication. It is emphasised that they start from a "different" science, which however does not lead to profit-making products, but takes into account the consequences for the ecosystem as a carrying force. For instance, the argument of GM crops as leading the way to a more sustainable agriculture is refuted by foregrounding a conceptualisation of sustainable agriculture that attributes a central role to biodiversity and its "natural repair tools" for cleaning water or recycling nutrients. The reductionist approach of biotechnology, on the other hand, is said to degrade biodiversity, arguing that the final result of worldwide GM agriculture would be worldwide monocultures. Referring to the Farm Scale Evaluations[3], BBL condemns the lack of polemics and controversy in the scientific community between "biotechnologists" on the one hand and ecologists and biologists on the other. Producing the GMOs is one thing, but studying the

consequences of their introduction is another. And somehow, this second step had been glossed when the first generation of GM crops was commercialised. There had not been any a large-scale evaluation of their ecological consequences, and BBL attributes this to a lack of debate within the scientific community.

Different Framing

> *Eventually, a nefarious development carries on globally for economic reasons. The argumentation is always the same: the "hard arguments" are economic arguments, these are dominant, and the soft NGO-sector that stands up for social justice … those are defenseless arguments … In a certain sense, in the eyes of those whose primary goal is safeguarding their profitable sector, we embody irrationality and stupidity* (Louis De Bruyn, Wervel).

These five NGOs were indeed found to aim not only at instigating an epistemic shift, but also for a different framing of the social choices that have to be made in agriculture in general. Whereas today, the economic arguments of growth, efficiency, profit and cost reduction are the dominant interpretations in making policy choices, these NGOs emphasise the importance of social justice and ecological sustainability, while in the eyes of their opponents they are blocking "scientific progress" and the development of "high-tech agriculture." The protection worldwide of an autonomous agricultural sector in which farming is able to develop within its economic and ecological environment into a self-sustaining and labour-intensive activity, is interpreted as an important element of these "soft" values which stand in opposition to the current global trends pushing for more trade liberalisation and large-scale high-tech agriculture. Eventually, the main limitations these NGOs are found to face are not *structural* limitations, although financial resources and access to the media are said to be limiting factors, but a *cultural* limitation: the domination of the corporate-economic logic in our societies, of which the current GM crops, which are predominantly engineered to be resistant to a herbicide or insecticide (or a combination of both) from the exact same company, are considered a prime example. It is in this context that these organisations state to seek the boundaries of social debate and aim at shifting them.

Discussion

In the context of a "science-industrial complex" with strong economic interests in the promotion of GM crops and food, which moreover enjoys the benefits of largely promotional institutional science communication channels to foreclose any debate over the problem of known and unknown risks, local NGOs are found to perform a role as *alternative* science communicators who whish (1) to instigate an epistemic shift to an uncertainty-oriented approach in risk assessment, and (2) reframe the (values at stake in the) debate. This requires us to return to Meyer's earlier question about the consequences of these evolutions for journalism (2006). In the traditional model, "science journalism" is conceptualised as an extension of institutional science communication, with (science) journalists seen as only "transporting" scientific knowledge from scientists to the public while identifying with the scientific profession instead of with the public. Therefore, Meyer (2006) argues that in the context of the present commercialisation of science, the idea of knowledge as a common good can only be saved by breaking with the convention

of science transmission and its associated marketing practices in order to promote and facilitate public scrutiny, discussion and reflection on questions of knowledge and technological innovation. For example, she juxtaposes the convention of science transmission in the context of the logic of corporate communication with the convention of investigative journalism, where the former's identification with the scientific profession should be replaced by identification with the public within the perceived dichotomy of "the people versus the interests." Salleh (2004) joins Meyer by arguing that responsible journalism in this context is not equal to amplifying the idea of a scientific consensus on technological risks. To the contrary, it implies framing "risk debates" as a *conflict* between opposing responses to unforeseen consequences, by revealing the competing sets of assumptions and values underlying these responses. However, she adds that this will only be possible when the dichotomy between scientific and non-scientific, between "hard facts"/"sound science" and epistemically-vacuous values, is exceeded in favour of a journalistic approach that shows how *different* responses to uncertainty have *legitimate* standing in the debate. Furthermore, it also implies a redefinition of the journalistic notion of objectivity, because this notion is directly related to the reification of scientific authority, either as a professional ideal by leading journalists to uphold a positivist notion of science (as the ultimate arbiter of truth), or as a method by which journalists choose to rely on official institutional sources (as a proxy for credibility) rather than dissenting sources, such as NGOs in the GM debate. Both argue that it is only by framing scientific and technological developments as social issues, in which conflicting epistemological, normative and axiological views are exposed, that news media live up to their role as facilitators of public discussion and (science) democratisation. Here the role of NGOs as *alternative* science communicators could prove particularly valuable.

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Notes:

1. Vilt is subsidised by the Flemish regional government and the private sector for public communication on agri- and horticulture. Flanders is the Northern Dutch-speaking region of Belgium to which we will refer as Northern Belgium in the remainder of this paper.

2. Velt: Luc Naets; JNM: Liesbeth Janssens; Wervel: Louis De Bruyn; BBL: Joris Gansemans; Greenpeace: Jonas Hulsens and Jan Turf.

3. The Farm Scale Evaluations were set up by the British (government) Dept. for Environment Food and Rural affairs (DEFRA) as "a four-year programme of research by independent scientists aimed at studying the effect, if any, that the management practices associated with Genetically Modified Herbicide Tolerant (GMHT) crops might have on farmland wildlife, when compared with weed control used with non-GM crops" (http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/fse/). It is still the principal study to date on the environmental impact of GM crops anywhere in the world.

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THE STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CORPORATIST MODEL: THE CASE OF FINLAND

JUHA HERKMAN

Abstract

As in many other European countries, the Finnish political public sphere has been mediatised and commercialised over the last three decades at the same time that structural changes have taken place in the national media systems. By using Finland as an example, article considers the structural transformation of the "Democratic Corporatist Model" defined by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini in their /Comparing Media Systems/ (2004). Article also examines what the Finnish case could bring to the discussions on the public sphere and its relation to empirical analysis in general.

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Ever since Jürgen Habermas's *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962) was first translated into English in 1989 (as *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*), lively debate has ensued on the democratic role of the public sphere. As is well known, in the first part of his far-reaching work, Habermas constructs a historical narrative of the rising bourgeois society and its commitment to the development of the concept of the public sphere as a counterforce to monarchic state regimes during the eighteenth century's Europe, especially in France, England and Germany. According to Habermas, the foundations for a bourgeois public sphere were laid for example by Immanuel Kant's work. The public sphere was represented as a new form of public discourse in which the common concerns of citizens could be carried out in rational political discussion or deliberations that formed public opinion through the general interest. In the second part of his work Habermas discusses the decline or "re-feudalisation" of this public sphere during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when borders between state and private organisations began to blur and the public relations industry as well as the mass media colonised and commodified the public sphere.

Just as Habermas's own work is divided into conceptual and historical analyses, so too the debates on his work have been similarly divided. As Koivisto and Väliverronen (1996, 22) put it, "Habermas largely replaces the historical analysis of the forms of public sphere by the history of ideas on the public sphere. This in turn tends to make his 'bourgeois public sphere' an ahistorical and idealistic concept." Criticism of Habermas's analysis has therefore been mostly directed either to the ideal concept of the public sphere or to the "historical mistakes" found from *The Structural Transformation*.

The former has emphasised the problems that normative idealism of common public opinion formed only through rational deliberation by informed citizens may cause by demolishing differences between genders and various social groups or discourses. These critics have reminded us of the importance of "weak publics" (Fraser 1992) or "counter publics" (Warner 2002) as well as of the meanings of the "emotional" and the "popular" in public debates (e.g. Hartley 1996; van Zoonen 2005). Some critics point out that rather than confirming "the belief in the possibility of a universal rational consensus … the task for democratic theorists and politicians should be to envisage the creation of a vibrant 'agonistic' public sphere of contestation where different hegemonic political projects can be confronted" (Mouffe 2005, 3).

The other mode of critique has focused on problems in Habermas's historical conceptions of the bourgeois public sphere in Europe (e.g. Baker 1992; Zaret 1992; Eley 1992) and elsewhere to the point that Schudson (1992) asks of the American case whether "there ever was a public sphere," and supplies the answer, "No there was." Sparks (1998, 5-6) states that "no such media" that realise all the requirements of the Habermasian ideal of the public sphere "exist in the world today, and never have existed in the past."

The debate has therefore been concentrated on the concept and the historical formation of the bourgeois public sphere. Much less attention has been given analysing the narrative of the decline or re-feudalisation of the public sphere, which has generally been considered less "satisfying" – because of Habermas's inability to analyse properly late capitalist societies and their media systems (Calhoun 1992,

29-30). Because of the normative idealism of Habermas's theory, there has been a clear disparity between theoretical discussions and empirical research.

It has to be kept in mind that Habermas's *Structural Transformation* was first published in the early 1960s and was anchored to the post-war European context and intellectual traditions. Since that time Habermas has turned elsewhere in his theory of communicative action and discourse ethics (Habermas 1990; 1996). He has also re-evaluated *The Structural Transformation* in relation to its critics (e.g. Habermas 1992). Habermas (2006) has even analysed different forms of the mediatised public sphere and considered how deliberative political communication could be used in empirical research. More recently, the view has also emerged by contemporary scholars that opposite perspectives of Habermas and Mouffe, for example, are not so opposite to one another: despite Habermas's and Mouffe's counter arguments both idealise the pluralistic public sphere (e.g. Karppinen et al. 2008).

Media and journalism studies have, however, eagerly adopted the normative ideal of the public sphere as the core of political journalism repeating the narratives of decline and the stories about public communication in constant crisis (see McNair 2000, 2-10). In these narratives the erosion of the public sphere has been linked to the marketisation, commercialisation and commodification of the media and has been characterised as the "tabloidisation" or "dumbing down" of political journalism (see e.g. Sparks and Tulloch 2000).

This article tries to bridge the gap between the empirical and theoretical approaches to the concept of the public sphere by using the changes in Finnish political communication as grounds for empirical testing. As in many other European countries, the Finnish political public sphere has been mediatised and commercialised over the last three decades at the same time that structural changes have taken place in the national media systems. By using Finland as an example, I will consider the structural transformation of the "Democratic Corporatist Model" (Hallin and Mancini 2004) at a systemic level, a transformation that is going on in many North European countries. I ask whether Habermas's theory of the decline of the public sphere can be seen as accurate in this respect and, furthermore, what the Finnish case could bring to the relationship between theory and empirical research on the public sphere in general.

Democratic Corporatist Model in Transition

In their seminal comparative analysis of different media systems and politics Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004) identify three "ideal types" of media systems dominating North American and European societies, exclusive of the former communist countries. In their classification Hallin and Mancini identify a Democratic Corporatist Model as distinct from an Anglo-American Liberal Model and a Mediterranean Polarised Pluralistic Model. The Democratic Corporatist Model is a system, in which state intervention in media is strong but media autonomy and professionalisation are nevertheless well developed. State intervention is intended to guarantee the plurality of the media markets rather than to colonise the political public sphere. Hallin and Mancini have located the Democratic Corporatist Model in Central and North Europe, especially in the Low Countries and Scandinavia, and Finland, according to the authors, is one of the countries that best represents the model (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 66-75).

Other features of the Democratic Corporatist Model have been the historically early development of the mass-circulation press in connection with the early growth of mass literacy as well as the recognised public service broadcasting. In this model the press has had close connections to political parties and other organised social groups such as trade unions, and the state has regulated public broadcasting in order to distribute content to all interest groups in society. Thus the Democratic Corporatist Model has been characterised by a high degree of "political parallelism," whereby "the culture and discursive style of journalism is closely related to that of politics" (p. 29). However, at the same time North and Central European countries have supported the growth of commercial media markets and the relative autonomy of the media in relation to other social actors. Hand-in-hand with the Democratic Corporatist Model have gone the welfare state and high level of media professionalism (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 143-197). Such "co-existences" may be the feature that distinguishes the Democratic Corporatist Model most significantly from the two other systems wherein they "do not appear simultaneously" or might even "be perceived as incompatible" (Strömbäck et al. 2008, 19-20).

Hallin and Mancini's contribution has inspired others to analyse the countries included in their systemic comparison. For example, Strömbäck, Ørsten and Aalberg (2008) have edited a comparative reader that tests whether the Nordic countries – Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Iceland – conform to the Democratic Corporatist Model as Hallin and Mancini claim. These authors conclude that even if there are variations and differences among the Nordic countries, it is possible to claim that a highly developed newspaper market, political parallelism, a high degree of journalistic professionalism and state intervention in the media system "are the most commonly shared features of the Nordic countries and indeed the Democratic Corporatist Model" (Ørsten et al. 2008, 268). Therefore the Nordic countries support Hallin and Mancini's view (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 11) that at the large, systemic level, it is possible to classify countries according to this kind of models.

However, as Hallin and Mancini (2004, 12) note, "media systems are not homogenous," and they are "in a process of continual change." The Nordic countries have also been changing along with international tendencies towards the commercialisation of the media and the professionalisation of political communication. The rise of commercial broadcasting as well as the cuts in press subsidies have been apparent in the Nordic countries, where today all media are more commercial and more market orientated than ever. One reason for the commercialisation of the media has been changing media policy, namely, increased deregulation by nation states and the European Union. These changes have also meant more politically independent media and therefore diminishing degrees of political parallelism (Ørsten et al. 2008, 271). Hallin and Mancini, too, (2004, 251) conclude their analysis by saying that "the differences among these models, and in general the degree of variation among nation states, have diminished substantially over time." They add that "in general, it is reasonable to summarise the changes in European media systems as a shift toward the Liberal Model that prevails in its purest form in North America" (pp. 251-252).

Even though systemic factors will always be important and will shape international tendencies and trends in ways that will never be adapted to national contexts

(Ørsten et al. 2008, 271; Brants and van Praag 2007, 108; Nord 2007, 91-92; Isotalus 2001, 11-13), it is justifiable to claim that there is a structural transformation going on in the media systems of the Nordic countries, and this transformation is challenging the Democratic Corporatist Model. It is not only the commercialisation of the media and the professionalisation of political communication have increased, but also the fact that the "European welfare state has clearly been rolled back as a consequence of the global shift to neoliberalism" (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 284), which has created trouble for the Democratic Corporatist Model. Another challenge to the model has been digitalisation and the rise of the network media, which already have re-structured media markets and systems in several ways and have also created a divide between different generations of media consumers and political agents.

Changes in the Finnish Media System

In Hallin and Mancini's (2004, 75) comparative analysis, Finland is considered with other Nordic countries to be a representative example of the Democratic Corporatist Model. At historical and global-systemic levels, this view is accurate even today, but over the last three decades the radical changes in the Finnish media system and political culture justify the claim that the model has been extensively challenged. The structural transformation of the Finnish media system has meant a transition from partisan to commercial media and the increased de-regulation and re-regulation of media markets, changes that can be described as the overall marketisation of the Finnish media. Most of the statistics used in Hallin and Mancini's analysis are ten to twenty years old. It is evident that the marketisation of the media systems accelerated in many North European countries from the 1990s on, and, in the case of Finland, this is undeniably true. Three indicators illustrate the change: the decrease in press subsidies, the diminishing role of public service broadcasting and the changing shares and statuses of different media in national media markets (see Table 1).

The press subsidies in Finland were at their highest in the late 1980s when the state supported the press with almost 80 million euros per year, even though the greatest share of the subsidy was channelled into postal delivery. However, in the 1990s subsidies were cut substantially, and since that time only some 13 or 14 million euros per year has been designated for press subsidies, of which the greatest share is channelled through political parties (Nieminen et al. 2005, 17; *Joukkoviestimet 2006*, 282). The structural transformation of the Finnish press was extensive during the 1990s, when many political and local newspapers were either closed down or merged with other papers. In this respect the period could be described as the "apoliticalisation" of the press. The result was the concentration of the press in the hands of a few large corporations, which were listed on the stock market (Jyrkiäinen 1994).

The undeniable hegemony of public service broadcasting was challenged for the very first time in its history, when commercial radio stations were launched in 1985. Finnish commercial television company, MTV, started also its own television news programmes and international satellite channels reached Finland in the mid-1980s. Until that time the national Finnish Broadcasting Company, YLE, had had a monopoly on radio and television programming – or, more accurately put,

Table 1: Changes in the Finnish Media System between 1985 and 2005 (Source: Statistics Finland)

	1985	1995	2005
Press subsidies (millions of euros)	79	25,2	14,4
Number of newspapers	229	231	205
Number of periodicals and magazines	4275	4818	4922
PSB Radio audience share (%)	100	69	51
Commercial Radio audience share (%)	– *	31	49
PSB TV audience share (%)	(70)	47	44
Commercial TV audience share (%)	(30) **	53	56
Largest private media company (and its revenues in millions of euros)	Sanoma OY (243)	Sanoma OY (313)	Sanoma-WSOY (2.622)
PSB (and its revenue in millions of euros)	YLE (201)	YLE (354)	YLE (375)
Household Internet connections (%)	–	7 (1996)	58

* Private radio stations launched in 1985.
** The share of commercial MTV from all television viewing in 1985.

in television there was a kind of duopoly, because YLE had rented its air time to MTV for entertainment programmes since the late 1950s. In 1993 MTV launched the first completely commercial national television channel, which, from its first year of operations, proved to be the most widely viewed channel in Finland. The second national commercial television channel Nelonen, was launched in 1997 as part of the largest media company in Finland, Sanoma Oy.

Heikki Hellman (1999) succinctly describes these changes in the Finnish broadcasting markets as a transition "from companions to competitors." Even though the status of public service broadcasting is strong in Finland even today, it is evident that since the 1990s, YLE has no longer dominated the broadcasting markets. In the twenty-first century the share of commercial television channels has been more than half of all Finnish television viewing, with YLE's share being about 45 per cent (*Joukkoviestimet 2006*, 170, 196). Stiff competition with commercial radio and television has led to extensive organisational reforms at YLE, including increasing emphasis on strategic management, scheduling and programming, all of which were formerly connected more with commercial than with public service companies (see Hujanen 2002). The audience share of domestic public service broadcasting in 2002 was less in Finland than, for example, in Britain, Spain, Italy, Austria, Poland or Russia, and it was the same as in France (*Joukkoviestimet 2002*, 259) – to name some of the countries representing the Anglo-American Liberal Model and the Mediterranean Polarised Pluralistic Model.

The changes described above are linked to overall changes in the status and shares of different media in the Finnish media markets, which, over the last three decades, could be described as a triumph of the commercial entertainment media. It is true that Finland, along with Sweden, Norway and Japan, is still a "newspaper nation" in the sense that in these countries more newspapers are published and read

per capita than anywhere else in the world (*Joukkoviestimet 2006*, 256). However, the fact is that, since the 1990s, Finnish newspapers have been continuously losing circulation and readers. The so-called prestige papers have been in particular trouble. The only papers that have succeeded in increasing their circulation after the depression of the early 1990s have been the popular tabloids and the free newspapers (ibid., 195, 203), but even they have lost readers in the last few years, even before the devastating effects of the current financial crisis, which has gutted advertising incomes, took their toll.

The most rapidly growing print media in early twenty-first-century Finland have been the popular periodicals and magazines that more closely resemble the British and US tabloid papers than the Finnish tabloids, which perhaps can be described as "serious popular papers" rather than tabloids in the Anglo-American sense (see Sparks 2000, 14-15). For example, the most popular gossip magazine in Finland, *Seiska*, has almost tripled its circulation since the early 1990s. There is one top-rated "prestige paper" in the country, namely, *Helsingin Sanomat*, but the second and third popular newspapers are tabloids, whose circulations beat that of the "prestige papers" – and so do the circulations of most of the popular gossip magazines.

These changes demonstrate that nowadays all Finnish media are more commercial and market orientated than before. The Finnish media system has therefore been "marketised" as part of a "more general secularisation of society" (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 178), in which state intervention has diminished and market intervention has increased in all social sectors. Hannu Nieminen and Mervi Pantti (2004, 22) describe this change as a transition from "cultural-moral regulation towards economic-commercial regulation."

The consequence of deregulation and marketisation has been stiff competition in the media branch, which in turn has led to a concentration of the Finnish media in hands of large corporations. The most active period in media concentration was the 1990s when several mergers took place. Since that time, Finnish media markets could be described as an oligopoly of a few large corporations that dominate the markets. In fact the media markets in every Nordic country can be described as oligopoly with one company significantly larger than the others, but a special characteristic in Finland is the unique status of one company, Sanoma Oyj, which by revenue in the year 2007 was almost eight times larger than the second largest company in Finland, the Finnish Broadcasting Company, YLE. However, more than half of Sanoma Oyj's revenue came from businesses abroad, mainly from periodical and magazine publishing in the Low Countries and Eastern Europe (*Nordic Media Market 2009*, 19-26). Today's media corporations in Democratic Corporatist countries are therefore more often business corporations than social institutions.

Large cross-media companies can share risks among the different media branches and therefore edge out smaller companies if there are economic difficulties. Another benefit in merging different media, from press to broadcasting and from Internet to book publishing, is the synergy this "cross-media structure" enables in media production and marketing (Croteau and Hoynes 2001, 116-117; Turow 1992). Large companies circulate content and advertisements in their media so effectively that cross-promotion seems to be the most innovative practice in commercial media today (see Herkman 2004). At the same time large commercial companies have constituted a counterforce to public service media, which continu-

ously have to legitimise their position to politicians and consumers as publicly funded institutions. By promoting commercial values, large corporations put pressure on the public service broadcasting (PSB), which has been challenged by neo-liberal ideology and claims that it "distorts media markets." As a result of this legitimation crisis, PSB has had financial problems in many European countries. In Finland the legitimation crisis has led to remarkable organisational reforms in YLE as well as to pressure on funding systems other than license fees, which have been used in Finland since the 1920s.

Much of the media circulation and cross-promotion has been done in the name of convergence, a key word in media industries since the so-called digital revolution in the 1990s (e.g. Küng et al. 1999; Mueller 1999). The irony in "digital revolution" has been that technological development of media systems has cost a great deal of money and has simultaneously challenged radically traditional media businesses. For example, the digitalisation of television has been a painful process in many countries; in Finland it has been one reason for the distress of public service broadcasting (Hujanen 2002, 156-162). The younger generations of media consumers have embraced the Internet as their master medium in which social networks, free content and grassroots activism flourish. The press and broadcasting companies are trying to find ways to attract these consumer groups as paying customers before their devoted consumers become extinct. It is worth asking how "corporatist" this kind of media system can continue to.

The Structural Transformation of Media and Politics

The changes in political cultures and institutions have paralleled the changes in national media systems in a process that has generally been called mediation or the mediatisation of politics. The mediatisation of politics has involved at least three factors in the relationship between media and politics: the increased significance of media publicity for politics, the increased professionalism of political communication and the increased personalisation of politics. According to the mediatisation theory these changes have forced political agencies to rethink their actions through media insofar as the logic of today's politics is determined by so-called "media logic" rather than by the logic of politics itself – whatever that might mean (Mancini and Swanson 1994; Scammel 1995; Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999). Mediatisation has taken place at the same time that political agencies, such as political parties, have assigned their power to market forces, political ideologies have converged on multiparty systems and voter volatility and political cynicism have increased.

In Holland the rise and sudden death of populist politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 has been described as a dramatic turning point in which the established and elitist political communication culture collided with the popularised performance politics of "medialand" (Pels 2003, 41-44; Brants and van Praag 2007, 99). The case of Fortyun may be particular, but the mediatisation and personalisation of politics have been apparent in all Democratic Corporatist countries over the last few decades. The mediatisation of politics, the convergence of political ideologies and increasing voter volatility have also been apparent in Finland, even though they are distinguished by national characteristics.

The spread of television has often been connected to the mediatisation of politics, and mediatised politics could even be called "televisualised politics" (see McNair

2007, 131). The spread of television has also dramatically changed political publicity in Finland, beginning in the 1960s, but Finnish researchers in political communication have been unanimous in stating that it was the 1980s when television radically encroached upon political campaigns and communication strategies (e.g. Pernaa and Railo 2006; Salminen 2006, 17-32). Until then, Finland has been governed by a powerful president, Urho Kekkonen, whose policy was determined by the post-war relations between Finland and the Soviet Union and by close connections to Finland's economic elite. There was also a national tendency towards pluralism in media content during president Kekkonen's long-lived regime, which lasted from 1956 until 1981. This tendency was advocated by the public service broadcasting policy and by press subsidies, but it did not support "performance politics," which were propagated more by commercial media – first the yellow press in the 1970s and then entertainment television from the 1990s.

Press and public broadcasting in the 1960s and the 1970s also had close connections to the political establishment, which, as Hallin and Mancini have noted, supported strong "political parallelism." Conservative foreign news reporting, especially in the case of Finland's powerful neighbour to the east, characterised Finnish media in those days. However, Kekkonen's regime came to an end in the early 1980s, and Finland opened up to an international market economy. The partisan media began to disperse, and liberal journalism gained ground. Political parallelism declined somewhat when journalists began to shoulder their task as the "watchdogs of political power" more eagerly than ever. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 also diminished the "self-censorship" of foreign news in Finland (Luostarinen and Uskali 2006).

One indicator of the mediatisation of politics is that almost all citizens depend on media content for information about politics and politicians, both during elections and at other times. In the 2003 parliamentary elections and in the 2006 presidential elections, for example, only eight percent of the voters had witnessed politicians speaking live. The most popular sources were television news and discussions as well as newspapers, even though the latter were considered as more important than television (Borg and Moring 2005, 54, 64; Moring and Gallup Finland 2006). Opinion polls published by the media have also been a central feature of Finnish politics and elections since the 1960s.

However, it is reasonable to assume that survey responses are biased by "the myth of the good citizen," who is rational and deliberative rather than emotional and impulsive in making decisions (Ankersmith 2003, 22). Increased voter volatility and the popularity of political entertainment reveal that performance politics may have much more significance in people's political choices than voter surveys and opinion polls would suggest.

Finnish politics has been personalised by mediatisation. Media publicity and campaigns are focused on a few top politicians, such as party chairmen, leading ministers and the president of the republic. It is therefore no surprise that the most popular elections are presidential elections, in which votes are given directly to one candidate, and only two main candidates face off in the dramatic media spectacle of a second round. The second most popular elections are parliamentary elections, while far less voter interest is awakened by local and by European parliamentary elections. The highest voting rates in parliamentary and local elections were

achieved during the politically active decades of the 1960s and the 1970s and in the presidential elections following Kekkonen's terms in the 1980s. Ironically, voters of "the new media age" are most interested in elections that have the least to do with real political power and voters everyday lives – since the president's political power was remarkably dismantled in the constitutional reform in the year 2000 – and are least interested in the elections that have the most to do with political decisions affecting their immediate living conditions.

The centrality of media publicity in political campaigns has increased the professionalisation of Finnish politics to the point that top politicians are trained in media performances, especially on television, and communication professionals are used during campaigns. One reason for this is that since 1991 paid political advertising has been allowed on commercial radio and television channels, a feature in which Finland differs from many other Northern and West European countries (Moring 2008, 57). It could even be argued that it was the successful use of advertising agencies in the presidential elections of 2006 and the parliamentary elections of 2007 that brought the National Coalition Party to victory: an all-around media strategy, positive image construction and ideological inversions in campaigning were carried out in a manner similar to the triumph of Tony Blair's Labour Party in Britain in the 1990s (cf. McNair 2007, 52-55). A closer comparison can be found in Sweden, where a right-wing alliance of bourgeois parties defeated social democrats and gained power in the parliamentary elections of 2006.

However, Tom Moring (2006) reminds us that Finland has not become as mediatised as some other states in Europe appear to have become. The degree of professionalisation of Finnish political communication was still quite modest in the early twenty-first century. The biggest parties and leading politicians had communication agencies and training only during their campaigns. As recently as 2002–2003 most members of Finnish parliament had no experience with image strategies or media training (Aarnio 2004). The spin doctors "are still absent in Finnish politics, and political journalists generally have direct access to the political leaders, including the Prime Minister" (Moring 2008, 56). Even though all candidates, campaign managers and media personnel whom I interviewed after the presidential elections of 2006 subscribed to the undeniable importance of media publicity for politicians, they also stated that the mediatisation of politics in Finland is still "at a quite amateurish level" (Herkman 2008a).

Therefore, the reason for the effectiveness of the Finnish media is not so much the professionalisation of political communication as it is the convergence of political ideologies, which has increased voter volatility and the success of populist politics in most multiparty system countries. The success of the bourgeois alliance in the Swedish parliamentary elections of 2006, for example, cannot have had much to do with political images constructed by advertising campaigns, because political television advertisements are still prohibited in Sweden (Nord 2007, 84). However, politicians and parties will use every means at their disposal to capture the attention of a volatile electorate in their campaigns. The mediatisation of political communication in Finland, as in Sweden, can therefore be described as a somewhat "lighter version" of the American model of professional political communication, which has been customised for a national Finnish context (Nord 2007, 91-92; Isotalus 2001, 11-13).

The Public Sphere and Politics

From an empirical point of view the main problem in the Habermasian concept of the public sphere is its singularity, which overlooks the contesting forms of public discourse as well as draws an imaginary line of demarcation between the public and the private as distinctive spheres (Koivisto and Väliverronen 1996, 22-24). Understood in the singular, the public sphere contains all political deliberation, from public interpersonal communication to the most popular mass media content. It might have been possible to consider the national public spheres in more or less this way until the mid-twentieth century, but since that time, the trans-nationalisation of the media industries, the globalisation of media culture, the digitalisation of media technology and the Internet as a "global" network have made it impossible to picture any singular public sphere as an empirical entity.

Therefore, for empirical understanding of political communication, we need more precise systemic models that take into account the various relations between different media forms, politics and private life. John Corner's sketch of the "spheres of political action" is a useful starting point. Corner (2003, 73) defines three spheres in which politicians or other political persons act, namely, (1) the sphere of political institutions and processes, (2) the sphere of the public and popular, and (3) the private sphere.

The sphere of political institutions and processes means those specific institutions and processes in which political decisions are made and political careers are constructed. Understood like this, the sphere of political institutions and processes is manifested in its purest way in political parties and other social organisations as well as in parliaments, governments and administration. This sphere is only "indirectly mediated," unlike the sphere of the public and popular, which contains all those serious and entertaining occasions when "politicians are seen as 'public figures'." In Corner's definition the public/popular sphere is the "realm of the visibly 'public,' the space of a *demonstrable* representativeness." Corner adds a third sphere, private life, to the junction of politics and the public sphere and notes that "there is ample evidence that the private sphere of politicians is now more than ever being used as a resource in the manufacture of political identity and in its repair following misadventure" (Corner 2003, 72-76).

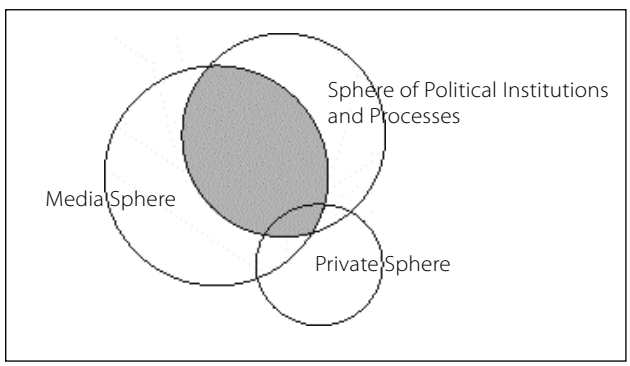
Corner's sketch has retreated from the Habermasian ideal model in at least two ways. First, Corner takes the disparity between the public and political spheres as the real state of affairs and does not see it as a kind of decline or re-feudalisation of the public sphere. Second, unlike Habermas's concept of the public sphere, Corner takes seriously the role of private emotional experience in politics. It is possible to maintain that Corner's three spheres resonate more easily with the empirical reality of today's political communication than with Habermas's ideal concept of one totality of the public sphere.

However, it is difficult to see Corner's three-part diagram at a systemic level because Corner concentrates on the actions of political personae. I will therefore reshape Corner's model in favour of a systemic comparison and rename the sphere of the public and popular a "media sphere." By using the term "media sphere," I emphasise the role of the media in all its technological and cultural forms in today's mediatised culture and political communication. In Hallin and Mancini's systemic comparison the media/politics junction is essential, including in relation to the discussions on the public sphere in general. It is worth remembering, however, that

the media sphere is only a part of the public sphere in the Habermasian sense, and vice versa. Thus, the key questions from a systemic point of view are how much and in what ways do the media sphere and the sphere of political institutions and processes intersect, and how does the private sphere trespass on them.

In the ideal Democratic Corporatist Model, the politics and media spheres intersect each other largely because of a strong political parallelism (see Figure 1). The ideological pluralism of the media sphere is supported by the state regulation of media markets and public service broadcasting, which guarantee that the interests of various social groups can be introduced into the public discussion. The role of the private sphere in politics is weak because the corporatist model stresses social groups and institutions over individuals. Yet the private interests of citizens are represented by various social groups and political parties and therefore are taken into account.

Figure 1: Democratic Corporatist Model (Ideal)

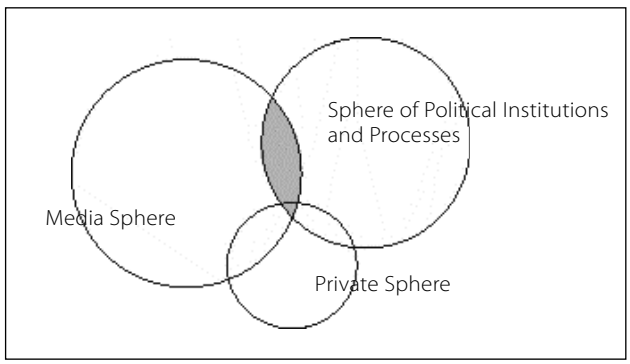


This kind of model was pursued in the Nordic countries between the 1960s and the 1980s but, as in the case of Habermasian ideal concept of the public sphere, it is questionable if it has ever been realised in its ideal form. At least in Finland, a strong political parallelism has historically meant an elite-driven media sphere, in which journalistic culture has not been so autonomous and the private interests of citizens have not been represented as well as Hallin and Mancini's model supposes (cf. Nieminen 2006). Certainly some pluralism of ideologies and social groups in the Finnish media sphere was achieved in the 1960s and the 1970s, thanks to an active media policy, but the political media were also closely controlled by the political and economic elite of President Kekkonen's regime. It is clear that the liberalisation and marketisation of the Finnish media since the 1980s decreased this kind of political parallelism and increased the autonomy of the media from political elite.

The mediatisation of Finnish politics exploded with the commercialisation of the media and the changes in the political culture after Kekkonen's time. However, in contrast to the mediatisation theory, the consequence of these changes has been the separation of political processes and the media sphere (Herkman 2008a; Kunelius et al. 2009). Interviews after the presidential elections of 2006 proved that a kind of "amoral" discourse of professional political communication had largely replaced normative discourse in the statements of candidates, media personnel and campaign managers, indicating the "secularisation" or "apoliticalisation" of Finnish politics.

Survey responses showed that voters were divided into two groups by generation: many of younger voters were keener to take "a playful postmodern stance" towards political media publicity, whereas some older voters were more critical of the commercialisation and personalisation of the public sphere (Herkman 2008b).

Figure 2: Democratic Corporatist Model in Transition



The commercialisation and liberalisation of the media have therefore meant more autonomy for the media and less political parallelism, but at the same time divergence between political processes and the media sphere as well as an increasing intrusion of the private sphere onto political and other media publicity (see Figure 2). In the Democratic Corporatist Model the mediatisation of politics has therefore meant an increased intersection of the media and private spheres but decreasing intersections of the media sphere and political institutions and processes, at least when they are understood as decision-making processes in a parliamentary democracy. The mediatisation of politics has therefore not increased the transparency of political processes, as was supposed. Quite the contrary.

As Brian McNair (2007, 63) puts it:

> *In an intensifying competitive environment, therefore, the political process comes to be seen by journalists as the raw material of a commodity – news or current affairs – which must eventually be sold to the maximum number of consumers. Inevitably, those aspects of the process which are the most sellable are those with the most spectacular and dramatic features, and which can be told in those terms.*

In Finland this has meant that, since the 1990s, political publicity has flourished in two kinds of events, namely, during elections and during political scandals, which are most often linked to the private lives of politicians.

As in Sweden, the Finnish media can be described as "politics-friendly," because "most of the national media still pay a great deal of attention to political affairs, particularly during the run up to an election" (Nord 2007, 93; Strömbäck and Nord 2008, 118). However, there is also great deal of evidence that this shared political publicity does not awaken volatile voters' interest any more than dramatic and personalised political publicity of election campaigns and political scandals. This is also the reason why politicians yearn for professionalised political communication and performance politics (e.g. Corner and Pels 2003; Niemi 2006).

Above all, the performance politics of election dramas and media scandals deal with moral discussions in postmodern societies (Lull and Hinerman 1997; Thompson 2000). "Moral politics" are not as interested in the structural power relations of a society or in political decision making of social institutions as in the moral values of individual choices. The problem in focusing on this kind of politics in today's media sphere is that remarkable power is still exerted by national and trans-national political institutions.

Political scandals, in which general moral annoyance is displayed by the media, might arouse views about "the watchdog media" with concrete political consequences, as in the case of Finnish Foreign Minister Ilkka Kanerva, who had to resign after sending several hundred text messages to an erotic dancer in the spring of 2008. Such episodes can, however, bring our attention apart from political decisions fundamentally affecting our daily lives. As McNair (2007, 63) puts it: "We may in such cases be enthralled at how the mighty are fallen, while remaining ignorant as to the less glamorous but more important details of how political power really works and is exercised." The crucial problem of performative political publicity was crystallised by one of my interviewees, who worked as a campaign manager in the 2006 presidential elections: a "disparity between public performances and hidden political decisions."

Analysing changes in the Finnish media system and political communication can therefore more generally reveal the problems facing the public sphere when the Democratic Corporatist Model is transformed into the Liberal Model (see Table 2). The success of the popular press and commercial broadcasting indicates that it will be justified to assert, at least in the Finnish case, that Hallin and Mancini (2004, 159, 165-170) understate the role of the commercial popular press and overstate the role of public service broadcasting in today's Democratic Corporatist countries.

Table 2: The Twenty-first Century's Finnish Media System in Comparison with the Ideals of the Habermasian Public Sphere and the Democratic Corporatist Model

	Habermasian Bourgeois Public Sphere (ideal)	**The Democratic Corporatist Model (ideal)**	**The Democratic Corporatist Model in Transition**
Period	18th century	1960s and 1970s	Since the 1990s
Location	England, France, Germany	Nordic and Low countries, Central Europe	Finland (other North European countries?)
Arena for political deliberation	Public sphere	Public and media spheres	Media sphere
Political interests represented by	Private citizens	Social groups (parties, trade unions)	Individuals (politicians, consumers, activists)
The role of citizen	An active individual	A member of a social group	Audience, a consumer
Political parallelism	Strong, weakly mediated	Strong, mediated	Weak, strongly mediated
Political decision making	Common, public	Common, corporations	Hidden
Political publicity	Deliberative	Informative	Performative

Similar changes with slight variations characterise all the countries included in Hallin and Mancini's Democratic Corporatist Model. The partisan press and press subsidies have declined, and the commercial media have strengthened their position. In the Nordic countries the model seems to resonate more with the past than with the present (Esmark and Ørsten 2008, 36-38; Moring 2008, 57-58; Strömbäck and Nord 2008, 117-118). Among the Nordic countries, Norway and Sweden seem to have the most continuity with the model. In Norway and Sweden political television advertisements are prohibited and the share of public service broadcasting is still at a high level, even though the commercial media constantly increase in significance (Nord 2007; Strömbäck and Nord 2008, 113-116; Østbye and Aalberg 2008, 89-98). The popularity of the Internet is spreading in all countries, and no one knows exactly what its significance will be in future media markets and in politics. Developments in the US demonstrate that the Internet's role in political communication will probably be much more important than it is today (e.g. Nord 2007, 90).

However, it has to be kept in mind that every country included in Hallin and Mancini's Democratic Corporatist Model differs from every other country proving that variations characterise this transition. The same kind of "pillarisation" of various Christian and political ideologies seen in the Netherlands cannot be found in the Nordic countries (see Hallin and Mancini 2004, 146, 151-152). The case of Pim Fortyun has had undeniable and particular significance for more recent political communication in Holland (Pels 2003; Brants and van Braag 2007). Norway and Sweden could have supported the welfare state and public service broadcasting more enthusiastically than Finland, even though the mediatisation of politics and the professionalisation of political communication may otherwise be more established in Norway and Sweden than in Finland (Srömbäck and Nord 2008; Østbye and Aalberg 2008) Finland may therefore differ in many ways from other countries in the Democratic Corporatist Model.

Still, the mediatisation of politics, the professionalisation and personalisation of political communication, the increased voter volatility and populist politics have been apparent in all (formerly) corporatist countries. Table 2 demonstrates how the Democratic Corporatist Model constituted an effort to create pluralistic and diversified public sphere by media policy and state intervention in mediatised and corporative countries during the 1960s and 1970s. It also shows that this system has been declined by deregulation and commercialisation of the media since the 1980s and 1990s. Finland could therefore be taken as a baseline for comparing whether the same kind of separation of the media sphere and political decision-making is taking place in other countries of the model. At least Cees Hamelink sees that the professionalisation of political communication, common to many European countries, is increasing the divergence between the interest of political elite and citizens: "Professionalization emphasises the democracy of representatives, not the democracy of citizens" (Hamelink 2007, 181).

A key question is whether this kind of separation is a problem emerging in systemic transition or whether it is a more permanent symptom of larger problems facing North European democratic societies today. Is the public sphere in the more mediatised Liberal Model, towards which Democratic Corporatist countries are turning, also more transparent and therefore more democratic, or is it just more

colonised by those who have money enough to run public relations industries, as Habermas suggests? Commercialisation of the media does not necessarily increase a neutral journalistic professionalism. Quite the contrary; it is "likely to create new forms of advocacy journalism and political parallelism, even as it undercuts the old ones" (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 286). This certainly appears to be true in Finland, where the news business today is intensively connected to political elites as the sources and subjects of journalism (Kunelius et al. 2009).

Another important question is how the Internet will affect political publicity: will it become a prominent political public sphere or will it remain a fragmented public arena of private interests as it has been? The divide between political and media generations in today's societies suggests that there will be remarkable changes in this respect, when the older generation of the political and economic elite retire during the next few decades.

The most important lesson from the Finnish case, however, is that the mediatisation of politics may focus our attention as citizens and researchers too much on the "secondary dimensions" of politics, such as media performances, election campaigns and political scandals. The mediatisation theory may be taken too much for granted, even though there is still a great deal of politics and decision-making behind the media sphere. It might therefore be time to take the sphere of political institutions and processes seriously again.

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ROBERT L. IVIE

PREMAGATI UROK VOJNE: DEMOKRATIČNI OBETI MIROVNEGA NOVINARSTVA

Ta članek proučuje in razširja kritiko mirovnega novinarstva v dominantnih novičarskih medijih, da bi zasnoval model obogatenega novičarskega poročanja, odpornega zoper vojno propagando in skladnega z demokratično prakso. Obravnava potencial političnega mita, da bi omejil demonizirajoče nastavke, ki bi sicer oslabile demokratično razpravo, in predlaga, da bi mediji spodbujali demokratično kulturo s krepitvijo javnega arhiva, od katerega so odvisne deliberativne prakse. Kritična pozornost je usmerjena na dva dejavnika, ki zmanjšujeta demokratični potencial novičarskega poročanja: (1) trdovratno opuščanje ključnih informacij in (2) kronično neravnotežje razlagalnih okvirjev. Ne glede na to, ali strokovne konvencije in tržni premisleki onemogočajo korporativnim medijem, da bi popravili okrnjene in neuravnotežene novičarske pripovedi, sposobnost javnega arhiva v podporo demokratični razpravi ustreza znanju in perspektivi, ki ga prispeva za zmanjšanje potujevalnih projekcij. Vprašati se moramo torej, ali se lahko deliberativni obet demokracije lahko uresniči brez popravila pomanjkljivosti medijev.

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NIKOLAJ NAYDEN

JAVNI SVET BREZ ODNOSOV V JAVNOSTI?

Izraz "odnosi z javnostmi" (PR) se je že davno uveljavil v pomenu prakse, ki proizvaja pozitivno podobo v javnosti. Ta članek navaja, da je treba odnose z javnostmi osvoboditi iz zapora "PR" in jih rekonceptualizirati kot odnose, ki določajo javno sfero v enaki meri kot gospodarski odnosi določajo gospodarstvo. S tega vidika lahko razlikujemo tri osnovne ravni odnosov z javnostmi: (1) odnose med javnimi ustanovami, (2) odnose med državljani in javnimi institucijami, in (3) odnose med posameznimi državljani, ki komunicirajo kot tujci. Odnosi na zadnji ravni so opredeljeni kot "temeljni odnosi v javnosti", ker so najpreprostejši, reproducirani na vseh ravneh, ne potrebujejo institucionalne mediacije in so jedro vseh političnih vlog in pomenov. Osvoboditev izraza "odnosi z javnostmi" od njegove omejene rabe in uveljavitev pomena "odnosi v javnosti" omogočata odkriti skupne korenine političnih institucij in javne sfere ter raziskati naravno sorodnost med politiko in vsemi drugimi segmenti javnega življenja. Skupni učinek je ponovna konceptualizacija politike kot v bistvu izhajajoče iz odnosov v javnosti in demokracije kot bistva politike.

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ANNA VAN CAUWENBERGE, DAVE GELDERS, WILLEM JORIS

POKRIVANJE EVROPSKE UNIJE: OD MEDVLADNE K NADNACIONALNI PERSPEKTIVI?

Članek raziskuje meddržavno razširjenost petih novičarskih okvirov v poročanju o Lizbonski pogodbi (ustavi EU) v kakovostnih dnevnikih. Ob treh okvirih iz prejšnjih raziskav – gospodarske posledice, spori in "human interest" – sta bila ugotovljena še dva dodatna: moč in nacionalizacija. V sedemmesečnem obdobju pred podpisom Lizbonske pogodbe decembra 2007 smo analizirali 341 člankov iz štirih kakovostnih dnevnikov: *Le Monde* (Francija), *De Volkskrant* (Nizozemska), *De Standaard* (nizozemsko govoreča skupnost Belgija), in *Le Soir* (francosko govoreča skupnost v Belgiji). Naši rezultati kažejo, da čeprav so bile med časopisi pomembne razlike v obsegu okvirjanja, nasploh kažejo podoben vzorec oblikovanja okvirov novic. V vseh časopisih je najpomembnejši okvir gospodarskih posledic, ki mu sledi okvir moči. Okvira konfliktov in nacionalizacije sta se pojavljala v bistveno manjši meri. Te ugotovitve kažejo, da bi lahko pomen ustave EU kot simbola nadnacionalne enotnosti povzročil premik od podomačenega, v konflikt usmerjenega poročanja, kakršno je bilo ugotovljeno v prejšnjih raziskavah, k bolj enotni predstavitvi EU v časopisih, ki so bili vključeni v analizo.

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PIETER MAESEELE

NEVLADNE ORGANIZACIJE IN GENSKO SPREMENJENI ORGANIZMI: ŠTUDIJA PRIMERA ALTERNATIVNEGA KOMUNICIRANJA ZNANOSTI

Članek poskuša pojasniti, kako in zakaj smo našli lokalne nevladne organizacije, ki opravljajo vlogo alternativnih komunikatorji znanosti v družbenih konfliktih glede kmetijske biotehnologije. Prvič, pregled literature kaže, da je ob tveganjih modernizacije postal tehno-znanstveni razvoj protisloven, kar se kaže v interdisciplinarnih nasprotjih, ki tudi sprožajo ta protislovja. To ustvarja priložnosti za znanstveno podprto javno kritiko znanosti in tehnologije v novih družbenih gibanjih. Poleg tega je komercializacija znanosti na eni strani prinesla "znanstveno-industrijski kompleks", ki ga združujejo gospodarski interesi za promocijo biotehnologije, in na drugi strani prispevala k praksi komuniciranja znanosti, ki uporablja logiko odnosov z javnostmi in komuniciranja podjetij. Ko je težko razlikovati institucionalno komuniciranje znanosti od poslovnega komuniciranja, nevladne organizacije spodbijajo in preokvirjajo znanstvena spoznanja, da bi spodbudile epistemološke premike v institucionaliziranih znanstvenih pojmovanjih ter diskurzivne spremembe družbenih vrednot, iz katerih izhaja znanost. Drugič, članek poroča o ugotovitvah šestih poglobljenih intervjujev z govorci nevladnih organizacij, katerih cilj je pojasniti, kako nevladne organizacije razumejo svoje soočenje z znanostjo v razpravi o gensko spremenjenih organizmih in kako so se postavile v vlogo alternativnih komunikatorjev znanosti. V zaključku članka je nekaj priporočil za novinarstvo nasploh in zlasti za novinarstvo o znanosti posebej.

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JUHA HERKMAN

STRUKTURNO PREOBLIKOVANJE DEMOKRATIČNEGA KORPORATIVISTIČNEGA MODELA

Tako kot v mnogih drugih evropskih državah se je finska politična javna sfera v zadnjih treh desetletjih mediatizirala in komercializirala, hkrati ko so se zgodile strukturne spremembe v nacionalnih medijskih sistemih. Na primeru Finske članek obravnava strukturno preoblikovanje "demokratičnega korporativističnega modela", kot sta ga opredelila Daniel C. Hallin in Paolo Mancini v knjigi Comparing Media Systems (2004). Članek tudi proučuje, kaj bi lahko finski primer prispeva k razpravam o javni sferi in njihovem odnosu do empirične analize na splošno.

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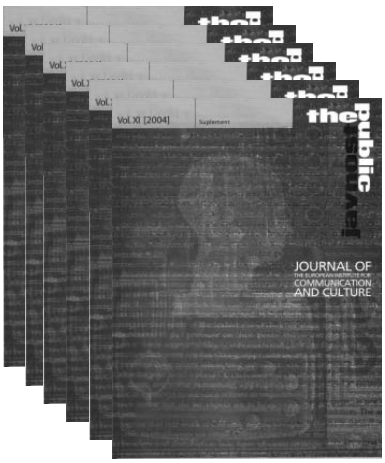

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