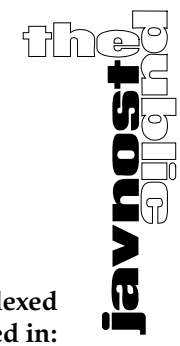

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CONTENTS

INFORMATION POLICY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

EU COMMUNICATIONS AND THE PROMISES OF DIALOGUE AND TRANSPARENCY

MICHAEL BRÜGGEMANN

Abstract

Taking EU communications as a case study this article deals with the relationship between communication activities of public authorities and the public sphere. Traditional theories of the public sphere regard government communications as an unwelcome intervention that distorts free and open debates. This article argues that public relations activities of governments should be analysed as being part of the implementation of an information policy that also comprises citizen's rights of access to documents and information. Whether information policy distorts or supports free deliberation is an empirical question that is answered by looking at the information policy of the European Commission since the year 2000. In response to the challenge of communicating Europe to largely disinterested audiences, the European Commission has reformed its communications in order to foster a European public sphere through enhancing the transparency of European governance and starting a dialogue with the citizens. The study shows that the EU fails on its promise of dialogue and that transparency could still be improved. The information policy of the Commission aims at normatively acceptable goals while using ineffective means. Information policy does not turn out to be propagandistic but ineffective. Focussing on media relations could make PR more effective in reaching out to the wider public. If journalism functions as its necessary corrective and citizens are empowered through strong rights of access to information, than information policy could contribute to a vivid transnational public sphere.

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Introduction

The European Union has a long-standing tradition of *not* communicating with the broader public. Until the 1990s, political elites have pursued their agenda of political and economic integration, while most citizens remained uninformed and by and large uninterested in what was happening in Brussels. The rejection of the constitutional treaty by the French and the Dutch voters in 2005, the Irish "No" to the Lisbon treaty in 2008 and the record low voter turn-out in the 2009 European elections are indications of the end of the traditional mode of European governance. From the perspective of the EU elites, the legitimacy crisis of the EU at least partly results from a "communication deficit" (Meyer 1999). According to policy papers from Brussels (e.g. European Commission 2006), the key for tackling this challenge is to foster the development of a European public sphere. To further this purpose, the European Commission has intensified its communication activities since the mid-1990s. From 2004 until 2009, communication even became part of the portfolio of a Commissioner. Margot Wallström who was appointed to this post initiated a comprehensive reform of the communication activities of the Commission (European Commission 2005a, 2006). Communication was supposed to become more than just an appendix to politics: "This Commission has made communication one of the strategic objectives for its term of office, recognising it fully as a policy in its own right" (European Commission 2005a, 2). The new policy aimed at enhancing the *transparency* of EU policy-making. Furthermore, it was designed to promote a *dialogue* with the citizens and thus prepare the ground of a thrivint *European public sphere* (European Commission 2006, 4-5). The promise of fostering a European public sphere understood as a transnational network of communication arenas where European citizens can participate in public debates about issues of common concern provides the research question for this article: Does the information policy of the European Commission effectively pursue this ambitious aim? Responding to this question requires the exploration of new grounds in political communication theory and research. The first challenge is to develop a framework for analysing information and communication activities as a *policy* and relating it to the notion of a democratic public sphere. The second challenge exists with regards to the operationalisation of this concept for analysing the case of the European public sphere and the information policy of the Commission. On a theoretical level, the empirical findings should allow for a better conceptualisation of the relationship between the public sphere and government communication activities.[1]

Information Policy: Connecting Public Relations and the Public Sphere

In everyday talk, journalists might write about the "information policy" of an energy company after an incident at a nuclear power plant. This use of the term equals information policy with public relations, which may be defined as "part of the management of communication between an organisation and its publics" (Grunig and Hunt 1984, 6). For the purposes of this article, however, the concept of information policy is meant to provide an integrative framework for analysing information and communication activities as *a policy*. Policy is understood as a set of governmental decisions (Dye 1972, 2; Jenkins 1978, 5). PR activities can thus be

analyzed as being part of the implementation of a policy governing all activities related to the exchange of all sorts of information, facts as well as opinions, between a public body and its environment. Therefore, this area of political activity may be defined as follows: *Information policy is a set of political decisions, which determine the goals, rules and activities of an organisation's communication with its constituency.* In contrast to private actors, who might limit their communication to address important stake holders, the constituency of democratic government bodies is the general public.

Information policy does not only result in certain strategies and means of active communication (*public relations*), but also in regulations of access to information (*transparency regime*). Viewing PR and transparency rules as belonging to the same policy enables us to explore the relationship between the two. While PR deals with communication understood as active and purposeful exchange of information and opinion which includes strategic persuasive communication campaigns, transparency rules define the right of the citizens to access all sorts of sources and not only the purposefully prepared messages of PR agents. PR might facilitate broad access to information but tensions might also arise between efforts of PR to withhold information and give it a certain "spin" and regulations that provide rights of full access to information. Having defined information policy, I will now briefly introduce the concept of the public sphere applied here and discuss the relationship between European information policy and European public sphere.

The term public sphere has numerous meanings. First of all, the adjective "public" describes objects which are neither secret nor private (Peters 2008/1994); "public" means, being accessible for everyone and being relevant to the political community as a whole. Discussion about what should concern the political community as a whole is one of the main functions of a public sphere. In this article, the public sphere is understood as a public space of communication with vital functions for democracy. It is a sphere of social interaction that is structured as a network of spaces of political communication (Habermas 1962/1989; 1992/1996). The various arenas of public communication are connected by communication flows (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988; Gerhards and Neidhardt 1991). Central junctions of this network are the mass media, which make the debates of smaller arenas of public communication accessible to the broader public. The notion of a public sphere differs from descriptive concepts such as "political communication" by its normative implications and its reference to the political community. Normatively, the public sphere is conceptualised as being an integral part of democracy. It serves two basic functions: Public debates have an informative function and they establish the *transparency* of the political process. Beyond that, they have a discursive function: they are the place of *exchange* of ideas, opinions and arguments (Peters 2005, 104).

This concept of a public sphere (see Ferree et al. 2002 for a typology of different approaches, and Splichal 2006 for an analysis of different philosophical roots of public sphere theory) may be transferred from the national to the transnational level: A *transnational public sphere* is a space of communication which is comprised of a set of national public spheres connected by communication flows: "a cosmopolitan public sphere is created when at least two culturally rooted public spheres begin to overlap. [...] It will be a public of publics, a decentred public sphere that permits many different levels without an implied universal audience" (Bohman 2004, 138-139).

The *European public sphere* is a network of national spaces of communication in Europe. The particularity of a European public sphere, in contrast to other big transnational communicative spaces, is the existence of the common political framework of the European Union. This common political authority can be addressed when actors in the public sphere make their claims. And EU politics can be expected to be responsive to public opinions expressed within this sphere of publics. This is why this transnational space of communication can become a *political* public sphere.

The question still arises, however, whether the social infrastructures are in place, which can carry transnational debates in Europe. In the absence of strong transnational media (Schlesinger 1999), the European public sphere evolves from activities in the existing national arenas of communication. This is not to say that a European public sphere exists just because there are mass media in all European countries. The European public sphere exists only to the extent that national public spheres open up for transnational flows of communication of a European scope. This process of Europeanisation encompasses different dimensions. Different approaches converge to put the following three dimensions at the heart of a developing European public sphere (Wessler et al. 2008; Koopmans and Erbe 2004):

1. Increasing discussion about EU issues (vertical dimension);
2. Intensifying connections between national public spheres (horizontal dimension);
3. Development of a perspective as participants of a common debate (identity dimension).

Empirical research on the European public sphere has brought to light the ambivalent finding of a *national segmentation of public spheres* in Europe: a trend of vertical Europeanisation with stagnation on the horizontal and the identity dimension (see Wessler et al. 2008 for a comprehensive account drawing on content analysis of newspapers in five EU countries).[2]

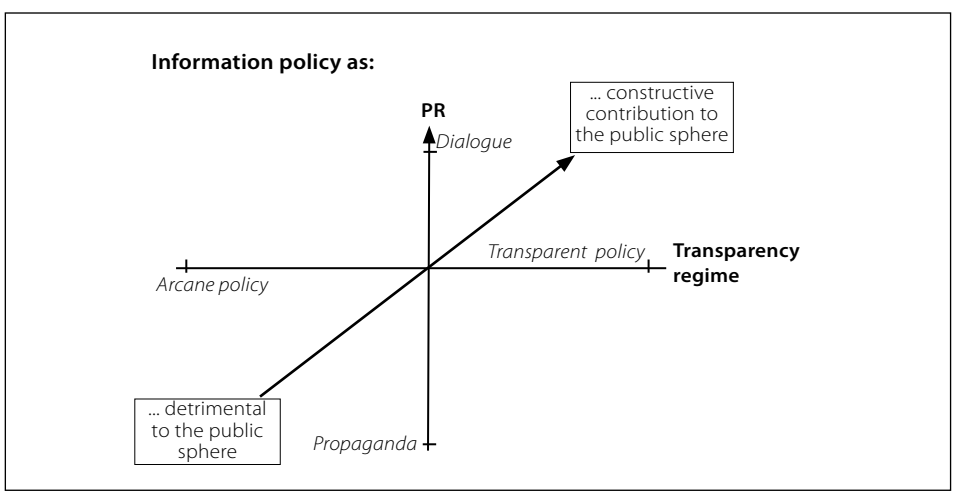
Ethics and Efficiency of a European Information Policy

So far, we have defined information policy as a set of decisions governing PR and the transparency rules of an organisation. We have defined the European public sphere as a network of national networks of public communication which forms an important precondition for democratic governance on a transnational level. Now, in what way could information policy influence the public sphere? If one follows the reasoning of the public sphere theory of Habermas, public debates should be autonomous from state control in order to enable critical reasoning (Habermas 2006). PR activities of the state and of big companies would transform the citizen's sphere into an arena of mere affirmation of power (Habermas 1962/1990). EU information policy would thus only contribute to the "re-feudalisation" of the European public sphere which would only serve the acclamation of political rule. This is the exact opposite of what the European Commission promises in terms of introducing transparency and dialogue with the citizens. If information policy was really about facilitating access to and free exchange of information and opinion, than it would be a substantial contribution to a thriving public sphere. In order to be able to evaluate whether the information policy of the Commission promotes a democratic public sphere, one has to look at both pillars of information policy: PR and transparency rules.

The analysis of the transparency regulation and its implementation will reveal whether the rules grant the citizens well-secured rights of access or rather shield state actions from public scrutiny by means of secrecy laws. Therefore, conceptually transparency regimes can be located between the poles of *transparency and arcane policy*.

Then, PR activities may also serve or distort free public discussion. PR influences public debates through strategic diffusion of themes and opinions, through the promotion of certain speakers in public debates, and sometimes also through the establishment of new communication arenas such as web platforms for an exchange of opinions on selected topics. All of this is an intervention into the structures of public debates. The question is, whether it serves to improve the chances of citizens to come to an "enlightened understanding" (Dahl 1989, 111) of politics and exercise their "right to communicate" in public which lies at the heart of the idea of publicity (Splichal 2006, 711). Thus, the contribution of PR to a functioning public sphere is not to be determined a priori: PR might or might not promote democratic communication. It could promote the debate of topics that would have otherwise been neglected by today's highly commercialised media system. It could also spread lies and silence critical discussion of policies. The extreme forms of PR may be labelled *propaganda and dialogue*. Propaganda as a concept of information policy pursues persuasive goals and employs manipulative means. In contrast to legitimate forms of persuasion, propaganda ignores generally accepted norms of communication such as truthfulness and a minimum of respect towards diverging opinions. Dialogue as a concept of information policy generates a communicative exchange with some kind of connection to political decisions (see below for its concrete operationalisation for this study). A policy orientated towards the strategies of transparency and dialogue is a constructive contribution to a democratic public sphere because it strengthens citizens' ability to form rational opinions and to participate in the political process in a meaningful way. Arcane policy and propaganda are clearly not appropriate for promoting democratic public debates.

Figure 1: Information Policy and the Public Sphere



In order to assess the actual impact of information policy on the public sphere it is not sufficient to test whether it pursues the normatively *acceptable aims* of promoting transparency and dialogue. The question is whether the policy is *effective* in pursuing these goals. Effectiveness would be the third dimension that needs to be added to Figure 1 in order to adequately locate information policy with regards to the public sphere. If the information policy of the EU actually wants to influence the transnational European public sphere, it would have to be able to operate effectively in such an expanded and complex space of communication. The communication of the EU must reach millions of citizens. Thus, besides the normative criteria, the analysis of the European information policy must also include criteria which test whether the information policy is suitable to reach out to this vast space of communication. Information policy will become effective – in the normatively desired or undesired ways – only if it reaches out to its addressees. When critics assume that PR activities of authorities lead to a re-feudalisation of the public sphere, they implicitly presuppose that the PR actually reaches the citizens and that it has effects on them. These presuppositions, especially when applied to the PR of the European Commission, should not be taken for granted.

Empirical Analysis of European Information Policy

The empirical study focuses on the development of the information policy of the European Commission since the turn of the millennium. The PR of the European Commission and the EU transparency regime will be discussed as to whether (1) they follow normatively acceptable strategies of a democratic information policy, and whether (2) the policy fulfils the preconditions for being effective with regards to the European space of communication. The analysis of the transparency rules will discuss whether they in fact are designed and implemented in a way that fosters the transparency of EU policy-making. The analysis of the PR will focus on the question of whether a political dialogue with the citizens was effectively promoted.

As for the PR, in the light of the diversity of the PR-instruments and activities by the different directorates and representations of the Commission, it was necessary to further limit the case study. The analysis has focused on the information activities around EU enlargement as this campaign became the biggest information campaign of the Commission in recent years. The analysis of the information activities related to enlargement required a multi-level analysis: it had to include the central activities in Brussels and the activities of the Commission on the national levels that was organised via its Representations in each of the member states.

The data collection was based on three pillars: expert interviews, document analysis and a standardised survey. The main data source were 59 expert interviews with officials of the Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council and the national governments, as well as with PR agencies involved, which were conducted successively between 2003 and 2006. The EU-wide overview was provided by two standardised surveys among all national representations of the European Commission and among the receivers of grants for information projects of the EU. In addition, almost 300 documents were analysed. Besides the policy documents (reports and policy papers of the Commission) also selected PR products (brochures, websites of the Commission in Brussels) and products of media relations work (interviews with Günter Verheugen, at the time Commissioner responsible

for managing EU enlargement) were included. The different sources of data were analysed using qualitative content analysis. In the following, only some of the main results can be presented here (see Brüggemann 2008 for details).

The European Commission's traditions of information policy clearly lie in a bureaucratic form of arcane policy: communication and information were neglected, though predominantly as a consequence of a bureaucratic communication culture, not as a consequence of a politically motivated conspiracy, which would consciously want to keep EU politics secret (Gramberger 1997, 100). A new, effective information policy heading for transparency and dialogue would constitute a fundamental change of the "policy paradigm" (Hall 1993), away from the structures and the organisational culture which have shaped the Commission since the 1950s. In the following, we will first turn towards the transparency rules and then move on towards the analysis of PR activities.

Towards Transparency?

The EU's transparency regime will be evaluated against criteria for a robust transparency regime according to international standards as established by a comprehensive comparison of international transparency rules in a report issued by the non-governmental organisation *Article 19*. According to international best practice, general access to all existing documents of an institution should be available with only a limited set of exceptions. A good transparency regime goes beyond the right of access to documents and also includes the routine, direct release of information, public meetings of institutions, and the introduction of registers listing all documents that the respective organisation holds. Active communication (PR) can contribute positively to realise transparency by facilitating access to information for all citizens (Mendel 2003). We will now briefly discuss how the different EU institutions perform on these criteria starting with the demand for public meetings. The discussion will then proceed from the evaluation of the formulation of the transparency rules to an analysis concerning the implementation of these rules.

Opening up council meetings. Traditionally, only the European Parliament (EP) had public meetings. The Commission and the Council met behind closed doors. For this reason, the Council has been widely criticised, since the secret meetings made it possible for national governments to lie about the policies they pursued in Brussels, and for using the EU as a scapegoat for everything that went wrong in Europe while claiming all the good for the national government. Since September 2006, many sessions of the Council and particularly the voting of the government representatives became public (Council of the European Union 2006). Today, meetings with legislative decisions are public as well as every session related to policies that fall under the co-decision regime with the EP. The citizens can follow these meetings via Live Stream on the Web.[3] There is a change towards more openness, but there are still a number of meetings (those without legislative decisions) which are not public.

A comprehensive right of access to documents. Likewise, after the turn of the millennium there was a move towards more transparency regarding the right of access to documents. Until 2001 there was no right for the citizens to access documents. The new EU-legislation (Regulation 1049/2001) is a thorough and robust regulation, which grants a general right of access to documents to all residents of the EU.

If the Commission or the Council decline the release of documents, citizens can demand an examination of this decision and ultimately also appeal to the European Court of First Instance or to the European Ombudsman. A refusal of documents can only be justified with reference to the reasons for exceptions that are provided in the regulation. The EU institutions always have to weigh their refusal against a potentially overriding public interest in the release of information.

Limited set of exceptions. The exceptions concern documents withheld for reasons of public safety, for keeping professional secrets and privacy, but also, whole areas of politics (security, finance, and economy) are exempted (Article 4). Civil society organisations such as *Statewatch* (Bunyan 2002) also criticise that the institutions are allowed to reject documents whose publication would "seriously undermine" (Article 4.3) the internal decision-making process of the EU institutions (Bunyan 2002).

Register of documents. With regards to transparency, practical questions also come into view. In order to request a document, one must be able to find out what documents there are. Therefore, the transparency regulations oblige the EU institutions to create public registers of all of their documents. This obligation corresponds to the "best practice" of international transparency regimes. Having said that, it is nevertheless important to distinguish between well-formulated rules and good implementation. In the following, we will see that the Commission, in contrast to the EP and the Council, does not always perform well in implementing the rules.

Implementation of regulations. The EU institutions have to regularly report on the state of the implementation of the transparency regulation. Table 1 compares the information gathered from the reports of the EP, the Council and the Commission.

Table 1: Implementing the Rules: Comparing the Performance of the EU Institutions

	EP	Council	Commission
Documents in register	1,022,000	850,000	74,000
Number of requests	1,900	2,200	3,800
Critical remarks from the European Ombudsman as opposed to number of complaints by citizens	1 1	0 0	5 7
Rate of documents disclosed after inquiry (2006)	98%	85%	77%

Note: The figures refer to the 2006 reports from the EU institutions as summarised by a paper issued by the EP (2008).

Quite to the contrary of common expectations that the Council is the most secretive of all institutions, the Commission shows most weaknesses in implementing the transparency regulation. The main weakness is the absence of a functioning register of documents held by the Commission.[4] Whilst the Commission produces by far more documents than the Council and the EP, the registers of these institutions are ten times more extensive than the one from the Commission. Thus, citizens cannot find out which documents they can request from the Commission – a fact, which has been labelled a case of "maladministration" by the European Ombudsman.[5] Also, with regards to other criteria, the Commission does not fare well in comparison with the Council and the EP: The EP and the Council give green light for access in response to a higher proportion of inquiries. And the Commission received critical remarks from the European Ombudsman in five cases in 2006.

The research process for this study also depended on free access to a multitude of documents. Therefore, the author could gain first hand experience with the implementation of the transparency regulations by the officials working with the Commission and the Council. Officials from the Commission followed quite diverse approaches towards transparency when being asked for documents and information for the purpose of conducting this research project. While some officials were very open and helpful in providing documents, others claimed that all the "public" documents of the Commission were already published online, whereas all other documents were "internal" and not accessible for outsiders. This does not go well with the transparency rules, which grant a general right for access to all documents. And for all documents, they can be only refused on the grounds of the exceptions in the regulation. Despite repeated e-mails, a query for documents from one of the Representations of the Commission remained unanswered for five months and then access was refused. The author gained access to the requested (two-year-old) activity reports only after an appeal to the Secretariat General of the Commission and after declaring that the next step will be to appeal to the Court of First Instance or complain to the European Ombudsman. Apparently, the spirit of official secrecy still pervades some corridors of the Commission. It seems crucial that political organisations not only have well-formulated rules for access to documents but that they also develop a culture of transparency in their daily work. Evidently, this has been more successful in the Council than in the Commission.

Another important finding concerns the question of who actually uses the transparency procedure. It comes as no surprise that ordinary citizens are not the main users of this kind of procedure. Lobbyists, NGO representatives, lawyers, scientists and representatives of other public institutions are the main users of the transparency regulations (European Parliament 2008). An important group is represented with less than three percent of the inquiries: the journalists. They cannot wait for two weeks to access to documents. However, they would be the group which could make the information contained in documents available to the general public in a language that citizens can understand.

The conclusion must remain ambivalent. Looking only at the formulation of the transparency rules, we could conclude that the EU is indeed one of the most transparent public institutions in the world. But looking at the implementation of the transparency rules, it still seems too early to talk about a fundamental change of policy paradigm. There seems to be a co-existence of strong rules opening up access to information and the traditions of bureaucratic arcane culture limiting their implementation.

Dialogue Desired?

Access to information and documents may be complemented by public relations measures of actively disseminating information. Furthermore, the Commission even wants to go beyond dissemination of information and start a dialogue with the citizens in order to vitalise the European public sphere. Whether the information policy of the Commission incites such a political dialogue, was explored through a case study of the PR campaign on the EU's big fifth enlargement round. With a budget of 150 million Euros between the years 2000 and 2006, the activities on EU enlargement constituted an important focus of the Commission's communication work. The PR was partly managed from the headquarters in Brussels and partly

from the Commission's Representations in the EU member states. The Representations administered a large part of the budget and had a (limited) degree of autonomy in spending the funds.

Did the activities inspire a dialogue with the citizens? In order to respond to this question, one has to further clarify the concept of "political dialogue" first. The concept of a political dialogue with the citizens goes far beyond the demand for transparency. In fact, transparency is only one of the preconditions for a dialogue to work out. The central feature of dialogue is the exchange of ideas, opinions and arguments. A dialogue becomes political not only by dealing with political topics but also because there is some kind of connection to political decision-making. The connection to the decision-making process has a temporal component: the dialogue should precede the political decision in order to be plausibly able to have some kind of relevance for politics. In the case of "dialogue after decision-making," PR would use dialogue merely as a means of persuasion. This may be effective and also politically legitimate; however, it is not consistent with the concept of dialogue in a political sense. Then, a political dialogue would also have an institutional component: there would have to be procedures and routines which feed the results of the dialogue back into the political decision-making arena, thereby providing for responsive politics. First of all, we will look at the temporal condition for the possibility of political dialogue, i.e. the relationship between political decision-making and public communication activities. In retrospect, three phases can be distinguished.

(1) *Politics without public communication*. After the fall of the iron curtain in 1989 the EU faced the question of how to relate to the Central and East European countries (CEE). The political project of enlargement developed as an answer to that question. In 1993, the accession criteria were formulated in Copenhagen. Until 1997, three CEE countries, Cyprus and Malta had submitted applications and struck association agreements. De facto, the general course for a big enlargement round of the EU including a number of CEE countries was set by the year 1997. It took five more years, however, to develop a communication strategy paper on EU enlargement.

(2) *Information for experts and the slow establishment of an information policy on enlargement*. From 1998 to 2002 the crucial negotiations towards accession took place. The political process was transparent only for policy experts who were able to interpret the policy papers issued by the Commission, such as the progress reports about each candidate countries' preparedness for enlargement. The Commission did not publish information about the negotiations themselves. One of the interviewees remarked:

> *The Commission strictly adhered to the principle of confidentiality. However, since so many participants were involved in the negotiations the journalists did always find ways to get information. [...] In this situation, those who leaked the information set the tone and the Commission played the second fiddle.*

All in all, the Commission did not act as a political communicator, but disseminated expert information about the state of the accession process in the different candidate countries. At the same time, the structures of an EU information policy on enlargement were established: the Directorate General of Enlargement set up an information unit and issued a strategy paper in 2002.

(3) *Delayed implementation of PR activities for the general public*. It was not before 2003 that concrete PR activities were planned and realised on a bigger scale. Due to delays in implementing communication plans, many projects could only be realised in the years after the accession date (1 May 2004).

Overall, communication was clearly lacking behind political decision-making. De facto, the PR of the Commission served to clean up after political decisions. It served to communicate political decisions rather than generate a political dialogue preceding political decisions. The uncoupling of the policy process and communication activities might be interpreted as a political strategy. In line with the spirit of the traditional functional logic of European integration (Haas 1968), progress in the integration process preceded public discussions. EU enlargement became a "fait accompli" before the citizens took notice of it.

The analysis of policy documents and the expert interviews conducted with officials show that this was not necessarily a voluntary decision or a strategic move by the Commission. One explanatory factor was the bureaucratic culture of the Commission. Following this logic, some of the interviewees argued, that the Commission was not able to disseminate information before the final agreement on the list of the joining countries and the precise time plan for accession was agreed. Otherwise one would presumably not know what to communicate. Other reasons for delays in communication as pointed out by most interviewees are related to implementation problems that the Commission faced due to strict and changing budgetary rules and a lack of adequate staffing for the administration and implementation of communication measures with the broader public.

Even with this lagging behind of the communication process in mind, it would still be conceivable that the Commission has kicked off a "dialogue" about the topic of EU enlargement in 2004 with some kind of political relevance for the following enlargement round to include Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. Therefore, it still makes sense to determine whether there was some kind of broad debate with citizens at all. Then, at least, the PR would have been *dialogic*. As pointed out above, it would constitute a political dialogue only if some kind of link to political decision making could be detected.

The empirical quest for dialogue will be pursued focussing on the case of Germany since here, unlike in other member states, the PR activities were documented in a very thorough and consistent way, e.g. giving details on the groups targeted by the PR measures, the number of participants and the degree of media coverage about the Commission's activities. The Representation in Berlin provided monthly reports from 2002 until 2004 and in this time period it described 159 information activities, which are the units of analysis. In the first step, various types of activities were assigned to different strategies of information policy. The underlying assumption is that different communication activities have a varying potential to inspire a dialogue. In a discussion forum where people representing different opinions sit on the podium and the audience can ask questions and express opinions, the structural conditions for a dialogue are better than in the case of marketing activities such as organising entertaining events, performances, games or putting up posters along the road. Of course, this classification is very rough because it is not guaranteed that a speaker uses valid arguments instead of sheer propaganda lies. Also, at a public round table discussion, the only thing that is certain is that the setting of the

event allowed for the exchange of different positions and arguments but we do not know whether there actually was an exchange of different opinions.

Table 2: Profile of PR Activities in Germany (2002-2004)

PR activities	Frequency (%)
Seminars, exhibitions, political education	26
Political speeches / appearance of single speakers	13
Discussion forums	46
Social events, games, advertisements	15
Analysis of the monthly reports of the German Representation of the Commission by the type of activities mentioned; N = 159.	100

Table 2 shows that nearly every second PR action mentioned was a discussion forum. This most frequent type of activity was followed by measures which convey background information like seminars, exhibitions, and activities of political education. Hence, many actions had a high potential of dialogue and transparency. There were fewer activities which fall into the category of one-sided justification. Political marketing in the forms of social events, games and advertisements plays only a negligible role.

Dialogical forms were at the heart of the PR activities organised by the Commission. It was not possible, however, to determine an institutional feedback-channel through which the results of these dialogues were able to systematically flow back into the political decision-making. Thus, the communication of the Commission on the topic of enlargement turns out to have been dialogic. In the absence of an institutionalised or at least a temporal connection to the political decision-making process this should not be interpreted as a political dialogue, but rather as a dialogic means of explaining a political decision already taken. Its aim is to bring the topic of enlargement onto the agenda of public debates.

So far, we have argued that the dialogic PR of the Commission was *not a political dialogue*. We will now show that it was not a dialogue *with the citizens* either, since the Commission failed to reach out to the broader public. Again, this will be demonstrated drawing on an analysis of the data from Germany. We assume that debates with a broader outreach call for one or (rather) several of the following conditions to be fulfilled: (a) there are many participants; (b) activities primarily address professional multipliers such as teachers, politicians, and journalists among the participants; (c) important media outlets follow the debate and serve as amplifiers.

Table 3: The Reach of PR Activities in Germany (2002-2004)

"Micro-activities": activities that reached less than 50 people and did not focus on professional multipliers (journalists, teachers, politicians)	22%
"Media-centred activities": News coverage in several regional or one national media outlet	22%
Typical number of people attending (median)	85

Note: Analysis of the monthly reports of the German representation of the European Commission N = 159 (activities mentioned)

Almost one-fourth of all activities mentioned in the reports by the Commission reached less than fifty people and did not primarily address professional multipliers (see Table 3). These types of activities were therefore categorised as "micro-activities" from which no effect on the broader public space can plausibly be expected. Typically, the activities of the Commission drew only slightly more than eighty participants. According to the reports, only less than one-fourth of all activities received intense media attention. Overall, these figures show that (at least if the case of Germany was representative for the PR of the Representations of the Commission) the Commission was not able to reach out to hundreds of millions of EU citizens drawing on the small scale PR activities that were at the heart of the EU enlargement campaign.

As the Commission has no direct way to address hundreds of millions of citizens, it would still be possible to focus PR activities on media relations in order to enhance outreach. Unfortunately, media were clearly not at the centre of communication on EU enlargement. This can be shown by looking at the resources available for projects with the media. Table 4 classifies the various posts from the budget administered in Brussels by primary target group as "media relations" or "direct PR": barely thirty percent of the expenditures went to media-cantered activities (Table 4).

Table 4: The Central Budget for PR Activities (2001-2004)

Share of PR budget [%]	Media relations	Direct PR	
Publications		6	
Events		1	
Discussion Forums		2	
Information Centre in Brussels		4	Centrally managed PR expenditures of DG Enlargement: 35 Million Euro in total.
Calls for Proposals: NGOs*		56	
Calls for Proposals: Media	24		
Other Broadcasting Projects	2		
Journalist Seminars	3		
Overall Percentage	29	69	

Note: Calculations based on Commission documents (European Commission 2004; European Commission 2005b). The data are rounded to one percent.

*The largest tender of fourteen million Euros in 2004 was not only available to NGOs but also to public bodies.

The finding that the Commission neglected media relations is also supported by looking at human resources; a good press work does not necessarily require a huge budget but certainly adequate staffing. Specific media relations work on EU enlargement in Brussels was basically handled by one press officer, the spokesman of Günter Verheugen, who was supported by one secretary and a part-time assistant – facing one of the biggest press corps in the world.

The case study on EU enlargement has shown that the human and financial resources of the Commission for communication were centred on PR activities that

aim to reach out directly to citizens. They did reach some citizens but mostly those already interested in the EU who were willing to attend informational seminars or public roundtable discussions. The PR of the Commission failed to reach the public at large. Media work was structurally weak and therefore could not compensate for the failure of direct PR activities.

Perspectives for the Information Policy of the EU

Overall, the information policy since the turn of the century has turned into a road heading for more transparency and dialogical forms of communication. The introduction of new transparency rules as well as other measures, namely the introduction and the improvement of the Web site "EUROPA" (see Brüggemann 2008 for details), are certainly milestones on this way. As regards the question of dialogue, there was a multitude of discussion meetings funded by the Commission and often organised independently by civil society organisations. As these measures were lagging behind the decision-making process, they can hardly be viewed as being part of a political dialogue with the citizens of Europe. It could still have been a relevant contribution towards explaining EU enlargement to the people if the PR had been able to reach out to millions of citizens. Looking at the effectiveness of both, the steps towards transparency as well as the attempts towards dialogue, the analysis arrives at the finding that the potential to actually enhance the transparency and public debate about European governance is severely compromised by a lack of effective implementation of information policy: This was shown by looking at the implementation of the transparency rules as well as by looking at PR measures. All in all, the image emerges of an information policy which operates "with the handbrake on." Information policy turned out to be normatively acceptable (even if the aim of dialogue proved to be illusionary) but not effective.

However, the information policy is not failing because it refrains from means of marketing and propaganda. Promoting a culture of transparency within the European Commission and installing a more comprehensive register of documents would help to make transparency real. The only way to enhance the effectiveness of the PR of the EU seems to be to focus on media relations. Only the media can take micro-dialogues with a few dozens of citizens to the wider public; this means the promises of the PR of the Commission must be scaled down. A direct dialogue with the citizens seems to be illusionary. The promise of dialogue itself becomes propagandistic if the debates with citizens do not reach a wider public and are in no way linked to political decision-making.

Even if direct dialogue might be bound to fail, the Commission can still go beyond promoting open access to EU information. It could strive to put EU topics on the agenda of public communication by strengthening media relations. National media are perfectly adapted to the needs of the national audiences. There are already signs of Europeanisation at least in the quality press (see e.g. Wessler et al. 2008). Information policy could try to broaden this trend. By provoking public transnational debates in the media, the Commission could contribute to a lively European public sphere. Beyond these practical conclusions drawn from this study, we will now go back to the more abstract question concerning the relationship between information policy and the public sphere and open up some links for future research.

Information Policy and the Public Sphere: Potential and Limits

The ambivalent finding of this study, that the Commission pursues democratically acceptable aims but fails in communicating effectively, also opens up a new perspective on normative theorising of state intervention in the public sphere. The general assumption of a re-feudalisation of the public sphere through information policy cannot be confirmed by the case study on the European Commission. PR measures are neither propagandistic by nature nor do they always have strong effects. If the case of the EU can be generalised to the information policy of other public bodies, then we should be very cautious in jumping to conclusions about good or bad effects of government intervention in the public sphere. Information policy may contribute to transparency or it may indeed be an attempt towards misguiding citizens. Providing access to information and documents promotes the thriving of a public sphere as it provides an important resource for public discussions: information that is needed to make useful political arguments and come to enlightened conclusions.

For the question of promoting direct political dialogue with citizen, there is a more sceptical conclusion. For the Commission, the strategy of a political dialogue proved to be deceptive. Researchers should be very careful when looking at political institutions which promise a dialogue with the citizens: they should ask whether these public bodies can actually initiate and implement a political dialogue with the citizens and whether these public bodies can be plausibly expected to take dialogue seriously. First of all, executive bodies such as the European Commission lack a strong incentive for dialogue if they are not elected by the citizens and do not have to fear sanctions if they ignore the needs of the citizens. In these cases, responsiveness is primarily a voluntary act of the administration. Furthermore, the Commission, as well as many national administrative organs, lack the means for a direct dialogue with the broader public. They cannot directly communicate with millions of citizens.

Government bodies might nevertheless contribute to the thriving of a public sphere in a more effective and normatively acceptable way if they focus on media relations. Then, on the one hand the media can work as an amplifier of political communication to a wider public. On the other hand, professional journalism can counter propaganda efforts by press officers. Therefore, the media are not only an amplifier but also a necessary corrective of government communication. Direct PR might be fashionable among some practitioners because there is no critical corrective for their messages. Sometimes, however, they overlook that there is also no amplifier for reaching out to millions of people. Media relations are thus the missing link between information policy and the public sphere. And the political message which results from these considerations is that a democratic and effective European information policy is feasible.

Using the concept of information policy for empirical studies has proven to be useful for the case of the EU and it is very likely to be helpful to analyse national forms of government communication since it combines the analysis of transparency rules and PR measures, which are, indeed, two sides of the same coin. Furthermore, the study has shown that it is paramount to combine research addressing norma-

tive questions (guided by the public sphere concept or other approaches) with questions of effectiveness of communication. Beneficial or malevolent, attempts to communicate may fail. Following Luhmann, one should indeed assume that communication is unlikely to occur (Luhmann 2005, 30). And this is certainly true for direct communication between government bodies and citizens, especially when the question is taken to the level of transnational structures of governance and communication.

Notes:

1. This article presents a concept of information policy that has been originally introduced in a more conceptual article in *Javnost – The Public* (Brüggemann 2005) and has been more fully developed and applied to the case of the EU in a book published in German (Brüggemann 2008). This article presents key findings and the main conceptual conclusions arising from of this study. I would like to thank the reviewers from *Javnost – The Public* for the very helpful feedback on earlier versions of this article!

2. For an overview of some of the flourishing academic literature on the European public sphere which goes beyond the scope of this article, please see the review article by Brüggemann et al. (2009) as well as the special issues of *Javnost – The Public* (2/2005), *European Journal of Communication* (4/2007), *Journalism* (4/2008), *Journalism Studies* (1/2009) and the project reports by the AIM project (see: http://www.aim-project.net/), the EUROPUB project (see: http://europub.wzb.eu/), the Reuters Institute (see: http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/research/featured-projects) and the ongoing research in Amsterdam (see: http://www.claesdevreese.com/research.html), Oslo (see: http://www.arena.uio.no/about/staff/trenz.xml), Zurich (see: http://www.nccr-democracy.uzh.ch/research) and Bremen (see: http://www.jacobs-university.de/publicsphere).

3. See: http://ceuweb.belbone.be.

4. Find the register of documents at: http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/recherche.cfm?CL=en.

5. According to the web site by the NGO Statewatch that has set up an observatory on Freedom of Information in the EU, see: http://www.statewatch.org/foi/foi.htm.

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A THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK TOWARD NETWORKED COMMUNITIES

A CASE OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNITY INFORMATION COMMONS

SEUNGAHN NAH

Abstract

The essay builds a theoretical framework toward the electronic information commons that can bridge virtually and physically networked communities. Relying on Habermas' theory of communicative action, first, the essay maps out community as a unit of democracy in a civil society context through which it provides a meta theoretical framework to understand a conceptual framework of the electronic community information commons from such theoretical perspectives as the public sphere, social capital, and networked communities. Then, the essay proposes an analytical framework that enables scholars and researchers alike to examine how community computer networks or virtual communities contribute to physical communities and vice versa through potential research agenda and questions. Theoretical, methodological, and practical issues are discussed.

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Introduction

With the advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs), a wide variety of virtual communities, ranging from community computer networks to recent citizen media projects in local communities, have formed new types of social relations among diverse individuals, groups, and organisations. Although newly emerging virtual communities have been connected to physically embedded communities, previous studies in the field of computer-mediated community communications have largely paid special attention to unique characteristics of online communities distinct from offline communities. Therefore, many earlier scholars and researchers have assumed that online communities are separate from offline communities. This assumption has been reflected in various terms that indicate these new communities, such as "virtual community" (Rheingold 1993a; 1993b), "networlds" (Harasim 1993), and "nonplace community" (Frederick 1993), all of which emphasises the discontinuity between traditional and modern communities.

In contrast, other scholars and researchers alike have attempted to bridge the gap between online and offline communities, assuming that the community in virtual space is based upon the community in physical space, and thus, the two types of communities are closely related to each other (e.g., Wellman 1999; Friedland 2001). Considering that both community types have a strong existence today, it is an attractive perspective that could explain our social life as a coherent whole. Although it is assumed that offline and online communities are interrelated, the theoretical and analytical frameworks that can bridge two distinct, but closely related, communities have been largely missing, especially in terms of how virtual communities can contribute to physical communities and vice versa. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide a theoretical and analytical framework that enables scholars and researchers alike to understand better the nexus between online and offline communities and examine community oriented citizen media projects or community computer networks.

In so doing, this essay maps out community as a unit of democracy in a civil society context, relying on Habermas' theory of communicative action (1987) through which it provides a meta theoretical framework to understand a conceptual framework of the electronic community information commons (Ostrom 1990; Levine 2002) from such theoretical perspectives as the public sphere (Habermas 1962/1989), social capital (e.g., Putnam 1995; 2000), and networked communities (Wellman 1999; Wellman et al. 2001). Then, the essay proposes an analytical framework that enables scholars and researchers to examine how community computer networks or virtual communities contribute to physical communities and vice versa through potential research agenda and questions. Lastly, this essay offers discussions on theoretical, methodological, and empirical issues, as well as practical issues regarding physically and virtually embedded and networked communities.

Theoretical Framework

Mapping Community as a Unit of Democracy

Relying on the distinction between systems and the lifeworld (Habermas 1981/1987), this section locates community as a unit of democracy and further discusses what roles community oriented projects, such as community computer

networks or citizen based community projects coupled with digital communication technologies, can play on community processes in democratic societies. The theory of communicative action (Habermas 1981/1987) offers the mechanism of social evolution, which differentiates systems from the lifeworld. In particular, communicative action enables individuals to disseminate knowledge, generate cultures, and build identities, thus integrating the lifeworld. As a consequence, the lifeworld that is integrated through communicative action – as opposed to political and economic systems that are integrated through steering media, such as power and money – nurtures civil society to grow and develop. The lifeworld is realised through public spheres that mediate between civil society and systems, in which a large public body forms public opinion and builds social capital, such as networks, values and norms through communicative action.

Although numerous definitions of community as a complex concept exist, community has long been conceived of as a unit of democracy mediating between the lifeworld and systems (see Friedland 2001) in which community members, groups, organisations, and institutions are integrated through communicative action. That is, community is considered as a mediating sphere, which corresponds to the public sphere (Habermas 1962/1989), and serves as a unit for a healthy democracy to function. Community, by definition, is one of the public spheres or equivalent to the public sphere that builds civic resources, such as social capital, not only at the individual level, but also at the organisational level, which is connected and integrated through communication networks. As the concept of community is complex, the diagram in Figure 1 attempts to locate community as a unit of democracy in a civil society context in relation to the distinction between the lifeworld and systems by comprising two dimensions (Habermas 1981/ 1987; Warren 2001): (1) mechanism or mode of coordination or integration and (2) closeness of social relations. First, in terms of mechanism or mode of coordination or integration, there are two types of modes: (1) legal coercion and money at the systems level, such as states and markets and (2) communication and norms at the social level. This makes a distinction between systems and the lifeworld. Second, in terms of the closeness among social relations, there are three types of relations: (1) intimate, (2) intermediate, and (3) distant. This results in an array of families, friendships, neighbours, voluntary and civic associations, and mediating associations in political and economic societies.

According to Habermas (1981/1987), the lifeworld that operates through communicative action has been decoupled from systems. In the decoupled relationship, the public sphere mediates between the system and civil society embedded in the lifeworld. Although the concept of public sphere is useful in understanding the differentiation between the lifeworld and systems within the civil society structure, it is somewhat abstract because the public sphere requires a substantial unit. As media is conceived of as a public sphere, it also requires a substantial unit, which is geographically and physically embedded, in order to function. The lifeworld that has been decoupled from the system comprises the interaction of communicative actions among citizens and their shared norms, culture, and personality. Community is embedded in the lifeworld that is equivalent to civil society, and the lifeworld and the system interact in the mediating realm of the community (see Friedland 2001). Further, community functions as a unit of democracy between the lifeworld

Figure 1: Mapping Community as a Unit of Democracy*

Closeness of Social Relations	Means of Social Coordination or Integration				
	Legal Coercion		Social (Norms and Communications)		Money
System	**States**				**Markets**
Distance		Mediating Associations: Political Society	Mediating Spaces: Publics	Mediating Associations: Economic Society	
			Community		
Lifeworld			**Civil Society**		
Intermediate		Voluntary/Civic Associations			

* Reconstructed from Friedland (2001), Habermas (1981/1987) and Warren (2001, 57).

and systems, and the public sphere as a mediating sphere between the lifeworld and systems can be realised in a community. As a result, family, friendships, and neighbours comprise primary forms of the lifeworld, whereas community becomes a secondary form of the lifeworld.

In relation to community, related concepts, such as the public sphere and social capital, provide valuable insights in understanding the roles of media in a community context. As aforementioned, the public sphere functions as a mediating realm between the state and civil society, which is embedded in the lifeworld. In particular, media may play a vital role as a public sphere, which creates social capital for a community to function in a democratic society. More importantly, media can function in relation to voluntary and civic organisations, which contribute to organisational social capital in a community context. Therefore, media, especially, digital communication technologies, can serve as public spheres, or integrating and mediating realms in which systems and the lifeworld encounter in networked communities. Media, particularly, information and communication technologies can also generate civic resources and culture, which, in turn, allows for a healthy community to function in a civil society context. Therefore, the following section reviews a conceptual framework of the electronic community information commons (Levine 2002; Ostrom 1990), which integrates and bridges physical and virtual communities through community computer networks or citizen based community projects through digital communication technologies.

Conceptual Framework: The Electronic Community Information Commons (eCIC)

The notion of community information commons through the Internet has been proposed by Levine (2002; for a detailed discussion of the commons, see Ostrom 1990). According to Levine (2002, 7), commons is defined as an association, which is "something valuable (intrinsically or instrumentally) that a whole community jointly owns and controls." The commons ownership is achieved through organising networks of community institutions and groups, such as non-profit and

nongovernmental associations. And voluntary membership, autonomy from other institutions, deliberation, norms to govern membership and common ownership are major features of community information commons (Levine 2002, 7).

For the Internet to be an associational commons, Levine (2002) provides three necessary conditions. First, the Internet needs a voluntary-based association that can encourage community members to participate in community activities. That is, "the Internet now needs a *voluntary, democratic organization* that can demand something of its members and *take collective action* on their behalf" (Levine 2002, 8). Second, the associational commons should be community owned commons. That is, "this association should articulate a clear definition of the 'commons' and defend its evolving principles *against anarchist and corporate alternatives"* (Levine 2002, 8). Third, the associational commons should build social and community networks. That is, "it should *strengthen networks among people* who are interested in the commons idea, by *bringing activists* from various communities into face-to-face contact, and by *sponsoring interchanges among grassroots activists, software experts, leaders of major nonprofits, and public-interests lobbyists"* (Levine 2002, 8).

The electronic community information commons may provide a virtual public sphere in which all of the community members and organisations build virtual social capital. In this case, the community commons can serve as community-owned media and community networks, in which community members discuss community issues and seek information about groups and related community issues through the participatory sphere (Tonn et al. 2001). Pre-existing social networks may lead to community networks through communication technologies, such as the Internet (Fukuyama 1995). And existing community environments, social networks and culture may serve as a basis for creating online community networks (Sullivan et al. 2002, 874). That is, as community technology has contributed to democracy (Bakardjieva 2002), community networks may facilitate civic participation (Kavanaugh et al. 2005). In addition, the electronic community information commons may function as conduits to offline community engagement. As numerous studies have demonstrated (e.g., Jennings and Zeitner 2003; Shah et al. 2001), Internet use yields a positive relationship with offline community engagement. And, physically embedded community engagement and satisfaction lead to Internet use by community members (e.g., Dutta-Bergman 2005). Furthermore, community computer networks affect social capital and community involvement offline (Kavanaugh and Patterson 2001).

Theoretical Perspectives

To understand better the electronic community information commons, which refers to community oriented experiments and practices through information and communication technologies, the following section provides theoretical perspectives to build a theoretical framework.

The Public Sphere Perspective. The concept of the public sphere (Habermas 1962/1989) has been expanded as it has faced social, political, cultural, and technological transformations. The public sphere in a face-to-face communication context traces back to the notion of a bourgeois public sphere (Habermas 1962/1989) that refers to a mediating realm between civil society and the state, in which ordinary citizens participate in public discussions to achieve common goals and interests as

opposed to private goals and interests. In particular, the public sphere notion has been changed as media, such as newspapers, radio, and television, has evolved beyond face-to-face communication. The public sphere in a mass mediated communication context obtains dual status in both physical and mediated realms. Habermas (1974, 49) explains the mediated public sphere, arguing that "citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion – that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions – about matters of general interest. In a large public body, this kind of communication requires specific [technological] means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it. Today, newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere."

Although Habermas did not specify the possibility and potential of the Internet as a public sphere, the Internet provides another mediated public sphere for citizens to discuss current issues, and reach mutual understanding and consensus-building (e.g., Papacharissi 2000). In particular, as Web sites are interconnected through online networks, they connect citizens and grassroots groups to exchange information and engage in discussions, thus functioning as multiple public spheres (Dahlgren 2005). In this regard, it is noteworthy to consider three conditions beyond technological innovations that enable the Internet to serve as a public sphere.

First, the Internet should be free and independent from power and market forces. Without freedom from structural constraints, the Internet fails to function as a public sphere. Second, the Internet should provide citizens and grassroots groups with various information and news that can encourage people to engage in discussions, which in turn, may lead to collective actions. Third, the Internet should foster interaction between political elites and citizens, and equally important, among citizens. In reality, however, the Internet fails to provide multiple public spheres to citizens due mostly to structural constraints (e.g., McChesney 1999). Likewise, as Dahlberg (2004) points out, market forces are threatening online civic communication through the Internet, thus shrinking online public spheres. That is, information interwoven with entertainment is becoming prevalent and dominant.

Nonetheless, the Internet, and especially Web sites, function as multiple online public spheres that connect citizens, thus encouraging participation in community activities (e.g., Dahlgren 2005). Web sites may be also useful for advocacy and activists groups, such as environment social movements and minority groups in local communities, to achieve their organisational goals by performing their organisational activities. Indeed, the Internet is of importance to grassroots community organisations as their new communication tool (Beck 1997). In addition, civic portal sites provide information regarding their activities, which can be converted into civic or social capital in a local community (Putnam 2000). More importantly, Web sites of civic groups provide interactive features (Schuler 1996) so that people in organisations and community members can communicate with each other through discussion boards, Weblogs, and other functions of online discussion, which are open to the public.

The public sphere perspective focuses on open public communication and interaction among citizens, which is also one of the most crucial foundations for communities. Given that online public spheres are interconnected through networks, they are more likely to bond and bridge social ties that build trust and mutual obligation among community members. In other words, the online public spheres

may function as bases that enable citizens and groups to build social capital and lead to civic participation, which will be discussed in the following section.

Social Capital Perspective. Although Putnam (1995; 2000) has popularised the concept of social capital, its origins and definitions go back to Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman among others (Portes 1998). First, Bourdieu's definition of social capital has been conceived of as "the first systematic contemporary analysis of social capital" (Portes 1998, 3). He defines the notion of social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" and "the profits which accrue from *membership in a group* are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible" (Bourdieu 1986, 248-249). Here social capital has several dimensions, such as resources of the social network at the levels of *individuals and further structure* (structural equivalence). He further argued that social capital can be transferred into cultural and economic capital and, finally, symbolic capital.

Second, Coleman (1998) explains social capital as follows: "social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain action of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible. Like physical capital and human capital, social capital is not completely fungible but may be specific to certain activities. A given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others." (Coleman 1998, S98)

Third, Putnam has attempted to explain the decline of civil society in America within a framework that focuses on the concept of "social capital" (1995; 2000). According to his definition, social capital refers to "features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 1995, 67). Also, in the book *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000, 19), he defines social capital as "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (*social networks* added)."

Despite their difference of theoretical assumptions to explain the relationship between/within social structure and social actors, Bourdieu and Coleman emphasise the importance of strong ties. As compared to the previous two definitions of social capital, Putnam's definition tends to emphasise loose social ties through informal social gatherings and associations.

Furthermore, Shah and his colleagues (2001, 467) define the concept of social capital in a broad sense as "the resources of information, norms, and social relations embedded in communities that enable people to coordinate collective action and to achieve common goals." Taken together, social capital indeed has multifaceted and multilevel conceptual definitions (Shah et al. 2001). Social capital encompasses trust, norms, and social networks among individuals, groups, organisations, and institutions. In turn, social capital can contribute to civic and community engagement, such as participating in national and local elections, serving on a committee within some local organisations, working for a political party, and engaging psychologically in local communities.

Although the concern of social capital has been extended from an individual level to a structural level (Portes 1998), the concept of social capital has been narrowly defined at the individual level, but not at the relational or organisational levels (e.g., Brehm and Rahn 1997). Even when Putnam relies on a macro level of analysis, it is still an aggregate level of social capital through surveys from individuals (Putnam 2000). In contrast, Coleman (1988) emphasises social capital both at the individual and organisational levels as follows:

> *It accepts the principle of rational or purposive action and attempts to show how that principle, in conjunction with particular social contexts, can account not only for the actions of individuals in particular contexts but also for the development of social organization* (Coleman 1988, S96).

In addition, as Paxton (1999, 100) argues, "individuals can be informally connected to others through friendship choices and other types of network ties, and individuals can be connected to others through formal group memberships." As a result, it is necessary for social capital to be understood not only at the individual level, but also at the organisational level, which leads to civic or community engagement. As discussed above, social capital can be organisational civic capital, which connects community organisations through the generation of common civic culture, norms, and even trust among them. The organisational level of social capital matters in the sense that individual citizens participate in a community through their relations with various community groups, associations, and organisations. That is, individual actions can form their organised engagement through various community organisations that have different activities based on their missions and goals, varying from the advocacy of minority groups, such as gay and lesbian groups, through environmental groups, to sports and hobby groups.

However, they may also serve a common purpose, enabling citizens to have shared goals and interests in a community context (Coleman 1988, S101). As a consequence, social capital as resources that are generated through various community organisations may contribute to citizens' engagement in local communities. The organisational level of social capital also occurs through the Web sites of community organisations. Although Putnam (1995; 2000) has argued that membership in voluntary associations has declined, individuals have engaged in various groups that have existed in different forms through electronic communications since the advent of the Internet (e.g., Rich 1999). For example, various types of voluntary groups build their own communities through the Internet, specifically through Web sites. That is, civic capital through organisational associations serves as a resource that can facilitate and enable citizens to achieve common goals through civic organisations that serve as a representative agent for collective action. In this regard, it is necessary to link offline and online social capital because offline organisational social capital may potentially lead to online organisational social capital and vice versa.

As discussed, online public spheres provide bases in which community members create online social capital in the online communities that are distinct but closely related to offline communities, potentially empowering civic participation. In a networked community paradigm, various communities are interwoven in layers and even purely virtual communities become related to physical communities, which will be discussed in the following session.

Networked Communities Perspective. According to a social network perspective (Wellman 1999; Wellman et al. 2001), a physically based offline community is associated with a geographically bounded online community. For example, community members in Lexington, Kentucky, tend to frequently visit their community portal site of Kentucky.com (see The Media Audit, April-May 2006). In this regard, it is important to consider empirical studies that show some evidence regarding how offline community activities are connected to online community activities (see Dutta-Bergman 2005). Given that community and communication can be conceived of as a social network (e.g., Wellman 1999; Wellman and Gulia 1999), it is necessary to consider a *networked community communication model*, wherein every level of community, ranging from local to global, can be interconnected with the Internet (Friedland 2001). As local media play an important role in community integration (Wirt 1948; Janowitz 1952/1967; Park 1926/1967), communication media also can contribute to community attachment and integration, linking cross-cutting networks from all levels of communities. In particular, in the model of *community communication ecology*, not only traditional media, such as newspapers and television, but also new communication media, including the Internet, can play a vital role in creating and framing community issues, as well as providing public spaces for public discussion to work in a community context (Friedland and McLeod 1999; Friedland 2001).

Within a networked paradigm of community, community has been understood from the perspective of "continuity" rather than "discontinuity." Basically, a networked paradigm of community assumes that community *per se* has consistently existed in contrast to community collapse or breakdown (see Wellman 1999). That is, a networked community has simply not changed from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*; instead, the two have coexisted (Fischer 1977, 14). The social network paradigm focuses mainly on individual and social relations as a specified set of linkage within a structure, and therefore assumes that community has consistently existed and will continue to exist without any kind of breakdown or collapse (Fischer et al. 1977; Bender 1978). The social network paradigm also goes beyond the traditional paradigm, which considers community as a distributed space. It seeks to find social structure and social process as well as the individual (Wellman 1999, 15).

In this vein, it seems reasonable that the Internet provides two forms of community: personal community and group community, or whole networks (Wellman 1999; Wellman and Gulia 1999). The distinction between personal communities and group communities is crucial for understanding how community works in contemporary societies, both in online and offline spaces. Group community is a social network in which people interact with each other and regularly provide sociability and support. Here, people can become members of a village, kinship group, neighbourhood, or an on-line discussion group, such as Usenet newsgroups or discussion groups, through electronic bulletin boards. By contrast, personal community is an individual's network, which is scattered into intimate or anonymous relationships. Moreover, as Fisher (1977) points out, a social network paradigm transcends space and time, which were important analytical factors in traditional community studies. Therefore, the Internet may take a central position in the sense that it has increasingly played a major role in civic and political life, inasmuch as it has changed our community (or society) (Friedland and McLeod 1999; Friedland 2001). In the studies of the relationship between the Internet and

community, the Internet can influence not only the offline community, but also the online community.

On one hand, in an offline community context, numerous studies have shown how the Internet and its use were associated with community engagement and community building at both the individual and group levels (Shah et al 2001; Wellman et al 2001). Also, a growing body of studies has investigated the role of the Internet in a community context and how electronic community networks can contribute to building a better community, considering not only individuals but also institutions and associations (e.g., Schuler 1996). On the other hand, arguments about deliberation have been moving toward public discussions through online public forums since the Internet has gained popularity. That is, the Internet offers technological potentials, such as online bulletin boards, chat rooms, and Usenet news groups, enabling general citizens to participate in an "electronic public sphere" (e.g., Friedland 1996; Papacharissi 2000).

In this vein, many scholars have argued that the Internet can contribute to building a new online community, where people can create their identities and share common interests by discussing political and community issues (e.g., Jones 1995). Having said that, it is notable that the Internet has formulated two types of online communities that may facilitate a public sphere, which may be independent from market and state power (see Blanchard and Horan 1998): 1) physically based online communities and 2) geographically dispersed online communities. In particular, physically based online communities through the Internet can be analogous to physically based local communities.

As Sirianni and Friedland (2001) argue, if only physically based activities can create democratic civic engagement in the community context, the Internet itself may not function as a medium for facilitating civic activities. However, given that online space-based activities are as important as offline space-based activities, online communities, especially physically based online communities, may contribute significantly to democratic action and practice in the community context (see Doheny-Farina 1996; Tonn, Zambrano, and Moore 2001). It is notable that offline communities cannot separate from online communities and vice versa (see Wellman et al. 2001). In addition, the Internet can build a cross-local community, providing an imagined identity of not only upper levels of communities but also lower levels of communities and lifeworlds (Friedland and McLeod 1999; Friedland 2001). In the process of cross-local community building, the Internet can play a central role in the sense that it can provide people with a wide variety of information and news both within and between communities. Given that the Internet can have all the various communication patterns that personal and mass media have, the Internet can connect all levels of communities ranging from systems to lifeworlds from a networked community communication perspective (Friedland 2001).

As Web sites of community organisations function as public spheres and online communities, which generate social capital and community engagement online, they exist as a participatory space (Ester and Vinken 2003), which, in turn, generates and leads to offline community engagement. That is, consequences of the organisational level of engagement in the community organisations' Web sites lead to offline community engagement. In this perspective, there are two types of engagement to consider: (1) extra-organisational engagement, such as participating

in a community project, community events, a community conference, a community public forum, etc., and (2) intra-organisational engagement, such as mobilising participants, volunteers, and donors. As a consequence, community organisations are anchoring groups, which bridge and bond members of a community.

The theoretical framework discussed so far becomes more useful when manifested specifically through analytical frameworks that directly address specific research agenda and questions to examine how the electronic community information commons may contribute to physically embedded communities and vice versa. The following section proposes an analytical framework that enables scholars to examine the nexus between community technology and community building.

Analytical Framework

As Figure 2 shows, the electronic information commons through community computer networks or citizen based community media, by nature, originates from and thus is embedded in physical communities. The electronic community information commons should be free from political power and market forces in the systems, and community owned. Based on the community ownership, it should provide virtual public spheres which tie to physical public spheres where community members gather to discuss community affairs and issues. In so doing, the electronic community information commons should deliver a wide variety of information and news concerning community problems and common interests.

Figure2: Analytical Framework toward Networked Communities

Theoretical Perspectives/Level	Electronic Community Information Commons		
	Virtual Communities	Networked Communities	Physical Communities
The Public Sphere			
Macro/Meso: Ownership		Community Owned Public Sphere	
Micro: Communicative Action	Discussion		Discussion
		Reciprocal	
Social Capital	Networks	Community Social Capital Building	Networks
Macro/Meso/Micro	Trust, Values, Norms, and Culture Engagement		Trust, Values, Norms, and Culture Engagement

The public spheres created by the electronic community information commons should also function as the realms through which they create social capital, such as trust, norms, values, cultures, and encourage community members to participate in civic activities. The electronic information commons, which provides public spheres to build social capital, should function at multiple levels. For example,

the electronic information commons as a voluntary and civic association can build inter-organisational networks with a wide range of community institutions, organisations, and groups while helping community members build interpersonal networks. Also, the electronic information commons should provide venues by which community members participate in diverse community activities: vote on community issues, donate money to charitable non-profit organisations, work for groups as volunteers, and affiliate with civic associations as members.

The electronic community information commons should function as the virtual public spheres which tie to physical public spheres that enable community members to deliberate on current community issues and problems. Also, the public spheres through the electronic community information commons should provide public arenas by which social capital emerges among community institutions, associations, groups, and individuals. The electronic information commons should bond and bridge virtual and physical communities through integrated and networked communities.

In sum, this analytical framework generates research agenda and questions that help scholars and researchers examine how the electronic community information commons through community computer networks or citizen media projects in local communities can operate and how virtual communities interact and influence physical communities and vice versa through networked communities.

1. To what degree does electronic community information commons (eCIC) create the public sphere in relation to physical community structure and the offline public sphere? To what degree is eCIC free from political power and market forces?

2. To what degree does electronic eCIC contribute to public discussion online? Does online public discussion lead to offline public discussion and vice versa?

3. To what degree does eCIC create and build social capital? Does online social capital lead to offline social capital and vice versa?

4. How and to what degree do offline and online public sphere and social capital influence and interact with each other?

Discussion

Since the mid 1990s, scholars, researchers, and practitioners alike have attempted to build communities through information and communication technologies. According to the Knight Citizen News Network (http://www.kcnn.org), there are more than 800 citizen media sites, which have been emerging over the years either in individual blogs or through Websites of civic associations. Although numerous projects have been working on community building through community technology, there remains a lack of conceptual, theoretical, and analytical frameworks to examine and analyse emerging community oriented electronic spaces and projects.

In overcoming this issue, this essay first provides a meta theoretical framework to understand the nexus between media, especially digital communication technologies, community, and democracy. From the meta theoretical framework, the essay draws a conceptual framework which guides theoretical perspectives. Then, the essay builds an analytical framework, which can examine how virtual communities through information and communication technologies can contribute to physical communities and vice versa. In this regard, this essay adds a framework to the field through which it can contribute theoretically and analytically to this area,

suggesting that future studies should consider adopting the framework to analyse potentials, possibilities, and practices of community based electronic information commons for community development. Also, this essay contributes to a theoretical and analytical framework that helps to evaluate previous projects on community technology and community building.

While adopting the framework to apply to not only pre-existing projects, but also newly emerging projects, future studies should consider a whole community case study, which examines the networked communities. Methodologically and empirically, future studies should adopt multiple research methods, which include but are not limited to surveys, content analysis, ethnography (e.g., participant observation and in-depth interview), and network analysis.

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BALANCING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VALUE FOR THE DIGITAL TELEVISION ERA

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Abstract

As the digital switchover is the result of the dynamic interplay between economic, social and political interests, this article reflects on the role of all stakeholders involved in the switch to digital television services. It aims to discuss the trade-off between public and private policy interests focussing on strategies for preparing the transition process and the digital take-off as well as on future opportunities that become available in the spectrum (digital dividend). Based on a comparative study amongst three European countries, it is demonstrated that government has played an important role in the development of the digital television landscape in the past, and it is argued why policy makers should continue to do this in the future. Instead of a solely market-driven approach, a strong plea is made for a better understanding of stakeholders' expectations in deploying public policies and business strategies concerning the digitised media landscape.

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Introduction

After analogue television sets have become ubiquitous in the viewers' living room for several decades, technological developments and policy initiatives have led to the worldwide roll-out of digital television (DTV) services. Simultaneously, valuable content such as major sports competitions and Hollywood movies is migrating from free-to-air (FTA) television towards pay-television platforms, an evolution that is likely to produce a polarised digital television market (Padovani 2007). This migration process towards digital television services is being pushed both by content providers and network operators that are seeking revenue opportunities in exploiting the digital content market. In their turn, (European) policy makers have stimulated the development of digital television in the light of the establishment of the information society policy (e.g. eEurope, i2010). To accelerate the uptake of digital television services, the European Commission is urging all Member States to switch over from analogue terrestrial to digital television signals no later than 2012. Although this process has already been completed by a couple of European countries, many Member States are still in the phase of planning the transition and co-ordinating the roll-out of digital transmission systems and can possibly learn from the experiences of the countries where the mission has been accomplished (un)successfully.

As this digital switchover is far the result of the dynamic interplay between economic, social and political interests (Galperin 2004; Hart 2004; Feng et al. 2009), this article reflects on the role of all stakeholders involved in this (broad) migration process. In addition, the trade-off between public and private policy interests – which is complicating the establishment of digital television markets (Maier and Ottaviani 2007) – is also considered. As policy makers are faced with the challenge to facilitate a smooth switchover, this interface is the subject of current debate. A poorly managed process can have dire ramifications, leaving socially weaker households (especially in rural areas without simulcasting) without access to television services (Raycheva 2008). Regarding the outcomes of the analogue switch-off and the digital future, questions therefore arise what role the government should play (e.g. in terms of service or technology neutrality) and how they should handle digital dividend issues. As the added value from digital content/services is considered anything but obvious, the question remains who – if not the audience – will benefit from the digital switchover. The focus of this article is both on policies and strategies for preparing the transition process and digital take-off as well as on the future opportunities that become available in the spectrum (i.e. digital dividend). Based on a case-study approach of three European countries, it is demonstrated that government has played an important role in the development of the digital television landscape in the past, and it is argued why policy makers should continue to do this in the future. Instead of a market-driven approach, a strong plea is made for more involvement of all stakeholders in deploying public policies and business strategies concerning the digitised media landscape.

Analogue Switch-Off and the Digital Dividend

The European Commission (CEC 2005, 3) has defined "switch-off" as "*terminating the terrestrial transmission of analogue television,*" and "switchover" as "*the*

transition from analogue to digital broadcasting of all types of broadcasting." According to Iosifidis (2006, 250), digital switchover should be understood as "*the progressive migration of households, from analogue-only reception to digital reception*." This process is seen as the natural outcome of technological evolution in the television landscape with consumers and broadcasters as main beneficiaries. Digital television is assumed to generate advantages for both citizens and broadcast companies in terms of (a) more choice, better signal stability and higher image and sound quality; (b) lower distribution costs and the possibility of transmitting more channels and services at similar costs; (c) greater efficiency in spectrum use, and (d) the ability to send data that allow for interactivity and more customised services (d'Haenens and Bink 2001; Iosifidis 2007). In order to guarantee a successful analogue switch-off and the rapid development of (new) digital television services, the digital switchover should lead to a win-win situation and to a strategic fit between the interests of all stakeholders involved.

Despite these promising social and economic affordances, the transition towards digital transmission systems is not welcomed by every citizen. Research has demonstrated that a substantial part of the citizens show a rather negative attitude towards this switchover process (Klein, Karger and Sinclair 2004; Verdegem, Hauttekeete and De Marez 2009). These attitudes may depend upon different aspects: (a) people believe that analogue television will be taken away from them and fear a significant increase of costs to watch television, (b) citizens do not seem to understand why the switchover is on the political agenda and have no faith in the arguments put forward by the government authorities, and (c) some citizens really have a problem with the (extra) financial investments needed for digital television. In some cases, people are satisfied with the current television supply and suspicious of the promises made in the digital era (De Marez 2006). Iosifidis (2005) and Murdoch (2000) even point at the danger of social exclusion when certain parts of the population have no access to digital television services. Therefore, government and public authorities have a responsibility in guaranteeing equal and affordable access for all of the new possibilities offered by digital television (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003). In this digital transition process, government has a specific role to play when it comes to communication and support. Evidently, in order to develop adequate measures regarding the switchover, government will need accurate insights in the viewing practices and expectations of the people (Verdegem et al. 2009).

In order to reduce and even avoid negative consequences for citizens, careful planning (on different levels: technological, financial, regulatory and social) is needed (Raycheva 2008). Therefore, national and European regulators have put the management of this transition high on the political agenda. The analogue switch-off largely remains a national responsibility of all Member States, but the transition process also affects the European level. As there may arise some quality problems with the existing analogue transmissions owing to signal interference[1], there is a strong need for a co-ordinated approach on the European level to ensure a harmonised European spectrum. Member States were thus urged to reveal their national switch-off plans in terms of timing, strategy, commissions, subsidies etc. (DigiTAG, 2008). Although Europe aims for the end of analogue terrestrial television by 2012, all European countries can freely choose their transition strategy. As a result, strategies and timing towards the analogue switch-off in Europe vary

greatly due to the current penetration of digital television services, spectrum availability and the individual character of the television landscape (Iosifidis 2007). In some countries, the analogue switch-off has already been completed (such as in Sweden, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands and the Flemish Community in Belgium[2]), others (amongst other France, Spain, Italy and Portugal) have set a fixed date in the near future.

The compatibility of home equipment is essential for the switch-off procedure complexity, which represents substantial challenges in those countries where the majority of households are exclusively served by analogue terrestrial networks (Burns et al. 2005). In this perspective, three types of countries can be roughly distinguished across Europe: (a) "cable countries" with more than 90% of the households having access to cable television (Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg); (b) "terrestrial countries" where terrestrial transmission is the dominant platform (France, Italy, Spain), and (c) "hybrid countries" where cable and satellite together serve more than the half of the households (Finland, United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden) (BIPE 2002; d'Haenens and Bink 2001; OECD 2009). In contrast with terrestrial countries, cable and hybrid countries may await an easier transition as there is no obvious need for considerable investments in antenna adaptation and set-top box purchase. As a result, the analogue switch-off will have less impact on these countries (Fontaine and Girieud 2007).

At least as important as switching off analogue terrestrial television signals, is how to turn account of the opportunities offered by this process of spectrum optimisation. Hereby, we refer to an often recurring concept in this digitisation debate among policy makers, namely the "digital dividend." Currently, this concept is high on the agenda of media and information society policy and closely relates to the analogue switch-off/digital switchover. The digital dividend refers to access to frequencies that are released by the analogue switch-off and *"is to be understood as the spectrum made available over and above that required to accommodate the existing analogue television services in a digital form*" (Doeven 2007, 1). More specifically, it is the financial and social payback for the investment in the digitisation of broadcasting, with industrial actors, policy makers and the public all having a share in this dividend to go digital (Vermaele 2008). According to recent research commissioned by the European Commission, this dividend is estimated to be in the range of 150 and 700 billion Euros (Analysys Mason et al. 2009). The allocation of these new spectrum frequencies allows for the creation of new distribution networks and the support of innovative wireless services. Four main service categories may be interested in using the frequencies released by the analogue television switch-off: (a) fixed or mobile broadcast television services (including additional TV programmes or TV enhancements such as high-definition and mobile television; (b) mobile telecommunication services (mobile data applications through WiMAX, LTE and systems beyond)[3]; (c) public safety services; and (d) commercial or public PMSE (programme-making and special events) services (Burns et al. 2005; Fontaine and Girieud 2007). As there might raise a potential conflict between public and private interests when opting for digital dividend opportunities, this indicates the further need for a balanced policy in order to reconcile both.

The released spectrum is a resource of economic, societal and cultural added value and lies at the basis for the development of important services in broadcasting,

mobile communications, wireless broadband (especially in rural areas), navigation and public safety. The real policy challenge for national spectrum regulators and European advisory groups (e.g. the Radio Spectrum Policy Group) is in maximising the benefits of the digital dividend to contribute to all these kinds of value. Policy should turn the digital dividend into a practical reality for the benefit of Europe's economy and all its citizens by extending its leadership in electronic communications services, creating growth and jobs, increasing productivity and, last but not least, granting equal access to broadband services for all Europeans. Therefore, harmonising economic development and social growth remains the major issue for European digital dividend policies.

Public and Private Policy Issues

As the analogue television switch-off is a *conditio sine qua non* for the release of new spectrum, policy makers should guarantee that this transition process runs rapidly and smoothly. However, this process of spectrum use optimisation varies considerably from one country to another in terms of network neutrality and allotment procedures[4]. Therefore, the switch-off success within Europe is not guaranteed as it depends on a couple of key factors that are influencing the complexity of this transition stage. The success heavily depends on the wide availability and high penetration of alternative reception solutions such as digital terrestrial television (DTT), cable, (free) satellite and pay television platforms. High DTT coverage is extremely important especially for terrestrial countries where the majority of households need its home equipment updated in order to switch to digital services. However, as DTT's implementation and further development is often depending on government subsidies and public service broadcasters initiatives (Storsul and Schanke Sundet 2006), the roll-out and program delivery of DTT across Europe is extremely scattered, which causes high differences in use diffusion (see Table 1).[5] Not only the total proportion of homes equipped with integrated digital decoders/television sets but also territory size and topology are considerable factors in this. Whereas satellite appears to be the best alternative for terrestrial television in remote areas, cable and IPTV seem more appropriate for (sub)urban areas. To counterbalance problems in the transition period and to improve the chance of a successful switch-off, public authorities have undertaken a wide array of actions in the countries involved: information campaigns, subsidies for purchasing DTT decoders, digital television regulation, complementary broadcast solutions for shadow zones, antenna upgrades, etc. (Iosifidis 2006; Fontaine and Girieud 2007).

In order to benefit from the digital switchover, broadcasters as well as viewers should invest in new technology and upgrade equipment to deal with the digitisation of production, transmission and consumption of television signals. On the supply side of the market, broadcasters should invest in digital transmission equipment and deliver content over digital platforms. On the demand side, viewers should buy a digital decoder (set-top box) or an integrated digital television set. The costs and benefits of the digital switchover, however, are unevenly distributed among the different market players. Especially the absence of transfers among these parties impedes this transition process (Maier and Ottaviani 2007). On the one hand, the digital switchover and the allocation of the digital dividend are further complicated by the interplay of both economic and political forces, which

Table 1: DTT Penetration and Status of the Analogue Switch-Off across Europe

	% home penetration	Status switch-off
Austria	12%	Processing
Belgium (Flemish Community)	4%	Completed
Belgium (French Community)	1%	Planning
Denmark	11%	Completed
Finland	54%	Completed
France	48%	Processing
Italy	37%	Processing
Luxemburg	2%	Completed
the Netherlands	10%	Completed
Portugal	20%	Planning
Spain	54%	Processing
Sweden	18%	Completed
United Kingdom	37%	Processing

Source: EAO 2008.

are often entwined. Government has a responsibility in stimulating innovation and supporting economic development, which in turn should contribute to common welfare and public prosperity. On the other hand, tensions between public and private interests may arise as well since public and private goals sometimes oppose (Mansell and Steinmueller 2000).

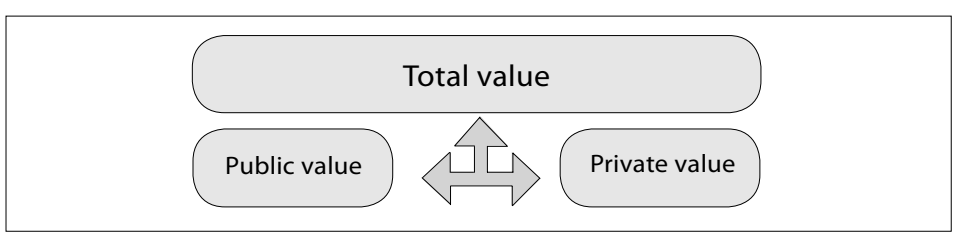
Addressing the optimal time schedule for switching off analogue terrestrial television signals embodies a crucial trade-off between public and private value. Whereas broadcasters and platform operators aim for a rapid switch-off, government should manage a non-discriminatory switchover in order to guarantee access to information through television for all its citizens. As operating both analogue and digital technologies (simulcast) multiplies costs, platform operators - aiming at minimising transmission costs - prefer digital systems because of the smaller and, consequently, cheaper spectrum requirements for digital broadcasting (Iosifidis 2007). However, the terrestrial signal should not be switched off unilaterally until a sufficient high proportion of viewers have already access to digital television services. A forced migration to digital would breach the universal access principle according to which all viewers should be assured equal access to some kind of broadcast content (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003). Viewers prefer to switch to digital services whenever the present value of the benefits from switching exceeds the switching costs (i.e. the purchase of a set-top box and the inconvenience of installing it). Platform operators may opt to offer subsidies or discount subscription fees to encourage viewers to switch to digital television services. Subsidies can be granted or suitable home equipment can be distributed free of charge to induce users to go digital in cases when they would otherwise prefer to remain with the analogue service. Solving for the optimal subsidy policy in general involves deriving the optimal time scheme for launching digital television platforms (Maier and Ottaviani 2007).

Regarding the development of digital television services, the emergence of the so-called "pay-per society" (Lillie 2005, 44) or "premium rate culture"[6] (Goggin

and Spurgeon 2007, 755) is threatening key public values such as the universality and open access of television content. This exemplifies another important tension between public and private stakes in the information society. As premium and pay-per-view channels are considered key drivers for digital broadcasting, television operators are eager to provide appealing content on subscription and on-demand channels exclusively available to end-users paying a supplementary fee (Callanan 2004). Bardoel and d'Haenens (2008, 354) argue that "*thematic channels will change the function of open channels into showrooms for thematic channels and on-demand platforms*" with television operators likely to encrypt all premium content for conditional and paid access. However, this evolution towards conditional access implies that only the elite can afford full access and control of programme content in the digital broadcasting world, which raises concerns about digital exclusion. Some argue that universal service principles should be applied to all digital media applications; others contend that limiting universal service values in digital media should enable service providers to develop sustainable businesses and stimulate new media innovation (Michalis 2002; Steemers 2004). The position of public service broadcasters (PSB) in digital technology should deserve special attention to constitute a legitimate future for PSB, as convergence and digitisation processes urge for redefining the PSB concept. PSB content should be universally available within its designated territory and free at the point of delivery. As a result, public service content should be freely accessible to all kinds of platforms and access technologies (Steemers 1999; Bardoel and d'Haenens 2008; Van den Bulck 2008).

Finally, the (re)allocation of released spectrum as a result of the analogue switch-off might raise new potential conflicts between long-term public value (welfare) and short-term private value (profit) (EBU 2008). Since radio spectrum is a scarce resource owned by society, all users of spectrum should support its efficient use. Telecom operators and service providers, mainly motivated by financial arguments, may opt for developing innovative mobile communications services and entering new media markets in order to create customer loyalty, develop triple-play services, gain extra revenues and make higher profits. However, efficient allocation of a scarce resource in private interest is not necessarily the same as for public interest. For example, what is the public value if public spectrum is given up for the introduction of new paid services inducing supplementary costs for end-users? Concerns rise whether future networks such WiMax or LTE will really be able to bridge the digital divide or just foster existing inequalities within and between societies. Therefore, efficient allocation of the digital dividend necessitates an optimal balance between public and private value in order to guarantee that all stakeholders involved have a meaningful share in this dividend (Vermaele 2008).

Figure 1: Policy Strategies in the DTV Era



From a regulatory viewpoint, it is the government's responsibility to reconcile both public and private policy goals and to maximise the joint surplus (total value) of the broadcasting industry as well as the viewers (Figure 1). Regarding the analogue switch-off and the digital switchover, government could facilitate competition among different delivery platforms to decrease switching costs for viewers and accelerate the uptake of digital television services. This way, stimuli (e.g. tax reductions, access to premium programming) can be obtained to provide digital television in remote areas, where satellite transmission is less costly than terrestrial technology. However, a key issue with encouraging digital television adoption is how to persuade those households who are reluctant to consider going digital, to adopt digital television services. This is of crucial importance, especially if these households are more disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic status. Given the availability of alternative and affordable services and educational efforts to inform analogue households about the switch-off, appropriate policy intervention such as subsidising conversion equipment should be justified (Bratton 2005)[7].

In addition to switching off analogue terrestrial signals and to support the development of digital broadcasting services, questions remain how the reallocation of the spectrum dividend can and should be organised. Governments should find the most appropriate spectrum management model or mix between models in various frequency bands to achieve a balance between the differing policy objectives. In order to achieve public interest policies such as security, defence, cultural diversity or interference requirements, the traditional "command-and-control" model is considered the most effective to harmonise spectrum and to avoid fragmentation of technical standards in order to establish interoperability and economies of scale[8]. In this model, regulators manage spectrum and design appropriate uses, technologies and users (OECD 2006). Especially in environments of rapid technology developments and converging services, the "market-based property rights model" grants tradability of spectrum rights in secondary markets and grants flexibility to apply spectrum in response to changing market needs. Concerns arise, however, about the risk of a decreased capacity of government to pursue general interest objectives and potential increased interference. Just as the market-based approach, the "commons model" stimulates technology innovation by lowering access to spectrum and reducing time to market but potentially risks overuse of spectrum. Finally, the "easement model," a mix between the market-based and commons models, stimulates the flexibility of spectrum use by introducing spectrum-sharing technologies including cognitive radio (Ofcom 2007). When opting for reallocating various technologies in the released spectrum, governments can choose between different approaches to deal efficiently with the digital dividend: whereas some countries prefer the development of (extra) broadcasting services, the European Commission pleads for adopting neutrality regarding the grant and use of spectrum frequencies and for setting technology-neutral performance standards in order to benefit from economies of scale (Analysys Mason et al. 2009). Despite this European policy, some analysts argue that service neutrality causes interference and therefore, they prefer international standard harmonisation to technical neutrality to create necessary critical mass for launching new services (Azibert 2008).

Particularly at this point, this article emphasises the need for user-oriented public policy strategies, i.e. based on extensive user and stakeholder research which offers profound insights in the real needs and expectations of the citizens towards

new possibilities offered by technological development. The authors believe that it should not only be the market "*who should essentially determine how the current broadcast spectrum will be used in the future,*" as suggested in some European studies (Burns et al. 2005, 4). As the European Commission and national governments have previously contributed to the development of digital television services and technologies, it is our conviction that governments should establish and regulate a market, which produces total value for society (sum of public and private value). In this context, technology development and innovation strategies could profit from bottom-up and user-driven approaches in order to create a win-win situation for all stakeholders involved in the e-communications policy process. Expectation management then becomes increasingly important (Maier and Ottaviani 2007). As de Holanda et al. (2008) have shown, this methodological multi-agent approach should be based on a comprehensive analysis of the social, economic, technological and regulatory aspects that support a decision of this complex nature. Special attention is devoted to mapping the individuals' (user) demand and preferences regarding the new digital dividend benefits, specifically in terms of new services and perceived attributes in order to analyse the social impacts associated to the services that will be released in the digital spectrum.

European Case-Studies

The diversity in configuration and development of digital television across Europe asks for an appropriate approach for managing the analogue switch-off, stimulating the establishment of digital television services and reallocating the digital dividend. In this section, public policies and private strategies regarding these issues are compared for three different European regions: Finland (hybrid country, Northern Europe), Flanders (cable country, mid Europe) and Spain (terrestrial country, Southern Europe). Special emphasis is put to finding the optimal balance between public and private interests to achieve total value for society as a whole. Table 2 summarises the television landscape for the three regions, characterised by diversity in market size, (digital) platform penetration, switch-off date, etc.

Table 2: Market Conditions for Flanders, Finland and Spain

	Flanders	**Finland**	**Spain**
Geography Population (millions) Area (km2)	 6.5 13,522	 5.3 338,145	 45.3 504,782
TV households (millions)	2,5	2,4	15,9
Analogue switch-off	3 November 2008	1 September 2007	3 April 2010
Digital TV penetration	47.3%	95.2%	76.5%
DTT service Launch Penetration Business model	 2002 3.5% FTA	 2001 54% FTA + Pay-tv	 2000/2005 54% FTA
Cable penetration	79.4%	69%	7%
Satellite penetration	4.3%	7%	13%
IPTV penetration	10.1%	1,5%	3,6%
DVB-H status	Auction pending	Deployment	Trial ended

Sources: EAO, 2008; OECD, 2009.

Analogue Switch-Off

Finland was one of the pioneer countries in switching off analogue terrestrial signals: on September 1st 2007 analogue terrestrial signals were abandoned, in February 2008 analogue cable transmissions were switched off. Despite the large amount of households relying on terrestrial television signals with approximately 140 main transmitters and 600 relay stations needed to be converted, Finland managed to switch over across the whole country on one single day. Aiming to smooth the transition from analogue to digital platforms, the government budgeted approximately 900,000 Euros for civic communication through informational websites, direct mail and call centres (Lugmayr 2008). Since all analogue channels were switched off simultaneously (in order to avoid preferential treatment for some broadcasters), teletext messages were shown while accessing these channels in the two-week period following the switch-off (DigiTAG 2008). In Flanders, a similar co-ordinated approach was adopted and all analogue terrestrial channels were shut down simultaneously. Moreover, the government and the public service broadcaster VRT played an important role in this transition process by unfolding a communication campaign worth of 350,000 Euros including television and radio advertisements, call centres and posters. Information brochures were distributed by local administrations, welfare organisations, cultural centres, public libraries, electronics retailers and camping terrains. This communication campaign has been based on results of a research project commissioned by the Flemish government to profile the antenna viewers and to discover their needs and wants regarding the switch-off and switchover (Verdegem et al. 2009). Contrary to Finland and Flanders, the Spanish government has opted for a phased approach with trials in a few northern provinces. In total, the switch-off will take place through ninety nationwide projects across three different types of geographical areas based upon the size of the population. By switching off rural areas and cities with low population density first, a rolling approach is developed and lessons learned from earlier experiences can be applied while completing the process in province capitals and metropolitan areas. In order to promote the development of digital television, analogue switch-off was brought forward two years from 2012 to April 2010. Given the modest growth of the DTT platform and the insufficient support from the Spanish government, concerns have arisen about the feasibility of this switch-off date (León 2007; Suarez 2008).

Development of Digital Television Platforms

In 2000, Spain became the third European country ever to launch DTT services after the United Kingdom (1998) and Sweden (1999). Although digital cable and satellite had already been rolled-out, digitisation only became a real issue for the audience when terrestrial, as main access point to television, had to face it up. The government decided in favour of a pay-DTT model but Quiero TV failed in 2002 by lack of viewers owing to the incapability to offer interactive services and value-added content. Owing to the slow reaction of the government, DTT implementation stagnated for three years. By the end of 2004, the new socialist government announced a new action plan and opted for FTA DTT as a vital element in the information society. Furthermore, the broadcasting association Impulsa TDT was created and funded by the government to foster the implementation of DTT.

Despite the growing DTT penetration, the television operators complain about the inactive role of the government, characterised by lack of leadership, lack of co-ordination, lack of transparency and lack of financial support to promote DTT implementation and decoder purchase (León 2007; Suarez 2008). The Spanish policy is in stark contrast with the experiences of Finland, which is listed the most advanced European country in the digital switchover with almost full digital penetration. The Finnish government has highly invested in network trials and research efforts. This successful cooperation between government, operators and research centres is regarded as one success factor of the introduction of digital television in Finland. In addition, various (inter)national research projects have established several spin-offs which now play a major role in the digital market worldwide (Lugmayr 2008). Today, Finland enjoys full DTT coverage including free and paid-for programming. While more than the half of the people relies on DTT, digital cable (mixed business model) has achieved a strong market position as well. Owing to historical reasons, analogue cable has been the dominant platform in Flanders for decades. Cable continues to dominate the market; however, its supremacy is threatened by the emergence of digital platforms (including digital cable and IPTV). The government has highly been involved in several trial projects for interactive digital television, which was considered an ideal entrance to the information highway enabling access to e-mail and e-government services. Given the wide penetration of cable, digital cable is expected to play the lead in the Flemish digital television market. As a cable country, terrestrial signals have a modest penetration, which has eased the analogue switch-off and caused little risks to deny many viewers access to television programmes. The DTT platform is not really successful since the platform only offers a simulcast of the public service broadcaster and allows for no interactivity. As the public broadcaster exploited the terrestrial network, commercial channels remained aloof to join; however, the analogue switch-off has driven the recent but modest growth of DTT penetration. Since the network is now operated by an independent company, rumours about a fully commercial DTT deployment in Flanders have arisen (De Marez et al. 2008).

Reallocation of the Digital Dividend

Finland focuses largely on using its digital dividend for television services and has been silent on the allocation of spectrum to other services and on the achievement of public service and public safety objectives. After a successful pilot, it became the first European country to launch commercial mobile television services (in 2006). The FTA service is supported by all major broadcasters and has a coverage area of approximately 40% of people living in Finland. Together with the DVB-H offer, Finland hosts a wide array of operators providing 3G television (EAO 2008). Since demand for spectrum for broadcasting is less than supply, beauty contests or auctions were not taken into account. As the Finnish government is committed to a service- and technology-neutral approach, no subsidies are considered (Europe Economics, 2008). Owing to disputes about which authority is competent for exploiting the digital dividend, Flanders is likely to lose its leading position achieved through the relative early switch-off. While the Flemish government aims for auctioning the released frequencies itself for broadcasting purposes (especially an extended DTT supply and DVB-H offer), the national telecommunications regula-

tor claims its competence over these affairs. By allocating the digital dividend to mobile broadband services on the contrary, the federal telecommunications minister is striving to create more competition on the Belgian broadband market causing lower prices, which remain relatively high compared to the EU average (CEC 2009a). Owing to the incomplete switch-off, the Spanish government cannot fully exploit the digital dividend yet although it has announced that broadcasters may continue simulcasting until 2015. This would mean that the frequencies released by the analogue switch-off will not be available before 2015. However, in order to fill public debts, government is likely to auction them already in 2010 so that telecom operators expect to gain return-on-investment only beginning from 2015. Since Spain is considered the most expensive market for mobile services in Europe (CEC 2009b), deployment of 3G-4G networks is assumed to stimulate competition, lower consumer prices and sustain economic growth (Mobile Europe 2009).

Towards an Open Innovation Approach

As international case studies have exemplified, a successful analogue switch-off and a sustainable development of digital television services require the full and active participation of all stakeholders involved in the process and a strong leadership from the government to affirm this process (Iosifidis 2005). Policy makers should not only make available financial resources to support the communication and marketing budget. In addition, they should also bring together broadcasters and content providers, multiplex and network operators, consumer electronics manufacturers, equipment retailers and consumers to successfully (a) roll-out digital access networks, (b) make the necessary home equipment available and (c) launch new and innovative consumer services. This plea for a holistic approach refers to the "open innovation" paradigm from a recent body of innovation management literature, considering innovation as a cyclic and open process with cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders involved. Open innovation can be defined as: "*the antithesis of the traditional vertical integration model where internal research and development (RandD) activities lead to internally developed products that are then distributed by the firm*" (Chesbourgh, Vanhaverbeke and West 2006, 1). It is the central part of the innovation process in which private companies go about organising the search for new ideas that are socially relevant and have commercial potential. External actors and sources can help to achieve and sustain innovation in order to create user-centric added value (Chesbourgh 2003).

The emergence of so-called "living labs" can also be mentioned in this context. One of the major examples is the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL) which is launched in December 2006, assembling hundreds of living labs from twenty-nine different countries. Living labs are experimental platforms in which technology – even in the early innovation process – is given shape in real life contexts and provide full-scale test bed possibilities for conceptualising, co-creating and prototyping as well as for the interactive testing and marketing of new (mobile) technology applications and business models (Frissen and van Lieshout 2004). Most often, test-users get devices "for free" and/or enjoy free access to services; therefore the results in terms of user acceptance and willingness-to-pay should be handled with care. As innovation is perceived as an active and a continuous process, the successful application of living lab environments should be supported by all relevant

stakeholders from user, policy and private communities. As a result, living labs contribute to a new innovation ecosystem in which users, academic institutions, public organisations and private companies cooperate towards the development of innovative technology solutions, products and business models.

Flanders, as well as other European regions, has a strong tradition of open innovation and living lab settings in the field of new media research. In the context of the analogue switch-off, the development of digital television and the reallocation of the digital dividend, several research efforts have been set up to support public policy. The commercial roll-out of digital television in Flanders was preceded by two government-supported trial projects. Between 2001 and 2003, the public service broadcaster VRT in cooperation with the state-owned telecom operator, managed the interactive IO project ("Digital Home Platform"), in which a living lab of hundred representative households was provided with set-top boxes. Although the project was conceived as successful, it also had some limitations (such as technical problems and limited content supply). In the "Flanders Interactive" project (2003-2004), all major broadcasters and cable operators were united. In this trial project, 300 households were equipped with a set-top box, on which they could watch digital television and test some interactive applications. In both trial projects, the public service broadcaster worked together with infrastructure providers, and both technical and socio-economic research groups from Flemish universities (Van den Broeck 2008).

As the Flemish government recognised that the smooth switch from analogue to digital terrestrial television demanded a certain degree of "strategic guidance," it commissioned a study (2007) to learn more about the analogue terrestrial television viewer in terms of profile and viewing expectations. The government assumed that a profound insight in the Flemish terrestrial viewer was needed as a starting point for guiding the information campaign (Verdegem et al. 2009). The project aimed at (a) profiling the analogue terrestrial viewers (in terms of socio-demographics and motivations to stick with their analogue television set); (b) gauging their knowledge related to the analogue switch-off and (c) mapping their expectations after the switch-off when it comes to television viewing. The results demonstrated that the antenna viewers are not very demanding viewers and especially watch news and information programmes. Nevertheless, these viewers were rather badly informed about the switch-off process and the possible viewing alternatives, causing negative attitudes towards this evolution. Digital terrestrial television clearly proved to be their most preferred alternative. These results were a first step in the development of a certain strategy towards the analogue switch-off and stressed the need of a communication campaign, which should explain the (rationale behind the) switch-off process and should stress the possible alternatives after the analogue switch-off (including both financial and technical aspects), with a particular focus on DTT.

Between 2006 and 2007, the MADUF (Maximising DVB Usage in Flanders) project was set up in the same tradition. Following the spirit of the open innovation paradigm, the two most important infrastructure providers were brought together and cooperated with the public service broadcaster VRT and equipment suppliers. Government has initiated the research project, as it was one of the projects of the Interdisciplinary Institute for Broadband Technology (IBBT), which is a public funded research institute whose mission is to stimulate innovation by

bringing together industrial partners and academic researchers. The objective of MADUF was to create an optimum model of providing mobile television services in Flanders via the DVB-H transmission standard, not only by providing technical solutions but also investigating legal, economic and user aspects. Within the broad city perimeter of Ghent, a living lab was installed with full network coverage and users were provided with DVB-H handheld devices. Research results clearly prove that mobile television will not gain mass market uptake in the near future and that market potential is considerably lower compared to other countries such as Finland (Schuurman et al. 2009).

This type of user-driven research projects should improve government's understanding of the value to consumers and society of new media applications and should serve both public as well as private needs. Hence, policies for the further digitisation of the European media landscape should be developed taking into account the challenges and experiences learned from user-centric research, which should raise both policy issues as well as provide economic forecasting for new (mobile) markets and the future use of the digital dividend spectrum. The MADUF project serves as an excellent example for this kind of user-oriented policy research. As mobile television is one of the possible new services that are likely to become available after the analogue switch-off, this research was closely related with a pending policy issue such as the digital dividend. Regarding the industry, the sector is under serious pressure due to the growing number of failing innovations, making a user-centric approach increasingly important in technology research (De Marez 2006). As well from the policy as the industry perspective, a general paradigm shift from a technology-driven focus towards a user-driven focus is identified. Technology research gradually becomes more interdisciplinary, affecting policy decisions. MADUF is a clear example as it provided policy makers with useful insights on both technical issues and knowledge about the citizens' preferences towards new services that become available in spectrum. This is crucial because of the ambivalent position of government in stimulating innovation and competition (economic policy) as well as securing inclusion of all citizens into the information society (social policy).

Concluding Remarks

The current European media policies should be driven by the desire for a non-discriminatory analogue switch-off, the rapid transition to digital television services and the successful reallocation of the digital dividend. Hence, this article aims for elaborating on the role of all stakeholders in this broad migration process and on the delicate trade-off between public and private interests. This balance seems a complicating element the further digitisation of the television landscape in Europe. Policies should pursue both public and private value and maximise total value in society. In this context, governments can choose between several policy tools and learn from experiences of other countries that are pioneers in media innovation processes (e.g. Finland). Although television landscapes and media policies greatly differ across Europe, a common policy goal should be that digitisation ultimately should lead to content and services offering added value for both citizens and industry. Hence, business models evolving from free to paid-for content are threatening the acceptance of media digitisation and are likely to produce a

polarised digital television market. Therefore, governments should intervene in the market to ensure the sustainability of digitisation and maximise total value for society. Apart from the responsibility of the Member States in this transition, co-ordinated European action should avoid a situation where decisions taken by one EU country negatively influence spectrum use in others. Therefore, spectrum policy in Europe requires close cooperation between national regulators and the European Commission.

In this article, the open innovation approach has been proposed as a conceptual framework for pursuing a balanced policy and managing the potential conflicts between public and private value in television's digitisation. Within this process – beginning from the analogue switch-off over the development of digital platforms to the efficient reallocation of digital spectrum – media policies should pursue a strategic fit between consumer and industry expectations. Consequently, expectation management becomes increasingly important in order to create a win-win situation for all stakeholders involved. In this context, technology development and innovation research could profit from user-driven approaches, which are concretised in living lab settings. In these interdisciplinary research settings, innovation is considered an active and continuous process supported by all stakeholders from user, policy and business communities. Scholarly institutions, public organisations, private companies and users cooperate towards the development and testing of innovative technology, services and business models. Together with a better understanding of the value of these innovative media applications to consumers, these experimental platforms should raise policy issues and should provide economic forecasts and business models for new digital markets.

However, the likeliness to which governments establish, design, support and regulate media markets is largely cultural-dependent and stems from a long tradition of policy intervention in correcting market shortcomings (Hallin and Mancini 2004; McQuail 2005). Finland acts as a textbook case combining one of the highest competitive economies in the world with a strong social welfare model. The Finnish dynamic market economy is characterised by openness (no monopolies or foreign ownership restrictions), strategic alliances between telcos, components manufacturers and equipment vendors and a large amount of public-private partnerships. The country has the highest public research and development (R&D) spending in Europe and thanks to high investments in education and universities, Finland has become one of the world leaders in the development mobile communications architecture and middleware residing the world's leading cell phone producer Nokia (Castells and Himanen 2002). This tradition of open innovation has further fostered the penetration of digital television platforms in Finland to become the most advanced European country in the digital switchover. By developing a tradition of sharing resources, leveraging ideas and bundling all stakeholders' knowledge and expertise during the 1990s, Finland has reoriented its undercapitalised economy into a vibrant innovation ecosystem which should be an inspiring model for other European countries to manage innovation in the media and communications industries.

Notes:

1. Some countries have already accomplished the switch-off while others are still in the phase of planning.

2. In Belgium, media is the responsibility of the regions. The Flemish Community (Flanders) is the northern region of Belgium, home to the Dutch speaking community.

3. WiMAX (Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access) and LTE (Long-Term Evolution) are broadband wireless communication network technologies.

4. In general, Member States choose to either sell the frequencies in a closed auction (highest bidder) or award them by means of a beauty contest (based on other criteria such as industrial experience, project viability, speed of deployment etc.).

5. It is important to be aware of the specific profiles of antenna viewers. Other research has shown that there is a clear distinction between primary antenna viewers (people having no cable or satellite subscription at home, which obliges them to watch television by means of antenna) versus secondary antenna viewers (people who possess cable or satellite at home, but they also watch television via the antenna in a second room or at a second residence (Verdegem et al. 2009).

6. The shift from free television content to pay-television business models.

7. When financing digital decoder purchase is technology-neutral and does not favour particular platforms or operators, subsidies are compatible with EU Competition Law and do not violate the EC Treaty state aid rules (Article 87(1)).

8. In a telecommunications context, interoperability refers to compatible communications paths (frequencies, equipment and signalling), adequate signal strength and scalable capacity.

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CRITICAL INTERPRETATION OF HYBRIDIZATION IN KOREAN CINEMA:

DOES THE LOCAL FILM INDUSTRY CREATE "THE THIRD SPACE"?

DAL YONG JIN

Abstract

This paper examines the fundamental assumptions of the concept of cultural hybridity in understanding the swift growth of Korean popular culture, especially films. It investigates whether hybridity, as a cultural globalization perspective, has generated new possible cultures, which are free from western dominance, by analyzing the hybridised Korean films. Unlike previous studies emphasising the crucial role of hybridisation in creating the third space, this paper empirically argues that the hybridisation process of the local popular culture is heavily influenced by Western norms and formats, and newly created local cultural products are rather representing Western culture, instead of unique local culture. It finally discusses the reasons why hybridity cannot adequately explain local cultures and identify some issues we have to consider in employing hybridity in interpreting globalisation.

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Introduction

Korean cinema has been considered a very distinctive non-Hollywood cinema in terms of the market share of domestic films, and Korean films are especially projected to have more success ahead as they recently began finding new audiences in other parts of the world. The swift growth of Korean cinema has been identified with several theoretical frameworks, including cultural imperialism and hybridisation. Contemporary cultural theories contain polarised ideas on whether culture is becoming increasingly homogeneous or heterogeneous under the scenario of globalisation, and cultural globalisation and/or hybridity, which emphasises either power to challenge and break the dominant culture of Western countries or power to sustain and develop local identities, has become a crucial and appealing theory.

Hybridity is often used in defining today's globalisation due to the interactions of the local with the global (Wang 2008). Several media scholars (Wang and Yeh 2005; Shim 2006; Ryoo 2009) believe that hybridisation has occurred in Korea as local cultural players interact and negotiate with global firms, using them as resources through which local people construct their own cultural spaces.[1] Through this, globalisation, especially in the realm of popular culture, breeds a creative form of hybridisation that works towards sustaining local identities in the global context. Some theoreticians have argued that in the current global media environment, which is characterised by a plurality of actors and media flows, it is no longer possible to sustain the notion of Western cultural imperialism emphasising hegemonic westernisation and homogenisation of local culture (Chadha and Kavoori 2000; Sonwalkar 2001). However, as Kraidy (2002, 323) points out, some scholars use the concept of hybridity without rigorous theoretical grounding:

> *[S]uch superficial uses will tend to be descriptive rather than analytical, utilitarian rather than critical. Since instances of cultural mixture abound in intercultural relations, a merely descriptive use of hybridity is especially threatening because it leads to uncritical claims that "all cultures are hybrid" and evacuates hybridity of any heuristic value.*

In line of Kraidy's analysis, this paper critically examines the fundamental assumptions of the concept of cultural hybridity in understanding the swift growth of Korean popular culture, especially films. It investigates whether hybridity, as a cultural globalisation perspective, has generated new possible cultures, which are free from western dominance, by analyzing hybridised Korean films. Unlike previous studies emphasising the crucial role of hybridisation in creating the third space, such a form of in-between space, where the power of hegemonic Western culture can be disrupted by reflecting local identities and cultures, this paper empirically argues that the hybridisation process of local popular culture is heavily influenced by Western norms and formats, and newly created local cultural products are rather representing Western culture, instead of unique local culture. Finally, it discusses the reasons why hybridity cannot adequately explain local cultures and identifies some issues we have to consider in employing hybridity in interpreting globalisation.

Hybridity and Global Culture

As a reflection of its complexity, different thinkers have taken almost completely opposite views about globalisation (Robertson 1992; Giddens 1999; Shome and Hedge 2002; Winseck and Pike 2007). For some, globalisation is a single homogeneous system that is characterised by convergence and the presence of the universal (Wallerstein 1990), representing cultural imperialism theory. On the other hand, globalisation is a matter of long-distance interconnectedness, and meddling with other people's environments (Hannerz 1996, 17), which symbolises cultural globalisation or hybridity theory. The concept of hybridity has become a new facet of the debate about global culture with the rise of post-colonialism, yet opinions are divided over the nature of cultural globalisation (Wang and Yeh 2005).

The term hybridity can be used to describe mixed cultures or the process of mixing genres within a culture (Turow 2008). Some people use hybridity to describe the local reception of global culture as a site of cultural mixture. For them, hybridity primarily means the physical fusion of two different styles and forms, or identities, which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries. A few previous studies have indeed employed hybridity to describe mixed genres and identities (Tufte 1995; Kolar-Panov 1996; Fung 2006). What they primarily emphasised is the nature of hybridity as the physical mix of two different cultures; however, what they did not focus on is whether the fusion of two cultures truly avoids a homogeneous culture heavily influenced by Western countries.

Hybridisation is not merely the mixing, blending and synthesising of different elements that ultimately forms a culturally faceless whole. In the course of hybridisation, cultures often generate new forms and make new connections with one another (Wang and Yeh 2005; Ryoo 2009). As Bhabha (1994) points out, hybridity opens up "a third space" within which elements encounter and transform each other as signifying the "in-between," incommensurable (that is, inaccessible by majoritarian discourses) location where minority discourses intervene to preserve their strengths and particularity. For Bhabha (1994, 53), "hybridity is an interpretive and reflective mode in which assumptions of identity are interrogated." As such, the theory of cultural hybridity assumes that hybrid culture is more rich, resistant, democratic, diverse, and heterogeneous than cultures of Western states (Appadurai 1996; Tomlinson 2000). Several scholars (Bhabha 1994; Joseph 1999; Shim 2006) also claim that domination within a culture may become more dispersed, less orchestrated and less purposeful because culture can then be negotiated by local and global power.

These approaches assume that the relationship among different cultures is more one of interdependence and interconnectedness than dominance, and also that no single power and no single model can control all the processes of hybridisation (Bhabha 1994; Kraidy 2005a). Garcia-Ganclini (1995) and Jan N. Pieterse (2004) especially state that hybridisation offers an opportunity for local culture to be highlighted or to be continued, and furthermore that globalisation is built on the base of local culture and local interpretation. In other words, they strongly refute the idea of cultural imperialism, which argues that there exist a one-way flow of cultural products from Western to non-Western countries (Schiller 1976), and the idea that capitalism creates a homogeneous or a universal culture; instead they claim that

global culture is hybrid and thus more diverse (Ferguson 1990; Kraidy 2005a).

While the term hybridisation is a significant concept for explaining globalisation, the concept of hybridity and/or cultural globalisation is not without areas of concern because there are some deficiencies in both theory and practice. Most of all, the concept of hybridisation falls short of acknowledging structural inequalities, which is one of the major concerns of political economy, and it has allegedly become a neocolonial discourse that is complicit with transnational capitalism (Friedman 2000). It means that the theory of cultural globalisation or hybridity intentionally or unintentionally ignores the commercial and capitalist nature of the global expansion process (Mosco 2009). Under the logic of capitalist production, hybridisation inevitably has inherent limitations, and we cannot be pointlessly optimistic about the idea that hybrid culture is democratic, resistant, diverse and less purposeful. In fact, hybridity is often criticised as de-powering and with apolitical concepts (Wang 2008). Golding (1997) also points out that the theory of hybridity overly emphasises cultural dimensions, leading to a neglect of the dynamic impact of structure, especially the unequal and asymmetrical power relationships among countries, cultures, regions and audiences.

Most importantly, hybridity has not given much attention to the nature of hybridised cultural products at the local level. While hybridity emphasises the nature of local resistance and diversity against homogenous western hegemonic power by providing some examples of developments in local culture as seen in Korean cinema, it does not reflect the results of the hybridisation process in terms of content. Again, hybridisation should not merely represent the mixing, blending or synthesising of different elements that ultimately forms a culturally faceless whole. Instead, hybridisation means that local culture generates new forms of culture, not homogenised, but the mixed third space by resisting global forces. However, hybridity theory misses in understanding the fundamental part, which is the nature of hybrid local cultures – whether they are unique local cultures representing local specificity, or whether they are only another form of global cultures with local clothes. Unlike many previous studies, therefore, this paper critically investigates the problematics of hybridity in interpreting Korean cinema by analyzing the characteristics of hybridised local cultures.

Korean Cinema Under Neoliberal Globalisation

The Korean film industry has experienced a roller coaster-ride change over the last two decades. After enjoying a boom period during the 1960s and the 1970s, the Korean film industry had almost demised due to the heavy influence of the U.S. government and Hollywood majors since the Korean government removed local barriers to imported films by opening up the domestic market in 1988 (Shin 2005). The market share of domestic film had significantly decreased since the late 1980s, and it was as low as 15.9% in 1993 (Korean Film Council 2009).

However, the rapid pursuit of globalisation by a civilian government since 1994 has substantially influenced the film industry because it contributed to the swift structural change of the film business. When the Kim Young Sam government (1993-1998) began to actively adopt the globalisation trend, it also initiated the resuscitation of the film business by applying the logic of globalisation to the culture and media industries. Facing a collapse in the domestic film industry, the

government began to use its legal and financial sources to promote content industries, in particular, the film industry, while continuously liberalising the cultural market (Jin 2006). The government first enacted the Motion Picture Promotion Law in 1995. The main section of this new law included diverse incentives, including tax breaks for film studios to welcome large conglomerates, such as Samsung and Hyundai, into the film industry, because the government believed these largest capitals become one of the main elements for the revitalisation of the domestic film industry. The government has also given financial support, either directly or indirectly, particularly to production industries.

The government's neoliberal cultural policies have expedited foreign investment in the domestic film industries, in both production and exhibition, unlike the previous market liberalisation which happened only in the distribution sector (Jin 2006). Foreign film majors had played a key role in direct distribution via their branches in Korea under the authoritarian regime since 1988; however, transnational cultural majors have invested in the Korean film industries, both in production and exhibition sectors, since the mid-1990s. They formed strategic alliances with domestic capitals to produce motion pictures in Korea. The Hollywood majors have developed an elaborate power structure to forge relations with independent producers, sub-contractors and distributors. By holding on to their power as international distribution networks, the majors tried to dominate the film industry (Aksoy and Robins 1992, 8-9).

Several TNCs indeed set up joint ventures with domestic capitals on a variety of levels for co-production, distribution, and exhibition. One of the largest joint ventures occurred between MCA and CJ of Korea, which was poised to jump onto the DreamWorks SKG bandwagon in 1995 (Brown 1995). Canal Plus also has a joint venture with the Hyundai Group for film production. In 1996, Diamond AD, a media subsidiary of Hyundai, which imported 20-30 films a year including blockbusters, signed a co-production and distribution deal with France's Canal Plus (Schilling and Wu 1998). Obviously, this new trend of foreign involvement in the Korean market was possible because the Korean government asked domestic companies to get involved in the global market to integrate the domestic cultural industries with the global cultural system. The government's changing cultural policies have resulted in a boom in domestic motion pictures through market competition and foreign investment (Jin 2006).

Against this background, the Korean film industry has been notable because it shows a consistent rise in its domestic market share, attendance at films, and the number of cinemas that have opened, since the late 1990s. The market share of domestic films produced by local producers reached 49.7% in 2001 and 63.8% in 2006 (Korean Film Council 2009). Korea has expanded its export of domestic films in Asia, and several Korean films have also received international film awards. For example, in 2007, Jeon Do-Yeon received the best actress prize at the Cannes Film Festival for her exquisite and ferocious performance as a grief-stricken woman in *Miryang* ("Secret Sunshine" in English), and the dark vampire thriller "Thirst" directed by Park Chan-Wook won the Jury Prize at Cannes in 2009 (Garcia 2009).

Korean cinema, however, has shown another downturn since 2006 right after the government changed its screen quota system in the midst of a free trade agreement (FTA) negotiation with the U.S. Arguably, a screen quota system had greatly

contributed to the recent development of the Korean film industry. However, the Korean government unexpectedly changed this crucial cultural policy under pressure from the U.S. before the FTA agreement between the two countries occurred in 2007. After several attempts to reduce or abolish the Korean screen quota system since 2003, the U.S. was finally able to reduce it, from 146 days to 73 days a year, from July 2006 onwards (Jin 2008). The U.S. government, MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) and Hollywood majors achieved what they wanted, and Hollywood subsequently boosted its presence and revenue in the Korean box office.

As a consequence of this new trend, the overall revenues in both domestic box offices and foreign exports have substantially plummeted. Among the top 10 grossing films (including both domestic and foreign) in the box office, there were only three domestic films in 2007, compared to seven domestic films in 2005 and 2006, respectively. The market share of domestic films has plunged from about 63.8% in 2006 to 50% in 2007 and to 42.1% in 2008 (Korean Film Council 2009). Unlike in previous years, local producers have experienced difficulties in finding funds and competing with foreign films; therefore, the Korean film industry has started to discuss whether it is in crisis.

How to Understand Hybridised Korean Films

Korea has witnessed the rise and fall of its film market due largely in part to its imbalanced relationship with the U.S. and Hollywood. While the market share of domestic films has achieved a strong growth, Korean cinema is still under Hollywood's massive influence as a recent decrease of its market share proves. In particular, since content is the most significant display of cultural hybridity, it is crucial to understand representation as an act of reconstruction rather than reflection, as Stuart Hall points out (1996),[2] and as an influence of hybridity in Korean cinema. However, Korean cinema is especially struggling with content issues in the midst of cultural hybridisation. Korean cinema was supposed to create new forms of local film through the hybridisation process; however, the reality is not there yet.

In order to determine the characteristics of contemporary Korean films, I analyzed domestic films in terms of film genres – a general categorisation of films – and themes – a basic conceptual or intellectual premise underlying the specific work of selected domestic movies. The sample films selected for this analysis are 210 films produced domestically between 1988 and 2008. The top 10 highest-grossing films, based on annual reports by the Korean Film Council, were chosen per year because only a few films dominated the market.[3] During the period, there were three major historical events directly influencing the Korean film industry in the context of globalisation. First, the Korean government opened the film market to global film majors, particularly Hollywood majors in 1988; second, the Korean government initiated the resurrection of the Korean film industry through legal and financial measures starting in 1995 after the initiation of globalisation in 1994; and finally, the country changed the screen quota system in 2006, so it is reasonable to analyze the results of the changing cultural policy up until 2008.

The overall period can be analyzed in three different eras: first, the period 1988-1994 (70 films) – mainly the pre-globalised and/or the pre-hybrid period. Although

Hollywood majors had begun to penetrate the Korean film market since 1988, their major role was limited to distribution, so films produced domestically had been less influenced by Hollywood. The second is the period of 1995 to 2001 (70 films) – primarily the globalising and/or the hybridising era, when the government actively adopted the globalisation trend in order to survive against global competition. The most recent era is between 2002 and 2008 (70 films) – a continuation of the hybrid era, but different from the second period. The last two periods overlap primarily because domestic film producers have adopted so-called Hollywood styles, skills, capital, and effects, which have resulted in the hybridisation of domestic films; however, these two periods are also different because during the third period, independent producers, instead of large capitals, are major players after domestic-based transnational corporations (e.g., Samsung and Hyundai) left the production market, and the screen quota system has also changed. The last period is especially important in that local producers are able to create the third space to either challenge Hollywood films or develop local identities – people's mentalities and socio-political agendas characterising a rather unique Korean society, including the South-North Korea division, democracy, and social class issues.

Hybridisation of Domestic Film Genres

Korea's emerging national film industry is revealing itself to be open to struggle over its meaning and status at home and abroad, so questions of genre have a crucial role to play (Stringer 2005, 95). Movies, especially contemporary Korean films, are difficult to categorise because they often combine characteristics from different genres. However, grouping films by category is important because it may elucidate what producers and consumers of films do (Staiger 1997). Given the lack of serious scholarship on Korean film genres, to define a genre by identifying its differential characteristics is prerequisite to any serious discussion of Korean cinema (Min et al. 2003). In order to compare domestic movies with Hollywood films, including Westerns, action, comedies, horror, musicals, and romances movies, the Korean films chosen were categorised by their major characteristics based on Lopez's categorisation (1993).

Slightly more than half of the movies analyzed (51.4%) were dramas, followed by comedy (20.5%), action (14.8%), and horror/thriller movies (7.6%). Others included adult (6 movies), science fiction (3), war (2), and Western (1). In Korea, only eight movie genres had made the top 10 grossing films, and the top three genres (drama, comedy and action) consist of as much as 86.7% of the highest-grossing movies. Although there are several hundred film genres, only a few of these genres are successful in Korea because movie makers produce familiar movies that can be imitated. This data shows that Korean audiences like dramas and comedies, and film producers heavily focus on a few successful genres. Although the situation has dramatically changed over the three different periods, it also confirms that drama, especially melodrama, is the most favoured genre, because it clearly reflects Korean society. As Hye Seung Chung (2005) points out, although the early Korean cinematic melodrama derives in part from the example of Hollywood, melodrama has become a national specificity due to the former's focus on ordinary lower-middle and working class citizens as opposed to the latter's gravitation toward upper-middle-class bourgeois housewives and widows:

> *[T]he Korean society of the 1950s and 1960s was torn apart by postwar poverty and chaos, so melodrama sided with underprivileged masses suffering social and familial alienation in the shadowy margins of modernization and economic development. Thus, in terms of its aesthetic characteristics and semantic ingredients, Korean melodrama was seldom divested of its realistic, socially conscious core* (Chung 2005, 119).

The early Korean dramas not only hybridised Korean and Hollywood signifiers (costumes, languages, and soundtracks) but also mixed Hollywood melodramatic tropes and realist Korean aesthetics and issues. Therefore, this specific genre is well-developed, rich with unique national values, such as the division of the country, democracy, and it social values (e.g., class issues, income divide, and Confucian mentalities), which are distinctive to Korean culture, at least until the early 1990s. The situation has rapidly changed over the past several years, because Korean cinema has been commercialised, emphasising economic imperatives as in the case of Hollywood movies, rather than serious social issues and/or national values, in the midst of globalisation.

To begin with, during the first period, among the 70 films analyzed, drama dominated (52 movies, 74.3%), followed by action (8 movies), adult (5 movies), and comedy (3 movies). Drama, including melodramas, comprised the largest portion of domestic movies each year. In 1988 there were only two genres in the top ten grossing films: seven dramas and three adult films. In both 1989 and 1993, nine films were dramas. As a continuation of trends from the 1970s and 1980s, dramas were receiving warm attention from moviegoers. Several dramas, including Rainbow Over Seoul (1989), Marriage Story (1992), Sopyonje (1993), and To You from Me (1994) got distinctions as the top grossing films of their respective years. Since the mid-1980s, again, drama has become critical realism movies or social dramas, which deliver social messages, such as those based on student movements, class issues, and democracy. While melodramas and historical films with soft-core pornographic elements were the major trend, the 1980s and the early 1990s saw various directions searching for a new filmic aesthetic (Min et al. 2003, 65). However, since 1988 when Korea liberalised its market to foreigners, particularly for direct distribution rights to Hollywood majors, the Korean film industry had virtually demised.

In contrast, during the period 1995 to 2001, the number of Hollywood style action and comedy movies rapidly increased, while dramas significantly decreased. During this period, film producers still focused on dramas because the audiences loved traditional values, although several directors began to produce comedies. Among the 70 films, drama films still accounted for the largest share; however, the number of dramas decreased to 29 (41.1%), compared to 52 (74.3%) in the first period, while comedy and action movies soared. During the first period, there were only three comedy movies; however comedy consisted of 24.3% (17), followed by action movies (16; 22.9%). Comedy and action together consisted of 47.1% of the top 10 grossing films, which is a new phenomenon in Korean cinema history.

There were several significant changes in terms of film genres during the second period. The major characteristics of dramas changed from melodramas dealing with realism and social issues to dramas primarily dealing with entertaining crime and cop stories, as in many Hollywood movies. Some Korean film producers have focused on crime and police stories since the movie Two Cops (1993), which was the

first major crime and cop film in the 1990s, became a huge success. Regardless of the fact that some critics argued that it primarily copied "My New Partner," a 1984 French movie, about rotten cops, several film producers have started to produce similar movies, including Two Cops 2, which ranked first among the top grossing films of 1996, followed by Nowhere to Hide (1999).

Meanwhile, the majority of comedies in the analyzed films were associated with love stories. The so-called romantic comedies, including Dr. Bong (1995), Mister Condom (1997), and Jjim (1998) signalled the arrival of a very popular genre in the late 1990s, although the stories often involved sexual discourse. As several crime and cop movies as well as comedies represent, the Korean film sector itself has hybridised with commercial Hollywood movies. Instead of maintaining its own unique drama genre, Korean cinema has utilised entertainment-driven films because making profits became a norm of the Korean film industry.

During the third period (2002-2008), this trend continued, while comedy was getting more popular. Among the 70 films analyzed, there were 23 comedies (32.9%), while there were 27 dramas (38.5%). Unlike in the second period, during 2002-2008 action movies plunged to seven (10%) primarily because major conglomerates who made blockbuster-style action films left the film market, while horror/thriller movies became popular in Korean cinema. There were only two horror/thriller movies during the first period; however, the number increased to six in the second period, and to eight in the third period. The comedy genre itself has changed, from romantic comedies to action comedies. Starting in the late 1990s, several comedy movies dealing with gangs as a new trend became popular, partially because movie production companies with lower budgets have turned their focus from action movies to action comedies. There were some successful gang comedy movies during the period 1995-2001, including Attack the Gas Station (1999) and Kick the Moon (2001). However, action comedy movies rapidly became one of the major genres in the most recent period. In 2002, Marrying the Mafia, a gang action comedy, ranked first among the top 10 grossing films of the year, and Oh! Brothers (2003), Marrying the Mafia 2 (2005), and My Boss, My Teacher (2006) were also popular.

Meanwhile, since the mid-1990s, science fiction genre movies have appeared in Korean cinema (Yonggary, 1999; Lost Memories, 2002; and D-War, 2007). Some films have also utilised SF characteristics by using Hollywood style computer graphics (e.g., The Host, 2006), although they were mainly categorised as other genres. Among these, D-War (2007) became a top-ranked hybrid movie. D-War, directed by Shim Hyung-Rae, is a fantasy film with a heavy dose of computer graphics – best known in Hollywood SF movies, and the production budget was over $50 million, including marketing costs (Kim I. 2007). Set in present-day Los Angeles in the U.S., the film depicts the mayhem that ensues when a giant dragon wreaks destructive havoc throughout the city. In a bid to capture the U.S. market, it cast American actors and was filmed in English, although the plot is based on a Korean legend about serpents that fight for the chance to become celestial dragons (Chun 2007). D-War is a hybridised Korean movie in several ways: the mix of Korean storyline, director, and capital with a Western location (LA), language (English), computer graphics, and major cast (Americans).

While admitting that D-War, as a hybrid movie, creates mixing, branding and the synthesising of different elements, the director mainly failed to create the third

place in that local culture could not generate new forms of culture, not homogenised, but the mixed third space by resisting global forces. Although one admires Shim's "anything Hollywood can do, I can do too" credo, this movie is nothing but another special-effect blockbuster (Wallace 2007). D-War attracted 8.4 million viewers in Korea; however, in the U.S. it earned only $4.1 million, so the blockbuster movie's net loss is more than $10 million because of the heavy marketing cost in the U.S. (Chosun 2009). Both aesthetically and economically, D-War has not been acclaimed in the global film market, because the movie is about producing a Hollywood movie by a Korean director, instead of overcoming Hollywood by creating a new form of culture resisting Hollywood dominance. D-War had a huge success in Korea mainly because Korean audiences, once touted for their sophisticated cinematic taste, have been drawn to movies that were entertaining enough but shallow compared to past box office successes. However, it could not become a global success due to its mix of a feast of A-grade F/X married to a Z-grade, irony-free script (Elley 2007), which means D-War seemed concerned with cracking the U.S. and international market on a technological level.

In Korean cinema, the hybridisation process has been active since the late 1990s when Shiri – the first Korean blockbuster movie funded by Samsung, which will be discussed in the next part – was made into a box-office hit. Many Korean production companies and directors have one after another tried to produce and even copy Hollywood style action movies. As one film critic points out (Choi 2005), "the Korean cinema is heading for Hollywood style blockbusters as if the globalisation of domestic films lies in the copy of Hollywood." However, Korean cinema has not sustained its glory because of it struggles in content, although a few commercial movies have been successful. Moviegoers dislike the copies of Hollywood genre movies, and domestic audiences still enjoy dramas reflecting national values and social issues, either hybrid or pure domestic genres, such as The Way Home (2002), Taegukgi-The Brotherhood of War (2004), and Welcome to Dongmakgo (2005).

Hybridised Film Themes and Cultural Globalisation

Theme is defined as a basic conceptual or intellectual premise underlying a specific work or body of works (Kaminsky 1985). Film themes determine whether the content of film includes some national identities, such as ideological conflicts, the South/North Korea division, political and social issues (including the military governments, student movements, unemployment, and immigration abroad), as well as some issues from traditional culture such as Confucianism, including its preference for boys and the strict social restrictions for women (Oh 1999). As Heather Tyrrell (1999) points out, theorisation around cinema and globalisation has largely been structured in terms of a basic opposition between Western commercial and culturally imperialist cinema, and the Third World's non-commercial, indigenous, and politicised cinema. National cinema concerns the lives and struggle of people in the nation, while entertainment predominates in Hollywood's commercial themes, including action, horror, Western and comedy.

Themes of Korean films, as one of the major standards in deciding movie characteristics, have rapidly shifted, as in the case of genres. Regarding themes, during the first period, more than 30% of films distinctively touched on social issues and national values embedded in the Korean context as dramas dominated box-office

hits. Several films, including North Korea's Southern Army (1990), Silver Stallion (1991), and Tae Back Mountains (1994) dealt with the issues of the South/North division and the Vietnam War. Several other films, including Come Come Come Upward (1989), Seo Pyeon Jeoi (1993), and Hwa-eom-gyeong (1993) showed national values such as Confucianism and Buddhism-related human stories. As a reflection of the democratisation issue under the military regime before 1993, several domestic films also dealt with social issues, including democracy, student movements, and class issues (Passion Portrait 1990; Human Market, Oh. God! 1989). During this period, drama was the major genre, and commercial Hollywood genres were not popular yet. Many domestic films still literally concerned the lives and struggle of people in the nation.

However, during the second period, themes touching on social and national issues had rapidly given way to crime action and comedy movies. Indeed, only two movies, Shiri (1999) and Joint Security Area (2000) dealt with North/South Korea issues, and Hi, Dharma (2001) talked about national values (Buddhism), while A Petal (1996) portrayed the brutality of the military regime that seized political power through massive massacre, which happened in Gwangju in 1980. Meanwhile, A Hot Roof (1995) portrayed feminism issues and A Beautiful Youth Chun Tae Il (1995) touched on the labour movement. As such, only a few films (10%) dealt with national and social issues. Domestic film producers could emphasise these issues, primarily because they were free from severe censorship, which was the major characteristic of the military regime. The concept of a Korean cinema was a counter-practice to the dominant films – commercially oriented U.S. films – in the domestic market, and a revolt against the oppression of the government's strong censorship. Korean filmmakers have begun to actualise the concept and the task of national cinema, dealing with subject matters that had been prohibited by censorship (Min et al. 2003, 11).

Among these, Shiri has been acclaimed as a new Korean cinema in style, because it successfully made a mixture of two different cultures between Korean history and Hollywood techniques and skills. It portrayed the confrontation between North Korean soldiers who were dispatched to South Korea as spies and South Korean anti-terrorist agents. The movie is not very original due to the fact that it was mixing Hollywood-style narratives and action with an old-fashioned yet refreshing Korean story. However, it contains a story that draws on strong Korean national sentiment to fuel its drama (Kim 2004), created as a deliberate homage to the "high-octane" action cinema made popular by Hollywood through the 1980s. This espionage action-thriller won over domestic audiences with a story centred on the continuing Cold War tensions between North and South Korea in the midst of loosening censorship, and its success was made possible by Hollywood style actions and blockbuster scale production costs, including the first helicopter scene in downtown Seoul in Korean cinema history. However, most films domestically produced during this period ignored serious issues that Korean society confronted, while focusing on more commercial genres such as comedy and action movies.

The most recent period is not much different from the period preceding it. Regardless of criticisms raised by several social groups, including film critics and college students, for the lack of unique films dealing with serious social issues or national values, film producers already embedded in commercial values continued

to produce films primarily based on economic imperatives. During this period, of course, a few films touched on important social issues; however, these films only consisted of 10% of the films analyzed. For example, Silmido (2003), Taegukgi (2004), and Hanbando (2006) are successful movies portraying the Korean War and South/North division issues. The movie 18-May (2006) also portrayed the brutality of the Chun Do-Hwan regime that seized political power in 1980. With these exceptions, there were no particular films dealing with national values, social issues, or political ideologies.

Domestic movies have swiftly adopted Hollywood themes, focusing on entertainment instead of the lives and struggles of people in the nation. Blockbuster-style action and comedy movies all ranked among the top ten movies in recent years. The film industry could be considered an achievement for domestic cinema in the sense that it had attained a comparable status of special effects proficiency with Hollywood (Jin 2005). Until the early 1990s, national cinema worked with social, political, and cultural practices. Since its earliest beginnings, Korean cinema has developed the cinematic traditions of melodramas and social realism, which emerged from specific social contexts in Korean history; Japanese colonialism, South/North division, military governments, and strict censorship. However, with the democratic government starting in 1993, again, the Korean film industry has hardly concerned itself with these issues, which has resulted in the commercialisation of Korean cinema. Regardless of the fact that the country has achieved democratisation, several issues, such as national division, colonial legacy, and socio-economic divide are even worsening. Korean filmmakers have partially actualised the concept and the task of national cinema, dealing with subject matter that has been prohibited by censorship; however, Korean filmmakers mainly could not create new forms of culture. Hollywood films as global standards reign supreme, while a local cinema primarily tries to copy or follow what Hollywood has done. The primary trajectory of globalisation, not only in capital and structure but also in content, is still from the West to the local.

Of course, several directors, including Kwon-Taek Im, Joon-Ho Bong, Ki-Duk Kim, and Chan-Wook Park, who are considered the best contemporary auteur, have produced unique domestic movies, including several commercially successful ones. For example, "Chiwaseon," which reflected Korean cultural traditions and values, achieved huge success. With his portrayal of 19th century painter Jang Seung-Up, director Kwon-Taek Im, won the Best Director Award at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival. Chan-Wook Park who directed Oldboy, which also won The Grand Prix at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival, repeatedly returned to the same subject matter, which is "revenge," as the central theme in his three consecutive films, including "Thirst (2009)." Some of these auteur movies have indeed achieved their successes not only with commercial investment, but also with a high level of cinematic literacy and creativity, so a few critics may say that Korean cinema is establishing unique content to overcome Hollywood's dominance.

However, in very recent years, these auteur films had difficulties in attracting the audiences' attention, primarily because the audiences have been drawn to movies that are entertaining enough but shallow compared to past box office successes. While Korean cinema was dominated by so-called "populace vanity" with people keen to trying to understand even the most abstruse films until the late 1990s and

very early 21st century, the audiences nowadays know what they want and no longer rave over a film just for the director's band power and colour (Shin 2009). For example, mixing drama with a right amount of comedy and tragedy, the two movies "Haeundae" and "Take Off" dominated the local box offices for months in 2009, although many professional film reviewers were reluctant to laud the two, mostly criticising the lack of logic and depth in their respective plots. However, these movies are without a doubt very clever and entertaining, but also very quasi-Hollywood and pro-commercial (Shin 2009). Instead of chanting auteur movies based on the brand name of directors, such as the same subject matter and a particular psychological or moral them, and visual and aesthetic style, Korean movie-goers currently appear to favour those based on somewhat corny and easy-to-comprehend plots, feature good people, which mix several different genres with a touch of comedy. The audience's propensity has changed and they like hybrid movies, which are commercialised movies, and this has become a boomerang to ruin the diversity of Korean cinema, one of the key elements of strength.

Critical Interpretation of Hybridised Korean Cinema

Understanding cultural hybridity is crucial because it reveals the process which others enter and blend into another culture and then become incorporated into that local culture. It displays a process of cultural mutation or so-called cultural globalisation in contemporary cultural lives (Wang 2008). However, current theories of hybridity often ignore several significant elements, in particular, power relations, not only in terms of political-economic power relations but also in terms of cultural influences between two different cultures, as well as the nature of hybrid films.

Hybridity theory in Korean cinema distorts the inequality and imbalance of power relations between Hollywood and national cinema, while optimistically chanting or empowering the cultural capacity of the local in the processes of hybridisation. Unlike the optimism of the theories of cultural hybridity, which claim that hybridity implies the leading role of the local, the representation of the local culture gives way to connotations and value standards based on Western ideas (Wang 2008), so cultural hybridity is related to an unequal power balance. Several postcolonial theoreticians, such as Appadurai (1996) and Bhabha (1994), strike back at imperial dominance by recourse to hybridisation as an affirmative strategy of resistance and cultural pluralisation (Ryoo 2009). However, as seen in Korean cinema, local producers cannot guarantee pluralism and diversity, because the local film industry only produces a limited number of genres, especially commercially-driven Hollywood genres. The local (Korean cinema) is still not powerful enough to become the subject in the complicated and dynamic processes of hybridisation and cultural globalisation (Wang 2008), because many local producers have still mimicked what Hollywood has done, instead of creating new cultures to overcome Hollywood.

Hybridity is seen as a strategy of cooperation used by the power holders to neutralise difference; however, hybridity is another expression of globalisation dilating the negative impacts of Western forces (Wang and Yeh 2005). The birth of the third space requires more than a process of dialectic discourse and reflective interaction through which ideas, values, and class are negotiated and regenerated. Without this element, hybridity is not much more than a simple mixing and hybridising to include forms that blend different elements (2005, 188). Hybridity should be the

site of resistance against imperialist powers (Kraidy 2002); however, Korean cinema could not resist Hollywood's dominance in content. While admitting several well-made Korean films have boosted national cultural industries, many domestic films are not attractive in the global market because global audiences do not want to watch Korean-made Hollywood style movies. In fact, the export of Korean movies has significantly declined from $75.9 million in 2005 to $24.5 million in 2006 and $12.2 million in 2007 (Korean Film Council 2009). The domestic-made commercial hybridised movies are not-global ready movies yet.

Korean cinema has experienced difficulties in creating new forms of movies. As the genres and themes of Korean movies demonstrate, many film producers have copied so-called money-making genre movies, such as comedy and horror movies, especially sexy and gangster comedy movies. Several young directors, who have been deeply influenced by Western cultures, have utilised a style that mixes indigenous cultural elements with regional and Western influences, and they are also responsive to contemporary domestic affairs and politics, as in the case of Shiri (1999) and Joint Security Area (2000) (Shin 2005, 56-57); however, in most cases, Korean cinema is another version of Hollywood. Instead of further developing aesthetic and social movies, hybrid movies have made commercially oriented entertainment movies. Many Korean film producers cannot produce a politically and aesthetically-viable third space in the midst of the commercialisation of domestic movies.

Unlike its promise that cultural globalisation breeds a creative form of hybridisation that works towards sustaining local identities in the global context (Shim 2006), the hybridisation of Korean movies primarily does not create new forms of the third space, nor does it maintain national values, such as traditional Korean mentalities and socio-cultural characteristics, against Western culture. Hybridity theorists believe that hybrid culture avoids becoming homogenous because the demands of the local still shape cultural products, and therefore, America's influence in other cultural industries is beginning to slip, although Hollywood remains a global powerhouse (Consalvo 2006). However, as Bhabha (1994) claims, hybridity should afford the emergence of new and legitimate identities, and these new identities should oppose those which hegemonic power desires to create locally. If hybridity simply means the mixture of two different cultures, Korean cinema would be one good case to prove this trend. However, as long as hybridity is about the creation of the third space beyond the simple fusion of two cultures, the local film industry has not successfully hybridised, with only a few exceptions.

Conclusion

Korean cinema has seemingly hybridised itself in mingling with two different cultures, in particular, with Hollywood. Consequently, the content of domestic films has significantly shifted, mainly from dramas formerly emphasising serious social issues to now utilising commercial entertainment formulas. However, as seen in recent years, the domestic film industry is not stable due largely in part not to create the new form of culture. The hybridisation itself is not necessarily bad for Korean cinema, because it is imperative, in some sense, and the mix of the two different cultures could create the new cultural space. The problem in Korean cinema is that the majority of films have by and large failed in making the third place, because the

display of the cultural factors of hybrid Korean films is western-centric and neglects Korean socio-cultural values to fit western tastes. It is perhaps naïve to attempt to maintain pure culture in some unadulterated form in the midst of globalisation; however, one also must remember that rootless hybrid cultural products, which are a rather simple mixture of two different cultures, cannot resist global forces.

In addition, the failure of the creation of the third space has been a problem domestically, because it has consequently affected audience propensity as well. The audiences, who have been major supporters of Korean cinema, have recently ignored auteur and independent movies, because they are now addicted to entertaining movies. They are bombarded by similar hybrid genre movies and are tamed by hybrid Korean movies whose major characteristics are commercial, which has resulted in avoiding traditional genres and themes. Korean movie producers have primarily pursued short-term commercial success, while disregarding the long-term effect, meaning they don't create the third space, and these commercial hybridised movies are not-global ready movies.

Cultural hybridisation in Korean cinema is happening as local producers interact and negotiate with global forces, and it is important to acknowledge that the interaction of the global-local culture should be understood through power conflicts, not only between two different political-economic entities, but also between two different cultures. In this regard, it is premature to say that domestic popular culture constructs its own cultural spaces, not as a simple mixture of two different styles, formats, and content, but as a resource to create new spaces, encompassing domestic cultural specificity as well as dominant western cultural genres. Korean cinema has become hybridised in production, in terms of style, special effects, and co-productions, but Westernised in content with its incorporation into globalisation since the mid-1990s. The global flow of images, though read actively by world audiences, is still very uneven and markedly one sided in its power to capture world markets (Shome and Hedge 2002). It also means that the Korean film industry broadly manifests the homogenisation thesis, which is the lack of hybridity emphasising the emergence of the third culture, therefore, contending the global force, which in this case would be, in Hollywood movies.

Notes:

1. It is essential to differentiate the concepts of global culture and national culture, which are building blocks of cultural hybridity. In this paper, I use the terms the local (culture) and the national (culture) interchangeably, against the notion of global culture, which is another term of American culture, symbolising commercial culture.

2. For example, the image of the woman on the cover of any magazine doesn't reflect what that woman really looks like. The image reconstructs something; but it isn't simply a woman. The surface meaning is an attractive woman, but the image was constructed to sell a specific kind of life-style that in turn demands the detailed use of commercial products and other commodities. Behind the image lies an entire world of beliefs, ideas, values, behaviours, and relationships that must be decoded and laid at the doorstep of transnational corporations, advertisers, cultural entrepreneurs and mythmakers (Hall 1996).

3. There are several significant domestic films other than top 10 high-grossing films, including independent and/or auteur films. Some of them are artistically successful, but not commercially. This paper does not consider these films as major target films to be analyzed, because they are mainly less hybridised movies. Of course, some issues of auteur movies will be discussed, as long as these films are related to the major theme of hybridity of Korean cinema.

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ROLE CONCEPTIONS OF BRUSSELS CORRESPONDENTS FROM THE NEW MEMBER STATES

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Abstract

Journalists working in Brussels are commonly perceived as different from traditional foreign correspondents. However, their isolation from their home offices also renders them distinct from domestic political journalists. Consequently, studies of Brussels correspondents have come up with their own viable types of "political journalism in Brussels." With the ongoing enlargement of the European Union – and a growing number of post-communist new member states – we need to re-define current typologies of Brussels journalism. Prior findings indicate that post-communist journalists have not yet evolved a fixed set of professional roles, norms and values. Thus, their work in Brussels may be characterised by a different approach towards correspondent journalism. As part of a study on Brussels correspondents, role conceptions of correspondents from post-communist new member states were examined. In-depth, semi-structured interviews with 14 journalists from different new member states show that explicative, objective and rapid information-gathering are the most important constituents of political journalism in Brussels. As a consequence of the highly-complex subject matter of EU reporting and declining support from home offices, journalists see it as their highest goal to explain the EU and make the EU decision-making process in Brussels better understood. Along this line, other forms of political journalism, such as investigative and critical reporting, are neglected.

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Introduction

Journalists from EU member states working in Brussels are commonly perceived as different from traditional foreign correspondents, because they are reporting on political processes that their home country is playing a role in and is subject to. However, their isolation from their home offices also renders them distinct from domestic political journalists (see e.g., Lecheler 2008; Terzis 2008). Thus, studies on Brussels correspondents from EU member states come up with their own viable types of "political journalism in Brussels," characterised by distinct role conceptions (e.g., Morgan 1995; Baisnée 2002; Meyer 2002; Drehkopf 2006). Following Weischenberg (1992), journalistic role conceptions inform a journalists' work environment and – consequently – news production. However, in the light of the latest enlargements of the European Union with twelve new member states, we need to re-define what we know about Brussels journalism.

The 2004 and 2007 enlargement rounds incorporated a number of new member states, whose media had undergone profound changes over the last fifteen years, with a shift from communist media control to a democratic media system. The transition of the media in those countries gave rise to a potential for the "birth of a new journalism profession" (Coman 2004, 45) with differing role conceptions. While there are great differences between countries, post-communist journalists are generally described as opinionated, highly politicised but often inaccurate in their reporting (Gross 2004, 123). Yet, many of them perceive themselves to be true representatives of the fourth estate – watchdogs who "best serve a transition by being partisan, an attack dog, a 'counter power'" (Gross 1996, 161). Once arrived in Brussels, post-communist journalists are integrated into the press corps, where differing journalistic traditions can impede their work (e.g., Morgan 1995). Thus, it is the purpose of this article to draw a first picture of post-communist journalistic role conceptions in Brussels and compare those to existing typologies.[1]

Political Journalism in Brussels

Brussels correspondents are agents of Europeanisation, wedged between complex European issues and national public spheres, privileged in terms of information supply, geographical proximity and social networking (Gerhards 1993; Baisnée 2002; Siapera 2005; Lecheler 2008; Terzis, 2008). However, with their focus on highly complex EU subjects and close interaction with colleagues from different news-gathering traditions, journalists working in Brussels are commonly perceived as different from traditional foreign correspondents. Their isolation from their home offices also renders them distinct from domestic political journalists (e.g., Baisnée 2002). Thus, most studies on Brussels correspondents come up with their own viable types of "political journalism in Brussels."

Baisnée (2000; 2002) identifies three approaches to EU news coverage, based on his analysis of French and British correspondents: firstly, institutional journalists act as "pseudo-officials," documenting European affairs on a daily basis but neglecting interpretation. To Baisnée, institutional journalism represents an original form of Brussels correspondence, dating back to the beginnings of the European press corps during the 1960s. Today, institutional journalists are those who have been in Brussels for a long time and they are "veterans of the press corps" (ibid,

12). Veterans are respected for their "in-depth knowledge on European affairs and their analytical ability."

However, institutional journalists have become deeply embedded in the system; they want to be "part of the game," so to speak, and part of the institutions themselves – a change labelled by the author as "self-assimilation" (Scully 2006). Secondly, the opposite end of the spectrum is populated by investigative journalists. They are younger and have not been in Brussels for very long. Yet, they have at their command a wide knowledge of European affairs and a viable network of contacts in Brussels. Investigative journalists aim to re-define the post of the Brussels correspondent according to the (normative and practical) standards of investigative journalism; they want to be critical, in-depth and independent.

Thirdly, Baisnée refers to a type of journalism that is similar to investigative journalism and has been developed by some British newspaper journalists. The main difference between the former and the latter is a "'nationalisation' of EU news" (Baisnée 2002, 124). British journalists link EU issues more closely to national political debates – a difference Baisnée attributes to differing perceptions of European integration in France and Great Britain. While French public opinion is characterised by a wide consensus on the fundamental roles and responsibilities of European Union membership, these same responsibilities are still fiercely debated in Britain. Table 1 displays the three attitudes towards political journalism in Brussels as elucidated by Baisnée.

Table 1: Three Types of Attitudes Toward Politicisation

	Institutional Journalism (F)	**Investigative/ political journalism (F)**	**Politicisation through national politics (GB)**
Age	Older, in Brussels for more than 15 years	Younger, arrived in the 90's	4 or 5 years in Brussels
Relationship to sources	Self-assimilation to the institution	Distance and reliable sources	Professionalisation of the journalist-source relationship
Perception of task	Intellectual and political project	Professional project	Editorial project
Primary focus	Protection of the institution	Scandalisation	Scandalisation through national politics

Source: Baisnée 2000, 20; F= France, GB=Great Britain.

On a similar note, Meyer (2000; 2002) discusses two types of (political) journalism in Brussels, "mouthpiece journalism" – similar to Baisnée's institutional journalism – and "investigative journalism." On the basis of his examination of journalistic control in the case of a number of scandals in the European Commission, Meyer concludes that there is indeed an embryonic form of permanent investigative journalism present in Brussels. The author identifies a number of endogenous and exogenous factors that have triggered the upturn of investigative journalism in Brussels, including the rising importance of European news coverage, coupled with a rise in information supply and co-operation but also competition. Meyer argues that journalists from northern European countries in particular take a

more critical view of EU affairs, thereby amplifying the increasingly critical tones of the Brussels press corps. Drehkopf (2006) focuses on German correspondents, examining the journalists' self-perception in the Brussels microcosm on the basis of an analytical framework provided by the adaptation of a previously-used multi-dimensional model (e.g. Donsbach 1987; Weischenberg 1992; Krupitschka 2005). This adaptation, contrary to previous models (e.g. Donsbach 1987), emphasises the importance of societal influences on the journalists' role perception. Moreover, it takes into account the interdependence between these societal factors and other factors (contrary to Weischenberg 1992), such as influences of the medium the journalist is working for or institutional factors in a non-hierarchical form. Based on this model, Drehkopf identifies four types of news journalism in Brussels (Table 2), ranging from the critical sceptic to the "ombudsman" and the "euphoric" supporter of European ideas.

Table 2: Types of Correspondents in Brussels

Types of Correspondents	Characteristics
"Explaining ombudsman"	• truly pro-European • bring EU closer to its citizens • explain the EU • motivate opinion-forming
"Neutral service provider"	• pro-European • wants to be as objective as possible • fast news-gathering, less background
"Sceptical observer"	• rather pro-European • wants to be critical and independent • opinionated coverage
"Euphoric promoter"	• truly pro-European • wants to create a positive picture of EU • opinionated coverage

Source: Drehkopf 2006.

Among the German correspondents interviewed, the type of "explaining ombudsman" emerged as the most prominent. This type of correspondent is very pro-European and puts great emphasis on explaining complex European matters to the audience at home. The "ombudsman" finds it less important to transport his own opinions in his news coverage, but strives to stimulate opinion-forming and debate among the public. The "euphoric promoter" on the other hand, who was represented by only two journalists in the study, attempts to convey his pro-integrationist, federalist attitude in the coverage and therefore delivers opinionated news (Drehkopf 2006, 116).

New Member States' Journalism

The 2004 and 2007 enlargement rounds incorporated a number of new member states into the EU, whose media had undergone profound changes over the last fifteen years, with a shift from communist media control to a democratic media system. While there are national differences, the media in post-communist states are by and large diverse, have the potential to fulfil democratic functions, and can operate in a market-oriented world (Gulyás 2003; Lauristin et al. 2005). However,

post-1989 media systems have not yet finalised their transition. Generally, the media in post-communist countries still lack the "establishment of the system of institutions, norms and values through which Western journalism was built and imposed" and which can only evolve over time (Coman 2004, 47). Apart from these similarities, there are of course as many cultural, political and historical differences between the different new member states, as there are between old member states. Still, a broad comparison of the "old guard" of Western European Brussels correspondents and the potential "newcomers" of countries that have just joined the EU is potentially fruitful. In Brussels, correspondents from post-communist new member states are potentially impeded in their work by the growing heterogeneity of the press corps, which reduces the relative importance of journalists from new member states and leaves them at disadvantage in the news-gathering process. Moreover, still volatile and tense media markets in the new member states, paired with little interest for EU affairs in these countries constraints the journalists' news performances, leading them to stress national angles of European topics (Lecheler 2008).

The transition of the media in post-communist new member states gave rise to a potential for the "birth of a new journalism profession" (Coman 2004, 45) with differing socio-demographic characteristics and role conceptions. Today, journalism in the post-communist new member states is dominated by young journalists who have only come into the media after 1990. This generational change has built up a divide between the bulk of younger journalists and the few remaining older journalists; younger journalists see themselves as "an antithesis to the old guard," assuming that "those who have not worked in the communist media were not touched by communist ideology" (Coman 2000, 43). According to Coman, these young journalists, since they lack defined role conceptions and journalistic education, promote "professional self-sufficiency based on the idea of a "mission" in the name of which they have chosen the press, a mission which does not require any critical self-evaluation, nor journalism education and training" (ibid). Furthermore, younger journalists have higher educational standards than the older generation and usually possess a University degree, although often not in journalism specifically. Surprisingly, few have attended formal journalism training, while most have learnt their trade on the job, as journalism training in post-communist countries continues to be characterised by a lack of practical manuals, modern equipment for the development of journalistic skills and experienced teachers (Gross 1999; 2004; Coman 2000).

The social position of journalists in post-communist countries differs in some respects from that of Western journalists. On the one hand, they appear to enjoy a "prestigious status" and to be highly regarded by their national societies. On the other hand, they are under pressure from the political arena and the so-called "barons" (former journalists, now powerful business men). Coman (2000, 45), while arguing from largely Romanian evidence, suggests generally that the "great majority of journalists are not protected against the abuses of bosses, not by law, not by clear conventions, not by a professional tradition". And, specifically in reference to Romania, he later states that most journalists had "lost control of this profession and are in quasi-total dependence on the bosses" (Coman 2004, 55).

Role conceptions differ considerably from Western equivalents. For instance, Weischenberg (1992) suggest that German journalists see themselves as informa-

tion-gatherers, responsible for explaining complex subject matters to their audience. Conversely, post-communist journalists are described as opinionated, highly politicised and often inaccurate in their reporting (Gross 2004, 123). Yet, many of them perceive themselves to be true representatives of the fourth estate – watchdogs who "best serve a transition by being partisan, an attack dog, a 'counter power'" (Gross 1996, 161). This leads to the production of news coverage that sacrifices comprehensiveness, objectivity and professionalism to the partisan mission (Gorban-Klas 1997). In a more recent study, Lauristin et al. (2005) found that Estonian journalists had quickly internalised "Western values" and the "formal criteria of news writing" but repeatedly compromised such standards in favour of sensational journalism. This growing sensationalism and "tabloidisation" of media products is stressed by a number of authors (e.g. Hiebert 1999; Splichal 2001). Pisarek (1998 cited in Coman 2000, 45) found that Polish journalists can be divided into three groups: "The *militant* (preoccupied with shaping opinion and influencing the public); the *disk-jockey* (centred on entertainment and "infotainment") and the *artisan* (careful to respect the professional values)." In his survey of Romanian journalists, Coman (2004), however, argues that journalists considered information-gathering and the analysis of social and political problems at the top of their professional agenda. Coman explains this with "double standards" among the journalists: high aspirations of the upper echelon of the journalistic profession characterised by objectivity and careful analysis stand in stark contrast to social reality, where sensationalism is the prevailing standard, together with

> *entertainment or at least infotainment, within the rapid rhythm of commercials and videos. Media are characterized by an explosion of subjectivity and even intolerance (racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance) to individual and national catharsis. […] The social characters of communist society were replaced by new characters related to human, symbolic and material capital, such as the reformer, the conservative and the fundamentalist* (Rowenta-Frumusani 1999, 41).[2]

Research Question and Method

This study provides first insights into role perceptions of journalists from post-communist new member states in Brussels. Previous studies have credited the Brussels press corps with developing forms of journalism that are distinct from traditional types of foreign correspondence or political journalism (e.g. Morgan 1995; Baisnée 2002; Meyer 2002; Gleissner and de Vreese 2005; Drehkopf 2006). This development has been attributed to the difficult situation of a Brussels correspondent trying to translate the highly complex subject matter "EU" into forms appropriate to the national audience's limited interest and knowledge, coupled with the overlapping relationships in Brussels between correspondents from different journalistic traditions (e.g., Morgan 1995). Studies have found their own viable types of "political journalism" that centre around the journalists' attitudes towards European integration, work ethics, journalistic functions and social status (Baisnée 2002; C.O. Meyer 2002; Drehkopf 2006)

However, post-communist journalists are believed to possess norms and beliefs different from those of most member states of the EU (e.g., Gross 1996; 2004;

Lauristin et al. 2005; Lecheler 2008). For instance, what is their attitude towards investigative or adversarial journalism in Brussels as it is suggested by Meyer (2002)? Moreover, following Baisnée (2002), do all journalists in Brussels over time get almost too integrated into the Brussels microcosm, thereby losing their professional distance? Consequently, this research attempts to explain what *role conceptions Brussels correspondents from post-communist new member states have.*

Interviews

To investigate the proposed research question, 14 semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted in May 2006 in Brussels, with journalists from new member states working as correspondents. Previously, a number of studies have applied such qualitative interviews to examine (political) journalists (e.g. Baisnée 2000; Drehkopf 2006). However, other studies have relied partially or entirely on quantitative research methods (e.g. Weaver and Wilhoit 1986; Köcher 1986; Schneider et al. 1993; Weischenberg 1992). Qualitative interviewing enables the researcher to portray a context in greater complexity and depth, thereby allowing individual opinions and attitudes to surface. Exactly for these reasons, exploratory or provisional studies mostly apply qualitative methods (see also Minichiello et al. 1990; Esterberg 2002; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006). A semi-standardised interview format was chosen, which required the design of an interview guide but allowed freedom for open questions and follow-up enquiries. This format was selected to ensure that all research dimensions were covered, while allowing adequate freedom for the respondents to generate useful information, as appropriate for an exploratory study. For example, journalists were asked to discuss their attitude towards "European integration" as well as their general idea of "journalistic functions" in Brussels and at home. In the interview guide, those factors were approached through open questions, in order to allow respondents the fullest opportunity to answer individually (Berg 1998). For example, the factor "main journalistic objective" was worded as "*In your opinion, what are the main objectives of political journalism today?*"

Sampling

Studying new member states' correspondents recommends the selection of journalists across the new member states of the EU[3]. Here, in its selection process, this study followed the practice of choosing "typical cases," cases that appear to adhere to the broad general patterns provided by the analytical framework (Möhring and Schlütz 2003). Thus, journalists were chosen for interviewing who appeared as typical according to the discussion of the Brussels press corps, while having to take into account the limitation of acquiring journalists for long in-depth interviews during a relatively brief enquiry period. This selection incorporated two primary selection criteria. An initial criterion was that the journalist was (1) stationed permanently in Brussels as a correspondent (under contract or freelance) and (2) that he or she was reporting to media from new member states. The second criterion was that the study aimed for maximal variance in attempting to acquire both female and male journalists from all new member states, of all age groups, working for a variation of mass media (press, TV, radio, agency, and internet) in their countries.

Table 3: Sample of Correspondents

Case	Nationality	Media	Length of Interview
Journalist 1	Latvian	Radio	53 min.
Journalist 2	Polish	TV	53 min.
Journalist 3	Polish	Radio	41 min.
Journalist 4	Estonian	Radio/Press	40 min.
Journalist 5	Hungarian	Press	38 min.
Journalist 6	Estonian	TV	59 min.
Journalist 7	Lithuanian	Radio	45 min.
Journalist 8	Hungarian	Press	41 min.
Journalist 9	Polish	Press	54 min.
Journalist 10	Czech	Press	46 min.
Journalist 11	Polish	Agency	30 min.
Journalist 12	Czech	Press	53 min.
Journalist 13	Czech	Agency	50 min.
Journalist 14	Polish	Press/Radio	30 min.*

* This interview was conducted by telephone.

Taking into account the above criteria, the sample eventually comprised 14 journalists from a number of new member states (see Table 3). Even though the study aimed at providing a general picture of journalists from all relevant new member states, there were no journalists from the Slovak Republic and Slovenia in the sample. This fact, together with a country skew in the sample, can largely be ascribed to difficulties in recruiting the relevant journalists from a number of (smaller) member states. Some of these member states do only have a very limited number of correspondents stationed permanently in Brussels, of which – in turn – some did not consent to participate in interviews during the data collection period. However, the sample was well balanced in terms of gender (1:1) and media types and included correspondents working for the press, TV, radio, news agencies and also internet media. Thus, while not representative, the composite of the sample allows first insights into role conceptions of Brussels correspondents from bigger and smaller new member states, from different media outlets and of different experience and expertise.

Data Analysis

The interviews conducted were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcripts were analysed according to the method of qualitative content analysis introduced by Mayring (1983; 2000). From initial readings of the transcripts, statements were extracted, paraphrased, set into context and explained when necessary. The shortened transcripts were subsequently sorted according to dimensions and re-read several times, with subsequent modifications and resorting. For example, in a number of cases, statements dealing with the main objective of the journalists'

work in Brussels were inextricably linked with statements concerning the attitude towards classic functions of political journalism. In those cases, the dimension taking up more space of the selected statement was favoured. The analysis thus kept the same sorting procedure as quantitative content analysis, while allowing for a more organic generation of content categories (Mayring 1983). Topics were chosen for discussion in the results section based on commonality of response, uniqueness of response, or explanatory power. Remarks on the frequency or uniqueness of those responses accompany the results listed below.

Results

As suggested by Weischenberg (1992), role conceptions inform a journalists' work environment and news production. In this study, when correspondents were asked about their political attitudes and about the role of political journalism in Brussels and at home, the majority of the correspondents were pro-European – supporting earlier work on attitudes of Brussels correspondents (e.g. Drehkopf 2006). Contrary to some speculation about the opinionated journalism of new member states (e.g. Gross 2004) correspondents considered it their primary goal to explain, inform and guide their audiences at home through the complex maze that is EU politics today.

An overwhelming majority of journalists are content with their position in Brussels. An Estonian correspondent said that as a correspondent in any other press corps, he "would have to know a lot more about specific stuff," while being a Brussels correspondent gave "much space and fewer rules, fewer traditions" (Journalist 4). A Latvian colleague stated that she felt a lot freer from editorial pressure in Brussels (Journalist 1). However, some journalists expressed their regret for leaving their families and friends behind, while others said that there were sorry to miss "important moments" for their homeland while being abroad (Journalist 9).

Most journalists in the sample are pro-European and thought that their home country has been able to benefit from EU membership. A Polish journalist explained:

> *I am very positive. One can describe me as a supporter of the idea of the European federation and common, liberal market. Anyway, it is better to like the EU, if you work here* (Journalist 14).

Veteran journalists who had served in Brussels for more than five years rarely expressed anti-European sentiments. However, some correspondents, particularly those who had recently arrived in Brussels, criticised EU processes ("cumbersome bureaucracy and obscure decision-making," Journalist 8) and some of its policies ("they are wasting money," Journalist 12). One Hungarian journalist offered her own opinions on how this dichotomy emerged:

> *I always had the feeling that people, who came here, had a sort of brainwash and got more and more pro-European. […] I think it's very healthy, if you leave Brussels after a time. The media needs a fresh look and a fresh brain"* (Journalist 8).

A young Czech newspaper journalist even referred to a long-time Brussels correspondent as "another institution in Brussels" and mockingly remarked that "if they built a new building somewhere here, it should be named after him – he is so institutionalised" (Journalist 10).

A number of authors suggest that role conceptions among post-communist journalists are characterised by expectations of being a watchdog or "fourth estate" and by a certain lack of objectivity and professionalism (e.g. Gorban-Klas 1997; Pisarek 1998; Gross 2004). In a study on Romanian journalists, Coman (2004) found that post-communist journalists had evolved high – *quasi*-Western – standards of objectivity and rapid information-gathering. However, these standards are not reflected in media content and are often compromised in favour of sensationalism and "tabloidisation" (e.g. Splichal 2001). Yet, the interviews in this study indicated that the Brussels correspondents have indeed adopted high journalistic standards. Here, an overwhelming majority of correspondents stressed the importance of informing the public as well as explaining complex topics to their audience:

> *The main function is to try to understand what's going on and then try to explain it as good as you can to your particular audience. There can be no other function* (Journalist 4).
>
> *A journalist first has to understand and then make understood* (Journalist 5).
>
> *It is to inform our readers about the developments of political life* (Journalist 14).
>
> *Most respondents identified most strongly with the role of a neutral information-gatherer – stating that good political journalism (in Brussels) did not necessarily need to be opinion-based but it should instead give audiences the opportunity to form their own attitudes. On the other hand, other concepts of journalism, such as innovative or investigative journalism were less popular among respondents. While most journalists did not deny the importance of investigative, critical or innovative functions, most did not rank them as highly as objectivity. Other functions, such as advocate journalism were soundly rejected.*

Most journalists thought that being a political journalist in Brussels was significantly different from working in their home offices. A Latvian correspondent remarked that, in Brussels, journalists were significantly closer to politicians and officials, sometimes blurring the line between professional and personal relationships (Journalist 1). This sometimes undermined critical journalism, especially for journalists from smaller member states:

> *It's very tricky. As we are a small community here, you cannot really say much, because you need these people as experts for your next story. Of course, we do not hide information about MEPs, but the situation is definitely more difficult* (Journalist 1).

Journalists from small new member states such as the Baltic States felt the greatest differences between the scene at home and in Brussels. Not only were the number of national references in Brussels small, journalists were also accustomed to gathering their news from a much smaller information pool. Many journalists found it overwhelming to sift through the vast amounts of information available to them in Brussels:

> *I apply universal standards. […] But, I have the feeling our situation here is different. Brussels is not about being a specific correspondent; it's being*

everything and nothing at the same time. We have more information, more dimensions to cover than the average journalist […] so, maybe the very political commenting is less present in Brussels. It's more about information-based stories (Journalist 10).

Just as Coman (2004) in his work, a number of journalists indicated that their profession was more highly regarded at home. A Lithuanian correspondent, for example, said that at home "journalists are seen as a fourth power in the state" (Journalist 7).

When asked whether they saw themselves different from journalists from "older" members, correspondents from post-communist states referred to the relatively young tradition of the free press in their home countries. As explained by a Hungarian correspondent, post-communist journalists were still in a learning process. Fifteen years were not enough to live up to the standards of English, German or French journalism and thus, new member states' correspondents today still lacked self-confidence in contact with officials and politicians (Journalist 8).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to provide a first and preliminary insight into the role perceptions of correspondents from new member states in the Brussels press corps. In-depth interviews with 14 correspondents from different new member states provided a limited but nonetheless rich collection of data for analysis. The interview responses were analysed within the context of the findings of similar studies focusing on journalists from old member states such as France, Germany or the United Kingdom. The Brussels press corps have been credited with being the brokers of a new Europeanised public sphere (Gerhards 1993). In an enlarging EU, the correspondents from new member states play a special role to impact this newly emerging communication space (Lecheler 2008).

Prior findings indicated that post-communist journalists had not yet evolved a fixed set of professional roles, norms and values. Coman (2004) characterised post-communist journalists as having high standards concerning their news production but only limited success in implementing these in a market which is characterised by sensationalism and "tabloidisation." Respondents in the study found that explicative, objective and rapid information-gathering were the most important constituents of political journalism in Brussels. Although it's not clear if this opinion represents the emergence of a professional norm, it closely coincides with findings made by Drehkopf (2006) on the journalistic type of the "explaining ombudsman" beloved of German correspondents: as a consequence of a highly-complex subject matter and declining public support at home, journalists see it as their highest goal to explain the EU and make the EU decision-making process in Brussels better understood. Other forms of reporting are not as highly emphasised. For instance, new member states' journalists in the sample did not show much interest in investigative or critical reporting, a fact that might also be connected with the fact that new member states' correspondents feel at disadvantage in the news-gathering process compared to their colleagues from big and powerful publications (Lecheler 2008).

Interestingly, a majority of respondents found their work in Brussels very different from home, not only because of its lack of editorial offices but also because of

its lack of oversight, allowing them to work freer from editorial pressure and topic advice. Lastly, and contrary to the portrait of the self-sufficient post-communist journalist proposed by Coman (2004), correspondents from new member states gave the impression of even lacking self-confidence in their daily work: "when I sit next to these big names," a Czech correspondent explained, "I listen to their questions and then to mine and compare myself" (Journalist 10).

Thus far, the complex subject matter of EU affairs and press work leads them to adapt an explicative but also rather uncritical view towards EU news reporting. In conclusion, common perspectives are eschewed in favour of national interest and international and transnational dialogues are hindered by uncritical reporting, impeding the emergence of a Europeanised public sphere, according to the normative and empirical standards adopted by a number of scholars (e.g., Risse 2002; Machill et al. 2006).

There are a number of caveats to this study. The relatively small number of interviews in the study limited the analysis in a number of ways. First of all, it could not provide an exhaustive insight into the journalistic life of correspondents from all new member states. Also, the generational gap expected between older and younger post-communist journalists in Brussels could not be analysed adequately. Along these lines, national comparisons within the group of new member states were neglected to guarantee a broad overview of the workings of Brussels correspondents from new EU member states. Future studies should zoom in on specific new member states and their journalistic culture. They must also address other constituents of contemporary political communication in light of a growing European Union, the sources of information (EU institutions), the actual products of news coverage (TV footage, newspaper articles) or the recipients of these products (the audience in the news coverage) must be subject to continuous research.

Notes:

1. The results presented in this paper stem from a larger study on "Brussels correspondents from the new member states," parts of which have been presented on previous occasions.

2. For a description of role conceptions of Bulgarian journalists, see Krasteva (2007); on Hungarian journalists, see Kovats (1998).

3. Since, among the new member states, Cyprus and Malta did not undergo a post-communist transition, these were excluded from the analysis. The interviews were conducted in May 2006, before the accession of Bulgaria and Romania.

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MICHAEL BRÜGGEMANN

INFORMACIJSKA POLITIKA IN JAVNA SFERA
KOMUNICIRANJE V EU TER OBLJUBE DIALOGA IN TRANSPARENTNOSTI

Na primeru komuniciranja EU članek obravnava odnose med komunikacijsko dejavnostjo javnih oblasti in javno sfero. Tradicionalne teorije javne sfere obravnavajo vladne komunikacije kot nezaželen poseg, ki omejuje svobodno in odprto razpravljanje. Ta članek pa dokazuje, da je treba vladne odnose z javnostmi analizirati kot del izvajanja informacijske politike, ki vključuje tudi pravico državljanov do dostopa do dokumentov in informacij. Ali informacijska politika omejuje ali podpira svobodno razpravo, je empirično vprašanje, na katerega članke odgovarja s primerom informacijske politike Evropske komisije po letu 2000. Kot odgovor na izziv, kako približati Evropo pretežno nezainteresiranim občinstvom, je Evropska komisija izvedla reformo svojih komunikacij, da bi okrepila evropsko javno sfero s povečevanjemm preglednosti evropskega vladovanja in z dialogom z državljani. Študija kaže, da EU ni izpolnila svoje obljube o dialogu in da lahko preglednost še izboljša. Informacijska politika komisije je usmerjena k normativno sprejemljivim ciljem, vendar uporablja neučinkovita sredstva. Informacijska politika ni propagandna, ampak neučinkovita. Poudarek na odnosih z mediji bi lahko povečali učinkovitost odnosov z javnostmi pri doseganju širše javnosti. Če novinarstvo deluje kot njen nujni korektiv in so državljani opolnomočeni s pravico dostopa do informacij, bi lahko informacijska politika prispevala k živahni transnacionalni javni sferi.

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SEUNGAHN NAH

TEORETSKI IN ANALITIČNI OKVIR RAZVOJA OMREŽNIH SKUPNOSTI
PRIMER INFORMACIJSKEGA ZBORA ELEKTRONSKIH SKUPNOSTI

Razprava postavlja teoretski okvir elektronskega informacijskega zbora, ki lahko virtualno in fizično poveže omrežne skupnosti. V navezavi na Habermasovo teorijo komunikativnega delovanja članek najprej obravnava skupnost kot enoto demokracije v kontekstu civilne družbe. To zagotavlja meta teoretski okvir za razumevanje pojmovnega okvira informacijskega zbora elektronske skupnosti iz takih teoretskih perspektiv, kot so javna sfera, socialni kapital in omrežne skupnosti. Nato je predlagan analitični okvir, ki omogoča znanstvenikom in raziskovalcem proučiti, kako računalniške omrežne skupnosti ali virtualne skupnosti prispevajo k fizični skupnosti in obratno preko potencialnih raziskovalnih programov in vprašanj. Razprava obravnava teoretska, metodološka in praktična vprašanja.

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TOM EVENS
PIETER VERDEGEM
LIEVEN DE MAREZ

RAVNOTEŽENJE JAVNE IN ZASEBNE VREDNOSTI ZA OBDOBJE DIGITALNE TELEVIZIJE

Digitalni prehod je rezultat dinamičnega medsebojnega vpliva gospodarskih, socialnih in političnih interesov, ki jih članek obravnava preko vlog vseh deležnikov v prehodu na digitalne televizijske storitve. Obravnava transakcije med javnimi in zasebnimi interesi politike s poudarkom na strategijah za pripravo digitalnega prehoda ter na prihodnjih možnostih, ki so na voljo v spektru. Primerjalna študija v treh evropskih državah kaže, da je imela v preteklosti vlada pomembno vlogo pri razvoju digitalne televizije, ki bi jo morala ohraniti tudi v prihodnje. Namesto zgolj tržno usmerjenega pristopa je potrebno boljše razumevanje pričakovanj deležnikov glede javnih politik in poslovnih strategij na področju digitalnih medijev.

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DAL YONG JIN

KRITIČNA INTERPRETACIJA HIBRIDIZACIJE V KOREJSKEM FILMU

ALI LOKALNA FILMSKA INDUSTRIJA USTVARJA "TRETJI PROSTOR"?

Članek obravnava temeljne predpostavke pojma kulturne hibridnosti za razumevanje hitre rasti korejske popularne kulture, predvsem filmov. Na primeru hibridizacije korejskega filma proučuje, ali je hibridnost kot perspektiva kulturne globalizacije ustvarila nove možne kulture, ki so osvobojene zahodne dominacije. Za razliko od prejšnjih študij, ki so poudarjale ključno vlogo hibridizacije pri ustvarjanju tretjega prostora, članek empirično dokazuje, da je proces hibridizacije lokalne popularne kulture pod močnim vplivom zahodnih norm in formatov. Novi lokalni kulturni proizvodi predstavljajo zahodno kulturo, ne pa specifične lokalne kulture. Na koncu članka avtor obravnava razloge, zakaj hibridnost ne more pojasniti lokalnih kultur, in opredeljuje nekatera vprašanja, ki jih moramo upoštevati pri uporabi hibridnosti za pojasnjevanje globalizacije.

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SOPHIE LECHELER
MALTE-CARLOS HINRICHSEN

POJMOVANJA VLOGE BRUSELJSKIH DOPISNIKOV IZ NOVIH DRŽAV ČLANIC EU

Novinarji, ki delajo v Bruslju, pogosto veljajo za drugačne od tradicionalnih dopisnikov iz tujine. Njihova ločenost od domačih uredništev jih razlikuje tudi od domačih političnih novinarjev. Zato so študije dopisnikov iz Bruslja prinesle lastne tipologije »bruseljskega političnega novinarstva«. S širitvijo Evropske unije – in z vedno več post-komunističnimi novimi državami članicami – moramo na novo opredeliti tipologije bruseljskega novinarstva. Pretekle ugotovitve kažejo, da postkomunistični novinarji še niso razvili trdnega nabora poklicnih vlog, norm in vrednot. Njihovo delo v Bruslju označuje drugačen pristop k poročanju. Poglobljeni polstrukturirani intervjuji s 14 novinarji iz novih držav članic kažejo, da so najbolj pomembne sestavine političnega novinarstva v Bruslju pojasnjevalno, objektivno in hitro zbiranje informacij. Zaradi zelo kompleksnega predmeta poročanja o EU in upada podpore iz domačih uredništev novinarji menijo, da je njihov najpomembnejši cilj razlagati EU in napraviti postopek odločanja v Bruslju bolj razumljiv. Ob tem so zapostavljene druge oblike političnega novinarstva, kot sta preiskovalno in kritično poročanje.

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