

Series Introduction

For years, the topic of information and entertainment content in the media has been studied by research teams all over the world whose members knew each other from a distance at best. The rapid technological development of the media not only enhanced the process of internationalization in media research, it also forced those distant factions of researchers to come together more often and to systematically communicate their ideas to each other. The new *Series on International Media Research* takes advantage of both of these major developments of the internationalization, of the field and of the fusion of different research fields and even different scientific disciplines. The series offers media researchers in and outside Europe a new platform to publish their research in English in order to reach an international audience in the field of communication. This first volume in the series not only informs about the current state of theory and findings in four important areas of media practice, in many chapters we also learn about the way researchers in the field view and interpret the research agenda for tomorrow in their specialty. Another important feature of this volume is the attention paid to methodological issues and the many ideas advanced to further the application of a wide variety of empirical research methods in media research. This volume in the *Series on International Media Research* provides critical information and ideas about some of the most active and important areas of present-day media research.

Angela Schorr

Preface

Angela Schorr & Stefan Seltmann (Editors)

Progress in technology has enabled new and innovative ways to produce and apply media content for information and entertainment purposes today. Acceptance and dissemination rate of new distribution channels are essentially determined by contents. At the same time, these new distribution channels and the choice of information being accessible individually, continuously and at many places, determine what contents are produced. This is true not only for new media contents but also for contents produced for traditional mass media.

Communicators and recipients play a much more direct and emancipated role in production and distribution of media content today. They use media differently than they did a decade ago. This is not only true for classical fields such as political communication/news production. The fields of information and entertainment—as the contributions to this volume will show—are changing in general.

In educational and organizational contexts the computer and the Internet profoundly changed communication structures (teaching and instruction online; e-leadership). Regarding entertainment, standardized, and increasingly individually customizable contents promise long term success. They are decodable against the background of multidimensional entertainment concepts.

The new trends have left their marks. The analyses and case studies in this volume reflect these changes. Communication researchers from all over Europe, the U.S.A., and Asia present results, interpretations and perspectives on the European and the international media market.

This first volume in our Series on International Media Research provides critical information and ideas about some of the most active areas of media research. The editors wish to thank all authors for their contributions and for gracefully accepting editorial reviewing.

Munich, September 2006

*Angela Schorr
Stefan Seltmann*

Introduction

Angela Schorr & Stefan Seltsmann (Editors)

Our book on changing media markets in Europe and abroad is subdivided into four parts: *Part One* consists of six studies that reflect on the political elites' new strategies to sway public decision-making processes by the systematic staging of medial events. The six chapters in *Part Two* mainly concentrate on the rapidly changing standards for the production of news items, a development that is paralleled by slowly changing user habits as far as news media consumption is concerned. The five studies in *Part Three* reflect on new developments in the field of entertainment media. Finally, in *Part Four* the changing communication structures and new communication needs in educational, organizational, and advertising contexts are discussed in five chapters.

With the beginning of the new century Europe faces fundamental changes in political culture. Although the developments differ from country to country, in the traditional democracies the changes occur more or less parallel to each other. Today's political commentators especially emphasize the new role of the media in the process of political communication. *Part One* of this book consists of six empirical "case studies" reflecting a new era: Independent of the political agenda, the media operate as a basis and a springboard of political initiatives, thereby moving into the center of political action. The political elites in Europe use the many new options for political communication and agitation that today's media offer, in a natural and effective way. Nevertheless, even their most experienced representatives are sometimes taken by surprise when looking at the results of all their careful planning and staging of political events. Nathalie Gagnère and Lynda Lee Kaid (chapter 1.1) studied the 2002 French presidential election. Their analysis shows that the young, visually oriented voters were strongly influenced by the TV spots advertising two candidates, Chirac and Le Pen. Although both politicians hardly differed as regards to their basic views and the political content of their public statements, the differing emotional profiles widely publicized by those TV spots were very effective. Based on the results of a careful content analysis and an experimental study, the authors

XIV *Introduction*

come to the conclusion, that the media strategies of Chirac and Le Pen had an impact on the voters' decisions and were of prime importance for course of the election. In the second chapter Anita van Hoof and her colleagues studied the short and abruptly ending career of the political newcomer Pim Fortuyn (†), who was assassinated only a few days before the 2002 Dutch elections. According to agenda setting theory, issues that are tackled by the media intensively and for a longer period of time, tend to become very influential in the voters' decision process. The results of the empirical study by the authors confirm that issue considerations on the voters' side became very important for pre-election decision-making, but that the closer the election day came, the more they lost ground again. The results of the election according to the authors were mainly influenced by retrospective considerations of the voters (i.e., considerations concerning national problems and who is to be blamed for). Retrospective voting behavior, the authors conclude from the results of their study, can be associated with a wide variety of topics. Politicians who are also able communicators, the authors conclude, will intensify their efforts to manipulate the pre-election issue dynamics to their advantage in the future (see chapter 1.2). The same year's elections in Germany according to Jürgen Maier and Thorsten Faas (chapter 1.3) too were marked by growing effects of mass media messages on the voters, the closer the election day came. At times, when voters feel insecure and their voting behavior tends to be unstable, the authors recommend to use repeated measurements (including three or more panel waves) instead of the traditional pre-post design to study the influence of televised debates on the voters' decision-making processes. Rita Marcella, Graeme Baxter, and Nick Moore in chapter 1.4 discuss the new and innovative Internet-based efforts of the British government to engage the public in the political process (i.e., by special websites). But the government's approach of informing the public while at the same time advertising governmental decisions is not always convincing, the authors criticize. Nevertheless, the sometimes conflicting goals of the new public information services according to Marcella and her colleagues can't explain why these services fail to attract users. Based on a careful empirical analysis, Marcella et al. come to the conclusion that it is not enough to set up websites for information purposes run by the government. Special measures have to be taken in order to motivate citizens to use these websites. Offering a new technology will not automatically lead to a significant increase in political participation by the

citizens (see chapter 1.4). Dave Gelders (chapter 1.5) studied the strategy to manipulate political decisions by making governmental decision processes public at an early stage and thereby stimulating a public debate that will influence parliamentary decisions in the end. In order to find better support in public debates that are strategically staged, the author recommends that the Belgium government should work out government information guidelines that are at the same time unambiguous and easy to handle. Dave Gelders believes, that the fragmentation of public communication can be fought by better coordination of the government's public statements. Finally, in chapter six John Rosenbaum analyses the long-term effects of the EU Directive Television Without Frontiers (TWF) on the establishment of public and commercial broadcasting in the Czech Republic, in Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia. He heavily criticizes the economic measures used in the screening process to determine whether TWF promotes cultural diversity in these countries. Envisioning the future establishment of digital TV as characterized by both tendencies, by media expansion and media convergence, the author recommends the systematic application of qualitative research measures to capture cultural diversity in media research. By these measures, the TWF Directive and the important goal to promote cultural diversity in Europe would be significantly reinforced (see chapter 1.6).

In *Part Two* of the book research teams from all over the world reflect on the new patterns of production and reception of information content in traditional mass media and in new media like the Internet. The marketing of news items/information content has changed a lot in the last 10 to 15 years. That does not mean that the classical virtues of journalistic work automatically fall by the wayside. But the many different contexts information content today may be presented in (e.g., newspaper, television, Internet, mobile phone) will lead to new target groups, new products, and new and unknown media effects. Not only in the field of entertainment, but also in this very traditional area of media content production, things are changing rapidly, while the habitual behavior of the major players in the game (producers, recipients) seems to change on a slow pace compared to the technological development. The study by Tiki Balas and Sam Lehman-Wilzig (chapter 2.1) critically reflects on the modes of information content production for TV news shows in Israel. In the context of an interview study they systematically compare the professional news production goals the producers of news items set themselves with what really appears on the TV screen as a

XVI Introduction

product of the daily routine in news production. Visual content needs, time pressure, budgetary constraints, and logistic difficulties are the main reasons why professional news production goals are often set aside. The authors' analysis shows that this is true for news production processes in the context of public as well as commercial TV channels. Breakfast TV, an infotainment genre that was first introduced to the European TV market more than a decade ago, is the research topic of Mervi Pantti and Jan Wieten in chapter 2.2. The authors study the characteristics of breakfast television through the eyes of the producers of this TV genre. What breakfast TV offers, is a very special mixture of information and entertainment for morning viewers who are in a hurry. To reach this target group is a particular challenge for the producers of these shows. More than any other group of TV producers, these professionals have learned to stay in close contact with their audience in order to be successful, thereby having accumulated a professional knowledge that will become important for all kinds of future TV productions operating with fractionated audiences. Giovanna Dell'Orto (chapter 2.3) analyzes the way news items from the United States (especially news items published in the online editions of *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, *CNN* and *ABC*) take in Italian and French newspapers published nationwide. Although the U.S. media probably gained more influence on the European news production due to their websites, the discourse the European media lead on the topics they select from these sources definitely turns out to be an independent one, the author concludes. A homogenization of discourse, often indicated by the literature as a by-product of new media, was not substantiated by this research. Byron T. Scott's careful analysis (chapter 2.4) of the news production results in Albania and South Africa on the occasion of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York shows, how much information content may be influenced by the different national perspectives on actual political events. The author comes to the conclusion, that journalists are expected to be professionals as well as patriots, meaning that independence and news judgment often have to be given up in societies that are still fragile and not settled in their democratic structures. In chapter 2.5 Carol Pardon, Jane Brown and Tara Kachgal take the low interest of the U.S. American youth in international news and in news and information content in general as a point of departure for their empirical analysis. Their data based on more than 3,000 adolescents who completed a self-administered ques-

tionnaire show, that although the participants of this study regularly consume a wide variety of media, news content is not a top priority for most of them. While the new media facilitate access to news items from anywhere in the world and allow for faster communication in many different ways, these new resources do not automatically lead to a change in adolescents' media use habits. The authors conclude that the producers of news content should make extra efforts to attract adolescents and young adults (e.g., by presenting news items in a more casual and less stereotyped fashion, etc.). The topic of school violence regularly appears in U.S. television news shows. Richard Long (chapter 2.6) analyses schools as organizational structures and studies the interplay between journalists, schools and community leaders in emergency situations from this angle. His study shows that school and community leaders still don't see the need to develop and to practice emergency plans, even if school shootings already occurred in their community. Moreover, Long's interview partners also didn't make any plans for the communication with the media in case of an emergency event (e.g., a violent attack in a school). Most often, Long's interview partners expected to be able to communicate with the media without any professional support. While many school officials tend to blame the news media for "causing" school violence, the author's data don't support these charges. All in all, his study contributes to the understanding of the complicated communication structures that develop during the production of news items on local violence. While journalists and school and community leaders nowadays are able to get access to news content from all over the world (e.g., the school shooting in Erfurt, Germany), Richard Long's interviews with them show, that these new resources are rarely used to analyze the local event more thoroughly.

The area of media entertainment like no other field of media research desperately needs an increase in basic and applied research. In *Part Three* in five chapters media entertainment is studied in non-interactive, interactive, and mixed environments. Angela Schorr reviews the psychological research on romantic love in order to develop a functional definition of the TV genre telenovela (chapter 3.1). Additionally, the author tries to explain, why the telenovela, originally a Latin American TV genre, has been so well accepted by international audiences, and most recently by German-speaking TV viewers. Finally, a new research agenda for this often denigrated genre is set up. In "The Interactive Sublime" Lars Nyre (chapter 3.2)

XVIII *Introduction*

discusses different options for the development of innovative content based on new media technologies, exemplifying his ideas by taking the mass medium radio as an example. Nyre critically analyses what he calls “the rhetoric of the interactive sublime”, and asks the question: Will digitalized media allow true interactivity supporting more and new ways of participation, or is this idea only one element of a successful persuasive advertising strategy developed to sell the new technologies to the user? Here and now, Nyre concludes, the future quality of communication is at society’s disposal: “Good” communication in the sense of more participation will only be attained, if the organizational structures of content production for mass media change and the producers try to explore new and innovative ways of content production. Digital games are the subject of Swaran Sandhu’s analysis (chapter 3.3). In his review of today’s research he did not focus on the different technologies involved (i.e., personal computer, the Internet, game consoles, different kinds of mobile personal information appliances). Instead, he critically reviewed the research on “game studies” and especially the goals the researchers in the field presently pursue. Sandhu wants to systematize the research on digital games. He recommends to explore communication science approaches in order to use them to the benefit of digital games research and furthermore develops some very original and exciting new ideas. A media communication format that is so successful with the user according to Sandhu has to be taken serious by media research, and is in need of a research agenda. In “Interactivity as Entertainment Content” (chapter 3.4) Angela Schorr reviews the historical development of the different concepts of interactivity as well as today’s research on the topic. The focus of the analysis is on entertainment, i.e., on the entertaining features of interactivity. The author recommends to overcome the prevalent “grand theory” discussions in interactivity research and to concentrate on pragmatic, consumer-oriented single-medium research on different levels of interactivity. Finally, Anna Spagnolli and Luciano Gamberini (chapter 3.5) present the results of their empirical research on “true” virtual environments. Using a head-mounted display (i.e., a data helmet), a data suit, an experimental laboratory and some special software, the authors systematically explore the effects of virtual environments on the experience of presence. In their study, the subject’s user navigation was systematically affected by technical interferences, forcing the subject for a short time to re-orient him- or herself in the reality of the psychological laboratory. As the

results of the study show, the users of virtual environments can easily act in two environments (the virtual environment and the real laboratory environment) run parallel to each other—a basic skill they obviously acquired early on in their personal media use history.

How today's media change learning and work environments, is discussed in *Part Four* of this book. They not only become important for teaching, the teaching of teachers, and the management of a wide variety of training centers and schools. Today's media allow for a multitude of new ways for individual users to communicate with each other. But many new media use options come with new demands the users have to meet. This is not only true for the field of education, but for the world of work too. The bottom line of the five studies in Part Four of this book is, that the quality of communication and the innovative character of digitalized media is dependent on the degree true interactivity becomes reality (for the definition of true interactivity, see chapter 3.4), and the new media succeed in optimizing media use options so that they enhance participative communication.

Mihai Bocarnea, Linda Grooms und Kathaleen Reid-Martinez (chapter 4.1) explore the use of computer-mediated communication in distance education, stressing the importance of dialogic structures for successful learning. In chapter 4.2 Melissa Poole studies the use of online communication tools during the most difficult stage in teacher education (i.e., preservice teachers, the final two years of teacher education). Based on the results of an empirical study her chapter contains many valuable insights and recommendations for the advancement of teacher education by the introduction of online communication tools. Larry Browning, Jan-Oddvar Sørnes, Alf Steinar Sætre, and Keri Stephens (chapter 4.3) take the garbage can theory as a point of departure (thereby accentuating the element of instability within organizations) in order to get further insight into the actual ICT practices of managers in business and governmental organizations. They base their observations and conclusions on the results of 72 in-depth interviews with managers in Norway and in the U.S.A. The topic of computer-mediated communication in organizations is explored by Stefan Seltsmann (chapter 4.4) from a perspective that is at the same time critical and constructive. He also focuses on the different leadership styles supporting or obstructing the use of new media. The results of his empirical study confirm, that the negative effects of leadership behavior characterized by dys-

XX *Introduction*

functional communication patterns tend to become even more dramatic when new communication options like the email are used regularly. In chapter 4.5 Angela Schorr tackles the problem of advertising, especially of advertising products symbolizing biological generativity and success to midage women between 40 and 60 years of age. Although the so-called “baby boomer” generation in Europe, Asia and the United States will stay influential for many years to come, the advertising industry has lost sight of this important target group. For many years children and young adults dominated the TV screen in advertising. Based on the psychological concept of generativity the author works out new marketing strategies for the midage generation.

Part One

Reaching Out for the Public: The Political Elites and the Media

1.1 Political Broadcasting in the 2002 French Presidential Election: Appeals and Effects for Young Voters

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Unlike the United States, where political advertising plays a dominant role, in France it has not been considered as important. However, in the 2002 French presidential campaign, with the surprising advance of extremist Le Pen into the run-off and the cancellation of the traditional presidential debate, the role of political broadcasting was enhanced. In this chapter we make use of content analysis to study the appeals employed in those broadcasts and report on the results of an experimental study conducted to measure the broadcasts' effects on the attitudes of young voters. The results suggest that candidates used television advertising to capitalize on dramatic visuals and issues; and that these measures taken had identifiable effects.

Introduction

Political leaders in democratic governments throughout the world face a common problem: How to convince their electorates to vote for them or their party? Over the last half of the twentieth century, the answer for many politicians and their parties has developed from a common strategy. Mass media, particularly television, have offered them the best chance to communicate their platforms and their qualifications to voters (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 1995).

The French presidential election of 2002 provided an opportunity to determine the effects of using television to communicate political information to voters. The research presented here assesses the extent to which presentations of the presidential candidates on television affected attitudes toward the candidates in the second ballot. In this chapter we use content analysis

to study the appeals employed in the broadcasts and we also report on the results of an experimental study intended to measure the effects of political advertising on the attitudes of young voters.

Background on the 2002 Election

The battle for the French presidency in 2002 was expected to be a fight between the incumbent president, conservative Jacques Chirac, and the sitting prime minister, Socialist Lionel Jospin (“They’re”, 2002). With a president and prime minister from two different political parties, France was governed jointly by a split arrangement since 1997, when the Leftists regained control of the National Assembly and the Socialists were accorded the prime minister’s position. This power-sharing arrangement has occurred frequently in France and is known as “cohabitation” (Krause, 2000). Leading up to the 2002 election, both Chirac and Jospin enjoyed relatively high respect and approval in opinion polls and were engaged in public communication campaigns designed to mold their images into more positive, sympathetic, and likeable heads of state (Krause, 2000).

However, as the election date in the spring of 2002 came closer, the French political landscape seemed less settled and more fragmented. The multi-party system in France allowed for 16 presidential candidates who split the vote along both the left and the right, whereas neither major candidate (Chirac or Jospin) seemed to engage or excite the electorate. This situation resulted in a surprising outcome on the first ballot on April 21, 2002. With one of the lowest turnout rates in France for over fifty years, the expected outcome did not turn out. Prime Minister Jospin failed to reach the vote level needed in the first ballot in order to advance to the second ballot run-off. Instead, perennial National Front candidate Jean Marie Le Pen received 16.9% of the votes, sufficient to stand against the incumbent president Chirac for the second ballot on May 5 (“Explaining”, 2002). The two-week run-off race turned into an orgy of “stop Le Pen” sentiment, as political leaders from both ends of the spectrum joined labor unions and other groups to ensure that Le Pen did not do well in the final vote (Graham, 2002). Le Pen’s result in the first ballot seemed to activate especially young voters to protest and to get involved in the system (“Le révolte civique”, 2002). On May 2, the leading Paris newspaper, *Le Monde*, did a

special layout with many stories about the political leanings and thoughts of young voters (“Ces jeunes”, 2002).

The first ballot election result in France set off a near-hysterical reaction and media frenzy, not only in France, but throughout Europe. Le Pen was considered a right-wing extremist by many, and his success seemed tantamount to the legitimizing of his entire ultra-right agenda. His advance to the second ballot was labeled cataclysmic, a tornado, a disaster, almost every dramatic phrase that could be called to mind. Known for his anti-immigrant stances, the National Front leader is characterized by journalists as “unquestionably France’s most rousing orator” (Gourevitch, 2002), given to “roaring flights of populist speech, rich in metaphor, sarcasm, pathos, and a sort of intimacy-building vulgarity (...) accompanied by a repertoire of dramatic facial expressions, hand flailings, and full-body thrusts” (p. 2). Le Pen seems to have a “gift for language, especially the sinister kind,” remarked a reporter for *The London Times* (Bremner, 2002c, p. 17). Although Chirac refused to debate (Bremner, 2002a), he eventually won the second ballot with over 80% of the votes (Johnson, 2002).

Political Broadcasts in French Elections

As in most modern democracies, television in France has become a dominant medium for information distribution. The majority of the French households own a TV-set (97%), and the average French viewer identifies television as major information source and spends over 3 hours per day watching television (Cayrol, 1988; Gaoutte, 1997; Koch, 1988a). Although the TV-program diversified over the years, the French state still maintains a strong public broadcasting system, and allows presidential candidates to have direct access to the voting public through the allocation of free time, granted in equal blocks (Haiman, 1988; Johnston & Gerstlé, 1995). Television coverage on the elections in France is strictly regulated, and not only are free time slots allocated equally among candidates, but stations operate under a strictly enforced mandate to provide equal time to candidates during the official campaign.

Like their American counterparts, French politicians have come to see the television and a successful performance on TV as a major influence in presidential elections (Tarlé, 1979). A 1974 public opinion poll, for in-

stance, reported that 64% of the electorate rated watching television as the most useful/efficient means of “choosing a candidate,” and 74% evaluated TV as the best source for “knowing what politicians are like” (Grosser, 1975). In fact, television has been cited as playing a major role in establishing the late French president François Mitterrand’s image as a statesman (Charlot, 1975; Forbes & Nice, 1979). Most analyses of the role of television in French politics focused on the impact of TV-news formats, which, also like their American counterparts, have been found to concentrate a great deal of time and attention on campaign strategy or the “horse-race” aspects of the campaigns (Gerstlé, Davis, & Duhamel, 1991; Neveu, 1999).

While it is difficult to assess the impact of the candidate/party ads in French elections, there is no question that they reach a large audience. During the first round of the 2002 presidential election 33 million viewers watched official political programs in the first week. In the second week there were some 27 million who saw these ads. This number was even more significant in the second round since candidate ads on television reached 48 million viewers.¹

Another aspect of the second round of the campaign may have made the party broadcasts even more important in 2002. As mentioned above, Chirac’s refusal of any kind of direct confrontation with Le Pen meant that, for the first time since 1974, the traditional debate between the two leading contestants could not take place. Since Chirac did not want to dignify Le Pen’s candidacy by appearing on a TV platform with him, the importance of media coverage and party broadcasts gained in significance.

Style of French Political Broadcasts

The free-time political broadcasts (“*emissions*”) allocated to candidates on television during campaigns are strictly regulated in France. Candidates do not buy time, and they have no say in when the spots will be broadcasted. Because of their traditional “talking-head” format and longer lengths, candidate broadcasts in past French presidential elections differed a lot from American spot advertisements. Forbes and Nice (1979) described the French emissions as having a “limited televisual repertoire” (p. 42). This changed in 1988 when the French system approved the use of “clips” (Gourevitch, 1989; Johnston, 1991), which consisted of preproduced seg-

ments added to various parts of the traditional five and fifteen minute broadcasts. With their fast-paced edits, visually interesting scene changes, and music, the clips made French emissions much more similar to the American campaign style than those used in any previous French campaigns. The French ads moved even closer to the American style in 1995 when spots were produced under new rules that provided for shorter formats and fewer content restrictions. According to the French legislation used in the 2002 election, candidates were authorized to use video or audio segments produced at their own expenses as long as they did not exceed 50% of the length of each broadcast.² They could also include outdoor settings.³ Indoor segments, though, had to be filmed in a fixed setting and produced under very strict and austere rules. These were the imposed figures of style that candidates had to go through if they wanted to participate in the official media campaign.

The *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA)* set up a timetable defining the time and order of all official broadcasts for the first and second rounds of the election. In 2002 the broadcastings of political ads were scheduled on public television and radio stations (France 2, France 3, La Cinquième, France Inter, RFO for overseas territories and RFI for French expatriates) from April 8 to April 12, and from April 15 to April 19 for the first round and from April 29 to May 3 for the second round. Contrary to the official campaign of the European elections during which the length of ads were allocated on the basis of previous electoral results, this time each candidate had the same number of spots and equal time.⁴

As to the style and content of the French political broadcasts previous research has indicated that they are usually very issue-oriented and rely heavily on logical appeals (Kaid, 1999). In an analysis of the 1988 French presidential candidate broadcasts, Johnston (1991) concluded that spots emphasized issues more than images and used more formal settings. French candidates were also more likely to appear in their ads (speaking for themselves) and to use their time to promote their own candidacies, devoting less time than their American counterparts to attacking their opponents. Holtz-Bacha, Kaid, and Johnston (1994) also found that French spots were more issue-oriented and used more logical appeals than the spots used in German elections. Kaid (1999) drew similar conclusions from the 1995 spots.