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Political Economy Section

Abstracts of papers presented at
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International Association for Media and Communication Research[1]
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Id: 11986

Title: PANEL: Global Media Giants and Media Power

Session Type: Panel Submission

Authors:
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Abstract: PANEL ABSTRACT & PRESENTER INFORMATION

This panel features four different case studies from the forthcoming edited volume, Global Media Giants. The book, as well as each presenter on this panel, interrogates the ways in which media companies from around the world exercise power within their respective domains. Recognizing the varied nature of power, the panelists will discuss the economic, political, and cultural influence of each company. Furthermore, each will reflect on the nature of "media power," including how it is constituted, exercised, and reinforced or reproduced by the companies they discuss. The case studies include National Amusements Incorporated, the Microsoft Corporation, the Interpublic Group of Companies, and one regional case study on East Asia and China. These case studies are representative of the diverse ways that media power is exercised around the world, and they also provide a look at companies that operate in different product markets.

Presenters and Papers:
Eileen R. Meehan, "National Amusements, Incorporated"
Benjamin J. Birkinbine, "The Microsoft Corporation"
Chris Chavez, "Interpublic Group of Companies"
Yu Hong, "East Asia and China"

Id: 11989

Title: PANEL: Global Media Giants and Media Power

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper Title: "Interpublic Group of Companies"

As with other forms of media, advertising may be seen as an important form of representation. At the same time, what distinguishes advertising from other forms of cultural production is its unique capacity to translate symbolic representation into material consumption. That is to say that advertising is designed to connect audiences with particular types of goods and services. Today, much of the world's advertising revenue is generated by just four large, global holding companies, which include WPP, the Omnicom Group, the Publicis Groupe and the Interpublic Group of Companies (IPG). Using a case study approach, I focus on IPG not only because the company exemplifies the consolidation that has defined the advertising industry in the modern era, but also because IPG was one of the early pioneers of global expansion. I will begin by situating the company historically, charting the transformation of IPG from a US based agency with trans-national interests into a truly global corporation that transcends the nation state. Second, I will detail the company's contemporary strategies, which have enabled IPG to thrive in a highly competitive media marketplace. Reporting over $7 billion in total revenues in 2014, IPG's growth strategy has been based on expansion, centralization and diversification. As the parent company of multiple, independently run agencies, IPG's portfolio of companies is no longer limited to advertising agencies, but includes a range of assets including digital agencies, public relations firms, media buying companies and lobbying firms. Finally, I assess IPG's global impact. As a result of its transnational presence, IPG's has become a significant player in the global economy. Because it is of the most prolific producers of trans-national advertising, IPG has the unique capacity to facilitate the movement of goods across borders and promoting uniform patterns of consumption. At the same time, advertising may be considered to be a symbolic system that synthesizes a culture's values and worldview. Consequently IPG has the unique capacity to project the ethos of global capitalism on a massive scale

Id: 11990

Title: PANEL: Global Media Giants and Media Power

Session Type: Panel Submission

Authors:
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Abstract: Paper Title: "Media Giants in the Making: Tencent, China Mobile and Shanghai Media Group"

Since the late 1990s, a distinctive East Asian media market has contended, collaborated, and overlapped with the global Hollywood system. Nevertheless, the rise of China is affecting this political economy. After sketching media reforms in East Asia and the resulting regional interactions with transnational corporate networks, this chapter focuses on analyzing the nature of China's potential media power. It examines China Mobile Communications Corporation, Shanghai Media Group, and Tencent Holdings as exemplary cases of media giants in the making. It argues that although Chinese state regulations continue to sustain distinct yet adjacent markets in the digital economy, the state is willing to tolerate loopholes and is poised to go down the deregulatory road. To be favorably positioned in the coming digital ecosystem, these corporations are using strategic investment and partnerships to grow their footprints.

Id: 11991

Title: PANEL: Global Media Giants and Media Power

Session Type: Panel Submission

Authors:
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Abstract: Paper Title: "The Microsoft Corporation"

The Microsoft Corporation rose to power during the 1980s and 1990s as its software was packaged with sales of the personal computers at a time when the market was booming. Since that time, the company has diversified its product lines, and it is still currently trying to reinvent itself in light of the emerging mobile computing market. In this chapter, I chart the history of Microsoft's development by examining its economic, political, and cultural influence. Throughout, I identify key strategies employed by the company in its pursuit of global dominance. Furthermore, I contextualize these strategies within history by stressing the growth and subsequent changes that took place in the personal computing market. Specifically, I argue that Microsoft's conviction of violating antitrust laws in the United States marked a turning point for the company and its strategies, specifically, but also marked the end of an era in the broader information technology industry more generally.

Id: 11996

Title: An African City: Web Television and the Promise of Alternative Production

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In the spring of 2012, Nicole Amarteifio posted the first episode of An African City on YouTube, an online series that focuses on five, upper-middle class women living in Accra, Ghana. An African City has been compared to HBO's Sex in the City because of its focus on high fashion and the sexual politics of dating, but the show may also be seen as a distinctly African product, addressing issues that are specific to the region. Soon after its release, the show quickly garnered a global following of Africans as well as those living in the diaspora. The success of An African City is remarkable for two reasons. First, with relatively few economic resources and no studio support, Amartafeio has accomplished the goal of attracting a following that spans the globe. Thus, An African City demonstrates the capacity for independent film-makers to cultivate a trans-national audience in a digital age. But the show is also remarkable because it promises to provide counter-hegemonic discourses outside the traditional network system. A trans-national television series that focuses on five, successful African women defies the conventions of western media, which has a very limited visual vocabulary when it comes representing the Africa and African life. A consistent finding in the literature is that tropes of violence and hopelessness continue to define African representation and in the process reify white superiority. When it comes to contemporary Black representation on global television, transnational media conglomerates ultimately create the conditions within which particular black portrayals are and are not thinkable. Black men tend to be confined to situation comedy, sketch comedy, animation and to a smaller degree, drama. By contrast, black women are portrayed as middle class women whose racial identities come across mainly through their linguistic styles. Focusing on An African City as a case study and using Pierre Bourdieu's general theory of practice as an analytical tool, we examine the conditions that both enable and constrain the ability for independent film-makers to act as transformative agents within the field of television production. In recent years, several economic and technological disruptions to the television landscape, including the cheap audiovisual production equipment, channel fragmentation and new forms of distribution have enabled independent film-makers to distribute their programs globally. We argue, however, that not all independent projects are destined achieve global success. Instead, different film-makers possess different levels of economic, social and cultural

capital that ultimately pre-determine their success in the marketplace.

Id: 12001

Title: Beyond anthropocentrism: merging critical animal studies with the political economy of communication

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper will introduce what the author considers to be the next natural step in the necessary constant rethinking and renewal of the political economy of communication (PEC) as a critical approach, namely to acknowledge the anthropological bias that prevents PEC scholars from seeing (and denouncing) the most widespread form of oppression taking place on Earth under capitalism: the oppression of nonhuman animals by human species. Our treatment of other species is not only immoral but, as research has increasingly shown, a form of violence interconnected with all other forms of violence, including violence amongst humans.

It is a natural step because we have already taken the path towards a more moral understanding of the planet. Environmental political economy is already a well-established school of thought in political economy. As Mosco stated (1996, 2009): "An environmental approach advances political economy's interest in the idea of the social totality by incorporating the natural totality of organic life. Concomitantly, it broadens political economy's concern for moral philosophy by expanding the moral vision beyond human life to all life processes". (p. 61)

A commitment to the environment in political economy was the missing piece in the necessary alliance between socialism and feminism to correct both the Neoclassical and Marxian tendency of neglecting nature in their analyses. Both inside and outside this alliance, environmental political economy has been very fruitful over the past decades. More recently, this approach has also produced results in the political economy of communication (for instance Maxwell and Miller, 2012; Maxwell et al, 2014). The PEC approach is now ready to fully expand the moral vision beyond human life, as other disciplines of the social sciences and humanities have done (particularly moral philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and psychology). This expanded moral vision includes realizing that humans are only a part of the planet, not above it, and that not awarding other species the same moral consideration as we do the human species is an anthropocentric bias which may be called speciesism and is deeply entangled with economic interests.

To make this step forward, the paper will suggest considering the tenets of critical animal studies (CAS) as a necessary condition for PEC's progress. The author will show how the two approaches have much in common and can mutually enrich one another. CAS is defined as a "radical, interdisciplinary field dedicated to establishing a holistic total liberation movement for

humans, nonhuman animals, and the Earth" (Nocella II et al, 2014: xxvi). Like PEC, CAS argues for an engaged critical praxis, for the political economy perspective, and for political stances that dismantle structures of exploitation, domination, oppression and power. But CAS also provides a much needed desconstruction of the binary opposition between human and nonhuman animals and a holistic understanding of oppressions, so-called intersectionality, a concept that describes the ways in which oppressive institutions and systems are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another.

Id: 12024

Title: PANEL Media and Marxism I: Critically Theorising Information and Communication with Karl Marx

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: PANEL Media and Marxism I: Critically Theorising Information and Communication with Karl Marx
Session

Chair: Marisol Sandoval, City University London, UK, marisol.sandoval.1 (at) city.ac.uk

Submission to the Political Economy Section

Panel description
Marx's theory has been an important approach in the political economy of communication. Nonetheless, political economy of communication not only involves Marxist, but various heterodox approaches. Since the emergence of the new world economic crisis of capitalism in 2008, there has been a surging interest in Marx's theory in the public and in academia. The hope is often that we thereby can better understand the crisis of capitalism. The more radical implication of engaging with Marx should however be to ask ourselves what is wrong with capitalism in general and capitalist media in particular and what the alternatives to both are.

"Media and Marxism" is a series of four sessions that explores how we can make use of Marx's concepts in order to critically understand the media in contemporary capitalism and discuss what can be done against capitalism and capitalist media and what the alternatives are.

The first session explores how we can build a critical theory of information and communication based on Marx's works.

Contributions
1) Christian Fuchs: Reading Capital and the Grundrisse in the Information Age
2) Brice Nixon: Communication as Capital: The Unasked, Fundamental Question of the Political Economy of Communication
3) Rodrigo Finkelstein: Productivity and Information: Cheapening the Value of Labour-Power

Id: 12025

Title: PANEL Media and Marxism 2: Commodification and its Alternatives in the Age of Communicative Capitalism

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: PANEL Media and Marxism 2: Commodification and its Alternatives in the Age of Communicative Capitalism
Session Chair: Christian Fuchs, University of Westminster, UK, c.fuchs (at) westminster.ac.uk

Submission to the Political Economy Section

Panel description
Marx's theory has been an important approach in the political economy of communication. Nonetheless, political economy of communication not only involves Marxist, but various heterodox approaches. Since the emergence of the new world economic crisis of capitalism in 2008, there has been a surging interest in Marx's theory in the public and in academia. The hope

is often that we thereby can better understand the crisis of capitalism. The more radical implication of engaging with Marx should however be to ask ourselves what is wrong with capitalism in general and capitalist media in particular and what the alternatives to both are. "Media and Marxism" is a series of four sessions that explores how we can make use of Marx's concepts in order to critically understand the media in contemporary capitalism and discuss what can be done against capitalism and capitalist media and what the alternatives are.

The second session explores various aspects of the commodity form, exchange value, use-value and possible alternatives to capitalist media and culture.

Contributions
1) Lee Artz: Transnational Entertainment Media and the Construction of Global Capitalist Hegemony
2) Padmaja Shaw: News as Use-Value
3) Arwid Lund: Framing Peer Production by Marxism: Complement or Alternative to Capitalism?
4) Marisol Sandoval: Better Together? Karl Marx and a Radical Cultural Co-Ops Movement for the 21st Century

Id: 12028

Title: Panel "Media and Marxism 1: Critically Theorising Information and Communication with Karl Marx"

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: Reading "Capital" and the "Grundrisse" in the Information Age

This is a presentation in the panel "Media and Marxism 1: Critically Theorising Information and Communication with Karl Marx" that was submitted by Christian Fuchs to the Political Economy Section

Since the start of the new world economic crisis of capitalism in 2008, there has been a profound interest in Karl Marx's works in the public, among activists, and in the academic world. At the same time, the dominance of postmodern thought in the social sciences and humanities has been weakened. This presentation will look at some implications of Marx's theory for the political economy of communication and present the approach that I take in the book Reading Marx in the Information Age: A Media and Communication Studies Perspective on "Capital Volume I" (Routledge 2016) that is a chapter-by-chapter guide to Marx's most famous book and takes a media and communications-oriented perspective.
There has always been interest in Marx in the field of the political economy of communication. This interest has grown during the past couple of years. Marx is, however, not always welcome, as a recent debate between Nicholas Garnham and me published in Media, Culture & Society shows (see http://mcs.sagepub.com/content/early/recent). First, I will comment on this controversy.
Second, I will engage with other newer companions to Marx's Capital, especially David Harvey's Companion to Marx's "Capital" and Michael Heinrich's An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's "Capital". In the broader field of Marxist theory it is still true what Dallas Smythe ascertained in 1977, namely that communication and communications form a blind spot and a phenomenon that is often considered to be secondary, subsumed, and superstructural.
Third, I will use some passages from the Grundrisse in order to show how this work can help us to think about cultural labour, communication labour and digital labour today.
Fourth, I will engage with some passages from Capital Volume 1's chapters 1 and 2 for also discussing how they relate to culture and communication.
I will advance a reading of Marx that allows us to avoid three problematic positions in respect to the question how the economy and culture as well as work and communication are related:

economic reductionism, cultural reductionism, and dualism. I instead argue for a specific reading of Marx: dialectical cultural materialism.

Id: 12029

Title: Panel "Media and Marxism 2: Commodification and its alternatives in the age of communicative capitalism

Session Type: Panel Submission

Authors:
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Abstract: Paper title: Better together? A radical cultural co-ops movement for the 21st century

Worker co-operatives, loosely defined as organizations that are owned and controlled by the people working in them, have a long and contested history. For Karl Marx, they on the one hand demonstrated the possibility of economic organization beyond exploited and alienated labour. On the other hand he warned that they cannot escape capitalist realities and therefore risk loosing in the competition or being co-opted.

This paper focuses on the potential of worker co-operatives to challenge precarious, unequal and individualized labour in the cultural sector. I suggest an understanding of co-operatives as a pre-figurative political project that might lead to immediate improvements in working conditions while at the same time pointing towards a radical alternative. However, today's co-ops still face the threat of being co-opted. Thus, they need to be defended form an entrepreneurial approach that conceptualizes co-ops as efficient and resilient businesses and integrates them into a neoliberal discourse of self-help and individual responsibility.

Drawing on a series of interviews I conducted with members of worker co-operatives in the UK I argue that if cultural co-ops want to contribute to structural change in the cultural sector and beyond they need to collaborate and form a radical co-ops movement that can make political demands. I discuss what such a radical cultural co-ops movement for the 21st century can learn from the history of co-operative theory and practice.

Id: 12031

Title: Panel: Media and Marxism 2: Commodification and its Alternatives in the Age of Communicative Capitalism

Session Type: Panel Submission

Authors:
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Abstract: Paper title: Framing Peer Production by Marxism: Complement or Alternative to Capitalism?

This is a presentation in the panel "Media and Marxism 2: Commodification and its Alternatives in the Age of Communicative Capitalism" that was submitted by Christian Fuchs to the Political Economy Section".

Peer production can, seen as a political strategy, look like a version of the autonomist Marxist's exodus. Projects of peer production constitute an outside to capitalism that is commons-based and built around the copyleft license. There is a difference between being useful to society and being social necessary. Value is a social relation, it is not the work that constitutes the value, but the social construction of valorisation in the in the market exchange between people. Therefore it is important how peer production is looked upon by outsiders as well as insiders, and if there exist alternative versions of valorisation.
This paper examines the relation between peer production and capitalism on a systemic and theoretical level. It helps us to contextualize peer production historically and structurally as well to gain perspectives on the conditions surrounding peer producers' perceptions and valorisations of their projects in relation to capitalism. The performative function of Marxism is here of some interest.
Tiziana Terranova holds that peer production investigates the possibility of creating a commons-based economy with its mode of production, but not necessarily antagonistically in relation to capital. She stresses that the evolutionary idea is central to what she calls the P2P principles, which are often put up against Marxism's antagonistic interpretation of social production.
It will be shown how Marxism and closely related theories can improve our understanding of peer production's growth within a crisis-prone capitalism. Marxism is a more dynamic theoretical alternative than neo-classical theory and the P2P perspective and takes both antagonism and evolution into account.
Peer production projects (PPPs) like Wikipedia has been seen as an ad-free and non-commercial safe haven within capitalism, but Marxist theory points to the potential realism of other functions and interpretations that are not as easy for capital to co-opt. Marxist interpretations of the relation between capitalism's inside and outside, theories of coexisting historical modes of production, analyses of cognitive capitalism, and Marxist crisis theory will be drawn on to make this point.

Title: Panel: Media and Marxism 2: Commodification and its Alternatives in the Age of Communicative Capitalism

Session Type: Panel Submission

Authors:
Name: Eran Fisher
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Abstract: Paper title:The Bifurcation of Information in Digital Capitalism: The Political Economy of Free and Commodified Information

This is a presentation in the panel "Media and Marxism 4: Digital Labour, Online Alienation and the Digital Commodity" that was submitted by Christian Fuchs to the Political Economy Section.

This research contributes to the understanding of the historical transformations of capitalism – particularly the dynamics of value creation – in the context of digital media. It argues that in the 1980s digital capitalism faced an impending crisis, emerging from information being caught in a paralyzing paradox, anchored in the contradictory nature of information in digital capitalism. Functionally, information has become central to the operation of capitalism as a force of production and its primary commodity. Ideologically, proprietary information has been under a populist assault with the emergence of digital technology, asserting that "information wants to be free". Both trends were paramount for the continued thrive of information capitalist society. That dual commitment of information under capitalism – to be free and commodified – has been resolved by a new class of information capitalists by enthusiastically adopting the cultural dominance of free information, yet creating businesses based on the bifurcation of information' haling information I as free, while commodifying information II. The distinction between information I and information II is heuristic. Information I refers predominantly to content delivered by traditional media producers. Information II refers predominantly to information created as a result of the circulation of information I in digital networks. To illustrate briefly the distinction: a news story form the New York Times would be information I; the information created by digital media users in the circulation of that news story (mostly data and meta-data about readership, reaction, and conversations pertaining to the story) is information II. (Heuristically we might also refer to that as a distinction between information and data).
In sum, this research wishes to offer an alternative explanation to the rise of big data capitalism, not as a result of a technological development (web 2.0) but rather as a structural-functional pressure of capitalism to overcome the dual demand of information to be free and commodified. According to this narrative, what big data capitalists have achieved was a retreat from what they saw as a lost battle over the commodification of information I and the creation of platforms where information I is free and at the same time creates information II.

Id: 12036

Title: Panel: Media and Marxism 1: Critically Theorising Information and Communication with Karl Marx

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: Academic Labour, ICTs and Marx

This is a presentation in the panel "Media and Marxism 3: Karl Marx and Digital Media" that was submitted by Christian Fuchs to the Political Economy Section"

The economic and political transformations of universities in the last decades have attracted criticism. This is also reflected in a growing academic literature arguing to see those changes in the context of neoliberalism and a rise in the interweaving of private and public providers (McGettigan 2013; Hall 2015; Winn 2015; De Angelis and Harvie 2009). Within universities, a new entrepreneurial and managerial spirit has emerged that resulted in the implementation of market-driven rules and competition (Liesner 2006). It is argued that educational institutions nowadays aim to respond to market demands whereby the public character of education tends to fade away (Peters 2003). Critical studies speak about the 'edu-factory', 'corporate university' and of 'academic capitalism' (Gill 2013). These structural transformations have also an effect on the working conditions, practices and relations of subjects and result in, to name but a few, intensification and extensification of work, blurring between work and spare time, casualization, precariousness, self-exploitation and self-marketing. How these conditions are experienced by different subjects is open to debate. While the experiences of work in other sectors such as the cultural and creative industries are well documented, there is still a lack of understanding labouring subjectivities in academia and to analyse how the existing conditions are experienced by academics.
Questions that need to be addressed in this context include but are not limited to: How do the different concepts and forms of academic labour look like? How do new information and communication technologies frame the working conditions of academics? How do different working contexts and conditions in the academia shape feelings of autonomy, flexibility and reputation on the one hand and precariousness, overwork and dissatisfaction on the other? How are the effects upon the quality of the pedagogical practice perceived? How do the broader political realities and potentials in terms of solidarity, participation and democracy at universities look like?
I address these questions based on a theoretical analysis and interviews with academics at several universities in the UK. I will present some preliminary findings from my study.

Id: 12041

Title: Panel "Media and Marxism 1: Critically Theorizing Information and Communication with Karl Marx"Productivity and Information: A Marxist Perspective"

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: Productivity and Information: A Marxist Perspective

This is a presentation in the panel "Media and Marxism 1: Critically Theorizing Information and Communication with Karl Marx" that was submitted by Christian Fuchs to the Political Economy Section.

Productivity constitutes a particular mechanism through which the capitalist class extracts surplus value from wage-labourers. Rather than extracting surplus value by adding more value to the labour-process, productivity does it by subtracting value, particularly the value of labour-power. However, Marx pointed out that productivity can produce surplus value for the capitalist only if it is applied to those industries that produce normal means of subsistence for the reproduction of the working class such as food, cloth and shelter. This assertion seems to limit the scope of productivity to those industries that do not produce immaterial but only material commodities needed to reproduce labour-power. Should then productivity as an analytical category be fully dismissed when analyzing an informational sector? Are immaterial or informational commodities exempt from productivity as a method of producing surplus value? This paper aims to answer these questions. Based on classic Marxism own definitions and classifications, I will try to clarify the concept of productivity and to shed light on the relationship between productivity and information. By examining and discussing the case of the safety insurance business, this paper will provide a template on how to use the Marxist category of productivity when studying an informational sector and its immaterial commodities.

Id: 12047

Title: Panel "Media and Marxism 1: Critically Theorising Information and Communication with Karl Marx"

Session Type: Panel Submission

Authors:
Name: Brice Nixon
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Abstract: Paper title: Communication as Capital: The Unasked, Fundamental Question of the Political Economy of Communication

This is a presentation in the panel "Media and Marxism 1: Critically Theorising Information and Communication with Karl Marx" that was submitted by Christian Fuchs to the Political Economy Section.

This paper argues that the question that should be fundamental to the political economy of communication – the question of communication as capital – remains unasked. One insight media and communication studies can gain from Marx is how to answer the question of communication as capital and capital as communication. Answering that question is as much about the method of political economy as it is about the theory and concepts. The result of this pursuit is the development of a political economy of signification as the core of the political economy of communication. That theoretical development would provide the basis for analysis of the historical processes by which communication is capitalized — processes that involve turning meaning-making into a source of value.

The fundamental question Marx asked in his critique of political economy was, What is capital? Hence the title of the multivolume work: Capital. In answering that question through a critique of classical political economy, Marx constructed an alternative, critical political economy. The political economy of communication should proceed from a similar fundamental question: What is capital as communication? To answer that question in a way that provides critical knowledge, it is necessary to follow Marx's critical, materialist, dialectical method while remaining sensitive to the particularities of communication. However, the question of communication as capital remains essentially unasked. To the extent scholars have analyzed the capitalization of communication, they have not sufficiently considered how it is determined by the particularities of communication — most importantly, the particularities of signification. But in the long-standing divide between political economy and cultural studies, signification has been treated as an object of cultural studies and not political economy.

Almost four decades ago, Dallas Smythe developed a political economy of communication that attempted to theorize the capitalization of audience practices of meaning-making. Smythe's

theory of commodified audience labor provides an opening toward a political economy of signification, but it pays insufficient attention to the particularities of signification. Earlier in the 1970s, Jean Baudrillard focused on the particularities of signification in his development of a critique of the "political economy of the sign." However, in his focus on signification, Baudrillard worked explicitly against Marx's political economy. The political economy of communication can resolve this division between political economy and signification by returning to Marx's method and theory while attending to the specificities of signification in order to determine how communicative processes are treated as processes of capital circulation and accumulation. Proceeding in that way puts the political economy of signification – specifically, subjective signification – at the core of the political economy of communication. Capitalizing on communication is, fundamentally, a matter of capitalizing on subjective meaning-making. Since the print era, communication industries have developed around the ability to channel audience practices of meaning consumption in order to appropriate value from the productive audience process of subjective meaning-making.

Id: 12104

Title: Panel "Media and Marxism 2: Commodification and its alternatives in the age of communicative capitalism

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: Transnational Entertainment Media and the Construction of Global Capitalist Hegemony

Leslie Sklair, William Robinson, Jerry Harris, Kees van der Pijl, and others have consistently recognized the importance of culture for the development of global capitalism, but none have provided an investigation. This offering directly addresses the primary institutional expression of global capitalist culture: the media.
The neoliberal policies of transnational capitalism encompass global media through mergers, joint ventures, and local partnerships. Simultaneously, global entertainment media distribute narratives and themes supportive of neoliberal globalization. This paper/presentation identifies the global interlocks among capitalist investors, shareholders, and media corporations across nations that produce commercial entertainment – entertainment promoting individual gratification, deference to authority, and consumerism among audiences.
Animation, action movies, telenovelas, and sports – the primary global media genres – exhibit the same individualist narratives and neoliberal themes in every nation, offering localized co-productions that complement global media content and transnational political and cultural mores. The resulting hegemony of popular consent is not simply mediated through fictionalized entertainment, however, but depends on the actual social relations of capitalist production, including media production that depends largely on a transnational division of labor of skilled, temporary, and non-unionized workers.
The analysis provided here concludes that although transnational media distracts audiences and obscures fundamental class contradictions nationally and globally, ultimately global capitalism cannot rely solely on entertaining spectacles to win consent in the face of class inequality and injustice. Still, media content does inform and promote political perspectives and social values necessary for capitalist power and its use of selective coercion.

Id: 12106

Title: The Buy Egyptian Campaign: Political Consumption and Neoliberal Nationalism

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In the past decade, the growing phenomenon of political consumption has drawn the attention of scholars of communication and political economy. Earlier literature has sought to measure the impact of politically motivated consumption on political participation and economic performance. However, the literature has paid little attention to the cultural impact of political consumption, and particularly to the impact of nationalistic consumption on discourses of nationalism and citizenship.

This paper explores the existing theory on political consumption in light of the case of the Ishtiri Masri [Buy Egyptian] nationalistic consumption campaign in Egypt. The Buy Egyptian campaign was initiated by the businessman and media mogul Amr Adeeb, while hosting the popular talk show al-Qahera al-Youm [Cairo Today]. Amr Adeeb declared that the "Buy Egyptian campaign was aimed at reversing the economic downturn and bridging the trade deficit, through encouraging consumers to purchase national products. The campaign benefited from the multiple media platforms that Al-Qahera Al-Youm had a presence and following, as producers and viewers created posters, YouTube videos, logos and Facebook groups to promote the initiative. Using a textual and visual analysis of campaign promotion materials issued by the initiator Amr Adeeb as well as fans of his show, this paper provides a critical perspective of the cultural impact of the "Buy Egyptian" initiative.

The findings of this project reveal that while economic consumption campaigns cannot significantly drive economic revivals, they may constitute effective means of tying national culture with neoliberal economic policy through the merging of discourses and symbols of the market with nationalistic symbols in nationalistic consumption campaigns. Moreover, the research presents a critical perspective on the growing commercialization of Egyptian media and the increasing influence of business professionals in the ownership, control and presentation of television media in Egypt and internationally.

Id: 12131

Title: PANEL: "Media and Marxism 2: Commodification and its Alternatives in the Age of Communicative Capitalism"

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: News as Use-Value

This is a presentation in the panel "Media and Marxism 2: Commodification and its Alternatives in the Age of Communicative Capitalism" that was submitted by Christian Fuchs to the Political Economy Section.
In India, after the government permitted the uplinking and downlinking of news channels in 2000, there has been a phenomenal expansion of the news television industry. Out of 800+ permitted television channels, 398 are news and current affairs channels. Of these, barely 1% break even. Politicians, entrepreneurs from services sector such as real estate and non-banking finance own many.
When the expansion of the news sector began, it was hailed as the most significant development for strengthening Indian democracy, as it was expected to bring diversity and plurality to the ownership of news television. But the commercial expansion has marginalised the substantive issues of concern for Indian democracy (CMS 8-year data on television news content from 2005 to 2013) and did not bring diversity.
In their 1944 book "Dialectic of Enlightenment" Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer warn about corporations "drowning out democracy in pursuit of profit." But the news industry in India does not appear to be profitable in an economic sense. In the Indian context, there is a need to reengage and examine the ideas of use value and exchange value; commodity – whether audience is the commodity since the channels occupy space in the public sphere irrespective of the viewership and advertising, or the lack thereof; and whether there is a need to pay greater attention to the intent of the entrepreneurs when they enter the media news space.
The popular assumption about the entrepreneurs entering the media news sphere is to place them in the Marxian M-C-M circuit (Karl Marx: Selected Writings (2000), ed David McLellan, Oxford: UK. 2nd Edition. Pp 472-481), which is essentially that of exchange value to multiply money. Whereas the intent of the capitalist entrepreneur may be better demonstrated if it is seen analytically as C-M-C, where money generated elsewhere through other commodity transactions is entering the media news space to buy the use-value of presence in the public sphere, which subsequently the entrepreneur hopes (but may fail) to convert into political influence.

Paraphrasing Marx's explanation of the metamorphosis of commodities (as in Marx's well-known example: Linen – Money – Bible – Money – Brandy) this paper will argue from Indian experience that news media need to be looked at differently than other kinds of capitalist enterprises.

Id: 12157

Title: Mediación, Subsunción y Apropiación Social. Contribución al diálogo entre Estudios Culturales, Economía Política y Comunicación

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Partiendo de la perspectiva de la Economía Política de la Comunicación y de la Cultura (EPC) y los Estudios Culturales (EC), que incorporan una perspectiva antropológica a los estudios comunicacionales, el artículo propicia un diálogo entre las categorías Mediación, Subsunción y Apropiación Social, con el objetivo de contribuir con la formulación de cuadros de análisis y taxonomías útiles para la organización de un nuevo programa de investigaciones. El uso del concepto marxista latinoamericano de resistencia deja clara la compatibilidad entre los dos enfoques (Mediación y Apropiación Social) y permite un abordaje de la EPC en la incorporación de la teoría de la apropiación social a su cuadro categorial. Se trata el campo específico de la apropiación social de la tecnología, que es lo fundamental todavía en el actual estadio de desarrollo de Internet (y que además puede ayudar a pensar en el tema de la tecnología en general y su vinculación con el problema de la mediación), y ayudaría a entender con mucho más claridad, de qué forma las TIC pueden convertirse en una verdadera herramienta de lucha para los movimientos sociales. En el trabajo dejamos la pregunta abierta sobre la economía política de Internet acerca de quiénes son los mediadores en los procesos de apropiación social de la tecnología, y se ofrece la pauta común que facilita la mediación entre los sub-campos de la Comunicación considerados y otras áreas de diálogo, diluyendo fronteras epistémicas y contribuyendo para entender el proceso de difusión del capitalismo y la construcción de las estrategias de resistencia que son la base para consolidar un proyecto contra-hegemónico capaz de revertir la realidad marginal y excluyente a que históricamente han sido sometidas las comunidades latinoamericanas.

Id: 12183

Title: Critical Interpretation of Digital Platforms through Marxian Perspectives on Digital Labor and Rent

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In the early 21st century, digital platforms, such as social network sites, search engines, and smartphones and their operating systems, have rapidly grown and changed people's daily activities. This article addresses the characteristics of digital platforms from the standpoint of the critical theory of technology in the tradition of the philosophy of technology. It begins with an explication of the historical development of three different approaches to technology, from instrumental theory to substantial theory to figure out the main characteristics of critical theory. It then applies these frameworks to platform technologies, but mainly from the critical approach of technology, and it discusses the rationales for the necessity of the convergence of the substantial and the critical approaches in analyzing digital platforms. It especially investigates the major characteristics of digital labor in tandem with platform technologies in order to provide an analytical framework for articulating platform users in the platform-driven capitalist society.

Id: 12191

Title: Subsidy Policy in Cultural Industries in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: East Asian media productions:- films, pop music, television dramas and other programmes; which includes output from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Singapore are increasingly integrated into a loosely organized cultural economy that is often referred to as 'East Asian pop culture'. However, the cultural industry in Taiwan and Hong Kong are becoming increasingly marginalized in the region, especially when compared with China's growing entertainment market and output. The aim of this proposal is to make a comparative of subsidy policy by particularly focusing on film in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China.

Since 1983 the subsidy policy has been very important in Taiwan. The main source of the subsidy is from the Ministry of Culture but additionally every city also has own its own subsidy policy, which can provide additional support. The Hong Kong Government now also has started to subsidy its film productions. The reason is firstly to respond to the challenges faced from Hollywood movies' and then the increasingly powerful China's market, which like a magnet absorbs other regional markets along with their associated talent. Hong Kong's subsidy policy dates from 1999 when the scale of the film industry in Hong Kong was declining. In recent years, both Taiwan and Hong Kong have co-produced films with China. But these films sometimes met with different challenges when they tried to get wider funding and investments other than through Governmental subsidy. This proposal will analyze the deficiency of the policy and the challenges faced by the film industry in Taiwan and Hong Kong. In China the Government's active intervention in the film market is helping enlarge it. In 2015, China's Government passed the film industry stimulation law. It includes more restrictions for foreign capital investment in China's filmmaking market.

This research tries to find out the differences of subsidy policy, the ways it combines the industry's own national characteristics, how it impacts on the film markets as well as whether the policy is helpful or deficient. The case studies will illustrate the controversies on individual case.

Id: 12281

Title: Political Economy and Discourse in Murdoch's flagship newspaper, The Australian

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The Australian is News Corporation's flagship newspaper in Australia. The only truly national, general daily, The Australian demands that it be taken seriously, not only as a 'newspaper of record', but as an actor in the business, politics and culture of the nation. Established by Rupert Murdoch in 1964, The Australian is widely understood to be his vehicle of influence, but more than that, it serves as a model of how his proprietorial influence is mediated in practice. Folkenflik, in Murdoch's World, sees The Australian as essential to the 'template' which Murdoch has pursued in other world markets as well.

A common assumption in the political economy literature is that ownership entails control, but how this happens is rarely demonstrated, nor is much consideration given to what its limits might be. The opportunity to research such questions came at the end of 2015, with the retirement of Chris Mitchell, the longest-serving editor-in-chief of The Australian. Furthermore, because in the previous year the paper had reached its fiftieth year of publication, a useful body of critical literature has been generated.

The political economy of The Australian is striking, in that it is not a profitable operation, and although it serves to cross-promote other interests of News Corporation Australia, such as its pay-TV venture Foxtel, the paper appears to exist principally for the purpose of exerting influence. It pursues an overt ideological agenda, even to the point of alienating the 'elite' readers which its advertisers are seeking to attract, evidencing an interesting contradiction between its editorial and commercial divisions.

The study shows that in addition to the predictable neoliberal agenda of the Murdoch-owned media familiar in the US and UK, The Australian under Mitchell's direction has pursued campaigns of its own, which while not in conflict with the international agenda, has peculiar inflections that suggest the editor-in-chief has 'relative autonomy' to assert control and influence in his own right. In this way, the study gives insight to the complex mediation of proprietorial control with implications beyond the particular case of The Australian.

The research for this study has been carried out by the author as a regular reader of the paper since 1964, and presents qualitative material collected over time, but particularly in the last quarter of 2015. This material will outline the kind of campaigns which The Australian has pursued in recent times, as well as demonstrate its discursive framing of issues and the lexicon of its peculiar world-view.

Id: 12366

Title: Branding Fetishism, Branding Education

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Branding of - literally, burning a mark on - chattels (animals, slaves) - originally denoted ownership or control; if cattle or servants strayed, they could be restored to their rightful owner. But words and or symbols soon came to refer to the source of goods or services. The farmer's mark could tell a buyer that meat came from an enterprise that could be evaluated: this farmer produces good beef, this other, not so much. That is the basis of trademark law, as practiced globally within capitalism. The owner of a brand is identified as the source of the goods or services to which it is attached, but also has a limited right to exclude others from using it.

Brands can be valuable (e.g., Amazon, a company worth US$175 billion but which makes scant profits, if any). And they can be pointless – a branded "skywalk" in an airline terminal, a logo for a pond in a housing development, a slogan designed to encapsulate a university in four words.

This paper will address the means by which brand normalization discloses cultures of market fetishism and cultural monetization in contemporary research universities, drawing on the first author's experience as an entertainment attorney and law and existing literature as: Blowing Up the Brand: Critical Perspectives on Promotional Culture (eds. Melissa Aronczyk and Devon Powers, 2010), Sport and Neoliberalism: Politics, Consumption, and Culture (eds. David L. Andrews and Michael L. Silk, 2013), Ethical Consumption: A Critical Introduction (eds. Tania Lewis and Emily Potter, 2011), and Islam, Marketing and Consumption: Critical Perspectives on the Intersections (eds. Aliakbar Jafari and Özlem Sandikci, 2016).

Id: 12386

Title: Framing Privatisation: The dominance of neo-liberal discourse and the death of the public good

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This working paper looks at the privatisation of Irish state assets and the treatment of this issue by the mainstream print media in Ireland. Specifically, it looks at the case of Bórd Gáis Energy (BGÉ) and its sale by the Irish government between March and June of 2014. From a contextual perspective, this came in the wake of the global economic recession and its longer term implications for Ireland. The treatment of that privatisation, by all national Irish newspaper publications, published between February 2014 and July 2014 and categorised using Lexis Nexis has been examined, using sourcing, framing and Critical Discourse Analyses. Wodak (2007) defines CDA as a methodology which analyses the transparent structural relationship of dominance, discrimination, power and control that is manifest in language.

Some interesting findings were observed. The media's coverage of the sale could not be found to be impartial: both the volume and thrust of the articles were inclined to portray privatisation in a favourable, non-critical light. The majority of content was presented within Neo-Liberal frames, with a competitive frame being dominant; in other words the topic was treated from a market or business perspective rather than the perspective of the public good or wider society. A consistent source bias was also found favouring business or market interests with almost no representation of workers or civil society.

The issues of the public good was under reported. Indeed, it was noted by Money Guide Ireland in June of 2014 that the Irish population was "probably not aware" that the privatisation had taken place and that even "their own customers would not have noticed"; because, while the sale was approved by the European Union on June 16th, the takeover had "already quietly happened" (Money Guide Ireland, June 2014).

Theoretically the paper argues that the framing of privatisation as a business and consumer issue, rather than a political one or that of the public good, acts to detract from the political aspects of the appropriation of public assets by international capital, including the implications for

infrastructure, economic development and accountability to democratic structures, none of which receive sufficient journalistic attention. Moreover the lack of analysis does a disservice to the decades of investment by the Irish state and citizenry into developing key infrastructure and industry.

An important topic of discussion is that of self-reflection within journalism and the media sphere. Following the 2008 crash and post privatisation failures such as Eircom one might conceivably expect a more critical media willing to question neo-liberal assumptions such as 'self-regulating' markets and the superiority of privately controlled enterprises and markets; moreover a more pluralistic approach to economic reporting including heterodox economic voices is the least a long suffering public should expect from economic journalism.

Id: 12388

Title: Media Studies and Political Economy Need Better Theories of Social Justice: Might the Capabilities Approach Help'

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Media, communication and culture have only very rarely figured in the capabilities approach to social justice developed by one of the world's most eminent political economists, Amartya Sen. Sen's own work on the (formally) 'free press' shows no interest in a political economy of media. Conversely, the capabilities approach has been largely ignored in media and communication research apart from rather neglected contributions by Nicholas Garnham, Robin Mansell and Nick Couldry. For Garnham, the most valuable potential contribution of Sen's capabilities approach to understanding media and communication was that it could allow policy debate in these fields to transcend the poor normative framing that plagued it. Garnham observed that crude measures of access and usage (in media policy) or visits (in cultural/arts policy) do not get at people's actual ability to make use of resources. By contrast, judgements informed by the capabilities approach would consider how well or badly media and communication, as they currently exist, serve people's needs and functionings. The connection to the core interests of political economy of media should be clear – and capabilities theory might have offered a basis for a useful conceptualisation of the failure of marketised media. However, Garnham (and Mansell's) writings on capabilities have hardly been taken up, perhaps partly because Sen himself was not clear about what he thought the most relevant needs and functionings were. So a possible way forward for further development of the capabilities approach in the realm of media and culture is to turn to the other chief exponent of the approach, the feminist philosopher, Martha Nussbaum, who does seek to specify relevant capabilities, needs and functionings, if only as a basis for discussion. These might be used in political economy, and in media and communication studies more generally, as the basis for making arguments about what needs and functioning a better set of media and cultural systems might serve. This paper argues that while Nussbaum does offer some foundations for a fuller theory of media and cultural capabilities (and also a welcome attention to the vital importance of cultural education) her work suffers from a limited conception of culture and communication, and I suggest some ways to build upon her contribution by conjoining it with better notions, drawing on writers such as Raymond Williams and Richard Shusterman.

Id: 12440

Title: Measuring media biases: Kremlin-ownership effects on news agency in the Ukraine crisis

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Since the outset of the Ukraine crisis in 2013, Western news agencies (AP, AFP, and Reuters) have been circulating hundreds of news stories worldwide based on information produced by Russia's official news agency, ITAR-TASS. This is an alarming example of how easily reliability of foreign news delivered to our news media can be affected by state-owned news agencies in other counties. Considering the ownership by the Russian state and the limited press freedom in the country, we believe that it is impossible for ITAR-TASS to produce objective news reports, but we have almost no knowledge about how much biases the news content has because of the state-ownership and how the biases are created. This is the knowledge gap this research aims to fill, and the research question is 'how and how much dose state-ownership affect news agencies' news reporting?'

In answering this relatively simple question, this paper will address two important problems in studying media biases, which are relevant to a wide range of empirical inquires. The first problem is how to measure only state-ownership biases excluding others. Our solution to this problem is introduction of a benchmark unit that are similar to ITAR-TASS, but not affected by state-ownership. The benchmark unit we have chosen is Interfax, a Russian commercial news agency operating independently of Kremlin. The second problem is how to analyze large flows of news stories produced by the news agencies. For content analysis of nearly 200,000 news stories published by the two Russian news agencies in 2013-2014, we employed an automated geographical classifier and a dictionary-based content analysis system. With those computer programs, we are able to filter our news articles about Ukraine, and quantify positive-negative framing of democracy and sovereignty in Ukraine in news articles. The longitudinal data created by the system is then analyzed by hierarchical multivariate regression models to estimate biases in news content.

The result of the analysis shows that, while framing of democracy and sovereignty is profoundly negative through the course of the crisis, ITAR-TASS shed positive light on Ukraine when a trade agreement with the EU was abandoned, and the referendum on accession to Russia was held in Crimea. The estimated sizes of biases are, respectively, at the highest point, 52.3% and 48.7% of the standard deviations toward the negative, which are 1.07 and 2.47 times of negativity of stories referring to pro-Western activists as 'extremists'. The main causes of biases in ITAR-TASS's news reporting are (1) highly critical comments made by Russian government officials against Ukraine and the West, which the news agency quotes very frequently, and (2) the news agency's general tendency to describe the events related to Ukraine more negatively. Additionally, we found that (3) negative descriptions of the situation in Ukraine are strategically

employed by the news agency to undermine Western sources' positive comments quoted in news articles. This type of biases, which hasn't been identified in earlier studies, is labeled as 'context bias' and added to the typology of news biases.

Id: 12458

Title: How would a political economy of the strategic uses of mediated communication in international development look like' An empirical example

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In earlier work (Enghel, 2015) I outlined ways in which a focus on political economy dimensions would contribute to understanding the obstacles and limits to the democratically-sound uses of mediated communication in international development: 1) by giving attention to the wider 'social totality' in which mediated communication interventions are embedded, thus producing contextually situated knowledge attentive to the political, economic and symbolic influences at work; 2) by enabling the comparative study of donor priorities and approaches rather than the comparison of single projects; 3) by illuminating the ways in which particular institutional components of donor governments begin to function as the home for the operation of dynamics constitutive of neoliberal digital capitalism, thus reorienting state agendas and policy work towards the requirements of the transnational economy; and 4) by emphasizing the analytical relevance of attending to the interplay between academic research and the institutional project of international development, and to the 'rules of the game' that ensue. In this paper I apply a political economy approach to a case study in which elements of communication for development, media support and public diplomacy were combined to produce a complex intervention with ambiguous political and ethical outcomes. The analysis of the Videoletters project (deployed in the successor states to the former Yugoslavia in 2005 by the British Foreign Commonwealth Office and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) through the lens of political economy reveals under-researched dimensions of the strategic uses of mediated communication in international development.

Id: 12475

Title: The endless "hook-up:' The political economy of dating app cultures

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: As the proliferation of dating apps and websites become a common fixture in the contemporary cultural landscape, the multibillion-dollar business of online romance and connection has become an intoxicating and profitable market. Critical political economic traditions have highlighted that capitalist structures display a systematic tendency for concentration, market saturation, and ubiquitous commodification. Scholarship of political economy of media has paid less attention to how concentration of ownership, saturation, and commodification at the micro-level, produce unique cultural sensibilities in late capitalism. The dating app industry has not been isolated from these dynamics and, in fact, has provided a distinctive illustration of the ways in which large market forces can shape the most intimate of social relations. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, dating apps are interrogated as fields of cultural production in which the fields' autonomous rules interact with contextualized constructions of taste and powerful socio-economic forces to shape user experiences. This paper will: review the historical constructions of love shaped by capitalistic logics; examine how the dynamics of the dating app industry and app features define intimate sensibilities; and assert that dating apps widely separate romanticism, marriage, love, and sex to create a bound space of endless potential "hook-ups." For this, we will analyze the ownership structures and app features of two dating apps: Tinder and Grindr. App features generate a cultural field permeated by advertisements, "click-bait," real-time geolocation updates, and gamified interactivity. We propose that these interactive models engender new social relationships and disrupt cultural memories of romance, sex, and courtship in which intimacy is experienced through the gamification of love and sex. Commodified and gamified intimacy, dehistoricizes romantic relationships and orients users to endlessly present actions unhinged from personal and shared histories of love. We also suggest that despite the expected short-term goal of user retention, these features ameliorate the logic of user desertion through the continued long-term profitability of data mining. Individual taste plays a secondary role in a platform where the primary goal is to transform geographic locations and user interactivity into commodities. Our paper extends the finding that contemporary love and intimacy is a process heavily driven by the forces of a populist and deregulated market. In addition, we aim to bridge macro-level interests with micro-level practices to examine the critical juncture of political economy of memory, media, and culture.

Id: 12494

Title: Chinese newspapers' responses to the impact of digital media

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The crisis of the newspaper press in the developed world is extremely well known. A combination of declining circulation and the flight of advertising to the internet has had a greater or lesser impact on the revenues, and thus on the journalism, of newspapers in many countries, and particularly in the USA. Up until very recently, the countries of the developing world, including China, have been widely regarded as immune to these problems: circulation was rising and advertising revenues were expanding. In the case of China, at least, this period of expansion in audiences and revenues has come to an end and newspapers have been struggling to adapt to the new situation. Some of the strategies are the same as those prevalent in the west -- cutting costs through economising on staff, more efficient use of material resources and moving from expensive offices to cheaper locations are familiar ways in which newspapers everywhere have responded to falling revenues. The press in China, however, has a different structure to that of newspapers in the developed world. This structure, determined by political factors, means that some familiar western strategies cannot be transported to China. It is not, for example, possible to merge titles for purely commercial reasons nor to sell them to rich individuals. On the other hand, the government has taken a much more interventionist stance in pushing newspapers to adapt to the new environment. A range of schemes have been set up designed to help newspapers develop new business models to replace the loss of advertising revenues and a variety of strategies are currently being tested. For many newspapers, particularly those

"commercial" papers that have prospered in the last thirty years, the prime motivation has been economic: they have adopted very aggressive commercial stances, developing online shopping portals for example, aimed at replacing advertising revenue with transactional revenue. For the "party" papers, however, the main motive has been ideological. They are adopting a number of strategies in order to retain existing readers while reaching out to new social groups via new media, notably through mobile media. This paper reports on the current difficulties of the Chinese press and analyses some of the strategic responses made by commercial and party newspapers.

Id: 12523

Title: When Past Clashes with Present & Shapes the Future: A media analysis of the #RhodesMustFall movement in South Africa's student protests and its impacts.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: South Africa's painful and unique transition to a non-racial, democratic society has recently celebrated its 21stth anniversary. With the sad passing of Nelson Mandela in late 2013, serious cracks are emerging - with radical voices challenging the very notions of the 'rainbow nation democracy'. In light of its incomplete economic and social transformation, as well as high unemployment rates, students have sparked and embarked on a major sustained # FeesMustFall movement, sparked, - in part by the #RhodesMustFall movement - where a group of student problematized the 'memory of arch imperialist CJ Rhodes' , leading to the removal of his large imposing statue at the University of Cape Town (UCT).
The paper will explore this debate and important public discourse, and the use of new media/ social media and online journalism in mediating this debate. By applying the 'medium as a message' thesis of (McLuhan, 1967); the paper unpacks memory in the public domain mediated by social media networks in real-time; thus giving instant agenda setting theme in the public media sphere. The paper shall zone in on very vivid and real lived experience of black people, and contested histories, the race and class divide that has led to the most sustained student protests since the dawn of democracy.
History and contested memory in contemporary society:
Celebrated by the mainly white community as the embodiment of western civilization and development; and despised by mainly black South Africans as exploiter of their natural resources through cheap labour, the paper shall analyse and unpack these contestations of 'memory of CJ Rhodes et al, and its current impact of SA's political economy discourse.
Media theory approaches would include the use of semiotics and content analysis; as well as applying Globalisation theory and the Network economy theory as espoused by Castells (1998). The paper will trace the linkages between international capitalist development and the underdevelopment thesis that arises from this mode of development; the logic being that Rhodes and South Africa were a critical 'centre for mining capitalist development and investment'. Indeed, the global information society mediated by web 2.0 and massified social media networks such as twitter and facebook realtime public debate and the ripple effects of the debate. It is not surprising that South Africa's #RhodesMustFall also sparked a similar, small campaign at Oxford, UK, on the memory of CJ Rhodes statue and whether it should indeed fall; proving the power of social media debates in a host country and that of its relationship with ex colonialist.
Methodology: The proposed methodology would include a variety of tools such as media content analysis; discourse analysis; by assessing these debates in social media; and 2) On line

interviews with key leaders of the #RhodesMustFall movement, as well as leading public academics commentators. It would synthesis these qualitative data and draw observations and conclusions.

Id: 12526

Title: Communications Policies in the countries of the Pacific Alliance -México, Colombia, Perú and Chile-. The logic of the free market as a centrality.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This research analyzes and compare the communications public policies in the Pacific Alliance countries -México, Colombia, Perú and Chile- to establish their particularities, scope and limitations from a critical political economy of communication perspective (Wasko, Murdock & Sosa, 2011). Latin America since the beginning of the XXI century has been reforming, at different velocities and levels, their communicative systems (Becerra, 2015). In fact, this research works with the hypothesis that the democratic consolidation of the region will be accomplished until the democratization of their communication systems . It's important to undermark that in Latin America since 2000 has been build two models of State and public policies, on one hand, it's visible a socialists populist block -Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay, Argentina [until 2015] and Brazil- and, on the other, a neoliberal free market block -Mexico, Colombia, Peru and Chile- (Gomez, 2013). These two blocks and models of public policies are in constant interaction, tension, debate and competition to each other. Thus, in the case of the reform of the communications systems in Latin America, this situation is giving important inputs, ideas and contrast to re-shape their communication systems, even for the two blocks. These debates are placing a central role to Latin America in the global debates of communication policies.   Because of this, this paper will address from a comparative analysis the communication systems of the Pacific Alliance countries in four main indicators: a) Media and telecommunications Act's -general rationality and goals-; b) the role of their regulatory bodies; c) media concentration and competition and; d) the role of their public service systems and community media. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the communication public policies of the free market block in relation with: a) democratic values as freedom of expression and plurality of voices; b) economic indicators in relation with competition/concentration and; c) socio-cultural aspects as coverage and diversity.

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communications: Core concerns and issues (pp. 1-10). London: Wiley-Blackwell.

Id: 12541

Title: The Culture of Neoliberalism and Capital Accumulation: Media Representations of Resistance as Terrorism

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: As the direct result of neoliberal globalization, the privatization and commercialization of public resources for capital accumulation has directly and dramatically increased global inequality and poverty. Unfortunately, much justified resistance has been glossed with religious or cultural distortions, without understanding the emerging class relations of transnational capitalism. Meanwhile, the political economy of transnational capitalism, including accommodating nation-states, and corresponding commercial media reduces such resistance to fit the rubric of terrorism.

An empirical textual analysis of leading news media from the US, UK, and France verifies that global commercial media consistently frame resistance to global capitalism and its nation-states as "terrorism" that threatens the "civilized" world, democracy, and the average citizen. These findings coupled with public opinion surveys indicate that the promotion of the terror frame (along with national security practices) creates a widespread culture of fear. In turn, media representations of resistance to authority, austerity, and inequality as terrorism further authorize and legitimize capitalist globalization and the occupation, destruction, and war against entire peoples in the Mideast, the Ukraine, and elsewhere—and the militarization of societies everywhere. This culture of fear of terrorism informs a global cycle of dispossession for accumulation, resistance, war and violence, destruction and dislocation, resistance, and more violence against humanity for the accumulation of capitalist profit. The conclusion based on this research draws an intimate connection between media political economy and media representations in service to neoliberalism.

Id: 12650

Title: Public funding to tabloids for advertising in Austria: market or an opportunistic logic'

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The market for the distribution of news in Austria is relatively atypical and therefore an interesting case study. The effects of technological change on the distribution of news are visible in the proliferation of online platforms and digital editions of newspapers, as well as in the common use of social media for the promotion of content. However, particularly thanks to subscriptions, the consumption of printed newspaper is still very popular and attendance of televised news programmes by the public service broadcaster is still very high. As a result, the effects of technological change on the structure of the markets for the distribution of news, which remain rather concentrated, have been quite contained: the public service broadcaster largely dominates the distribution of news on television; the popular local and regional newspapers benefit from local monopolies, and tabloids and free newspapers are ahead in the competition for national audience over nationally distributed broadsheets.
Thanks to the use of unpublished data collected by YouGov from over 1000 respondents for the Supplementary Digital News Report 2015 published by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, the authors are able to provide an analysis of the effects of the market structure on the consumption of news in Austria, with details that have never been made public before. Moreover, the analysis of this data, which includes the consumption of online and traditional sources of news, the competition between brands, as well as different regional trends and differences between age groups, can also shed new light on a controversial issue that originates from, and has consequences on, the policy sphere. Indeed, the implementation of a Media Transparency Act in 2011 obliged public institutions to publish the details of their acquisitions of advertising space from media outlets. Therefore, if on the one hand, subsidies to the press and television are regulated and have been made public since 2004, the amounts that public institutions feed to media outlets for the purpose of advertising, which are consistently larger, are not regulated and information about them was until recent times also confidential. The information published as a result of this regulatory change shows that public institutions tend to consistently favour placing advertising on tabloids and free newspapers over other media outlets. In order to explain this choice, these institutions claim that the rationale for this bias is economic and they justify it with the higher circulation of these brands in comparison to others. However, a

review of the content of these ads and the unpublished data on the consumption of news will be used to assess whether this form of transfer of important funds from public institutions to particular media companies is efficient and can be explained by a market logic.

Id: 12723

Title: Putting political economy back into struggles against communications surveillance: lessons from South Africa

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: It seems trite to say South Africa under apartheid was a highly repressive country, using overt and covert repression (such as communications surveillance) to track the activities of the anti-apartheid movement. Signs have emerged that the ruling African National Congress (ANC) - which itself was subject to surveillance - is now using the very same strategies to monitor its perceived critics, including investigative journalists.

South Africa is not the only country experiencing these problems. Edward Snowden's 2013 revelations about the National Security Agency's mass surveillance programme, caused widespread outrage, and civil society organisations have sought to reign in the state's surveillance capacities. Yet, as important as they are, these struggles risk depoliticising the problem, by reducing it to a right-based struggle for civil rights such a privacy. In doing so, they risk missing the bigger point that surveillance has become a central organising principle of contemporary society, which is likely to make the problem more intractable than they realise.

Not enough has been said about the power of mass movements, and the necessity of mass struggle more broadly, to transform the social relations that are so dependent for their continued existence on surveillance. Activists who are serious about challenging surveillance state powers, need to place both the politics and the economics of surveillance at the forefront of these struggles.

Mass surveillance has become big business. The war against terror has spawned a lucrative security-surveillance-industrial complex that governments have a vested interest in maintaining. As a user, financier, producer and exporter of mass surveillance technologies, South Africa is no exception to this general rule, in spite of the fact that it faces no major terrorist threats.

The paper will explore lessons to be learned from South Africa, and propose elements of a framework for effective mass struggle against surveillance. Many older activists still carry memories of apartheid era-spying, and their memories continue to inform democracy-era movements. As a result, there is an already high-developed mass consciousness of the inherently political nature of surveillance, which is an essential subjective condition for effective mobilisation beyond the confines of elite civil society and limiting rights-based discourse.

Drawing on the experiential, historically-grounded knowledge of a range of social movements in South Africa - as well as the lawyers who defend them, the academics who research them, and the journalists who write about them – this paper will propose the beginnings of a framework for effective mass-based resistance against these practices. It will explore how resistance strategies are being crafted that could, potentially, address the bigger context in which the surveillance state is expanding: a context which, arguably, requires an organised political response that links resistance to surveillance to resistance to capitalism. To this extent, it is argued that South Africa could be considered something of a 'laboratory' for resistance strategies against what some have characterised (wrongly) as an elitist issue that is of little relevance to workers, the unemployed and the global South.

Id: 12794

Title: PANEL: How Has Information Society Been Imagined in China' The Dynamics of Informatization and the Future of Digital Socialism

Session Type: Panel Submission

Authors:
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Abstract: Chair:
Hong Yu, University of Southern California, USA

Discussant:
Qiu Linchuan, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Panelists and Paper titles:

Uber's Entry into China: Financial Capital, Class Divide and the 'Golden Ages' of the Internet +
Wu Changchang, East China Normal University, China

The Political Economy of China's Agricultural Informatization
Wang Wei, University of Southern California, USA

The Power Structure of Big Data in China: Myths and Political Economy
Ji Deqiang, Communication University of China, China

From Neo-liberal De-regulation to Authoritative Re-regulation: The Development Trajectory of OTT in China and the (un)Doing of the Cultural Leadership
Zhao Yu, Zhejiang University, China

Search Boundaries: China's Digital Privacy Law and Non-Institutional Information Gathering on the Internet
Han Dong, Southern Illinois University, USA

Rationale:

From the politically-driven introduction of Toffler's the Third Wave to the prevalence of Negroponte's futuristic Being Digital laying the foundation for China's information highway project at the very inception of the new century, from the Castellsian Network Society conception which shed lights on the non-hierarchical and flattening structure and democratic

vision in the ideal information age to Shirky's manifesto Here Comes Everybody being the business Bible for the Chinese internet+ (new) economy in the past few years, China has hastily embraced the imagination of information society from the top down. Meanwhile, individualistic heroism, consumerism embellished by a hybrid of the pro-consumer, non-cultural and apolitical discourses, combined with (neo)liberalism as the self-governance, constitute the core of, and overwhelmingly shape the subject and subjectivity within the information society. A critical political economic research of how the information society has been imagined in China can thus help delineate from the bottom up, and reveal both societal and geographical dimensions of the political-academic-industrial complex oriented and projected information society.

This panel is a collaborated effort to explore the way the information society is supposed to be alternatively and comprehensively constructed beyond digital capitalism. As the opening gambit, Wu Changchang and Wang Wei, based on case studies and ethnographical work, provide critical examinations respectively on Uber's entry into China with its individualistic entrepreneurship and China's agricultural informatization. They address the flow and transmutation between financial capital and technological revolutions, which are intensified by the nuanced account of class divide and urban-rural disparities under the crossfire of Chinese neoliberal and urban-centric restructuring and transnational capital powers. Adept in the infrastructure and governance-related policy studies, Ji Deqiang and Zhao Yu document the twisted rises and falls of political agenda, conflicts and tensions within the power structure, in addition to the ambiguities and paradoxes of the development trajectories of big data and OTT through regulation, de-regulation and re-regulation. Concluding with and feeding into each other, the last presentation by Han Dong, demonstrates how the law of privacy in digital media in China reflects intensive efforts by the state to develop depoliticized and professional internet-related laws as well as popular interest in information gathering through the Internet, and uncovers how privacy matters constitute and are shaped by ideological and political-economic conflicts in China's digital media policy.

Id: 12795

Title: PANEL: How Has Information Society Been Imagined in China' The Dynamics of Informatization and the Future of Digital Socialism

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: Uber's Entry into China: Financial Capital, Class Divide and the 'Golden Ages' of the Internet +

China ushering into the first decade of the 21st century witnessed the apparently boundless rise of two forces: the information revolution and financial capital. Actually, China has already been inaugurated with optimistic prediction or claims about the advent of the internet+ new economy characterized by the alleged potential of relentless growth and entrepreneurship in ostensible contrast to what Dan Schiller depicted as Digital Depression around the capitalist world.

The rises and falls of the Unicorn companies such as Uber when entering into China's vast market and its biggest competitor Kuaidi&Didi Group, and their astonishing and apparently non-rational cash flow (or cash burn) through financing, without clear monetization model, have shaken these beliefs and led to confusion and academic reflection.

The article, based on the analysis of the publicized financial statements of UberChina and personal interviews with 52 UberChina drivers in Shanghai, will develop a socio-institutional(ideological) model, as a replacement for what Carlota Perez has summarized as the four phases of technological revolutions and financial capitals(techno-economic paradigm), to elucidate the complexities and inherent paradoxes of new economic euphoria and financial excitement around China in the past decade, intensified and further complicated by the foreign companies like Uber and their high profile forays into the Chinese market. The main contention is that the relative autonomy of the local governments and their different attitude towards the internet+ economy, the increasingly fierce competition between domestic copycat Unicorn or internet companies with potent nationalism and foreign companies in accordance with the differentiated investment opportunities from VCs, and class divide, urban-rural disparities and unbalanced regional development which have been strengthened by the new economy and resulted in the stratification among consumers, make up the multi-poles of growth of contemporary golden age underneath which there hide bubbles. A critical political economic research of their converging point can thus illustrate both socio-technological and geopolitical dimensions of this historical process.

Id: 12797

Title: PANEL: How Has Information Society Been Imagined in China' The Dynamics of Informatization and the Future of Digital Socialism

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: The Political Economy of China's Agricultural Informatization

Since the late 1980s, China has been applying information and communication technologies to agricultural production, operation, management, and service to enhance efficiency, productivity, food quality, and revenue. These ICTs have shifted from earlier generations of RS, GIS, GPS to more advanced database techniques, the Internet of things, and the like in the current period. There are also vast regional variations in the policy rubrics of the application of ICTs.

The adoption of these ICTs is driven by different social forces instead of unfolding in a social vacuum. These social actors involved in agriculture in China, including but not limited to farmers, agribusiness, local cadres, different levels of governments, NGOs, have different preferences and interests in ICTs selection. However, not all these preferences or interests are reflected in the application of ICTs in the agricultural sector. Some social actors have more say than other social actors in designing the policy rubrics.

In this article, I attempt to present a historical analysis of the political economy of agricultural informatization at the policy level. The aim is to discover how the policy framework of agricultural informatization has evolved from the early stage in the 1980s to the present stage. The major research questions are as follows. First, what kinds of policies are promote and implemented by the central government and by local governments? Second, why certain technologies, rather than others, are adopted? Third, who initiates, develops, fuels, and propagates agricultural informatization in China? Fourth, whose interests are driving this process?

The purpose of this article is to expose the intersection of political, economic, and social power in the critical field of agricultural development and rural restructuring. An exploration of the political economy of agricultural informatization will shed insights into the development path of China's agriculture. It will make contribution to the research area of rural China studies by proving a communication perspective.

Id: 12798

Title: PANEL: How Has Information Society Been Imagined in China' The Dynamics of Informatization and the Future of Digital Socialism

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: The Power Structure of Big Data in China: Myths and Political Economy

Defining "power" as a structural force from both cultural and political-economic perspectives, this paper, on the one hand, interrogates the mythical narratives formulated with the popularity of Big Data concept (Danah Boyd & Kate Crawford, 2012) in the ICTs industries in China. The naturalization of the notion of a data-driven development as an irreversible trend in the future will be critically and contextually dismantled, with a special focus on the "embededness" (Karl Polanyi, 1944) of Big Data mythology in the fabrication of the neoliberal developmentalist ideology in the reform-era China.

On the other hand, as Vincent Mosco (2005) once noticed, "myths are important both for what they reveal and for what they conceal", this paper also dedicates to explore the multi-dimensional realities behind Big Data mythology in current China through a lens of political economy. Firstly, the economic structure of Big Data-related industries will be depicted in order to identify the dominant players in this emergent market space. It is argued that the high threshold of both capital and technological investment has consolidated Big Data as a monopoly market. Secondly, the possibilities of building public Big Data service platform by Chinese government are still unknown. It involves a range of considerations, including financial obstacles concerning Big Data as a capital-laden project (Linchuan Qiu, 2015), the potential threats of Big Data-based systematic surveillance to a rising notion of individual privacy, and the uncertainties caused by raising the level of transparency of Chinese government system.

In short, big data is empowering Chinese society in an uneven way, and scholarly attentions should be diverted to an emergent hierarchical power structure of Big Data by either ideological or political-economic analysis, or combing both, as this paper will attempt.

Field works have been conducted in three leading Internet companies (i.e. Tencent, Baidu and Alibaba) who are also widely considered as dominant players in the emerging Big Data industries in China. The results of the field works will be presented and discussed.

Id: 12799

Title: PANEL: How Has Information Society Been Imagined in China' The Dynamics of Informatization and the Future of Digital Socialism

Session Type: Panel Submission

Authors:
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Abstract: Paper title: From Neo-liberal De-regulation to Authoritative Re-regulation: The Development Trajectory of OTT in China and the (un)Doing of the Cultural Leadership

Followed by a crack-down of OTT TV in 2014, the year of 2016 will witness a new policy framework of China's advanced television to strengthen the control of market structure, behavior of market actors and content production. The internationalization and decentralization nature of OTT TV is supposed to accelerate the deregulation of China's media policy, yet the watch-dog organ seems to increasingly adopt a hard stance toward internet-enable television and internet enterprises coveting audio-visual market. The tensions between market and state have casted shadows on China's media convergence, and even triggered cyber resistance which reflecting conflicts between "cultural for people" and "culture of people". Commercialization without independent of Chinese media lies behind the paradox and the market governance mode tends to influence the allocation of market resources under the name of market itself, which deepens the gap between policy formulation and policy implementation. It is obvious that the era of policy austerity has come, but whether the policy paradigm will shift to re-regulation remains a problem.

Id: 12802

Title: PANEL: How Has Information Society Been Imagined in China' The Dynamics of Informatization and the Future of Digital Socialism

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: Search Boundaries: China's Digital Privacy Law and Non-Institutional Information Gathering on the Internet

Privacy-related information gathering and publication on the Chinese Internet has grown dramatically in the past decade. Meanwhile, the law of privacy in digital media develops fast and has outpaced China's privacy law in general. This research argues that online privacy-related searches in China, as non-institutionally conducted information gathering and publication, need to be conceptualized in the contexts of state control over news production as well as the rise of tabloid journalism during the media reform. The Internet, among other things, opens up opportunities for individuals to investigate and disseminate information otherwise not available from state media. While politically sensitive stories are always censored, non-political and sensational stories are widely circulated. Political censorship, digital technology and market-driven Internet growth are key factors that condition the rise of privacy-related search and information exchange on the Chinese Internet.

China's online privacy law develops as part of the state's intensive lawmaking efforts regarding the Internet. It grows side-by-side with state secret and libel laws as part of the state's larger scheme to rein in bottom-up challenges to the domination of institutionalized news production. Statutes and court rulings on privacy reflect the political ambiguity of China's transformation. On the one hand, the law refuses to incorporate moral or ideological considerations and attempts to develop "apolitical" and "professional" law. On the other hand, it rejects the U.S. model that places privacy issues under the First Amendment, yet has not developed an alternative framework. A good example is the court's ruling and opinion in the well-known case Wang Fei v. Zhang Leyi, in which the plaintiff's personal information was published on the Internet after his extramarital affairs led to his wife's death. The court's opinion explicitly excludes the role of moral considerations in shaping the scope of privacy, seeking to build a wall between ethics and law. At the same time, it also refuses to recognize the public's right to be informed, thus imposing no restrictions on privacy protection. The court's argument is reflective of China's online privacy laws in general, which tend to restrict information dissemination without clearly articulated principals or boundaries. The law of privacy is part of China's struggle to define its digital media policy in a more explicit political and ideological manner.

Id: 12819

Title: Alienated Nature, Reified Culture: understanding the limits to climate change responses under existing socio-ecological formations

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This article explores the limits to climate change response in the socio-economic sphere. It suggests that these limits are, in part, attributable to a double process of alienation and reification in two key areas - those of nature and culture. First, the societal relationship with nature influences the responses society considers available to respond to climate change. Second, how those responses are framed, articulated and interpreted depend on mediated communication and culture. This article argues that responses to climate change in both natural and cultural contexts are limited by two processes of alienation and reification. These processes predominate in both the societal relationship with nature, and secondly in how that relationship is articulated through culture. In the case of the society/nature relationship, current economic arrangements both alienate society from nature and reify the societal relationship with nature. In terms of culture and what can be known about the society/nature relationship, culture itself is reified by industrialisation processes whilst at the same time plays a role in alienation processes. The double processes of alienation and reification in nature therefore limit what can be known about the socio-ecological relationship. Furthermore, alienation and reification processes in culture preclude a cultural landscape that can robustly problematise, that is recognise and engage with, ecological crisis, and articulate appropriate responses to the problems associated with it.

Id: 12888

Title: Digital Technology and the Stealth Revolution: undoing liberalism

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The history of telecommunication is unusually complex. It has been characterized by an alliance between the capitalist objective of maximized profit-making through technological innovation alongside a citizen-oriented goal of a democratically informed society. Each of the categories in which this political economy has been worked out have remained in flux, contested by competing interests across the ideological spectrum. However, a shift in orientation has emerged with the increasing massification of networked digital technologies along lines that are weighted heavily in favor of profit maximization to the detriment of democratic social life. With an increasingly dominant global position, Internet-based communication has been constructed as inherently capitalistic within the hegemonic meaning structure of contemporary consumerist culture. In what Wendy Brown recently described as the Stealth Revolution (an intentional oxymoron, given that most revolutions are violently conspicuous), the Internet can be considered an important component in the steady unwinding of liberalism and its corporate-citizen alliances. Indeed, Armand Mattelart noted in The Information Society that the pre-history of the Internet was established through "the miraculous power of IT," privileged in its mathematization. The stealthy overturning of liberalism for a politics in which capitalism is the only perspective is the result of several conjunctures based in the western cult of computerization that have hardened with the maturity of the Internet. This paper will consider these conjunctures, hypothesized as: Globalized financialization; Public policy inhibition; Hypercapitalist politics; New colonialism; Super-consumerism; One dimensional ideology; Citizen dismemberment; Digital false consciousness. Each of these conjunctures are part of a constellation of ideological trajectories gathered around the Internet. Rather than extending a liberalism conceived as open tolerance towards a range of contesting ideas, these conjunctures construct a landscape that has been altered to such a degree that communication is barely able to offer alternatives in a simplified system of meaning. The paper will offer examples to illustrate each conjuncture, offering tentative critical perspectives on alternatives.

Id: 12892

Title: Transformations of Chinese TV production: Big capital, big IP, and the rise of new media production

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The Chinese TV production field has changed significantly since big capital operations were introduced for title sponsorships in TV programs in 2005 and reached the peak investment amount in 2014. Chinese TV production has entered the financial investment stage, rather than the professional production stage. The definition of a good TV program depends on the potential chances of bringing big profits for investors.

The transformation of content production have occurred not only in the traditional TV production field but also in the new media industry because of the Chinese cultural policy and broadcasting rules, changes in audience media-use behaviour, and the increase of copyright costs, which have encouraged online media companies to begin in-house production rather than purchase programs. The year 2006 is regarded as the beginning of online video platform development and 2014 as the beginning of online drama development. However, this development has highlighted another issue in the new media production field: in order to compete with TV stations and other online media companies, media companies are starting to struggle for big intellectual properties (IPs).

This article is part of a continuing study that includes a focus on Taiwanese TV workers in China, and on the effects of the changing TV environment on TV workers since 2008. This article includes the aim to investigate the effects of big capital investments and big IP phenomena on the Chinese TV production field from a political economy perspective. For this research, 15 professionals from the traditional TV production field, new media companies, and academia were interviewed between August of 2014 and January of 2016.

The initial findings presented in this article show that, firstly, professional TV workers have gradually lost their ability to cope with commercial power under circumstances of capital concentration. Buying foreign TV program formats from overseas has become the mainstream practice to ensure the success of TV programs. Secondly, the findings indicate that new media content production is based on numbers, that is to say, to an extent, big IPs stand for large numbers of fans or supporters who are among the critical reasons for winning or losing the market. Attention management has become important for increasing a program's popularity. However, the hunt for big IPs has caused a high concentration of capital and has encouraged the authors or agents to boast about their works. This study significantly contributes to Chinese

media studies by interviewing professionals and closely keeps up with ongoing media developments in China.

Id: 12902

Title: Digital Imperialisms: South Korean Audio Visual Culture in the Era of Networks

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Taking South Korea as a case study, this paper explores the issues that the transition to digital technologies poses for national audio-visual policies.
In common with a number of other societies faced with the ascendency of Hollywood in the post-war period , the South Korean government pursued two major policy strategies to protect and develop the domestic film industry: imposing quotas that limited the amount of cinema screen time devoted to imported production, and actively promoting the domestic industry.
In 1999 a total 200 out of 297 imported movies were from the US (UNESCO, 2000a). Under pressure to decide between protection and opening the entertainment market in that year the government created the Korean Film Council (KOFIC) to support and promote the domestic film industry. It has been successful and South Korea is now is one of the few countries where local productions have a dominant share of the domestic market, surpassing American movies.
At the same time, the audio visual industries were coming to be seen as a key sector in reliance on heavy industry to boost growth and expand export markets , with an official report noting that the total revenue from the Hollywood blockbuster movie Jurassic Park was equal to the foreign sale of 1.5 million cars manufactured by Hyundai (Presidential Advisory council, 1994). Under the rubric of the 'Korean Wave'(Hanryu) the Korean government launched a raft of measures to promote the film, broadcasting, game, and animation sectors and maximise their overseas earnings potential . Again, these interventions have met with considerable success with Korean soap operas and K Pop bands becoming a significant presence in Asian regional markets , and establishing niche markets globally, including in the United States.
At the same time, these interventions in cultural production have run alongside massive investment in communications infrastructure giving South Korea one of the world's leading high speed internet networks. While this has provided domestic audio visual industries with a range of new distribution platforms it has also opened the market to new overseas content providers led by US firms such as Amazon, Netflix, and Hulu.
Drawing on recent data this paper examines the present market and policy situation in South Korea and asks whether digital technologies herald a new phase of cultural imperialism.

Id: 12903

Title: Current Affairs Programmes in New Zealand a political economy investigation of the genre.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Many critics believe that the current affairs genre is in terminal decline in most Western countries (Franklin, 1997; Holland, 2006, Macdonald, 2000). Previous research carried out in New Zealand demonstrates that the New Zealand media greatly altered after election of a Labour government that took a radical turn and deregulated key institutions in New Zealand. The New Zealand media was opened up to overseas ownership and became commercially oriented which many critics argue reduced the quality of news and current affairs programmes (Atkinson, 1994; Baker, 2012; Comrie, 1995; Cook, 2000). The decline in quality news and current affairs was huge massive and many argue that the programmes have never recovered. This paper takes a critical political economy approach to examining the current state of current affairs programmes in New Zealand. Primarily the critical political economy approach permits an examination of how capitalism affects the media (Wasko, 2004). This permits an examination of how production shapes public discourse and thus the range of debates available. The end of the New Zealand current affairs Campbell Live in 2015 sparked concerns that 'quality' current affairs programmes were not just in terminal decline but were dead and that the genre was only left with magazine and infotainment programmes. As such some critics argue that the public sphere has been seriously diminished and this key area is not providing what it should. This paper continues an exploration of previous research into current affairs programmes in New Zealand that demonstrated that the genre had been heavily affected by deregulation and neo liberal policies that ultimately shaped the New Zealand broadcasting environment into a highly commercialized entity (Baker, 2012) programmes will examine current affairs programmes using a quantitative approach to examine the changing subject matter and item length of the contemporary current affairs programmes and contrast these with the existing data on the programmes. I will explore if the state of decline in current affairs programmes is as serious as some critics believe and examine what the future is for current affairs programmes in New Zealand.

Id: 12912

Title: CNBC, Financial Rituals, and Memories of the Market

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This project analyzes how the discourses found on CNBC (Consumer News and Business Channel) both promote the reliance on the network and construct market subjects. More specifically, CNBCs market discourses take on ritualistic elements as they reframe the past, present, and future of financial investing and investors. A discourse analysis examined a simulated week of CNBC television offerings, including both daytime, early evening, and weekend programming. Forty hours of content was transcribed and coded, with seven major themes emerging. One of these themes was that recurring segments, such as the "Kudlow Creed" and Suze Orman's folk financial wisdom in "Suze 1 on 1," functioned to create market rituals that helped individuals make sense of financial vicissitudes. Each CNBC program studied used a ritualistic device – a cut-away segment, graphic, or motto – to introduce a sense of stability to the fluctuations of the market. These ritualistic devices not only contribute to the CNBC televisual brand, but also assist the ideal investing subject in the management of stress and uncertainty that characterize financial markets. The communicative practices and discourses of CNBC thus become part of the wider cultural system that ritualizes finance and investing.

These rituals, like all rituals, are neither neutral nor natural. Larry Kudlow's oft-repeated "Creed," that "free market capitalism is the best path to prosperity," is both an interpretive schema and a reparative ritual uttered to ward off perceived encroaches upon the sanctity of unbridled markets. Likewise, when Maria Bartiromo states that "capital goes where capital is treated best," or Suze Orman exhorts her callers to "trust your [financial] numbers" and "stand in your truth," CNBC discourses encourage viewers to "see" the market's past and present through the language of these ritualized statements. The concept of market "sight" serves two functions here. First, it captures the need for CNBC, as a commercial television enterprise, to make financial markets visually appealing as a means to attracting advertisers-via-viewers. Second, it serves as a reference to Feldman's (2005) concept of the "actuarial gaze." Although Feldman uses this phrase in the context of geopolitics and the war on terror, it is useful as well in understanding how the televisual representations of financial markets ask viewers to adopt a particular way of seeing and calculating market risk.

CNBCs television presentation foregrounds the role of ritual in understandings of financial markets. As financial phenomena such as the Dow Jones Industrial Average and LIBOR come to be seen as socio-political barometers, rather than purely economic ones, the role of finance is becoming increasingly prominent. Taking stock of the ways in which rituals in financial media

help construct the memories and potentialities of the market is a necessary component of a fuller understanding of the role of finance in contemporary media and culture.

Id: 12951

Title: The Relationship between Media Ownership and its Manipulation of Democratic Transformation Issues in Egypt

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: A more general and ambitious definition of political economy is the study of control and survival in social life. "Control" refers specifically to the internal organization of social group members and the process of adapting to change. "Survival" means how people produce what is needed for social reproduction and continuity. Control processes are broadly political, in that they constitute the social organization of relationships within a community, and survival processes are mainly economic, because they concern processes of production and reproduction. Political economy has consistently placed in the foreground the goal of understanding social change and historical transformation.

Thus, this study aims to monitor and analyze the relationship between media ownership and its manipulation of democratic transformation issues in Egypt in the light of political economy theory. It is important to note that political economy is the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources … etc. This formulation has a certain practical value because it calls attention to how the communication business operates, for example, how communications products move through a chain of producers, to wholesalers, retailers, and, finally consumers, whose purchases, rentals, and attention are fed back into new processes of production.

The study may find out whether there is a difference in the media manipulation of democratic transformation issues according to ownership patterns of media or not. What are the most serious obstacles to democratic transformation in Egypt?

We will discuss whether media in Egypt form obstacle or not.

This study is a descriptive and explanatory one. It will use both survey and comparative approaches. It will use a media discourse analysis and the field study will be conducted on a sample of the Egyptian elite: political, media, and academic elite. This study will shed light on efforts to more studies in this area.

The researcher will suggest a model for the relationship between media and democratic transformation in Egypt.

Id: 12954

Title: How do Chinese city policy makers from north inland area interpret the creative industries policies' The case of Harbin

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The policy discourse of "creative industries" has been exported to China from the UK since the 2000s. There is much debate about whether the British creative industries policies are interpreted as neo-liberal (McGuigan, 2005; Freedman, 2008; Miller, 2009; Hesmondhalgh et al., 2014). China and the UK are both influenced by the neo-liberal globalization since the 1980s, and there is also debate about whether China is going down the neo-liberal road (Harvey, 2005; Arrighi, 2007; Nonini, 2008). But this debate has not been brought in the cultural field, and the relationship between the interpretations of Chinese creative industries policies and neo-liberalism has not been identified. Given the local autonomy and regional inequality in China (Keane, 2009; O'Connor and Gu, 2012), the research focuses on the city level and aims to explore whether Chinese city policy makers from different regions interpret creative industries policies as neo-liberal or not.

Since China shifted its economic system into market economy in the 1980s, the south coastal areas have fully promoted the private economy and marketization while the north inland area was still influenced by the remainder shadow of planned economy and emphasized government intervention. This paper focuses on the north inland area and selects the north inland provincial capital city Harbin as case study.

In the light of the critiques of McGuigan's (2005) ways to analyze neo-liberal development in British cultural policies and Harvey's (2005) analyses of neo-liberalism with Chinese characteristics, the research established a working framework to evaluate neo-liberal characteristics of Chinese cultural policies. It contains the following perspectives: 1. Instrumental cultural policies 2. The policy makers adopt the new public management strategies in promoting local culture 3. The policies encourage increasing private sponsorship on the culture that is previously public funded. 4. The cultural entrepreneurship is encouraged 5. The cities follow the national regulations in lowering the barrier for the entry of various kinds of capital. The paper triangulates the data from interviews with policy makers and local policy documents during 2006-13 and public records to explore how the perspectives of the working framework are reflected in Harbin policies.

The paper shows that Harbin policy makers on one hand adopt neo-liberal elements in encouraging cultural entrepreneurship and promote the commoditization and privatization of

culture for economic growth, on the other hand, they intervene in the market competition and provided tax support for the weak cultural enterprises and also increase the amount of public funding for culture, which are not advocated by the neo-liberals. For these reasons, Harbin creative industries cannot be simply interpreted as neo-liberal. The paper finally aims to show that it is inexact to conclude that Chinese city creative industries policies are interpreted as neo-liberal. It also challenges Harvey's (2005) opinion that China is going down the road of neo-liberalism with Chinese characteristics.

Id: 13035

Title: Financialization, concentration and exclusivity: an analysis of the monopolised market of audiovisual sportive spectacle in Brazilian pay-TV

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Since the beginning of the industrial capitalism, the tendency towards the concentration of wealth and power is observed, resulting in the formation of big national companies, transnational companies and finally the conglomerates, product of mergers and acquisitions between great companies. Ben Bagdikian (1992), Robert McCheney (1998, 2000) Arsenault & Castells (2008), Hardy (2014), among other, have been highlighted the increase of concentration on the ownership of media companies, affecting the dynamic of the sector regarding to diversity of content, competition in the market, regulation on the sector, etc. In most cases, the financial capital is behind the process of concentration promoting the capital realization acceleration. In this article, we analyse the relation between financialization, concentration and exclusivity in the sector of pay-TV in Brazil, through a case study which analyses the monopolised market of audiovisual sportive spectacle, focusing on the major sports channels SporTV, ESPN, Fox Sports and Esporte Interativo. First, we discuss the role of the audience as part of the spectacle and then the capital realization supported in pay-TV sector by the intellectual property rights and restricted access to industrialized cultural goods, walled gardens. With the theoretical support of Political Economy of Communication is investigated how the pay-TV productive chain monetizes the financial investment in the business model through the acquisition of intellectual properties, more specifically sports events broadcasting rights and of the investment in areas related to the provision of content. As a result we identify the appreciation of the broadcasting rights in Brazilian pay-TV market since 2012 with the entrance of Fox Sports in this market, supported by the capital of the Twenty-first Century Fox. Time Warner was another conglo ESPN, part of The Walt Disney Company, and SporTV, hold by Organizações Globo, a Brazilian conglomerate. Even though the foreign channels appear to be rival, the conglomerates that hold them share the main institutional shareholders like The Vanguard Group, State Street Corporation, BlackRock, among other. The spectacle has been served to appreciate the financial market, for one side, and to support the real economy with the consume of goods and services that it announces.

Id: 13140

Title: The Advance of Communication Technology: Machinery of Tyranny vs. Machinery of Emancipation

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper will not be presented because the government of Turkey has violated academic freedom by imposing a ban on foreign travel for Turkish academics.

The advance of communication technologies cannot be understood without considering the requirements of capitalism in order to consolidate the material and symbolic bases of the mobility of capital. Though the requirements of capitalism offer the essential framework, it would be wrong to assume that the development of communication technologies has its own trajectory and determined results. There is a paradoxical situation related to the advance in communication technologies. On the one hand these technologies serve for the benefits of capitalism; on the other hand they may be used as a tool of emancipation against capitalism. This study explores the paradox of communication technologies by focusing on social control and resistance in Turkey. The consolidation of power and capital in Turkey seeks to restrict these technologies only with socially "disciplined" usages whereas opposition forces try to overcome these barriers with alternative usages. There is an ongoing struggle on the social role of technology that will determine both the future of these technologies and the emancipation of society.
After the Gezi Resistance in 2013, the Turkish government has accelerated the usage of communication technologies, precisely the Internet and social media, as a tool for a broader and deeper surveillance. In order to restrain critical voices, the government has imposed access bans and blocked websites. Furthermore it has started to prosecute social media users for their critical comments on its policies. An interesting dimension of the government strategies for suffocating emancipatory potential of communication technologies is the hijacking of democratic discussion with trolls. Many social media accounts associated with ruling party trolls undermine critical discussions on government policies with provocative contents.
On the other hand, opposition has increasingly mastered the emancipatory potential of these technologies. From the beginning of the Gezi Resistance, dissidents began to create alternatives communication ways as a response to the ignorance of the resistance by the Turkish mainstream media. They have founded alternative websites, newspapers, radio stations and an online TV channel. These experiences show that Turkish grassroots movements have the necessary technical capacity to overcome government restrictions. The alternative communication capacity they have built is still keeping its strength to some degree though some of their initiatives ended. By considering the Turkish experience from the beginning of the Gezi Resistance, it is possible

to argue that two points is especially important for exploring the relationship between technology and emancipation. On the one side of the issues, there is technological mastership. In order to broaden the emancipatory potential of these technologies, dissidents must know ways of overcoming government's restrictions. At least some experts must provide methods for disabling bans and censorship. On the other side, alternative communication spaces created through the potential of new communication technologies must be protected against the attacks of power's agents. Thus, there is also a social dimension of the issue. Though these two important points is related to Turkish experience, they may well shed light to explore other experiences in the world.

Id: 13144

Title: Outsourcing videogame quality assurance ' the case of Polish videogame testers

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This presentation focuses on labour in external quality assurance companies in the videogame industry. The development of the industry and videogames themselves has increased the complexity and cost of videogame productions. It also results in the emergence of occupations specialised in assuring the quality of videogames (Bulut, 2015, p.242). In the early years of the videogame industry, videogame testing was performed by designers themselves, however, because of the complexity of modern videogame productions, this labour is now performed by specific divisions in development studios (internal QA) or outsourced to companies specialised in localisation services (external QA).

The discussion aims to contribute to the knowledge about contemporary videogame production and nature of its labour, as a videogame production is an under-researched subject in cultural studies (Deuze, et al., 2007, p. 335). The structure of the videogame industry is often briefly presented in relation to the division between publishers and developers, however this perspective should by investigated further especially with the increasing interest in outsourcing videogame development (i.e. Gamasutra, 2009).

This paper focuses on videogame testing as outsourced labour, as videogame testing is a crucial and rarely acknowledge occupation in the industry. Videogame testing is often presented as one of possible ways to start career in the industry or as a 'dream job' for videogames enthusiasts (i.e. Fullerton, 2008, p.433). This labour is on boundaries between service and creative work, as videogame testers are mostly engage in repetitive activities of checking games functionality. The specificity of labour in the videogame industry such as long working hours, project-based employment and exploitation of young people passion toward videogames have been previously documented in literature about videogame labour (i.e. Dyer-Witheford & de Peuter, 2009). This presentation aims to contribute to the knowledge about labour in cultural industries by investigating videogame labour from the perspective of young workers and their first jobs in the industry.

The discussion is based on in-depth interviews with Polish videogame testers working in outsourcing companies. The perspective of Polish industry can be also beneficial, as majority of research about videogame labour is focused on the USA videogame industry (i.e. O'Donnell, 2014).

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Id: 13148

Title: PANEL Growing Economic Inequality and Mediated Communication

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: One of the most significant economic developments over the last decades has been the rise in inequality. A widening of the income gap, the highly uneven distribution of wealth and a falling wage ratio are data indicators of this transformation.

After decades of benign neglect, the issues of economic and social inequalities have re-entered the stage of mainstream political attention in the western heartland over the past couple of years. This is due, in part, to the public reception of recent publications by Thomas Piketty and Tony Atkinson who have worked in this field for years.

Moreover, this renewed attention to, economic and social inequality unfolds against a background of very slow, partial and highly uneven 'recovery' from the major financial crash, which emerged in the north-Atlantic region in 2007-2008. Sluggish economic growth, declining or stagnant incomes, state policy regimes orientated towards 'austerity' have followed in many countries in the core capitalist regions, often with extremely high unemployment - a key marker of overall distribution of welfare and power –and turbulence in the formal political arena.

In line with the overall theme of this conference and the disciplinary remit of the IAMCR, the growing significance of deepening economic inequalities prompts at least two broad, if overlapping, sets of questions:
➢   How do these new forms of economic inequality, power and privilege relate to relevant theories and conceptualisations of the media and institutions of public communication, whether in the fields of communication studies and/or political economy? How does this knowledge base serve to help a 'forward looking' analysis of the meaning and implications of recent inequality trends?
➢   What role do the new forms of economic inequality, thus power and privilege, play in the typical narratives of mediated communication today? How does the "story-telling" take place? How is inequality framed and discussed?

The proposed Panel is trans-disciplinary in scope and brings together several leading researchers, based in the communication studies, journalism and the political economy fields, --all engaged in complementary ways in exploring the relations between media and public communication institutions and economic and financial processes.. We are aiming for five well-grounded and substantial papers with view to getting them published in a special section of a relevant journal.

PANELLISTS AND TITLES OF THEIR PAPERS:
Paschal Preston & Henry Silke : ''Socio-Economic Inequalities and Communication Studies''.

Andrea Grisold and Henrik Theine : 'The Mediation of Economic Inequalities'.

Núria Almiron : 'Think Tanks and Policies Favouring Austerity and Inequalities'.

Wayne Hope : 'Coevalness, Time and New Avenues of Research on Media and Inequality'.

Chair: Stephen Schifferes

Id: 13157

Title: Cultural Inc. Redux

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: 27 years ago, Herbert Schiller warned about the information-cultural industrial complex and its enclosure of public cultural space, and called for a new information-cultural politics to expand publicly supported cultural expression, creativity and the democratization of the information order (H. Schiller, 1989). He foretold the increasing concentration of economic power in the information and communication industries as it took over the public sector of information and cultural institutions.

Since then, there are radical political economic changes afoot as network technologies, digital systems and applications have been introduced across economic sectors as well as throughout the social and cultural arena — the so-called "new" economy. The emergence and prevalence of new network technologies are often seen as opening up space for cultural institutions to leverage new networks and distribution channels and challenge the top-down political economic power. However, as political economy is further reoriented to information, even the last line of defense of public culture is being pillaged and transformed into new business sectors with very little public oversight.

Under the guise of "preserving" and "promoting" culture online and "access" to information, transnational Internet and information firms like Google, Apple, Amazon, Proquest, Elsevier etc, supported by the corporate state, are rapidly restructuring existing industries and reorganizing the public cultural domain – libraries, museums, archives, public information and public space – and further opening them up to what Gary Fields (2013) would describe as "new territories of profit." Google, for instance, is aggressively digitizing books, art, museums, and archives around the world, claiming to "bring them to life" under its Cultural Institute launched in 2011 while in reality reorganizing and cultivating them into its profit domain (D. Schiller & Yeo, 2014). Google's dominance in the global search engine industry has been at the center of social and political debates (Carr, 2009; Wu 2010; Vaidhyanathan, 2011; Pasquale, 2015); however, there is a glaring blind spot to its impact on the realm of cultural expression in public spaces to which Herbert Schiller referred.

Meanwhile, Apple and Amazon are reeling in print and library culture into their new profit projects as they try to expand their market and compete with their rival Google. Information firms like Proquest and Elsevier are reshaping libraries – and eroding public culture – by imposing draconian licensing agreements, subscription fees, and Digital Rights Management

(DRM) and erasing fair use as a defining library principle. Given the unprecedented corporate seizure of public sectors of information and culture, there is a need to revisit Schiller's work and closely explicate the breadth, scope, and impact of this trend.

The paper, thus, will examine how new emerging internet and information industries reshape and accelerate market relations in the remaining cultural spaces and rearrange them into profit domains, and will investigate the broader implications of this movement and call for an urgently needed new information and cultural politics.

Id: 13165

Title: PANEL: 'Growing Economic Inequality and Mediated Communication'

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: PAPER TITLE : Socio-Economic Inequalities and Communication Studies".

ABSTRACT :: After decades of neglect, economic inequalities have surged back to a more central role in political and media discourses over the past couple of years.

Recent studies show that the highest income groups have been visibly gaining over lower in ways that differ quite strikingly from the trends prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s – the time when the communication studies field was first institutionalised and its core theories and concepts developed on both sides of the Atlantic.

This shift is also manifest in the fact that, as we write, a 'socialist' candidate who identifies growing inequality as the primary policy issue is proving to be the most popular candidate in electoral processes to select the Democratic Party nominee for the Presidential elections in the USA. That same electoral candidate identifies the mainstream media as ''corporate media'', defining it as extremely hostile to his cause and the policies he espouses. At the same time, the western (liberal) model of news media and modern journalism has been undergoing a severe crisis of legitimacy -- with the gap between its declared role and values on the one hand and its actual practices on the other now clearly yawning wider than ever before

The proposed paper draws on a systematic and critical review of the accumulated knowledge base in communication studies, examining its framing and treatment of socio-economic inequalities and their implications for the analysis and practices of the media in 'liberal' electoral democracies. It addresses four key questions and stages of the research project:

.1) How does the research literature in communication studies field address class or other socio-economic inequalities and frame their role, significance and implications for the theory and practices of mediated communication, and whether and how these have changed over time? We identify and classify the most common concerns, framings and constructions of different forms

of inequality and their explicit or implied implications for the processes political communication and practices of journalism.

.2) Drawing on our systematic review of research literature as disciplinary 'memory' [and directly in line with one of the pointers in the IAMCR-2016 conference 'Call' doc] the paper addresses "what role does privilege/inequality play in the creation, sharing, or preserving" of certain forms of inequalities, divides or cleavages or the relative neglect of certain forms. We examine whether and how inequality tends to be framed (e.g as either unavoidable or 'unfortunate events'; or 'necessary' as the only way for markets/enterprise to work, or regarded as 'unfair' -on individual or collective levels; or whether or how inequality addressed as an issue of class or class/class fraction power).

.3) We consider whether and how the concepts, patterns and tendencies identified in the communication studies research field tend to directly engage with, and/or help inform, the recent surge in the public profile (and attention paid to) of class and similar socio-economic inequalities.

.4) Implications for future research and teaching.

Id: 13192

Title: Comparing media regulation agencies: the European experience

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Media regulation is a widespread reality in Europe, but different national solutions may be expected. The comparison between different systems of regulation allows, in the first place, to ascertain the diversity of experiences and differences that characterize the European space and, secondly, to de-construct the naturalization of regulatory mechanisms, contextualizing them in terms of their historical and media models.
Statutory regulation, which includes laws and enforcement of rules as well as penalties for the non-compliance of actors, has evolved to include media agencies set up to pursue the defense of the public interest in media activity. For the member-states of European Union, another level of governance should be considered. Hartcourt (2012) has argued that there is an "europeanization" of media policies in the European Union member-states, with signs of European institutions shaping national media regulation. This may mean that media regulators in the member-states mays share common features, showing signs of some homogenization.
Research has shown that, however, while the majority of democratic countries in the European context has administrative bodies with different levels of functions and financial autonomy, there is some variety in the different dimensions that characterize these bodies (Sousa et al., 2013; Schulz et al., 2013) There is a common understanding of media regulation as an essential activity to democracy and to the qualification of symbolic environments, but different forms of setting media regulation agencies.
The western European context provides a common background in terms of considering freedom of speech and pluralism as central democratic values, but the way media systems have incorporated these values differ substantially as the comparative analysis of Hallin and Mancini (2004) demonstrates.
The same may apply when considering a single element of the media system: do media regulators respond to specific features of the national context? Is it possible to find common trends between countries? Is it possible to envisage signs of harmonization in the regulators of the European Union member-states?
The purpose of this communication is to analyze the different models of media regulators, identifying differences in terms of independence from political structures, convergence of functions, national or regional configuration and mechanisms of funding. A comparison of the media regulatory agencies of 18 European countries (members and non-members of EU) will be performed, using variables of national political and social contexts in order to try to establish models of regulation media agencies.

Id: 13214

Title: Reconstructing and Renewing Heterodox and Critical Approaches to the Political Economy of Communication

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper aims to reconstruct the political economy of communication because, in the eyes of many, the approach serves as code for a single marxian view of the field, with a few going to great length to affirm that this is so.

Christian Fuchs (2012), for example, is emphatic that "the Political Economy of the Media [i]s Marxist Political Economy". Eileen Meehan and Janet Wasko (2013) agree: "scholars who identify as political economists of the media are generally assumed…to work within Marxist traditions" (p. 40).

Not surprisingly, critics of political economy agree. As Havens, Lotz and Tinic (2009) state: "Political economy…approaches have been reproduced by generations of academics who maintain an unreconstructed Marxist theoretical framework (p. 238). Holt and Perren (2009) condemn "the North American strand of critical political economy forwarded by scholars such as Herbert Schiller, Ben Bagdikian, Robert McChesney, and Edward Herman . . . as reductive, simplistic, and too economistic . . ." (Holt & Perren, 2009, pp. 8-9). Cunningham, Flew and Swift (2015) take such criticisms to caricultural lengths in their new book, Media Economics.

But what if the PEC doesn't start with Dallas Smythe and Herbert Schiller and American Marxism in the 1960s and 1970s, but a century or earlier in a trans-Atlantic circuit of ideas when communication, media and information emerged as central objects of analysis within the emergent modern capitalist world order?

This paper's central thesis is that the focus on PEC's post WWII Marxist roots obscures the field's much older and more diverse back-story. PEC actually emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it argues, as elaborated by European and North American scholars like Karl Marx, Charles Horton Cooley, Edward Ross, Albert Shäffle, and Thorstein Veblen, amongst others. They saw extended networks of communication and transportation in their time, and the greater mobility of capital, goods, people, knowledge, and culture they enabled, as the defining features of the then-new age of capitalist modernity. Thus, long before Dallas Smythe and Herbert Schiller, communication and media were already major objects of inquiry within this loose, cross-Atlantic political economy tradition—a formation that predated the differentiation of the social science disciplines in the early to mid-20th century. This tradition was imported into

communication studies through the halfway house of sociology, mostly after the turn of the 20th century. To put it boldly, political economy is the mother of communication and media studies, if we look back far enough and across disciplines while simultaneously following a windy path to recover some of its forgotten and estranged constituent forms.

A renewed agenda for PEC today must grasp these origins and then apply what we have learned to better understand the transformation of the communication industries, technologies, institutions, laws, rules, forms of expression and kinds of social interaction that are now congealing to constitute the conditions of modern life under informational capitalism in the 21st Century.

Id: 13291

Title: A decade of cyberspace: An empirical study of the evolution of popular Arabic websites between 2006 and 2016.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In the context of memory and communication, looking back, looking forward, this paper reflects on the evolution of the social integration of new technology and compares new media production practices over the decade 2006-2016. Although social media became very popular today, the World Wide Web still occupies a key place in the electronic media landscape. This research focuses on the evolution of the WWW industry in regards to structure and content. It studies the transformations and new trends in Web producers' practices and strategies. It questions how time and geopolitical events and interests have affected Web producers' practices and users' interests in Web content.

This research uses an empirical quantitative methodological approach. It starts from a 2006 research about popular websites (Allagui, 2006) that looks at both the structure (including type of site, size, language, ownership, business model, interaction and design) and content of the websites (including type, theme and source).
In media, success is most often measured by audience popularity through usage or viewership. For instance in televisoon, the higher the rating the more popular the program. The peer evaluation approach has also been normative over the years in cultural industries including the awards in music or cinema. In this paper, we work with Alexa analytical data software that measures the websites traffic. Researchers and academics use Alexa for decades now to identify popular websites and thus, popular trends in the cyberspace for specific countries and regions. (Hofheinz, 1996, 2005, Anderson, 1999, 2003, Allagui, 2006, 2009). In this paper, I compare the successful Arabic websites based on Alexa rankings in 2006 with those in 2016 and investigate the cultural and structural changes over time. As this is a comparative analysis, I use the same variables and coding categories.
Primary findings show that ten years ago, popular Arabic websites are mainly commercial and deal with local rather than pan-Arab issues. The study describes socio-cultural transformations driven by cultural processes. Websites do not favor controversy and are developed in highly monitored environments. Today, news sites dominate the popular Arab cyberspace and are interested first in regional focus; the domination of media conglomerates is less pronounced and there is evidence of cultural transformations envisioned ten years ago.

The conceptual framework includes media content and media globalization literature that help understanding the producers' strategies as they emerge from the study. The political economy

approach helps understanding the relationship between media, power and users (Hesmondhaghl, 2002). The cultural or 'creative' (Banks, 2015) industries approach conceptualizes answers to media content questions (Mosco, 1995, Jenkins, 2006). The paper also highlights limitations in this conceptual framework when applied to the cyberspace context.

Id: 13298

Title: Challenging power dynamics of discourses on climate change: a political economy of Chai Jing's documentary Under the Dome (2015)

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Are social media really overturning power dynamics of public communication? While today's news continues to flow through traditional media channels, timely debates are increasingly constructed and circulated through social networking sites. Social media are becoming progressively interlinked with traditional media outlets (Meraz, 2009) to constitute what has been dubbed as a 'hybrid media ecology' (Benkler, 2006).

While fifty years of research in western countries have provided empirical evidence that indicates that elite media set the public agenda (McCombs, 2004; Coleman, McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver, 2009) it is becoming clear that social media tools play a significant role in shaping public opinion and setting political agendas (Woolley et al. 2010; Wallsten, 2007; Bruns & Burgess, 2011; Sauter and Bruns, 2013).

What are the political, cultural, economic factors shaping discourses on climate change in a hybrid media ecology?

This paper answers these questions by focusing on a relevant case study from China. It looks at Chai Jing's 2015 documentary Under the Dome, a video that went viral for about 40 hours in Chinese social media and addressed the issue of smog pollution. Watched by over 200 million times, the video is the recording of a carefully staged Ted Style lecture-performance by Chai — a well-known former China Central Television journalist. The conversations on climate change triggered by Under the Dome will be studied through an analysis of Sina Weibo. Dubbed the "Chinese twitter", Sina Weibo is currently the most popular micro blog platform in China (Mou, Fu, Atkin,2011; OpenNet Initiative,2012) and has been described as "a kind of tabloid press, raising scandals, mobilizing capricious online public opinion" (Sullivan,2012,p.373). The alleged democratic potential of Weibo will be tested against its capacity to influence a debate on People's Daily, the official voice of the government of China published worldwide with a circulation of 4 million (The Nieman Report,2014) and the China Daily, published in English on a smaller scale, but very relevant for its role in Chinese elite policy debates (Zhang, & Zheng, 2012, The Nieman Report,2014).

Id: 13345

Title: Production Logics and the Digital Games Industry

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: In light of the conference theme this paper seeks to look anew at the concept of production logics, and to explore their usefulness in understanding contemporary cultural production, specifically in the context of the digital games industry.

European scholars in the cultural industries tradition developed the concept of production logics to understand the variations in production in the cultural industries. The concept of production logics was elaborated by Miège, B. (1989) who used it to refer to a relatively stable set of institutional forms and relationships created by the commodification and industrialization of culture (Lacroix and Tremblay 1997, Miège 2011, Miège and Garnham 1979). These works identified three dominant production logics across the cultural industries: a publishing logic, a press logic and a flow logic. Each logic highlights a dominant approach to production, work and revenue models.

Following a brief overview of the historical literature on production logics, this paper applies production logics to understanding the contemporary digital games industry (Nichols, 2014, Huntemann and Aslinger, 2013, Jin, 2010). Drawing upon both primary and secondary data this paper analyses production logics in the digital games industry over the last ten years. The paper argues that a number of production logics co-exist in the digital games industry. Adopting a production logics perspective allows us to highlight the continued presence of editorial and flow logics, the development of hybrid models and the emergence of a platform logic. It also identifies the re-emergence of an exhibition logic.

This paper argues that production logics provides a useful starting point for understanding changing production trends in contemporary media industries. They allow us to connect micro changes in production processes and technology to larger institutional and organizational changes at the meso level and to think comparatively across industries while capturing variations within industries. It also allows us to assess the changing role of creative professionals in different production logics. The paper concludes that while production logics require some extension when applied to contemporary media, they provide a useful way to contextualise organizational, technical and worker changes. This approach may also create some common ground between those researching 'new media' and those focused on 'established' cultural industries.

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Nichols, Randy. 2014. The Video Game Business. London: BFI and Palgrave MacMillan

Id: 13356

Title: PANEL" Title : Growing Economic Inequality and Mediated Communication'

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper Title: Think Tanks and Policies Favouring Austerity and Inequalities

This paper will elaborate on the role of think tanks on public opinion and policies favouring austerity and inequalities. Ways for critical media studies to contribute to this area of research will also be suggested.

Think tanks are one among many organizations competing to shape public policy in a political setting where policy making is the product of a dynamic interplay among organized interests. There is an increasing literature on think tanks authored by political scientists scholars yet very few research has been conducted regarding their role as media and public opinion agenda settlers.

Assessing how think tanks have contributed to promoting austerity requires a discourse analysis of narratives. However, there is a step to take prior to this. Before measuring think tanks' outputs, researchers must measure their inputs, notably resources and constituencies. Analyzing think tanks' inputs and constituencies may broaden our understanding of who has the power of directing, and collaborating within and beyond, the new think tank space.

The paper theoretical framework is built upon the results of a research on the most influential think tanks in Spain during the economic crisis that began in 2008. Our findings showed that the Spanish think tanks providing advise and producing knowledge on economics and finance during the period were in a position of total lack of autonomy when confronting the challenges posed by the most devastating economic and financial crisis the region has faced since the recovery of democracy. Actually, with very few exceptions, their profile was unambiguously aligned with Spanish government policy making during the studied period, tending to lean toward the wishes of the wealthy rather than the needs of working classes and the common good.

Our findings were therefore consistent with the field theory (which focus on the complicated organizational and political environments in which think tanks operate and on their underlying dependencies on powerful sponsors), elitist theory (which stresses that interest groups are neither neutral, disinterested actors devoted to the progress of knowledge nor competing equally in shaping public policies), and discourse coalition theory (which focus on studying the national and transnational networks, institutionalized actor constellations and power relations of the

hegemonic neoliberal discourse coalition).

Taking this theoretical framework and case study as the starting point, I will elaborate on how the political economy of communication can contribute to unveil the discourse coalition of elites that has promoted the neoliberal discourse of austerity in media, the public opinion and public policies.

Id: 13395

Title: The politics and economics of independent game distribution in China

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper studies the political and economic dynamics that shape the online distribution system in China. The paper engages in discussion about the revolutionary power of digital distribution. Disrupted technology reduces the dominance of global conglomeration in emerging digital market. Distribution platforms such as Amazon.com, Netflex, Apple Store, and Play Station Network give rise to media contents for niched market. As we see videos move online, independent cinema nowadays becomes competitive to Hollywood film in a long-tailed market. Hollywood is argued to have failed in maintaining its legacy for majors lack effective strategies to stop illegal downloading from popular pirated web sites like BitTorrents and etc.

Certain issues related to pricing, copyright protection, innovative business model and digital right management require attention. Current literature shows an interest with ongoing debate about disintermediation of major publishers in western media economies. Tis paper adds China as an additional case to discuss disintermediation. The paper studies independent game circulation in the online distribution system of China. It explores the ways that disruptive technology promotes peripheral content in niched market. The paper studies the use of disruptive technology by independent game developers in enabling small-scale creative innovation in China's transformative internet society. Corporation competition is examined in the context that independent game developers negotiate publishing possibilities between major local players (ie. Tencent and Alibaba) and foreign platform giants (ie. Apple Itune and GooglePlay). The paper uses fieldwork interviews to map out complex digital distribution network both at the scales of formal and informal economies. The paper maps out complex industry value chain in China's highly censored and hyper commercialized media environment.

The paper will first include a section of literature review on online distribution. It will then provide a historical review on the growth of independent game development in China. Circulation of underground game titles under and the rise of pirated culture will be discussed. The paper then presents growth of independent game developers and publishers in today's market structure. The interview analysis includes independent game companies (ie. Coconus Island, Breezy Bay, Cotton Game, etc) and their award winning titles (Finger Balance, Lost Journey, New Qinsmoon, etc). This paper lastly maps out third party game publishing channel and proposes alternative industry value chain that leads independent developers to bypass major publishers in China's current game publishing system.

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Id: 13399

Title: PANEL: Growing Economic Inequality and the Role of Mediated Communication

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Paper title: The Mediation of Economic Inequalities: Empirical Research, Theories and Fading Memories

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Hendrik Theine, Research Assistant, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria

Growing economic inequalities have become a pressing issue on political agendas recently, increasingly reflected by individuals as well as the civil society. Although the topic of inequality has reentered the field of economic science, the problem how topics on economic inequality are mediated (to the public) is not being discussed in economics at all.
The political economy tradition offers rich theoretical approaches to study media, power and inequality. This paper will argue that we are in need of a reexamination and reappraisal of those theories to answer questions like: How is inequality treated in retrospect to media coverage, and how is economic inequality discussed in the media context?
During the last decades, such theories have witnessed a decline in scientific engagement and application, but - thus the crucial point made by the authors – not in actual relevance. Against the background of rising inequality in the core capitalist regions, such theories can act as important guidance to contextualize and understand current processes. Therefore, the first part of this paper offers a discussion on the relevance of (nowadays rather neglected) political economy theories that include the concept of power for the mediation of economic inequalities.
In the second part of this paper, we concentrate on recent work in the field of media economics, political economy and communication studies, as long as they put an empirical focus on how inequality is covered in the media. By conducting a systematic analysis of these recent studies, we debate the concepts of media power and the role mass media play as information providers. We will assess and evaluate the underlying assumptions and the methodological approaches guiding the respective empirical findings. By highlighting the merits and shortcomings of this body of work, we will establish interconnections adequate to the theories of political economy faded in today's memory.

Id: 13435

Title: Alternative media fetishism

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Media researchers explored various aspects of alternative/activist journalism since 1980s, focusing on what constitutes an "alternative" in the media and on how these media operate within the context of contemporary capitalism. Assuming that alternative/activist journalism aims at challenging the mainstream and changing the social status quo, this paper will point out that the logic of media publishing often tends to override these aims and turn the alternative medium into a commodity which functions within a systems of circulation of not only (and mostly) economic, but also (and mainly) social and cultural capital. Although alternative media still provide platforms for voicing otherwise neglected facts, arguments and perspectives, denying the mainstream a monopoly and subverting its hegemony, the necessity to keep the media organization going can lead to what might be called alternative media fetishism on part of both producers and consumers of the media. From individual perspective, the alternative/activist journalism can be practiced not just to advance some cause, but also in order to contribute (modestly) to one's income, establish one's name in the "alternative circles", build personal network within these circles etc. At the same time, consuming alternative media can mean contributing to their survival, gaining consciousness about given causes and/or building one's identity as someone who is generally against the mainstream, but it can also replace more direct activism and serve as an indulgence for otherwise passive activists. The paper will provide several brief case studies from Czech Republic in order to illustrate various aspects of alternative media fetishism. First, it will analyze a trajectory of an alternative environmental magazine from being the mouthpiece of a major Czech environmental organization towards its current de facto independence on its original publishers. Then it will explore the career of its one of leading Czech activist journalists and his media projects. Finally, it will deal with a group of semi-alternative media launched by professional journalists after so called Berlusconization of the mainstream Czech media during the last three years.

Id: 13442

Title: Future of Regional Australia in the Age of Broadband Telecommunication Network

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: What defines a regional community, and how does broadband technology enhance or disrupt such sense of community? The introduction of new technology has the potential to fundamentally change a service market and the way people behave and share sense of identity (C. M. Christensen, Horn, & Johnson, 2008). It also forces organisations to decide if and when to integrate new technologies into their system (Padgett & Mulvey, 2007, pp. 375-376); (Rao, Angelov, & Nov, 2006); (Lucas Jr & Goh, 2009). According to Castells (2009, p. 304), "the instrumental capacity of the nation state is decisively undermined by the globalisation of core economic activities, by the globalisation of media and electronic communication". Such new communication technologies transgress geopolitical boundaries and create complex narratives in the definition of regions and nation states, plus a shift away from the local to the global (Kofman, 2008, p. 21). Regional Councillors are often at odds with trying to sell regions as unique, while at the same time justify why regions should also invest in disruptive technologies, which could challenge such uniqueness.
In their study of regional and urban service delivery, Bamberry and Dale (2009) identified disparities in access to high quality telecommunications for regional as against urban cities. Ahrend, Farchy, Kaplanis, and Lembcke (2014, p. 5), pointed out that the economic productivity of a city increases with its population size. In a US study of broadband adoptions, Larose, Strover, Gregg, and Straubhaar (2011, p. 92) observed that "older, less educated, lower income residents are more common in rural communities, and these are groups with low levels of broadband adoption". It was also noted that the 'productivity of a given individual increases with the size of the city in which they work'. Such disparity aligns with what Park (1999, p. 85) regards 'as an eternal dependent relationship between the centre and periphery'. Doreen Massey (2005) however argues that 'the really serious question which should be raised is not whether space will be annihilated, but what kinds of multiplicities and relationships will be co-constructed as a result" (M. Christensen, Jansson, & Christensen, 2011, p. 3).

The National Broadband Network in Australia (NBN), has been regarded as the panacea for the above challenges, as well as the key to future regional development. But the question is whether regional communities are ready and aware of the ubiquitous nature of NBN in changing their way of life and regional identities. How does regional Australia utilise NBN to create a sustainable community while maintaining regional identity?
This paper uses Castells (2009) theory of Identity, and C. M. Christensen (1997) theory of

disruptive technology, to interrogate the impact of broadband in regional Australia. It is expected that such findings will help us redefine regionalism in a technological age; have a better understanding of how disruptive technology helps to shape the future of regional Australia. It will also enable us understand how the new configurations will reflect or refract memories of regionalism?

Id: 13534

Title: Critical political economy and the next wave of convergence: 'content marketing' and media and advertising integration

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: A distinctive contribution made by critical political economy of media scholars has been to examine the implications of advertising as a system of financing media and the influence of marketers on media content, provision and access to communications. Classic contributions examined advertisers' influence on non-advertising content and on media firms' behaviour. The problems they identified are of central concern today, but critical political economy approaches need to be updated to deal with transformations in the ways marketing communications are produced and circulated and the changing dynamics of media-advertising relationships.

This paper discusses key trends in the integration of media and marketing communications described by terms such as content marketing, branded content, native advertising and sponsored stories. It presents original research on the growth of these practices, and discusses how media and marketing integration is advancing across corporate ownership and networking, work practices and values, forms and formats, user engagements and (co)creation. It identifies critical issues and implications ranging from the (further) erosion of the 'firewall' between editorial content and advertising, to concerns about deception, disclosure, economic surveillance and privacy, to wider concerns about advertiser and ad finance influences on media content, creative control and corporate decision-making.

The paper argues that media and marketing integration marks the latest phase of convergence and has profound implications for communications and for the study of communications. Against the weight of affirmative scholarship, the critical tradition is needed, but also needs to be revised to engage with contemporary features of media –advertising relationships. The paper proposes an analytical mapping of the factors that tend to strengthen advertiser influence on media communications and countervailing forces that can serve to mitigate or contest advertiser influence. Such an approach seeks to bring the insights of earlier accounts into a more appropriate framework for examining emergent practices in convergent media, one that incorporates political economic dynamics, governance arrangements, work cultures and practices, automation, multiple sites of agency, the influence of publics, and user interaction. The radical tradition can be renewed by addressing the forms and implications of marketers' influence across contemporary communications systems. This requires analysis of practices, policy (including regulation and governance) and problems (the formulation of critique).

The paper advances an agenda for critical academic scholarship and introduces a new, broad-based academic network project to investigate these emergent practices that seeks to promote resources for collaborative research and academic engagements with industry, trade unions, civil society and policy networks. The paper also considers the significance of this new wave of convergence of media and marketing for the teaching and study of media and proposes more integrative approaches to critical studies of 'owned, paid, earned and shared' media.

Id: 13537

Title: Questioning contemporary media agency: Survey-findings on structured film audience practices and the need for a political economy recontextualization

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: If there is one characteristic ascribed to contemporary audiences, it is their increased agency. Conceptualized as the driving force within today's 'convergence culture' by Henry Jenkins, audiences are seen as more autonomous, selective, and less rendered to traditional media companies than ever. Audiences are seen as actively seeking, selecting, shaping, and creating individualized media experiences. Moreover, the integration of screens that characterizes convergence, enables transmedia storytelling where virtual/online experiences complement physical/offline experiences sought and shaped by contemporary audiences.

In this paper, we problematize this rather celebratory emphasis on active audiences in two respects. First, from an historical perspective, this paper criticizes arguments on today's media audiences as if historical audiences were inactive. As this paper points out, an important body of literature proofs that historical audiences were anything but inactive – with technologies enabling audience participation; with media industries encouraging audience interaction and using transmedia strategies, and with audience practices that illustrate forms of active media fandom and resistance. Second, the emphasis on contemporary audience's activity seems to imply that today's seeking, selecting, shaping, and creating is not subjected to any constraints. Questioning the lack of acknowledging structural constraints to audience practices, this paper underlines the need to take into account issues of societal stratification, limits in access (such as material and cultural barriers), self- and professional limitations to creative expressions, and corporate (discursive) strategies on (monitoring) audience choice and autonomy.

Turning to the empirical part of the paper, we first criticize the fact that most research that

informs theories on participating audiences are often case studies on particular audiences, grounded in qualitative methodologies. The paper then presents results from a recent representative study that explores film consumption amongst Flemish-Belgian youth aged 16-18, an audience most often conceived as highly active in terms of active film consumption and participation. Among the more amazing findings is that that the more traditional screens such as cinema and television not only remain popular, but are even still preferred to - less constraint-new screens. Young audiences also prefer company whilst watching film, which implies a specifically social informed content selection. Previously existing film related practices occur, but are not as common as one would expect in an allegedly converged media landscape. Although the paper recognizes that contemporary audiences to some extent seek, select, shape, and create their own media experiences, it also questions both the newness of, and the restraints that audiences encounter in deploying these practices. The structured film audience practices thus call for a political economy recontextualization.

Id: 13547

Title: Where's the Money' Transactional Data and Cultural Memory

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: It isn't often couched in these terms, but money is a powerful form of cultural memory. In elemental terms it is a public record keeping technology that reports to any user the full history of all economic agents with whom she has had direct or indirect contact in the past. With coins and paper money, this history of social debts and obligations is stored in a physical token. But transactional history can also be stored in digital form, as a cryptographic token or as data in an electronic ledger.

Indeed, money's status as cultural memory is particularly significant in light of new technologies (such as distributed ledgers and cryptocurrencies) that produce a persistent history of monetary transactions, but also because many of the new channels and infrastructures for payments (such as magnetic cards, mobile phones, the wired internet, social media platforms and RFID technologies) record detailed transactional data alongside demographic and psychographic data. With digital payments, previously latent traces and memories of money's circulation are brought to light, such as who spent money on what and whom they are connected to in the broader economy. This has significant implications for money's status as a form of cultural memory and particularly for the ownership, storage and monetisation of monetary data.

Today, for example, companies and governments are developing new credit scores and citizen information based on digital transaction histories. These include peer-to-peer loan systems such as Branch and M-Shwari, which use mobile payments and social media data to provision credit in the Global South. They also include large-scale operations such as Chinese Internet Giant Alibaba's 'Sesame Score', an algorithm that uses online transactional data histories to produce a unique consumer credit rating. Today these scores not only provision financial services from Alibaba, they may also affect a user's visibility on online dating sites and impact their ability to acquire a Schengen Visa. Furthermore, the Chinese government has recently reported that something very similar to these consumer credit scores will be compulsory from 2020.

What happens when the transactional data that we produce is automatically recorded and commodified or used to make decisions about us as citizens? Who has access to or ownership of this data? And how can thinking about money as a form of cultural memory help to inform decisions in engineering and policy that might produce more equitable and ethical data gathering practices?

Id: 13548

Title: Time Warner and the changing ecology of television

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper focuses upon the recent developments at Time Warner, a media corporation that claims a unique competitive position because of its "combination of global scale [and] an intense focus on global video content". This position is in part the result of the decade long process of de-conglomeration that has made Time Warner into "a lean, mean TV machine" which is heavily influenced by its position in the digital TV 'ecosystem'. As well as internal restructuring and cost reduction, it has sought to reinforce its position in global value chains by, for example, taking on Netflix with its HBO Now 'over-the-top' service and lobbying the FCC place tight restrictions on Time Warner Cable's merger with Charter Communications. This activity has occurred in a context in which the corporation has been subject to takeover bids and has been associated with recurring speculation about its further break up and the sale of its HBO, Turner and Warner Bros divisions to companies such as Apple, AT&T or Amazon. Time Warner 's management has sought to increase the influence of longer-term investors on management's decisions, as its share price has fallen in line with the wider US media sector and rumours have emerged about activist shareholders (Corvex Management and Trian Fund) acquiring positions within the corporation's open share register.

This paper reviews these corporate developments, and the wider context of the changing digital TV 'ecosystem', in relation to competing theories associated with critical political economy and so called evolutionary economic approaches to media economics. In so doing it challenges recent assertions that, as compared to the latter approach's ability to assess the rates and qualitative dimensions of change, critical political economic approaches tends to underplay uncertainty, risk and business failure rates within capitalism.

Id: 13580

Title: The Strategic Laboring of Communication: Consumer Participation in Creativity in Advertising

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper intends to examine how creative workers in advertising agencies as wage labor exploit unpaid consumer creativity in advertising. We are experiencing a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to participate in co-creating brand value. They are highly motivated and socially networked. Their engagements with brands can promote "affective economics"（Jenkins 2006）and generate an ethnical surplus（Arvidsson 2005）. Thus, advertisers are now more interested in embracing user-generated content（UGC）as part of their advertising strategies. For example, Doritos' "Crash The Super Bowl" contest has been considered as the most successful advertising campaign which urges consumers to create their own Doritos television commercials and would air the selected finalists during the Super Bowl .

Dallas Smythe（2006）introduced the idea of audience labor. He claimed that media companies sold audiences as commodities to advertisers. Consumer labor in the digital age has been shaped and integrated into advertising strategies. As Ritzer argues, prosumer capitalism is dialectic. On one hand, prosumers are empowered to create their own messages and freely share with one another. On the other hand, their works have potential to be exploited for commercial purposes（Ritzer 2015）. Advertising executives set up the circumstance that consumers are willing to produce certain creative works to fulfill the ultimate strategic objectives（Fuchs 2012）.

This paper investigates four advertising cases of consumer participation in Taiwan to observe how strategic laboring works in prosumer capitalism. The findings contribute to the research of political economy of communication on audience labor. In-depth interviewing and participation observation are two major methods to collect data. Interview subjects include creative directors, copywriters, art directors, directors for production teams, and account managers in each case. There are two key research questions in this study. First, this paper probes the intention of advertising executives exploiting unpaid consumer labor and their strategies of commodifying it. Second, branding has no room for freedom. Advertising workers always carefully define brand meanings. To what extent consumers have the autonomy to interpret brands their own ways when they participate in advertising projects?

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Id: 13630

Title: The 'forgotten' German tradition of critical political economy of the media and communication and its relevance for under-standing digital labour

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: My contribution combines considerations, one the one hand, about the process of marginalisation of a rich critical political economy tradition in the German speaking countries that is relatively un-known to an international audience and links thereby to the overall conference theme ("looking back"). On the other hand, it argues that this tradition can conceptually provide important insights in currently relevant phenomena concerning the political economy of information and the Internet, particularly the topic of 'digital labour' ("looking forward").

Connecting to the early Frankfurt School's analysis of culture industry in the 60s and combining po-litical economy with mass psychology, the German speaking tradition of critical political economy of the media and communication, in comparison to the English speaking filed, paid more attention to dissociate itself from other approaches in the flied. Foundations of the discipline were established mainly in the works of Dieter Prokop, Horst Holzer, and Manfred Knoche until the 90s (see e.g. in English Knoche 2016 and the MC&S special issue). However, the tradition was explicitly, through political reservations, and implicitly, through inner-academic selection processes, struggled against so that Holzer (1994) has spoken about it as a 'forgotten' theory tradition. Today with the retire-ment or emigration of its main proponents its reproduction is strongly endangered and emerging scholars are forced to find academic homes outside of the German speaking countries.

Recently labour was rediscovered as a blind or hot spot of the discipline (e.g. Mosco 2011). From the very outset of the German tradition, the strongest theoretical attention was paid to under-stand the nexus between social praxis, work, and communication and thereby situating media in a historical materialist paradigm. My contribution revisits the ground-breaking work of critical political economists, such as Holzer, Hund, and Prokop, in the light of current debates evolving around digi-tal labour and the Internet.

Particularly, I provide reasons why, first, work and communication must not be opposed (see Habermas 1984) but considered inclusively. This is in turn a premise to consider online activity, e.g. the work of using social media, as exploited. Second, I argue why it is misleading to separate the politi-cal economic analysis of media and communication commodities from an analysis of ideological forms. In informational capitalism, the ideology of privacy on social media can serve

as a crucial ex-ample here.

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Id: 13672

Title: Formation of a super-indie in television format industry: a case study of Endemol from 1989 to 1999

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Starting with Survivor, Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?, Big Brother and Pop Idols in the late 1990s and the early 2000s, television formats have emerged rapidly as a new phenomenon in the global television market. The major player behind this growing global television industry is independent production companies. Large independent production companies, so called "super-indies" such as Endemol (now EndemolShine Group) and FremantleMedia, play a leading role in producing global television formats. What is particular about these large independent production companies is their nationalities; they are European, not American. More importantly, they have a particular corporate structure; they have built an assemblage or a network of production companies. They establish, acquire and/or joint-venture production companies in multiple territories. By linking them together, they also play as distributors, specialized in international sales and distribution.

The scholarship of television formats has merely treated the emergence of super-indies as a natural reaction of capital to commercialization and deregulation, which swept Europe in the 1990s. Scholars and industry professionals argue such structure is a strategy of localization. However, the strategy does not necessitate the network structure of super-indies. This paper zooms into this overlooked but more complicated moment of the history of global television in order to understand the process of emergence of super-indies. By understanding the process, this paper will contribute to revealing the historical construction of super-indies and its relationship to the formation of television formats as a global commodity, not as a mere production practice between some producers in the U.S. and the U.K.

This paper specifically focuses on the development of one super-indies, Endemol. From a political economic perspective, I highlight three major players involved in the development of Endemol: a supranational institution, a nation-state and an independent production company – in this case, the European Commission, the Netherlands and Endemol respectively. By examining primary documents, trade journal articles and scholarly books and articles, this paper argues that cooperation and struggle among the three major players led the emergence of a super-indie.

There are three major findings. First, a supranational institution, the EC, played a direct and indirect role in the development of Endemol. By enforcing Television Without Frontiers Directive in 1989 and rejecting Endemol's involvement in Holland Media Group joint venture in

1995, the EC both gave freedom to and imposed constraints upon Endemol's structural capacity. Second, the development of Endemol was not a passive process of corporate aggrandizement. It utilized television formats as a means to overcome language barriers existed in production and trade of television programs in Europe. Endemol's strategy of expansion and format's growing popularity went hand in hand. Third, Endemol built its distribution structure, by linking production companies, in order to add more value to its television formats. It created a chain to direct a flow of television formats, from North America, where high quality English-lingo programs were made, to five major European markets: France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the U.K.

Id: 13673

Title: Young People Making a Living the Creative Industries

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The 21st century has seen a steady and substantial increase in the number of youth seeking to create their careers in the creative industries, but statistics on the income patterns of artists and cultural workers demonstrate the challenges of this career path. In Canada, 2011 National Household Survey data showed that artists and cultural workers are often self-employed and employed for less of the year than other workers, while earning dramatically less than national averages, with incomes that often fall below the poverty line. Nonetheless, the creative industries are growing at a higher rate than the labour force as a whole, demonstrating an increase in non-standard employment characterized by challenging labour conditions (Hill Strategies, 2014). Professional artists are among the youngest workers in the labour market in Canada, and women and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in the Canadian creative industries, which mirrors international employment trends in this field (Coles, 2013; Countache, Davis, & Zbrolska, 2015; Conor, Gill & Rosalind, 2015; Oakley, 2006, 2013; Skillset, 2010; Stats Can, 2008; Taylor, 2014).

Despite this available data, little research has examined barriers to equitable employment, or the process and methods of generating creative industries work. Labour issues in the creative industries are relatively poorly understood, but have recently been subject to research interest (Banks, Gill, & Taylor, 2013; de Peuter, Brophy, & Cohen, 2014; Pratt, 2002, Ross, 2009). Entry-level youth creative work often does not register when using traditional economic indicators for measuring the impacts of the creative industries. Because of the nature of employment surveying in Canada in the National Household Survey, youth creative workers lack visibility as polling emphasizes the employment situation that gives rise to the most paid hours. In the entry phase of creative work, youth in particular face the expectation of working for free, or put long hours into career development that are not directly compensated (Campbell, 2013, 2015). One untested assumption emanating from anecdotes in some studies of artists as workers is that youth entering the creative industries come from privileged backgrounds due to the extended period of establishing a career in this field, which can involve unpaid internships, low pay, or short-term contracts (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; McKinlay & Smith, 2009; Thornton, 2005).

This paper will present the findings of my Young People Making a Living in the Creative Industries project, which has set out to address questions of diversity and access to creative industries work by evaluating income earning for youth aged 18-35 through an online survey,

and to document best practices and challenges in experiences in entry-level creative industries work through semi-structured interviews. This project has collected data on age, level of education, race, gender, length of time in the field, average income, and different revenue sources, including employment other than creative work. After presenting these findings, this paper will make recommendations regarding better support systems, including cultural and educational policies, such that creative work can be more accessible and more widely spread at the entry level.

Id: 13696

Title: Peru's Struggle Over Memory

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Memory construction is never built in isolation from intersecting political, economic, cultural, and social power relationships that are at play both locally and globally. Utilizing a political economic framework I analyze the institutionalization of Peru's memory of the most recent internal war that took place between 1980 and 2000. This work focuses on the construction of the Lugar de la Memoria or LUM, as well as on how the LUM and its institutional structure supports the dissemination of memory works, especially in the form of audiovisual and photographic materials.

Some of the guiding questions are: What is the role of the Peruvian state in institutionalizing (or not) memory (or memories)? What is the role of the international community in the institutionalization of Peru's memory? Who is producing the audiovisual memory disseminated by the LUM? What kind of memory (or narratives) is the LUM disseminating? Who is the LUM's audience?

Memory of the Peruvian conflict still remains fresh and it is a site of struggle where memories are contested and in some cases disregarded, calling to forget the past and to move on. The LUM is a good example of the struggle over memory. The LUM was possible because of an initiative and funding from Germany, which in 2008 donated US$2 million to Peru for the creation of a museum. This funding was initially rejected by then President Alan García who opposed to the creation of a "memory museum." This rejection was highly politicized given García's own responsibilities during the internal conflict (1980-2000) since he had served a first term as President between 1985-1990; this period—1985-1990—is considered some of the worst years during the internal conflict. However, under local and international pressure, García's government ended accepting the funding in 2009. It has taken several years and other President in office to build the LUM, which still, after its recent inauguration in late 2015, continues to have its detractors and supporters thus reflecting a societal ambiguity towards the acts of remembering and/or forgetting the experiences of political trauma.

Id: 13703

Title: Disney's Commodification of Memory

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: "Let the memories begin!" While this phrase was the official marketing slogan for Disney theme parks from 2011-2013, it's importance to Disney's financial success reaches far beyond conventional public relations strategies. The notion of "memory" has been at the center of Disney's public engagement strategies for decades now and has become increasingly prominent within the past few years. Memory is a concept utilized in Disney's promotional advertisements, their merchandise, their theme parks, and their films.

By utilizing methods such as document analysis, personal interviews, and participatory observation, the goal of this paper is to highlight the ways in which Disney sells memories to their consumers. It will analyze a number of specific examples of Disney commodities that promote the notion of memory, as well as present an argument for why it is important for critical media scholars to understand this business strategy.

For example, from 2011-2013 the slogan "Let the memories begin!" could be seen throughout most Disney theme parks. In fact, it took until early January 2014 to remove the "Let the Memories Begin" sign that hung across the iconic scene of the floral Mickey and Main Street Station at Magic Kingdom Park. Disney has also introduced new products that contribute to the idea that Disney helps create important personal memories. Some of the most prominent examples of this are the newly introduced Disney Weddings and the photo editing website appropriately named "The Memory Maker." These examples, among many others, highlight Disney's focus on selling memories to audiences.

Another important aspect of this phenomenon is Disney's use of commemoration to promote their products. Disney is famous for re-releasing their films in order to commemorate an anniversary, as well as creating events at their themes parks to commemorate certain dates. This paper takes a critical approach to understanding the ways in which Disney uses concepts such as commemoration to sell memories to audiences.

Id: 13738

Title: Good Practices for Cultural Diversity in the Audiovisual Landscape

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper introduces part of the work we have done within the framework of the research project 'Cultural Diversity and Audiovisual Industry: Good Practices and Indicators', which is continued with the research project 'Diversity of the Audiovisual Industry in the Digital Era', which we are currently performing. Both research projects are being made with the funding of the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness of Spain.

In these research projects our main concern has been the analysis of cultural diversity inside cultural industries in general, and the relationship between diversity and audiovisual systems in particular, understanding them as complex systems in which one can identify different industries – filmmaking, TV, radio, phonographic and videogames – and social actors located in different position of the audiovisual market.

One of the specific objectives we have set for ourselves in our work is to identify the 'good practices' that are capable of protecting and/or promoting diversity of cultural expressions in the audiovisual field. To accomplish this task, in the first place, we have inquired about the origin and meaning of the term 'good practices' and reviewed similar notions, such as best practices, smart practices, recommended and leading practices or contextual practices. In the second place, we have drafted our own definition of 'good practice' to encourage diversity in (or of) the audiovisual field, and have developed a matrix of analysis to examine the actions detected as potential 'good practices.' Finally, we have prepared a catalog of several initiatives designed to protect / promote diversity in (or of) the audiovisual field. This catalog, which is in progress, is available at diversidadaudiovisual.org

In order to identify the 'good practices' comprised in the catalog of practices that protect and/or encourage diversity in (or of) an audiovisual system, we have looked through the magnifying glass at different consolidated sources, including: a) the quadrennial reports submitted by signatories of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity, b) the projects financed by the International Found for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), c) the works published with UNESCO support, like: Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue (UNESCO, 2010), Creative Economy Report 2013 (UNESCO/PNUD, 2013) or Mapping Cultural Diversity, Good Practices from around the World (Sekhar and Steinkamp, 2010). The selection of 'good practices' was also based on the reports submitted by other institutions, such as Media4Diversity, of the European Commission (CE).

From the initiatives selected by the research team, this paper present two examples which are very different from each other (in their respective offerings, funding modes, intended audiences, etc.), which are exploring the possibilities available with digital technologies, and contributing

contents for a more diverse audiovisual landscape: 1) the Special Broadcasting System, developed since 1978 by the Australian public broadcasting sector, and, 2) the portal PLAT developed as open-source software by the Spanish nonprofit association Kinora.

Id: 13757

Title: Obscuring the Truth for the public Greek debt and the political economy effects

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Keywords: Truth Committee, Greek public Debt, Decision Making

Six years since the economic adjustment programs began, Greece remains deeply cemented in an economic, social, democratic and ecological crisis. The black box of debt has remained closed. Until June 2015, no authority, Greek or international, had sought to bring to light the truth about how and why Greece was subjected to the Troika Regime. The debt, in the name of which nothing has been spared, remains the 'rule' through which a violent neoliberal adjustment was imposed and which is causing the deepest and longest recession experienced in Europe during peacetime (Truth Committee, June 2015).

The 'Truth Committee' on Public Debt constituted a tool of contesting the policies that the Greek authorities have been called to apply under conditions of coercion, extortion, blackmail and unbearable pressures that the Greek people had to endure and conform to. The decision to terminate the operation of the 'Truth Committee' in the November of 2015 was the end of a series of political acts, decisions and pressures between the Greek authorities, the creditors, the corporate media and the Greek people. Using Steven Lukes's 'Power a Radical View' (2004) theory, of the "Three Dimension of Power" and the associated theory of The Two Faces of Power by Bacrach & Baratz (1962), we try to interpret the conditions and the acts that forced the Greek government and people to undesirable decision-making, compromised with the policies imposed from their European partners. We also try to outline the step by step political process that has driven the Greek government to terminate the operations of the Committee. Subsequently, we examine dominant corporate media stances which played a gatekeeper's role in favor of creditor's political agenda, by keeping a derogatory stance towards the Committee's Preliminary Report and by explicit reluctance to communicate its findings to the Greek people.

According to the 'Truth Committee', there is an immediate democratic need and a social responsibility to address a range of legal, social and economic issues that demand proper consideration (Truth Committee, 2015). It is also our responsibility to investigate the political process, which has driven the Greek government to fail to endorse the findings of the 'Truth Committee' on Public Debt and subsequently to reclaim the review and abolition of the Greek sovereign debt. There were political actors who undertook to set barriers in their public disclosure. There are some others now, who try to erase them from people's memory. However,

it is an issue of democracy to keep the facts of these memories alive.

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Id: 13760

Title: 140 Characters: Short and Sweet' A Political Economy Perspective on Political
Journalists' Twitter Engagement

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Ever since Twitter has become one of the key social media platforms in the news industry, journalists have been under pressure by news organizations, peers, competitors and even the public to use it to break news, disseminate content, source stories and engage their audiences with an unprecedented immediacy. While none of these are genuinely novel elements in the news cycle, Twitter as a medium enables professional journalists to pursue these activities in a broader variety of ways and under profoundly different conditions than ever before. If the ongoing social media hype puts pressures on journalists to constantly be active on those platforms, and to capitalize on the many affordances of digital technologies, then what are the underlying forces that shape the conditions, degree and breadth of journalists' Twitter engagement? And what are, ultimately, the outcomes (both actual and perceived) of journalists' efforts on Twitter?

This paper presents the findings of 25 in-depth expert interviews with political journalists who work for 20 of the top broadsheet newspapers and two of the top cable news channels in the United States. It investigates how, when and why journalists navigate and respond to broader political-economy and socio-political factors that shape their work and practices on Twitter. In particular, the paper discusses three key aspects and their influence on journalist's individual Twitter engagement.

First, it considers news organization's institutional logics, such as the role of the audience's "power of clicks" on social media in relation to revenue from digital advertising, institutional social media policies that guide, encourage, or even mandate certain behaviour, as well as social media analytics software that readily quantifies and evaluates performance. If traditionally, journalists' affiliation with legacy news media warranted their adherence to a set of institutionally defined procedures, then how does this play out on Twitter?

Secondly, it examines the impact of changing news climates and socio-political environments. Real-life developments are the lifeblood of journalism, as the occupation is tied to the inherent expectation to provide information and, most importantly, to make sense of them. However, the performance of journalism is highly situational: during key news events - be it predictable, scheduled or breaking stories - journalists follow different rhythms and work patterns than during slow news phases. If we link this assumption to Twitter, how may journalists'

engagement with the platform differ during, for example, mundane news periods and times of heightened political activity?

Finally, it inquires into the role of Twitter's socio-technological affordances and constraints. As is the case with any technology and product, Twitter's communicative features, infrastructure and user interface design enable and simultaneously disable particular uses of the platform. To that effect, how and where do journalist pursue and capitalize on individual opportunities (and navigate limitations) to engage in particular ways or others?

Id: 13761

Title: Coevalness ,communication and global capitalist inequalities

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Coevalness is inherent within forms of intersubjective and reciprocal communication which recognise discrepant awarenesses of time. These qualities of communication are not pregiven;narrow,univocal assumptions about time may predominate and thus damage communication among individuals,groups, institutions and cultures with disparate historico-temporal experiences. Johann Fabian`s critique of Western anthropology, `Time and the Other` argues that such research constructed its object in a way that erased the historical and temporal perspectives of the cultures under investigation. Investigated cultures were externalised as `other` to the assumed centrality of `our` time. The `other` was chronologically and temporally distanced by the anthropological lens as backward, traditional, savage,tribal,peasant etc. But, the centrality of `our` time (ie Western linear progress through history) was beyond critical scrutiny. The result,according to Fabian, was the denial of coevalness, or allochronism. The growth of anthropology as an allochronic discipline was facilitated by the rise of capitalism and its imperial-colonial expansion into non Western regions of the world. The same can be said of all other disciplines and sub-disciplines imbued with Western conceptions of `the Orient`. From Edward Said`s famous study of this development various aspects of Orientalism can be seen as interdependent elements of Western cultural imperialism, a histotical project which can be directly equated with Fabian`s denial of coevalness. The decolonisation of European empires and the proliferation of post-colonial scholarship delegitimised western allochronism across the disciplines . However, with the demise of the Cold War ,Third Worldism and Keynesian social democracy the denial of coevalness became re-expressed within global configurations of capitalist inequality. I will show how this multi-facetted process occurred and highlight the importance of coeval understandings for the political economy of communication. Materially,it will be argued that denials of coevalness are central to worker exploitation across global supply chains alongside global contours of socio-economic polarisation and exclusion (involving the working and wageless poor). I will also identify the ideological components of allochronism, namely, the exnomination of global capitalism as an epochally distinctive power structure and the ubiquity of a globally mediated present which obfuscates the temporal experiences of marginalised peoples. I then suggest that coevally grounded critiques of global capitalism can advance can advance the political economy of communication research field in the following ways. Firstly, coevalness and its denial is epistemically and materially related to other aspects of time, namely, epochality,time reckoning and temporality. Together , they provide a counterweight to Henri Lefebvre`s concept of spatialisation which Vincent Mosco invokes as being especially important for political economists of communication. Secondly, the idea that

coeval understandings and solidarities might shape coalitions of counter- power against global capitalism provides new insights into the nature of praxis for critical political economists. Thirdly, the intellectual origins of coevalness and allochronism point to the significance of radical anthropology as an adjacent sub-discipline to the political economy of communication. Such an appreciation contributes to a fuller understanding of how global capitalism reproduces inequalities.

Id: 13771

Title: Toward an Epistemology of the Trade Press

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Vincent Mosco (2009) calls the political economy of communication (PEC) "a major perspective in communication research" (p. 1). Unlike other major orientations, though, PEC scholars have dedicated relatively few words to articulating or justifying our research methods. As Meehan, Mosco, and Wasco (1993) explain, "unlike positivist paradigms, political economy tends to treat its methods and criteria implicitly; practitioners are expected to follow criteria implicit in the paradigm and then to select the method best suited to the problem" (pp. 112-113). Indeed, media and communication methods texts rarely include political economic methods, and PEC scholars often omit methods sections entirely from their books and articles. These tendencies are, perhaps, understandable given PEC's closer similarities to journalism and history than positivist social science. Still, this "methods gap" poses problems for our ability to justify our findings, as well as our efforts to share best research practices with one another, emerging scholars, and the general public.

This paper aims to begin filling PEC's methods gap by making explicit and justifying some of our implicit methodological approaches. Specifically, I interrogate one key PEC data source -- the media industry trade press. These magazines (and related media) publish industry news and opinion for media professionals and executives. In doing so, they provide rich resources for PEC scholars seeking to document and make sense of industry developments. Indeed, Bettig (1999) notes the trade press "provide much of what we know about what occurs in the realm of business practice" (p. 6). Despite their widespread use in PEC scholarship, though, no existing works systematically articulate and justify PEC scholars' use of trade publications.

Thus, this paper seeks to answer three questions about the trade press: How do PEC scholars use trade publications to study media industries? As data sources, what threats do these publications pose in our efforts to construct trustworthy research? And how can those threats be mitigated? In short, this paper offers an epistemology of the trade press — a critical examination of "the nature, sources and limits of knowledge" (Klein, 1998/2005, para. 1). I begin by describing the trade press and explaining how PEC scholars gather insights from these publications by "listening in" and "burrowing down." I then take Scott's (1990) four criteria for assessing documents in social research — authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning — and I apply those four criteria to the trade press. Epistemological threats in each of these four areas are identified, and threat-mitigation techniques are suggested.

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Id: 13792

Title: Media regulation in Argentina: time for restoration

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Abstract:
This paper sketches the main historical processes that have shaped the media regulation in Argentina over the last decade. Focusing on the broadcasting rules adopted in 2009 and on the telecom rules adopted in 2014 under Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner´s presidency and its changes due to the new government (Mauricio Macri´s presidency) regulation, the paper analyzes the variety of policy strategies and also the interests of main actors in the Argentine media market, as well as the impact of digitalization and media convergence.

Id: 13797

Title: Negating Neutrality: Contesting a civic Internet at the margins of Informational
Capitalism and the case of Brazil's Marco Civil

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Upon its passage into law in April 2014, Brazil's Marco Civil da Internet was feted
internationally as a 'Magna Carta for the Net' (Berners-Lee 2014), a possible blueprint for a
global Internet oriented to civic ends. Built upon the three pillars of safe harbours, network
neutrality and data protection, and emerging from a tumultuous five year multistakeholder
process, judgment largely converged on this constituting an improbable rejoinder to the logics of
profit, surveillance and control that had been sweeping upon the Internet. It is the contrarian
premise of this paper that rather than a substantive embodiment of civic safeguards, the Marco
Civil is better understood as a set of market mechanisms that enables the continued expansion of
the very forces it purports to contain.

When the cast of actors involved in the law's development included the telecoms sector, web
companies and state security services, the proper context to understand what was truly at stake is
offered by informational capitalism. A legion of scholars use this concept to assert the salience
of information to contemporary capitalism and describe how its commodification impacts upon
social justice and democracy (Fuchs 2014; Mosco 2009; Schiller 1999). It is under the
conditions of this economic system that any struggle over the orientation of the Internet would be
waged, a system in which the objectives of its powerbrokers must be accounted for.

The political economy of communication is attentive to both the ownership of particular media,
but also the way in which values are presented therein that challenge or reinforce social relations
(Mosco 2004). As such, this paper adopts a twin focus on the material and discursive constraints
upon the civic potential of the Internet in the case of the Marco Civil. It does so on one hand by
tracing the formation of the 'legitimation discourse of networked capitalism' (Fisher 2010) that
permeates our civic imaginary for the Internet. This results in a lionisation of the values of
expression, participation and expression at the expense of any political-economic considerations,
serving to reinforce the system of informational capitalism (Dean 2010). Within the material
realm, I examine the resources brought to bear upon the Marco Civil by the agents of
informational capitalism to steer it away from those possibilities that threatened their economic
interests.

Across both the material and discursive dimensions, I address a key blindspot within existing
accounts of informational capitalism: that while global, it does not settle evenly across the globe

and manifests particular adaptations in its peripheries, in places like Brazil. This is a result of both its legitimation discourse 'articulating' (Hall 1978) with endogenous Brazilian discourses around media and democracy, as well as the political-economy characteristic of those zones that exist outside centres of technological innovation. This paper is based upon interviews with actors from the stakeholder groups as well as a critical discourse analysis of media and legal texts, ultimately demonstrating how a civic Internet is contested 'at the margins'.

Id: 13861

Title: Global Copyright Policy and the Trans-Pacific Partnership: The Evolution of "Notice and Takedown"and it's Impact on Freedom of Expression

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: As a growing sector of the U.S. economy, the copyright industries, made up of those companies that produce films, books, music, software, video games, and broadcast programming are now a significant part of America's exporting power. In this context, copyright law is at the center of electronic media markets both domestically and internationally, as it defines their historical progression (Meehan & Torre, 2014). However, there is a growing concern that the expansive copyright terms that are included in recent trade agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, are undemocratic in nature and do not adequately protect freedom of expression. In practice, the "notice and takedown" mechanisms included in the TPP, that mirror those within U.S. policy, have already led to abuses and the censorship of social movements, as rights holders have used their authority to take down content without judicial oversight. Tweets, Facebook posts, images, memes, videos and blog posts, the digitally available artifacts of social change are disappearing from globally accessible memory, at least temporarily, due to the adoption of U.S. copyright law. Analyzing the documentary evidence of the policy making process, including congressional records, email communication, trade press, presidential communications, and accounts from major U.S. newspapers, this paper explores first, the influence of the U.S. cultural industries on the development of the TPP, with particular attention to copyright enforcement. I further examine the evolution of the "notice and takedown" enforcement mechanism, from the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 to the TPP in 2016, taking into account resistance to it and its application internationally vis-a-vis political content. The removal of content that is critical of state leaders and elite interests from the internet threatens both the immediacy of this content's impact on public opinion and alters the stories that are created and retold from digital archives overtime. I argue that these developments are re-defining the role of the state in regards to enforcement of copyright law internationally, limiting the impact of social movement communications across geography and across time, and reflect a geopolitical contest for control over information resources.

Id: 13896

Title: Politicians-as-commodities: Instrumentalisation of political communication of Slovenian parties

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Dallas Smythe (1960) was amongst the first scholars emphasising how political candidates have been turned into commodities, with politics beginning to be consumed as entertainment. More than two decades later another key representative of political economy of communication approach, Herbert Schiller (1984, 117), similarly emphasised that political debate has been reduced to media advertisements and marketing messages. As he noted "candidates are 'sold' to the public, much like soap and automobiles." (Ibid.) Even though these issues have been identified, critical media and communication approaches have surprisingly dedicated less in-depth attention to them as one would expect. Issues of institutional communication of political actors remain confined to the more narrowly focused "Political Communication approach", where political marketing and selling of the programmes and politicians is more or less taken for granted, while a more holistic, historical and normative approach of political economy of communication with few exceptions (e.g. Sussman and Galizio 2003; Sussman 2005) largely remains missing.

The paper discusses the recent processes in institutional political communication and reinterprets the often discussed tendency towards the professionalisation of political communication to the overwhelming instrumentalisation of political life and its adoption of the commodity logic in public communication. As argued these tendencies are leading to the internalisation and normalisation of marketing techniques, political branding, and selling of political programmes and candidates.

The study proceeds from the perspective of critical theory and the political economy of communication, which provide a basis for a critique of instrumental reason and the ongoing commodification processes. The latter now encroach not only upon formally commodified relations and processes, but also change many other social institutions. The intensification of commodification, which has been part and parcel of "capitalism in expansion", has been so overwhelming that even social spheres that are formally based outside of capitalist social relations now in many ways mimic its operation.

In the empirical part, this theoretical basis is related to Slovenian institutional politics with the aim to analyse whether and in which ways instrumental reason and commodity logic have been adopted in the political communication of political parties in this small and peripheral political environment. Answers to the following two research questions are provided: Firstly, whether and in which ways (if any) the instrumental reason and commodity logic has been accepted, adopted,

internalised and normalised by political parties in a small and peripheral polity? And secondly, in which ways (if any) do the parties differ in their acceptance of the (apparent) 'rules of the game' of instrumentalised political communication? The study is based on semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted with key representatives of seven parliamentary and three extra-parliamentary Slovenian parties or groups. As demonstrated in the paper, the parties by and large internalised and naturalised the commodity logic present in political marketing and viewed it as commonsensical. They openly openly spoke about self-promotion, selling of the party and its programme, niche targeting and branding opportunities.

Id: 13905

Title: Data reuse by social media platforms and the alienation of users: integrating science and technology studies and political economy perspectives

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The proliferation of social media (e.g. Facebook) and online platforms (e.g. sharing economy) has led to an increased reuse and commodification of personal data. Strategies to increase and strengthen secondary use of data drive updates, changed privacy policies and company acquisitions. Despite public knowledge about this extended (re)use of data, users keep on using these services. The fact that Google revealed the merging of user data across all its separate services in 2012 or that Facebook announced to exchange user data between its 'family of apps' in 2015, has not stopped user growth. Hence we witness how the evolution of these technologies and the increased commodification of personal data has met little user resistance, despite privacy outcries.

We investigate this situation from a theoretical perspective, by applying the central Science and Technology Studies (STS) concepts of 'interpretative flexibility' (social construction of technology (Pinch & Bijker, 1984)) and 'irreversibilisation' (sociology of translation (Callon, 1991)). These notions are framed in a political economic perspective, where we identify social media as platforms to create ethical surplus (Arvidsson, 2005). By combining STS with political economy, we are able to show how the commodification of personal data on social media may not be hyper-exploitation (Fuchs, 2012) but a form of alienation, more aptly described in actor-network theory as 'treason', i.e. the point where an actor no longer behaves as expected (Callon, 1986).

The aim of the paper is to analyse the coercion and alienation of users via the technological development of data-driven platforms and services. For this we frame Facebook as an exemplary case to illustrate how the technological evolution of this platform consists of two phases: a first phase of irreversibilisation and a second phase commodification. We refer to irreversibilisation as the point where a platform becomes so central in other actor-networks that non-usage becomes more difficult than usage. Since social media, but also internet-of-things and smart city initiatives, remain in perpetual beta, they can add new actors any time. In a second phase the

actors that increase value are attracted to this network from as soon irreversibilisation is achieved for end-users. As a result, new actors can be added for further reuse of personal data.

The research questions are: (1) How can we apply the notion of interpretative flexibility to unfinished technologies? (2) How can we use the notion of irreversibilisation to refer to particular situations of social closure of a technology? (3) How can we use these STS concepts to identify sites of coercion and alienation of users via platform technologies and services?

In the conclusion we first problematize the concept of interpretative flexibility for technologies that are never truly finished. Second we illustrate the much needed integration of STS with political economy to better criticise what data driven corporations like Facebook and other social media platforms do in order to reuse personal data for more and more purposes.

Id: 13907

Title: Early control of distribution and exhibition of films in US Mexican-American markets: the case of Texas' border with Mexico, 1915-1960

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Despite an overwhelming majority of Mexican-Americans in the population of the major Texas border cities with Mexico, the distribution and exhibition of movies in them became under the control of major US state or national conglomerates very early in the history of cinema, with some notable exceptions. Original Latino, locally owned movie houses were bought or displaced by external groups like R&R Enterprises and Dent Theatres during the 1910s and 1920s, significantly decreasing the diversity of ownership and programming in Texan border towns where Mexican Americans represented between 70% and 95% of the total population.

During the early 1930s, with the advent of sound in films, the need for movies in Spanish motivated the opening of new independently owned theatres that would first show Spanish-language versions of Hollywood movies and later films from Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries. By the end of the 1930s, however, the same or new American state or regional chains would take control of border cinema venues again, even of those that would keep showing Mexican or Spanish-language films to the vast market of Mexican-Americans living on the US side of the border.

The paper, based on archival research, oral histories and published documents, discusses these historical developments and analyses their effects on the exhibition and scheduling of both Hollywood and Mexican films in cities like Brownsville, Laredo and El Paso, in terms of competition, diversity and programming strategies.

Id: 13915

Title: Behind the Lines: Press freedom and the security state

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper interrogates press coverage of the major US intelligence leaks in 2010 and 2013. Many of the revelations contained within these leaks pointed to widespread institutional corruption at the heart of the transatlantic security establishment. The media response has proved critical in shaping the nature of political and public debate in the aftermath of the leaks, on both sides of the Atlantic. The leaks therefore provide compelling test cases of the extent to which unauthorised disclosure and watchdog journalism can deliver on their accountability promise in the age of mass surveillance (as well as 'sousveillance').

The paper draws on post-doctoral research into the Wikileaks and Ed Snowden case studies, consisting of in-depth qualitative and quantitative content analyses and over 40 semi-structured interviews with editors, journalists and government insiders. The discussion presented here begins by critically examining the so-called 'new model of journalism' consisting in the analysis of mass data dumps and extraction of stories that characterised press responses to both sets of leaks. It then considers the data in a comparative context, with reference to the distinct cultural, structural and legal conditions that impact on mainstream press in the US and UK, with particular attention to the force of prior restraint laws in the latter.

Finally, we will interrogate the counter-narratives in the UK press that placed first the leaking platform (Wikileaks) and then the publisher (the Guardian newspaper) at the centre of the story. It will be argued that the immediacy and prominence with which these counter-narratives surfaced says something profound about the structural weaknesses of journalism, particularly when faced with the ideological defences of the national security state. The process and ways in which the story becomes 'de-legitimised' will be deconstructed with reference to the role of journalists as 'secondary definers' (Hall et al 1973) and as agents of ideological 'repair work' (Bennet et al 1986).

Id: 13933

Title: PUBLIC SUPPORT TO THE AUDIOVISUAL CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN BRAZIL: FIRST NOTES ABOUT THE PERCEPTIONS OF INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper aims to present the first results of a research project developed at the Federal University of Bahia, Brazil. The goal is to analyze the independent producers's perceptions about the Brazilian public support to the audiovisual production in order to better understand their evaluation about the role the State assigns to them. It involves a description of the selected producing companies profiles and the investigation of how their processes of creation/production are affected by public support actions on the sector. Public support to the audiovisual production in Brazil is based on a policy that takes diversity of producers as one of the cornerstones to strengthen the market and increase competition. This study selected independent producers located in Brazilian state of Bahia. They were asked about foment actions to the audiovisual production, implemented by the Brazilian federal government, in the last years. The Brazilian state selected is increasingly becoming one of most important audiovisual producing regions in country. The article's theoretical approach is based on the creative industries (Caves, 2000; Howkins, 2001; Florida, 2004); the political economy of communication (Garnham, 2005); and authors dedicated to the examination of audiovisual industries in Brazil (Ancine, 2013; Cannito, 2010; Machado, 2007; Simis; Marson, 2010). Methodological, the discussion presented in this paper was developed on two main procedures. First, a sample of Brazilian independent producing companies based in the state investigated was

selected. The selection base was the list of companies covered with resources from the Audiovisual Sector Found (Fundo Setorial do Audiovisual- FSA), main source of resources from Brazilian public support to the audiovisual, between 2013 and 2015. FSA integrates the structure of National Cinema Agency (Ancine). After this step, questionnaires were applied, and results were analyzed.

Id: 13953

Title: Politics and economics in national broadcasting - from cold war scarcity to market abundance. A UK case study, 1956 and 2003

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: There is arguably a tension between the IAMCR 2016 conference themes of memory and commemoration and the existing paradigms that characterise political economy research. The first appears to foreground the content and significance of cultural production, the second emphasises the determinative power of modes of economic production upon the content-producing industries. The weakness of the latter has often been seen as its inability to consider or evaluate meaning, significance and content in the cultural sector.

This proposal tries to side-step the theoretical and methodological discomfort suggested above by turning to an historical approach that tries to combine 'politics' and 'economics' with an interest in the kinds of meanings being made by national broadcasters at different historical moments. It is hoped that this comparative historical approach might generate results in analysing emblematic moments in the history of broadcasting in other countries where the primary concern is with broadcasters supported by or controlled by state institutions.

The first historical moment addressed by this paper is the period of 1955-56 when the BBC was negotiating the advent of its first television competitor (the creation of a new privately-owned and advertiser-funded TV network) and was confronted in the genre of news with the duty of reporting on the actions and objectives of a British Conservative government in their invasion of Egypt (the 'Suez Crisis'). Some commentators have suggested this was the first time that the BBC had pursued coverage that appeared independent from the declared foreign policy of the government of the day.

The second historical moment chosen here is 2003-4 when a British Labour government was, pursuing arguably neo-liberal economic goals as well as joining itself closely to American foreign policy. The two key factors here are the passing of the 2003 Communications Act and the invasion of Iraq. The reporting of the latter was to lead to an unprecedented resignation of both the Chair of the BBCs governing body and of its Director General.

These two studies, taken together, may lead us to a better understanding of the relative independence (or not) of cultural production in the context of what might otherwise be understood in relationship to the determining power of deep-rooted economic relations.
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Id: 13957

Title: (Re)mediated memories: Commemorating loss and pain through narratives of violence and displacement among minority Muslim communities in India

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Few nations have witnessed history quite like the way in which those in the South Asian sub-continent have – from centuries of invasion and occupation to contemporary struggles with national identity and questions of belonging. Intimately linked to this question of identity has been the question of belonging, particularly for members of minority communities. Through this paper I explore the ways in which members of displaced Muslim communities in Gujarat, India create spaces of articulation and animate their discourses of resistance as they struggle against the larger conspiracy of silence engineered by mainstream media and the forces of the nation state. It draws on an ethnographic field research and an oral history project that I conducted between 2013 and 2014 among the displaced Muslim communities in and around the city of Ahmedabad, in the western state of Gujarat.

Ironically, while historical and mediated accounts of the riots and communal violence exist, narratives of these lived experiences are largely absent. Having been granted unprecedented access into these "walled" (both literally and figuratively) communities, by virtue of having lived there and conversed at length with local residents, this ethnographic data yielded unprecedented insights into identity constructions by members of these displaced communities.

This paper also discusses the deep disconnect between mainstream media's biased and limited accounts and the community's own narratives of their lived experiences. These are participants whose lives have been irrevocably altered by the violence-induced displacement and migration within their own homeland, who continue to occupy the barely visible margins and are strategically exploited by power brokers. Included among them are older women who have, since these riots, lost means of livelihood and earning members of the family (one woman witnessed the murder of her only son); older and middle-aged men who have had to recreate their lives and rebuild their families and homes on multiple occasions; and younger folks who only know a world where stories of lost hope abound.

The aim of the ethnographic study was to explore the correlation between socio-economic factors, class-based politics and the strategic use of religion by power brokers across all political platforms to fuel dissatisfaction and dissent. Sentiments that have festered in the minds of a billion-plus population for over six and a half decades have now polarized the country into irreconcilable factions with deep-rooted mistrust toward each other, which in turn have framed

contemporary politics and provide future frameworks for the political economy of the nation.

Finally, this study raises significant questions about the politics of citizenship. How are questions of citizenship and belonging linked to the idea of the nation and the political economy of the nation-state? As citizens, what do we choose to commemorate about our past and what is left out of those remembrances of the past? How does the emergence of the self as citizen play out in the aftermath of the forced ghettoization of Muslim neighborhoods and growing Islamization within these displaced Muslim communities?

Id: 13968

Title: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INFOFLATION

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: A well-known distinction applies between types of information. Significant information-capital, securing profits and power is expensive and limited to few holders. Types of know-how f. ex. are patented by few, powerful and employed strategically. Overall, such empowering information does not circulate in mass-consumption information platforms. By contrast, mass-consumption-information platforms, such as most social media, provide contents which tend to be ephemeral, shallow, of low relevance or low informative value. This category is massively available, supplied by numerous sources, including individual internet posters. Such contents nowadays inundate our time and space, while claiming our fragmented attention.

In this paper, firstly, I introduce the concept of infoflation and secondly, I present the regime of infoflation which defies human nature and its vital necessities. Infoflation regime keeps growing, causing sustainability threats in the life of ordinary people, both materially and mentally. Namely, when people are flooded with redundant, often self-propelling information-bits, and they must unavoidably deal with them (e.g. spam), their quality of life deteriorates inevitably to a corresponding degree, often irreversibly.

In my approach of 'infoflation' analysis, I appreciate information as both vital and a fundamental resource. However, we need to recognize that information is an indispensable sine qua non capital, only when it comes in the right quality, the right quantity, proportion and timing. So, in trying to trace and depict the intricacies of such capital, I treat information as a means which can be likened to a currency. The term infoflation, -composed by 'information' and 'inflation'- becomes, thus, a tool for highlighting both web-derivative and web-specific sources of entropy and of social disorganization. Thus, my aim is to explain how and why redundant information and clichés tend to take over. I use the hybrid concept of 'infoflation' to capture and describe an already generalized twin problem: (a) rapid and vast increases in information quantities, combined with (b) rapid decreases in informative value• which constitutes a sui generis case of entropy. Diminution in the quantity of substance of the informative content deteriorates its quality and, subsequently its use value. Nonetheless, trends of 'over-pricing' and of evaluating excessively such redundant contents are being noticeable. Here, then, the relation between quantity and quality becomes crucial.

What are the consequences of this odd disease? They are multiple and operate at several levels. For instance, capturing and maintaining people's attention engaged with un-informative contents, leads to public awareness deficits, in crucial exchange categories, thereby fostering political ignorance problems. Hence, the disease of infoflation counteracts empowerment, through knowledge, which cannot be underestimated.

In sum, through this concept I hold that we can explore some intricate consequences and we can explain how the combination: of information plethora and of concurrent diminution of informative value produces a corrosive syndrome, which impacts negatively on material and existential co-ordinates, such as time and space integrity or mental coherence and memory retention. "Infoflation", is an ICT-endemic condition, affecting our symbolic, organizational and material life. Understanding its workings may help us diagnose degenerative trends of network-society and may help avert them.

Id: 13989

Title: The Political Economy of Digital Journalism: Discursive Capture, Market Ontology, and Corporate-Libertarian Mythologies

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Few would dispute that commercial journalism is in a state of crisis. As readers and advertisers migrate to the Internet, the dominant model for the commercial press system—advertising-dependent newspapers—is in a state of gradual collapse. Despite general consensus about the root cause of this decline, analyses of its implications and what should be done about it vary widely. Furthermore, techno-utopian and market-oriented discourses obscure many aspects of this political economy. For example, although the structural problems facing journalism are well known, the increasing casualization and precarity of digital news labor deserve closer attention.

Another under-studied problem is the rise of native advertising, a core feature of digital journalism's business model. While traditional advertising has often relied on disingenuous persuasion, the degree to which native advertising deploys deception by blurring the distinction between advertising and news content is deeply problematic. The increasing prevalence of this practice signals the end of the firewall that publishers have purportedly maintained for a century between news organizations' business and journalistic functions. Despite obvious perils, native advertising's dubious ethics has thus far escaped a thorough public hearing.

Using the American news media system as a case study, this paper will assess the quandaries that arise when journalism becomes so dependent on deceptive advertising and precarious labor. The paper also examines "disruptive innovation" and other ideologically-laden tropes that obfuscate the social problems that digital journalism both masks and perpetuates. More specifically, this study examines the "market ontology" that seeps into the master categories that define what journalism is and what it should be in a democratic society. I conclude with a discussion of two vital arguments that can intervene against the pervasive corporate libertarianism now coloring discourses around journalism's future. One argument rests on democratic theory, especially the case for codifying positive freedoms. The other argument rests on economic theory, especially that of public goods and market failure. Both arguments suggest that journalism should not be reduced to market values; instead, normative considerations must be brought back into the discussion about journalism's future.

Id: 13991

Title: Ownership Orientation and Editorial Content: A Case Study

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Media Political Economists routinely assert that concentration of media ownership is harmful for democracy because it undermines media pluralism, thus limiting the diversity of voices/opinions in the public sphere. Although the emergence of online media promised to decentralize the power to control access to the public sphere, in practice, even search engine and social media markets are characterized by concentration of ownership.

In February 2016, the publication of results from the European Commission-funded Media Pluralism Monitor project which looked at threats to media pluralism across the EU28 suggested that two decades of broadly deregulatory media policy-making at both an EU and member state level, has been followed by a measurable increase in concentration. In consequence the Monitor concluded that the risk to media pluralism across the EU has increased.

However, of its nature, the Monitor can only identify potential threats (i.e. risks) to pluralism. It does not systematically identify specific examples whereby media owners have expressly sought to shape the editorial content of their media outlets. Strikingly, there has been relatively little empirical work in this area. This is in part because it is difficult subject to research: journalists and editors routinely refute any assertion that media owners seek to exert editorial influence. It is commonly asserted adherence to professional journalistic standards would automatically ensure that journalists would in any case ignore attempts to exert such influence.

Nonetheless the question remains as to whether media ownership influences editorial content either explicitly or via more tacit editorial understandings of ownership preferences.

By definition, overt interference would be hard to identify - such attempts, if they were to occur, are unlikely to leave a historical record via written communications. Meanwhile tacit understandings, by definition, cannot leave an obvious trace.

This research reports the results of a study conducted for the European Parliament. It seeks to address the lack of empirical data on the relationship between media ownership and editorial content by analyzing a sample of Irish print and broadcast content. The research takes three case studies of media coverage of public controversies in which Irish media owners played a prominent role. These include:

o   Denis O'Brien, owner of the largest share in Independent News and Media and both national commercial stations in Ireland.

o   RTE, the state-owned Public Service Broadcaster.

o   The Irish Times, a broadsheet daily owned under a Trust structure.

In each case study, the research uses content analysis to code the nature and extent of this coverage with a particular focus on how the media owners are represented. The research specifically seeks to identify whether or not there are significant and persistent distinctions in how media owners are represented in/on media outlets which they own and in how they are represented in stories from independent media outlets. The coverage is blind-coded to avoid coder bias. Ultimately, the results will allow the researchers to move beyond merely positing risks to media pluralism and to definitively establish whether media ownership is a key factor in determining media content.

Id: 14064

Title: Toward a History of Communication as Capital

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In this paper, I outline a political-economic history of communication as a history of communication as capital. I proceed from a political-economic perspective that sees the foundation of the business of media as the ability to channel and capitalize on audience activities. I conceptualize those activities as a kind of labor: audience labor, as a labor of signification. I argue that the development of media and cultural industries has involved a history of efforts to create the means to channel and capitalize on audience activities, as this is the fundamental means of capitalizing on communication. The history of these efforts is the core history of what I here term the capitalist mode of communicative production. I argue that this history of capitalizing on communication has been as aspect of the overall history of the capitalist mode of production from the beginning.

This outline of a history of communication as capital describes three key moments that illustrate how the history of communication has been, in part, a history of channeling audience activity and extracting value from the audience labor of signification. This first moment is the development of copyright in England and the passing of the Statute of Anne in 1710. The creation of modern copyright is described as creating a legal basis for capitalizing on audience labor by creating a legal system of property rights over the object of that labor: printed material that was read. Copyright created the first means of extracting value from audience activities buy forcing potential readers to pay the copyright holder for access to printed material. That material was not legally available for consumption otherwise. The second moment is the commercialization of newspapers in the nineteenth century. Here, I consider the U.S. case. The increasing reliance on advertising as a source of revenue for newspaper owners is described as the creation of a second means of extracting value from audience labor: an indirect process of lending space to advertisers who pay for that space and then attempt to affect the signifying process of readers through their advertisements. The third moment is the development of commercial broadcasting, again looking at the U.S. case. This process is examined as a significant development of the capitalist mode of communicative production beyond print media (though not the only such development) but one that continued the process of capitalizing on communication by channeling audience activities and extracting value in the process. Controlling the electromagnetic spectrum, transforming radios into receivers (or, instruments of consumption), and lending air time to advertisers are examined as key aspects.

Id: 14123

Title: Learning from Magna Park: spaces of capital hidden in generic landscapes.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: One way to understand the aggressions and fluctuations of capital as they occur in everyday life is to begin with the disassociation between the gratifying moment of unboxing a new commodity and all the productive and logistic forces that brought it into one's hands. This paper is a study in opacities, disjunctions and invisibilities by looking at the generic landscapes of infrastructure sites in the West Midlands (UK).

According to Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift 'nearly every urban practice is becoming mediated by code', and there is a rich stream of interdisciplinary research combining urban communications, geography, and cultural and social theory, such as Rob Kitchin's work, that seeks to ascertain the socio-spatial processes of these practices. The fact that it is necessary to declare the importance of data flows and digital processing in urban space should direct our attention to a key dynamic—that our everyday landscapes, connected to social imaginaries, are usually disconnected from actual circumstances, and that this mismatch is not exactly innocent or merely outmoded but rather a political construction. Research that encompasses network forms and emergent urban space seeks to connect the material to the virtual whether through new materialism and/or geographical frameworks. My paper shares aspects of research that brings online and offline together, and connects online shopping with networked supply chains, yet with a particular insistence: that the gap between the ostensible city and digital infrastructure is itself a socio-spatial process of contemporary capitalism, and is connected to larger fields of distortions obscuring systems of production and exploitation.

The paper is based on ethnographic studies I am developing on logistic sites in the West Midlands, including Magna Park (Europe's largest distribution site), Minworth industrial park and the area around Birmingham airport and the NCC. In particular I am looking at how these sites fall outside the optics of conventional political sites. Neither urban nor rural, and within Post-Fordism zones that lies outside of the typical landscapes associated with production and struggle, these sites that are absolutely central to contemporary capitalism yet are effectively hidden in plain sight. I will be examining this tendency though an analysis of a generic aesthetic in utility constructions, unmarked compounds, corrugated metal sheds, tidy landscaping and perimeter fences. These normally unremarkable visual qualities have carry high stakes in the way their opacity and banality escapes scrutiny even though much of this built environment is on a monumental scale.

I will also be examining a temporal dimension of these logistic sites which function within the ideal of the continual present – these warehouses and logistical components are quickly constructed, modified and can be easily dismantled. As such, they seldom appear old, and in fact,

present a scene outside the usual passage of time. In this way the gap between the space/time of familiar social landscapes and these logistic sites is heighten. Contemporary capitalism operates through such disjunctions, and the objective here is to expose these workings.