Review of News on the Internet

Information and Citizenship in the 21st Century, by Tewksbury and Rittenberg

Jensen, Klaus Bruhn

Book reviews

John Downey and Sabina Mihelj (eds), *Central and Eastern European Media in Comparative Perspective: Politics, Economy and Culture*, Ashgate: Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT, 2012; 212 pp.: £ 49.50

Reviewed by: Péter Bajomi-Lázár, *Oxford University, UK/Budapest Business School, Hungary*

Since *Comparing Media Systems* came out in 2004 and mapped how political systems had shaped media systems in the 'Western' world (Hallin and Mancini, 2004), a number of edited volumes partly or fully dedicated to assessing how the Central and Eastern European countries fit into Daniel C Hallin and Paolo Mancini's analytical framework have been published (e.g. Dobek-Ostrowska and Głowacki, 2008; Dobek-Ostrowska et al., 2010, Jakubowicz and Sükösd, 2008a; see also Hallin and Mancini, 2012). While the widely held view is that the former communist states are closest to the polarized pluralist model, i.e. the media there have undergone 'Italianization' (Splichal, 1994) or 'Berlusconisation' (Wyka, 2007) after the political transformations of 1989–1991, it is increasingly acknowledged that – despite obvious similarities in their recent histories – major differences prevail across them, best described as 'multiple post-communisms' (Jakubowicz and Sükösd, 2008b).

One of the obvious questions to ask then is what explains differences across the media landscapes of the former communist countries? *Central and Eastern European Media in Comparative Perspective*, edited by John Downey and Sabina Mihelj, suggests that differences in these countries' media systems are explained, among other things, by the size and wealth of domestic economies, a factor whose weight may have been understated in Hallin and Mancini's influential book. Along these lines, several contributors to the volume find correlations between various economic and media systems indicators. For example, Colin Sparks observes that 'in situations of intense competition, it is common-place for enterprises to seek political support', i.e. weaker economies may be responsible for higher levels of politicization and partisanship (p. 59), while Downey argues that 'media firms will be usually unwilling to invest large sums in relatively small markets', which explains why transnational companies are more likely to invest in, and to bring their know-how to, big countries such as Poland rather than small ones (p. 118), and Václav Štětka notes that 'the more wealth is being generated . . . the more resources are available to be invested in higher quality production', including domestic television programmes responsive to domestic audiences' needs (p. 187).

It would, however, be misleading to suggest that Downey and Mihelj's volume is just another attempt to fine-tune the Hallin and Mancini model. The book aspires to go far beyond that. As the editors state in their introductory remarks, 'in this volume, we focus on clarifying media's relationships with politics, economy and culture, and with respect to the latter, we pay attention primarily to ethno-cultural diversity and gender relations' (p. 6). In line with this objective, each of the contributors focuses on a different variable that may explain why the media are as they are in Central and Eastern Europe. They also theorize on a number of conceptual issues such as what may be the unit of analysis when comparing highly complex media systems.

Karol Jakubowicz maps how various constitutional arrangements and election systems co-vary with different levels of media freedom, while also demonstrating that media freedom is frequently undermined by political elites' values and behaviours; in other words, it is not media regulation per se but its implementation, often flawed by domestic political elites' short-term interests, that matters. He observes that public service broadcasters' boards and regulatory authorities, because of their appointment mechanisms, 'are a direct extension of the political power structure' and are frequently instrumentalized as a means of party patronage, allowing for the extraction of public resources for private ends (p. 28ff.).

While Jakubowicz focuses on political systems indicators, Sparks, Downey and Štětka, as already noted, discuss economic factors. Sparks studies how weak national economies and large inequalities in revenues in the region had favoured advertising in television (i.e. mass advertising) rather than newspapers (i.e. niche advertising), which has ultimately lead to the concentration of ownership in the markets of print publications. Downey uses the concept of 'mimetic institutional isomorphism', arguing that on the uncertain media markets of Central and Eastern Europe multinational investors have adopted business models that had been successful elsewhere, which, because of the ensuing rise of apolitical and politically moderate outlets, has had a mitigating impact on party political pluralism and the emergence of fully-fledged polarized pluralist systems. Štětka contrasts theories of 'cultural imperialism' and 'cultural proximity', i.e. the predominance of American vs domestically produced content with regard to audiovisual flows in the former communist countries, and demonstrates that, contrary to fears from 'Dallasification' voiced in the aftermath of the political transformation when commercial broadcasting was introduced, prime-time television in most of Central and Eastern Europe is now dominated by European and domestic programmes.

Sabina Mihelj looks into how countries in Central and Eastern Europe respond to ethno-cultural diversity, and challenges the view underlying much of the comparative literature that the nation-state is the most valid unit of analysis. She distinguishes between 'segmented' and 'integrated' media systems (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Macedonia vs Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland), while also noting that most countries constitute hybrid systems comprising elements of both. She finds that larger minority populations within a country are more likely to sustain commercially viable media of their own, which is conducive to the establishment of segmented media systems – unless faced with massive popular prejudices or having low purchasing power.

As regards the role of the nation-state in comparative analyses, a similar argument is put forward by Mojca Pajnik, who discusses gender inequalities as both a reason for and

an outcome of biased media representation. She notes that women are underrepresented in that, among other things, they occupy lower rank jobs than men in the media and the experts interviewed in the news are predominantly male.

Alison Harcourt argues that, despite evident similarities with the polarized pluralist model, the former communist countries also resemble the liberal model, which she explains with reference to the strong presence of US lobby groups in the field of media policy making, due to these countries' economic weakness and their resulting susceptibility to pressure. Harcourt also suggests that 'government efforts to control private media have largely been unsuccessful. Political influence can be seen to be minimal as a consequence' (pp. 145–146). This view, however, is shared by few analysts and journalists in the region (see Czepek et al., 2009), and is also challenged by Freedom House data, which show that most of Central and Eastern Europe is lagging behind most of Western Europe in terms of media freedom (Freedom House, 2012).

Central and Eastern European Media in Comparative Perspective is a comprehensive and thought-provoking book. It offers a predominantly descriptive and explanatory approach to Central and Eastern European media landscapes with a hint of normative assessment every now and then, and the contributors introduce new perspectives into the comparative study of media systems on the basis of solid, but mostly secondary, empirical data. The critical reader may, perhaps, be missing two further factors that are not considered in this excellent book, including the geographic proximity of the various former communist countries to the 'West' and the size of their populations, both of which may possibly have an impact on some media systems indicators, including, among other things, the volume of transnational media investments and the level of media freedom.

One may also note that comparative approaches to media are preoccupied with *spatial comparisons*, while *temporal comparisons* are much less frequent in the academic literature. However, media systems in Central and Eastern Europe have undergone major changes over the past two decades, which changes also call for an explanation. One may wonder, for example, what may have caused the recent decline in the level of media freedom, which process, surprisingly, began right after many of the former communist countries joined the European Union in the mid-2000s.

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James Curran, Natalie Fenton and Des Freedman, *Misunderstanding the Internet*, Routledge: Abingdon, 2012; 208pp.; £23.99

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In this book, three prominent UK media scholars come together to offer a critique of the role of the internet in society in terms of its relation to democracy, power, resistance and the public sphere, and to outline their own set of proposals for its future regulation.

The overall argument of the book is a call to quell technologically deterministic accounts of the internet with a political economic account of its social context and the ways in which the technology is constituted by its design, funding, regulation and use. Each author has two chapters in which to make this case with regard to different aspects of the internet: James Curran's chapters reassess the history of the internet so far in terms of its impact on society and democracy; Des Freedman's focus on its control and regulation; and Natalie Fenton's discuss social media and radical politics; while a co-written conclusion doubles as an introduction to the book's structure and a manifesto for media reform and the public interest regulation of the internet.

Taking issue with technologically centred predictions about the transformative potential of the internet, Curran begins the book with a refutation of four general claims (made for the most part in the 1990s) about how the technology would change society by examining them in light of examples that show how, in practice, 'different contexts produce different outcomes' (p. 25). He argues, first, that the internet has failed to transform the economy because the 'underlying dynamics of unequal competition that make for corporate concentration remain unchanged' (p. 179). Second, that it has failed to promote global understanding or lead inexorably to the formation of an international public opinion because its influence is 'filtered through the structures and processes of society' (pp. 9, 179), a society which is as unequal as it is affected by state (p. 11) and market (p. 49) censorship. Third, that it has failed to revitalize democracy because both its energizing of activism from below and its provision of e-government from above are fettered by political disaffection, the weakened democratic power of nation-states and the unaccountability of transnational corporations in deregulated global markets (p. 17). And finally, that it has failed to augur a renaissance in journalism because incumbent news organizations have taken advantage of the internet to extend their domination across technologies (pp. 19, 179).

Curran then gives an account of the history of the internet, from the pre-market phase of its military and scientific beginnings in the US, through the influence of the counterculture movement and the European public service tradition, to the current phase of global antagonism between commercialization and state censorship (p. 197). Curran's intention is to offer a revisionist version of internet history that takes into account the less idealistic and non-western trajectories of its more recent evolution (p. 35). Among summaries of the internet's technical development, the military logic behind its non-hierarchical network structure, the scientific community's formative influence on the openness and reciprocity of networking protocols and Tim Berners-Lee's public-spirited (and publicly funded) development of the world wide web at CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research), Curran makes a point of emphasizing the less familiar role of state sponsorship in subsidizing the research and development of the fledgling US computer industry, and state shepherding of the public internet to market with the lifting of the ban on its commercial use in 1991 and its ultimate privatization in 1995 (p. 37). Although the commercialization of the internet may have seemed initially to extend the benefits of this open public space by making it more user-friendly, Curran argues that the US state-coordinated marketization of the internet has served over time to detract from its fundamental nature (p. 41) and limit its emancipatory potential (p. 42), introducing economic and metadata controls and new technologies of surveillance into what is now a predominantly commodified space (p. 45).

While this 'chronicle of contradiction' (p. 48) has led to a struggle (most visibly in the West) between a commercial regime and the open source movement, more recent instances of state censorship (particularly in the East) have reminded us that the internet is far from uncontrollable (pp. 49–50). Rebuffing claims that the Arab Spring was a social media revolution, for instance, Curran prefers to emphasize instead the ability of those states under threat (as well as China and Iran) to monitor citizens via the internet and to even shut down internet access within their territorial borders. Ultimately, Curran's objective is to demonstrate that both market censorship (corporate concentration, commercial surveillance and strengthened intellectual property law) and state censorship (restrictive licensing, state surveillance and the ability to pull the plug) are now undermining the freedom many celebratory accounts promised of the internet (p. 59), while the commonsensical distinction between state and market may not be as clear-cut or as epistemologically useful as it may at first seem.

Implicit in such celebratory accounts (whether commercial, journalistic, academic or political) of the transformative potential of the internet is a free market model with which Freedman takes issue in his section of the book, arguing that self-regulation amounts to little more than corporate regulation, and highlighting the social and economic distortions brought about by a laissez-faire approach, even in the supposedly separate sphere of open access (p. 180). Despite the rhetorical bifurcation of the internet between the commodified and proprietorial sphere of the capitalist marketplace, and the non-commodified and non-proprietorial sphere of the open source commons, Freedman emphasizes the blurred boundary between the two (p. 83), insisting, drawing upon the work of Christian Fuchs (2009), that their dialectical entanglement involves always the latter's subsumption by the former (p. 84). Pointing out that much of what seems free is actually paid for at another point of entry (p. 81), either by 'us as consumers' or by

others buying information about 'us as commodities', he qualifies the participatory potential of the active prosumer with the coincidence of the simultaneously cost-effective generation of content *by* prosumers *for* corporate others (pp. 82–83), reminding us that the premise of 'wikinomics' is 'to use the principles of open source in order to invigorate and renew market institutions' (p. 83). As the authors of that particular treatise argue, 'without the commons, there could be no private enterprise' (Tapscott and Williams, 2008, cited p. 83). Far from constituting a threat to corporations or offering an alternative to a market model based on private property, therefore, open source and peer-to-peer production actually constitute a challenge to corporations to increase productivity and achieve growth by learning how to incorporate collaborative principles into the pre-existing model of the self-regulated market (p. 84).

They also constitute a challenge to the liberal democratic governments around the world that uphold this model (p. 103). Despite recent examples of governments reasserting their sovereignty over the administration of the internet, often via complex governance structures that combine market liberalism with state supervision (p. 113), they continue to rely on legal and economic arrangements that remain prone to corporate takeover and that lack any engagement with public interest, citizenship or democracy (p. 109). Instead of serving the interests of the public at large, 'governments, supranational bodies [and] large . . . companies have sought agreement on terms of trade and custom and practice that best serve them' (p. 183). Freedman therefore argues for the normative retrieval of the democratic state as guarantor of the public interest (pp. 97–98). The internet is not, however, the first technological system to serve both public and private interests. Indeed, Freedman foregrounds the continuities between the regulation of the internet and the 're-regulation' of 'legacy media', such as broadcasting and the press, which have also seen their capacity to serve the public interest compromised by the market (p. 116), and where arguments for public interest regulation, independent of both commercial and governmental interests, have had varied impact on public policy.

But what about the extent to which online participation *feels* emancipatory and democratic to the individual users? Arguing against media-centric accounts of social media that obscure the complexity of power relations in society, and that a focus on communication-led sociality serves only to further inscribe the neoliberal production and marketization of the individualized self, Fenton aims to offer an alternative account of communicational life and the producer/consumer destabilization that resists succumbing to media fetishism (pp. 124–125). She argues that the automatic commodification of content generated by the participation of individually autonomous users as consumer profiles demonstrates how digital citizens are far from being socially or politically autonomous of capital (pp. 128–131). That, despite the potential offered by social media for counter-expression, particularly within authoritarian regimes (p. 132), the expansion of mediated space has coincided not with a more general expansion of the public sphere, but with a diminishing range of content, a reduction in areas for public deliberation and a marginalization of dissent (p. 131). That moments of individual creativity are nevertheless framed by powerful media actors in a market-dominated culture (p. 135) which remains disconnected from institutions of power (p. 136). And that despite offering a new level of monitorial democracy, social media's efficacy as a watchdog holding power to account is undermined by the privileging of speed over fact-checking, by the fact that

an open internet also provides authority with a greater means of spying on its citizens, and by the internet's inability to transcend the neoliberal power structure from which it is formed (pp. 136–139).

In evaluating the 'radical collective possibilities of online political mobilisation' (p. 149) beyond the communicative realm of the connected individual, she finds fault as much with the Habermasian account of political dissipation as with the unreflexive praise of multiplicity. Offering a more concrete, political economic critique of, for instance, the 'connections between Google, Facebook, Twitter, the US State Department and Movements.org' (p. 157), she warns against the self-defeating emphasis on autonomy ('an individualistic politics') and multiplicity ('a liberal tolerance of difference') to the extent that its illusion of direct control actually comforts users into inaction (p. 170).

Although perhaps liberatory for the individual, Fenton insists that networks are not always democratizing for society. Social media, she argues, are more about the individual than the collective, the consumer rather than the citizen, and leisure more than political communication (p. 180). While networked communication expands possibilities for contestation, it simultaneously embeds the interests of the powerful 'ever more deeply into the ontology of the political', diverting attention away from corporate influence and access to decision-making structures (p. 142). Fenton's argument is that social media's capacity to contribute towards a cultural or social public sphere does not extend to a capacity to form a political one. While the communication of injustice or inequality may express and articulate the dynamics of political environments and increase the prospects of change, it is not enough, she argues, to recast or regenerate the structures that uphold these environments (p. 143) or tackle the transformation of the political and economic system itself (p. 164).

Only activities conducted on an internet regulated according to public interest criteria could do that. But the authors argue that, having long been regulated 'by governments, markets, code and communities' (p. 181), the internet is now at a critical moment at which its collaborative and communicative potential is in danger of being enclosed and privatized. They thus advocate in their conclusion what Costas Lapavitsas has called 'market-negating regulation'; that is, regulation which serves the public at large, as opposed to the 'market-conforming regulation', which is little more than the compromise reached between powerful public and private interests (pp. 182–183). To achieve this, they propose a series of redistributive public interventions, such as: the prioritizing of an increase in sources of information over an increase in speed; infrastructures constructed as public utilities for citizens; the protection of open public spaces; the public funding of sites to deal with major issues of public concern; and the circulation of content on networks regulated in the public interest (pp. 183–184). These interventions are to be performed by publicly accountable bodies established at arm's length from the state, publicly funded, in the spirit of the proposed Tobin Tax on global financial transactions, by taxes and levies on private communications businesses (they refer to this as the Cerf Tax, in honour of Vince Cerf, one of the 'fathers of the internet'). After all, if there is agreement that an open internet is a priority, they argue, then that 'those who are benefiting from the demand for information and communication [should] make a full contribution to building and supporting such an environment' (p. 184).

While these proposals could have been fleshed out a bit further for the more practically minded policy scholar, the historian of media regulation might be more interested to hear about how such proposals for the regulation of the internet (and such critiques of the internet's role in society) differ from those proposals and critiques that have already been written about by (these and other) political economists with regard to other media. A sceptic, finding the arguments outlined in the book all too familiar, may argue that, in their efforts to distance themselves from technologically deterministic accounts of the internet, the authors have hindered their appreciation of the ways in which this particular medium is distinctive from broadcasting and the press. Or one could argue the opposite and criticize the implication that the privileging of speed over fact-checking, for instance, is somehow unique to the internet, when this has been a problem a long time in the making and one only exacerbated by technological advances. Other readers may be disappointed that this book fails to transcend the debate between those accounts that hail the emancipatory potential of the internet, and those that critique its capacity for neoliberal capture. Nevertheless, Curran, Fenton and Freedman manage in this short introduction to the internet to offer not only a comprehensive overview of the literature in both camps, but also a unique contribution to the latter that culminates in a timely and coherent call to arms for regulatory reform.

Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith and Joes Segal (eds), *Divided Dreamworlds? The Cultural Cold War in East and West*, Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam, 2012; vii + 238pp.: US$45.00

Reviewed by: Gleb Tsipursky, *The Ohio State University, USA*

Recognizing the crucial role played by the cultural front of the Cold War, scholars such as Ted Hopf, Nicholas Cull, Kristin Roth-Ey, Anne Gorsuch, William Risch, Sergei Zhuk, and many others have recently shed much light on this issue. Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith, and Joes Segal make a signal contribution to this field in their edited volume, which emerged from a 2008 conference in Utrecht. This book constitutes one among several recent edited volumes exploring the cultural Cold War, for instance by Sari Autio-Sarasmo and Katalin Miklossy, by György Péteri, and by Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zuchman. Such publications have provided an invaluable forum for cutting-edge research on the cultural elements of the Cold War.

The introduction to the volume, written by Giles Scott-Smith and Joes Segal, deserves praise for laying out the major themes clearly and cogently. Apparently, the book's unusual title of 'divided dreamworlds' comes from Walter Benjamin's use of 'dreamworlds' to describe how individuals use fantasies, stories, and beliefs to create meaning and relevance out of the chaos of the world around them. The socialist and capitalist blocs, the editors argue, constituted collective dream projects, with each building their own dreamworld; both extended the promise to break decisively with and go beyond the dark moments of the past, instead offering true freedom, full equality, social harmony, and universal happiness in the upcoming future.

The editors explain that 'dreamworld' as a concept serves a particularly useful function by highlighting the fact that although both the socialist and capitalist dream projects had extensive support from 'dream communities' within each bloc that shared the

mainstream stories and beliefs promoted by the authorities, plenty of others diverged, to some degree, from these dream projects. They constructed their own, alternative interpretations, which included not only direct political dissent, but to a much greater extent cultural nonconformism: while each system tried to claim all artistic and intellectual production within itself as emblematic of its successful accomplishments, plenty of cultural production contradicted the essential dream project of each bloc. Using the term 'dreamworld' also helps the editors convey the evolution of cultural and social structures over time, owing to internal and external developments alike. Likewise, this notion underscores that the two collective dream projects had substantial connections and interchanges, whether through collaborative cultural exchanges arranged by organizations on both sides of the Iron Curtain or through cultural diplomacy that the government of each bloc aimed at the other. All this undermines the traditional view of the Cold War in terms of stark opposition between two large, cohesive, and monolithic blocs that expressed their own unified and intractable interpretation of the world and opposed the claims made by each other, and manufactured wholesale consensus among their citizenry by soft and hard power alike.

The overarching points made in the introduction are thoroughly persuasive. However, the use of the notion of 'dreamworlds' as a heuristic tool of analysis is less so. After all, other recent scholarship has successfully demonstrated that both capitalist and socialist authorities sought to manufacture domestic consensus and ensure legitimacy for their own thought systems through soft and hard power strategies; that significant portions of the populations within these blocs did not feel fully committed to this consensus; that perspectives and identities evolved over time; and that the capitalist and socialist blocs interacted extensively with each other. Furthermore, speaking of capitalism and socialism as collective dream projects poses the risk of obscuring some of the differences between how the blocs sought to achieve domestic consensus and legitimacy. The socialist effort to do so was significantly more top-down, centralized, cohesive, state-driven, and deployed on extensive censorship; the capitalist one was more decentralized, less top-down and cohesive, involved extensive collaborations between the government, non-governmental organizations, and market forces, and relied substantially less on government censorship and more on pervasive media presence. Any analysis needs to consider such structural dissimilarities systematically, as they contributed to the varying shape of Cold War cultures in the socialist and capitalist blocs.

Such criticism should not detract from the entirely legitimate underlying points made by the editors, or from the essays included in this volume. Most are of high quality, but limited space permits me to discuss only a few. Christine Varga-Harris examine how families moved into new apartments during the Khrushchev house-building campaign launched in the mid-1950s. Varga-Harris links the understanding of 'home' across the Iron Curtain, illustrating how this concept combined the triumphs of modern technology with the traditional sense of domesticity, while being ideologically charged in both the socialist and capitalist settings alike. She demonstrates convincingly that the Soviet state intended the provision of new housing on a mass scale to illustrate the success of the USSR in implementing the promises of the upcoming communist utopia in daily life, making 'housing construction and communist advancement' serve as 'fundamental aspects of the housewarming narrative' (p. 151).

On a related topic, Natalie Scholz and Milena Veenis compare East and West German interior design, finding some fascinating similarities in how professional decorators in both countries during the 1950s–1960s promoted modernist interiors, meaning relatively unadorned, spacious, with clear lines and much light. Despite the commonalities of these messages, interior design experts set their recommendations within the context of their respective ideological frameworks, with the West German ones praising modernist designs as denoting a break with the national socialist past and the East German decorators presenting modernist interiors as a departure from capitalist kitsch. Both sets of experts experienced difficulties persuading consumers to adopt these new guidelines.

Two insightful essays on Yugoslavia explore its role as a cultural mediator. Sabina Mihelj portrays Yugoslav cultural production from the mid-1950s as having a hybrid character that spanned cultural elements from both blocs. Yugoslav cultural producers and officials sought to forge a new type of culture, a 'third way' between the capitalist market-dominated system and the socialist model of government-controlled cultural production. Yugoslavia, as Mihelj persuasively illustrates, indicates that the cultural conflict of the Cold War allowed a wide scope for local alternatives and variations; still, she points out that the Cold War binaries mattered in the sense that they 'provided the ideological blueprints of institutional forms and practices', defining the borders of the broad frame of reference for Cold War cultures (p. 113). Her findings link well to my own research on Soviet jazz musicians, which similarly indicated that the Cold War's cultural competition opened up some room for negotiation and grassroots agency even within the heart of the Soviet superpower, while simultaneously setting limits on permissible cultural expression.

Dean Vuletic extends Mihelj's analysis by focusing on the Yugoslav use of popular music as a soft power instrument. 'Yugoslavia's geopolitical position permitted its cultural products and workers to traverse the boundaries of the blocs in a privileged manner', enabling the authorities to assert a unique position as a mediator between the blocs (p. 130). Yugoslavia exported its western-style cultural products to other socialist states, playing a westernizing role that was similar to that which Risch and Zhuk found about the way Poland conveyed western cultural influence to the USSR.

Also dealing with musical cultural diplomacy, Harm Langenkamp offers a fascinating insight on continuities between the Cold War and recent events. He explores the Bush administration's post-9/11 endeavor to have the State Department sponsor the Silk Road Ensemble, a musical collaboration embodying the idea of a harmonious global community unified around the western liberal values of freedom, tolerance, integration, and mutual understanding, one that left no space for any conflicting interpretations. The Silk Road Ensemble project, Langenkamp insightfully notes, brings to mind the Eisenhower administration's mid-1950s strategies to use musical cultural diplomacy to promote the American system and oppose the Soviet one.

Other chapters include Nathan Abrams' description of how both blocs related to Arthur Miller's works in nuanced ways; William DeJong-Lombert's study of the complex attitude in the US and UK toward the Soviet attack on genetics; Jill Bugajski's exploration of the way that a key Polish avant-garde artist, Tradeusz Kantor, proved capable of negotiating the Iron Curtain and gaining fame in socialist and capitalist blocs alike; Marsha Siefert's examination of Soviet and western collaborative film productions; Annette

Vowinckel's contribution on civil aviation, and specifically skyjacking; and finally, Justinian Jampol's study of the post-1989 use of East German material objects as both artifacts of political memory construction and as scholarly sources.

Overall, this volume provides a valuable addition to recent works that reassess the cultural Cold War between the blocs, complementing and extending the current wave of historiography that offers a more nuanced and richer understanding of Cold War domestic cultures and international cultural interchange. It thus constitutes required reading for anyone interested in the Cold War, in Soviet and Eastern European history, in diplomatic and international history, and in modern European and American history. Owing to its relatively affordable price, it can be fruitfully adopted in advanced undergraduate and graduate courses on the above-listed themes.

David Tewksbury and Jason Rittenberg, *News on the Internet: Information and Citizenship in the 21st Century*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2012; 197 pp.: £13.99

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For anyone tiring of constant utopian as well as dystopian hype concerning the internet as a democratic resource, this volume provides a carefully balanced overview of previous findings and insights and, thus, a solid ground for further research and future debates. From the outset, the authors recognize that, 'We cannot say, in the end, whether the internet is good or bad for publics and politics' (p. 17). Also, despite the fact that the conditions of news delivery have changed fundamentally over the last 20 years, they approach the field with the understanding that 'the internet is far more an integrated and evolutionary medium than an autonomous and revolutionary system' (p. 40). The key question addressed by Tewksbury and Rittenberg is whether and how the internet may serve to inform and enhance citizenship in practice in the long run.

Focusing on the interaction between audiences and the internet, the book takes up classic issues of how information circulates in society, and how citizens receive, respond to and act on this information for various political purposes. On the demand side, it bears repeating that audiences have rather limited time and financial resources to spend on the news. As noted by Herbert J Gans many years ago with particular reference to the national level: 'Many people could carry on their lives without national news; and in any event, their need for it is not often urgent. Yet at the same time, people seem to want national news' (Gans, 1979: 226). On the supply side, the book discusses how economic crises have entailed cutbacks in traditional news organizations in recent years, inevitably affecting the scope of journalistic content. This is not to deny the value of user-generated content and citizen blogs, a broader range of public opinion, or items beyond classic conceptions of 'news' and 'politics', only to note that the overall quality of the available information – its topical diversity and political relevance – depends, to a significant degree, on the resources of established journalistic organizations.

Among the central issues reviewed are the differences between online and offline news, not least when it comes to the news that audiences actually seek out and select. While findings remain mixed, one recurring implication is that, despite the wealth of

specialized sources of information online, 'there is not much evidence of internet news users taking advantage of the medium's capabilities to limit their news exposure to a small number of news sources' (p. 97). Also the larger worry – that 'knowledge and opinion are fragmenting and/or polarizing' in the digital media environment – receives little support in the reviews, even if the authors cautiously note that the uncertainty, to a large extent, 'stems from a lack of research' tracking forms of communication that are recent additions to the general landscape of news and citizenship (p. 143). The volume, thus, cautions against simply assuming that new forms of production and delivery will result in new forms of reception and use. Also, in another respect, studies suggest that internet use is subject to mechanisms familiar from mass communication, for example, knowledge gaps, so that 'more knowledgeable individuals are more likely to find online news . . . and more likely to search for additional information' (p. 116). New media are subject to old processes of social structuration.

The devil is in the detail, also online and in internet studies. Among the examples cited here is the role of Twitter as a source of news – which is frequently highlighted in other media, not least during election campaigns. For the record, a 2010 study from the Pew Research Center concluded that only 1% of the US population received news or news headlines from Twitter (p. 136). Another recent development is the emergence of websites that condense the output of many other sources, offering a Citizen's Digest of sorts. Here, it is essential to distinguish between, on the one hand, news aggregators such as Google News, which are generated through a combination of algorithmic procedures and predetermined user preferences and, on the other hand, collaborative news-filtering systems such as Reddit and Digg, in which the ranking of top stories results from the recommendations made by users. While one type of news digest is not necessarily preferable to the other, the algorithms of automatic gatekeeping are proprietary information, not transparent to either citizens or journalists, whereas the criteria underlying user recommendations can be contested, to some degree, by other users through the collaborative process of selecting, combining and passing on information.

Regardless of utopian or dystopian inclinations, much research and commentary converge on the idea that the internet has a real potential to enhance citizenship. Building on their careful review and nuanced discussion, Tewksbury and Rittenberg towards the end of the volume turn to the prospect of 'information democratization', defined as 'the increasing involvement of private citizens in the creation, distribution, exhibition, and curation of civically relevant information' (p. 147). One way of assessing the potential of the internet in this regard is to consider opposing or countervailing forces; the authors note three of these. The first is simply that news media, both online and offline, still predominantly operate as businesses, not as instruments of civil society. Specifically, major media are in a position to both mass produce and differentiate their products to various target groups across several technological platforms. A second issue, less often noted, concerns the various regulatory frameworks governing the network that delivers the news to citizens. Though originally conceived as a neutral, open, or common carrier abiding by a principle of network neutrality, the internet is currently under pressure to become two (or more) internets, so that consumers may be charged more for access to certain parts of the internet with greater bandwidth and functionalities. In addition to introducing new partitions within the public sphere, such a development would place

ordinary citizens at a further disadvantage as online producers as well as users of news. The third concern revolves around the users themselves, who may not be as committed to information democratization as many researchers (and journalists) would want them to be: 'One of the most significant forces working against any movement . . . is inertia. A social change of the magnitude we are discussing here requires a lot of work, both physical and mental' (p. 158).

A last point to consider is that information democratization may not be a good thing in every respect: 'it is possible that attempts to expand the role of citizens in the media could increase the level of social fragmentation' (p. 152). Citing Michael Schudson (1998), the authors note (p. 6) that the twentieth-century ideal of the active and well-informed citizen is a contingent or historical category, preceded by, for instance, the party-centred or partisan citizen, and followed perhaps by still more and alternative conceptions of citizenship. The breakthrough of the internet, arguably, has contributed to making participatory ideals of political democracy that emphasize information and communication seem natural, even unquestionable. In the twenty-first century, then, at long last, the twentieth-century ideal might be realized under different technological and institutional circumstances. New media continuously invite new ideas of what communication, including political communication, is and might be (Peters, 1999). The point is that more communication does not necessarily equal more democracy.

Part of the recently launched Oxford Studies in Digital Politics from Oxford University Press, USA, the present volume emphasizes US findings and examples. However, both the framework of the reviews and the call for carefully weighing the evidence for and against the democratizing potential of the internet apply equally to other regions of the world. Most importantly perhaps, more international and comparative studies are needed in the future (Goggin and McLelland, 2009), to move beyond universalistic hype about 'the internet' as such, and to evaluate its specific potential in those local and regional contexts where citizenship and democracy must be accomplished in practice.

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Eugène Loos, Leslie Haddon and Enid Mante-Meijer (eds), *Generational Use of New Media*, Ashgate: Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT, 2012; 218 pp.: £55.00

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Intergenerational relations have been recently explored in media studies. Carefully organized, this book is a stimulating contribution to further research and to informed policies aimed at assuring digital inclusion from pre-adolescents to the 'oldest olds'. By

refusing to consider younger and older generations as homogeneous entities, the book demonstrates the need to take into account the distinct subpopulations within the broader group of senior citizens. Besides age and generational differences, gender, levels of education and degrees of internet access and use also affect the online experience. Therefore, instead of the popularized dichotomy between 'digital natives' and 'digital immigrants', the idea which emerges from this book is that of a 'digital spectrum'.

The 10 chapters are written mainly by European researchers participating in the COST Action 298, 'Participating in the Broadband Society' (2006–2010). The first section of the book deals with young people using new media, the second section presents the insights of older people using new media and the third contrasts ways of using the internet by younger and older people.

The first three chapters are supported by large-scale empirical research conducted at European level and within two countries, Belgium and Portugal. In common, they articulate the online experience of young people with parents' roles and mediation, thus considering the intergenerational dynamics that characterize the family order in contemporary societies.

By analysing parental mediation of internet use and evaluating family relationships, Leslie Haddon, one of the editors of this volume and co-coordinator of the EU Kids Online network, discusses results from the survey that involved more than 25,000 children (9–16) and their parents. Linking different kinds of mediation (active mediation of children's internet use and of internet safety; restrictive mediation; monitoring; and technical mediation) to the authoritarian vs democratic style of parenting, the author concludes by saying that: 'pulling the different strands together, what emerges in the European average is a fairly positive evaluation that does not in itself prove less authoritarian parenting is taking place but does suggest reasonably good relations between parents and children, where mediation is by and large acceptable' (p. 24).

Joke Bauwens in her analysis draws on the Belgian project, TIRO (2006–2008), which focused on teens (12–18 years old) and their parents. Guided by Bauman's ideas about the social specificity of morality and triangulating among a multitude of data, the author notes that 'internet usage is deeply entrenched in social, hence moral life' (p. 32). The analysis highlights three complex and ambiguous ideas about adults' role among these teens: a strong respect and preference for adult moral reasoning that transcends day-to-day restrictive rules; a contrast between teachers and parents, these latter being often in the background of peer-to-peer conversations; and self-perceptions as internet brokers in terms of functional and active literacy. For these reasons, Bauwens concludes: 'When it came to moral literacy and especially when confronted with ethical questions that sharply impinged upon their personal identity, young people turned to lessons learned from adults' (pp. 44–45).

As the EU Kids Online survey has shown, the national contexts differ. For instance, in 2010 only 32% of Belgian children were allowed to access the internet in their bedrooms, against 67% in Portugal. The chapter written by Gustavo Cardoso, Rita Espanha and Tiago Lapa explores tensions within the cultural and geographical location of this southern country where the generational gap concerning internet use is higher. In 2008, research on children's and teens' perspectives of parental regulation included TV, internet, mobile phone and interactive games. The most common conflict associated with

internet use was the amount of time, particularly among girls. Another difference related to gender was that the father was much more present in relation to the use of the computer and ICT, while the mother was more associated with TV regulation. Generally speaking, Portuguese results confirmed that the respondents were happy with the relationships within their families. However, relating children's and parents' management of autonomy with the dominant media order in the families, Cardoso, Espanha and Lapa identify different trends: there tends to be less conflict in families with a shared appropriation of networked communication; by contrast, in households where mass communication prevails as the communicational model shared by parents and networked communication as the one shared by children, parents tend to negotiate control and autonomy by focusing more on television rather than the internet. Consequently, such children may 'retain a higher interest in building belonging and reference groups without the need to negotiate with parents' (p. 67).

The fourth chapter moves to the school context. Based on his experience as teacher in the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong (2008–2011), David Herold argues that 'the almost general assumption that proficiency is acquired by "osmosis" instead of through a dedicated learning process is in fact hiding a lack of even basic competencies in the use of computers or other networked technologies' (p. 74). The particular context of these Chinese students should be taken into account: many had rarely used a computer outside the classroom before, and some didn't own a computer and relied instead on the computer labs for their IT needs. However, Herold's analysis of the difficulties and resistances that young people revealed in their online management may be confirmed in other university classes in western countries. Besides technical and software learning problems, issues related to data usage and critical awareness emerged in these classes of Media Studies and Urban Popular Culture. Having been working in China for the past 15 years, the author critically contests the digital dichotomy ('natives' vs 'immigrants') that ignores conditions of internet access. 'It seems more appropriate to talk about different levels of technological expertise combined with specific attitudes towards technology (and a measure of one's disposable income and spare time)', Herold writes (p. 83). He also adds: 'neither younger nor older people can be assumed to have the necessary skills to be part of an inclusive, networked society' (p. 84). This key idea crosses the second and the third part of the book.

Having researched technology and social change for over 20 years, the Swedish scholar Jan-Erik Hagberg presents 'the people who have the longest experience of changes in society and have faced innumerable shifts in everyday technology throughout their life courses; the people who have adjusted to change after change in the technology landscape' (p. 90). Influenced by the techno-sociological tradition in which 'technology is understood as socially constructed and embedded in cultural values without ignoring the compelling nature of its material character' (p. 91), this chapter contains accounts from 30 participants (85 or older) among the 80 men and women (aged 55–95) who were interviewed (2006–2010). The articulation between theories, the historical context and personal judgements contributes to a rich discussion about ageing and techno-biographies. As the author writes, 'the oldest old live with the tension caused by relying on one's traditional way of acting yet knowing, or suspecting, that one must change one's habits and adjust to the new demands' (p. 98). Not only is

technology mainly developed by younger people, and new things are first used by them, but also 'older people have fewer possibilities to express and accentuate identities by inserting new objects in their everyday life' (p. 99). Besides age, there is a dividing line between the growing cities and their urban surroundings and genuine rural areas, where a significant part of the oldest olds still live. These differences lead to compelling questions about old people's ability to decide about their 'material room' according to their own needs and interests. Two final questions challenge public policies and industries: should the oldest old have the right to be outside, to keep their habits and routines, and not have to learn new practices? And how can the oldest old who want, but are unable to use, new technology be supported?

Chapters 6 and 7 provide practical contributions to these challenges, sustained in empirical research. From the USA, Dana Chisnell and Janice Redish present research and practical guidelines for designing websites for older adults. Most technology is designed by young people, yet research has shown the importance of designing in an inclusive way. As experts on social media usability and training design, the authors point to the iPad as a good example of a transgenerational tool, being enormously popular with people of all ages and requiring little effort for beginners. According to the authors, four attributes of old users need to be considered: *age* (not just chronological but taking into account life experiences including education); *ability* (physical and cognitive variation); *aptitude* (expertise with the target technology); and *attitude* (outlook and risk perception). The chapter also contains heuristics for inclusive designs in three dimensions: *interaction design; information architecture*; and *information design.* As many older adults do not perceive themselves as being old and many websites for older adults are designed by young designers, Chisnell and Redish argue that technology design should be participatory and involve older users.

From Austria, Gunther Schreder, Karin Siebenhandl, Eva Mayr and Michael Smuc present the challenge of assuring social inclusion by barrier-free vending machines in railways stations. The project team conducted an empirical study with interviews and observations to learn from the actual experience of users and identify particular elements that most frequently cause problems or hinder use. These results contributed to design and test specifications for a prototype of a new generation of ticket machines. Similar studies from the UK and Taiwan provide evidence that the problems also exist with other systems that were built without proper usability engineering. As the authors conclude, 'an easy-to-do system will not only facilitate access to public transport systems for people with low technological affinity, but could provide a chance to develop positive attitudes towards digital technology in general' (p. 146).

Two chapters in the third section compare how younger and older people explore the same purposes and activities. The Finnish experience of Communication Camps is presented by Giuseppe Lugano, ICT Science Officer at the COST Office who manages 24 scientific projects on technology and society, and Peter Peltonen, who researches collaboration in online environments in Helsinki University. Communication Camps are informal learning experiences in which participants from all ages act as one group in media-related activities, with no separation according to gender, age or level of digital literacy. In a national context where digital access and uses are very high among the population, 'digital natives' and 'digital immigrants' expressed different visions of

their relations with personal media such as letters, phone calls, email or instant messaging. Differences were visible on media ecology, technical difficulties, modalities for information processing, critical thinking, personal values and perceptions of reality, but these differences did not prevent the media-related activities. As the authors conclude, enabling the creation of intergenerational bridges, Communication Camps are complementary to traditional learning settings and should be seriously considered by public policies.

From the Netherlands, Eugène Loos and Enid Mante-Meijer present another research project that compares actual navigation behaviour of older and younger people searching health information. Eye-tracking, a non-intrusive tool, assures a comparison between ways of navigating online. Conclusions of this study make the authors, who are also co-editors of this volume, underline the notion that black and white distinctions between 'digital natives' and 'digital immigrants' were not remarkable. The authors also noted that the main differences were visible *within* the group of older people. Accordingly, and in line with Chisnell's and Redish's orientations noted above, Loos and Mante-Meijer stress recommendations for website designers: taking into account diversity between and *within generations*, not forgetting that older people are much more diverse in terms of life experience and levels of capability and disability than their young counterparts.

Our last note goes to Alexander van Deursen's contribution. Having researched digital divide and social inequality, this Dutch scholar discusses four types of internet skills and identifies distinctive problems related to each type. Two are medium related (operational and formal skills) and two are content related (information and strategic skills). Empirical research based on this analytical tool makes visible that although young people perform far better in terms of medium-related internet skills, they still show a strikingly low level of information and strategic internet skills, similar to people of all ages. The author concludes that 'the most important factor – determining all types of internet skills – is the level of educational attainment' (p. 181). Learning internet skills merely by trial and error is a limited strategy since 'information and strategic internet skills do not actually increase with years of internet experience or with the amount of time spent online' (p. 182). Rethinking the obvious on the 'natural dichotomy' between generations is therefore an imperative for further research and for inclusive policies, namely in education. With so many cases and discussions, this book provides an excellent tool for this challenge.

Paul Booth, *Time on TV: Temporal Displacement and Mashup Television*, Peter Lang: New York, 2012; 255 pp.: £24.00

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Media studies is currently experiencing a turn towards time, temporality and memory as analytical categories for the exploration of traditional and more recently emerging digital media and the social and cultural structures and experiences associated with them (e.g. Ames, 2013; Garde-Hansen et al., 2009; Hassan and Purser, 2007; Keightley, 2012; Van Dijck, 2007). *Time on TV* follows this turn towards time in media studies but departs

from the majority of existing studies of mediated time in two interconnected ways. First, Booth examines both traditional and 'new' media, not in temporal contradistinction from one another, but in an attempt to trace their interrelationships. In doing so he positions television and social media as part of the same cluster of aesthetic and structural changes to temporality taking place in contemporary culture. Second, existing temporal analyses of media have tended to focus on the ways in which temporal transformations in social life and culture are facilitated by contemporary media technologies. In contrast, Booth's analysis is located squarely in the tradition of television criticism with a clear emphasis on the aesthetics of television content (see Ames [2013] and Holdsworth [2011] for other recent examples of the temporal analysis of televisual content). By attending to televisual content, Booth attempts to link an aesthetic analysis of the temporal displacements that characterize contemporary television with a reflection on the broader social and cultural transformations in the experience of time in digital culture.

The book is organized into four substantive sections: Time on TV; Memories; Temporalities; and a general conclusion. The first section is comprised of two chapters which introduce the core features of the relationship between time and contemporary television and lay the conceptual groundwork for Booth's central contention that 'recent mashup television content focuses on shifting temporal expectations in television narrative and on altering representations of time, in order to reflect and teach about changes brought to our everyday life through the use of transgenic media' (p. 1). In the introductory chapter Booth elaborates on this claim, which operates on the premise that aesthetic changes in television content can tell us something about larger cultural changes brought about by online media (p. 4), by demonstrating that contemporary television content is characterized by the same 'temporal displacements' that structure our use of social (transgenic media). Booth describes two kinds of temporal displacement devices used in contemporary television programmes: those which relate to the narrative structure of television content, and those which refer to character and memory. In the remainder of the introductory chapter, Booth provides definitions for the other two conceptual categories on which his analysis is based: transgenic media, which refer to online media that integrate content from another medium which is characterized by the intent to share this content (p. 9); and mashup television, which refers to televisual content which mashes together the 'characteristics of online media with characteristics of traditional media' (p. 11). In the following chapter Booth examines more closely the relationship between television and 'transgenic' media to argue that the introduction of the temporal imperatives of online social media into television content reflects a 'growing change with the way our culture understands and deals with time, memory, and history' (p. 22).

In the second section of the book, 'Memories', Booth explores the ways in which memory as a device for temporal displacement is used in television content, particularly in relation to television characters. Over the course of the section Booth attempts to demonstrate that the ways in which memory is constructed and utilized in televisual content relate closely to the simultaneous externalization and internalization of memory facilitated by transgenic media. In the first chapter of this section, Booth does this by focusing on the instability or provisional nature of mediated memories, both in televisual content and in our everyday use of social media. Conversely, in the second chapter, he examines how jumps in time made by characters to reflect on their pasts and futures

offer opportunities for audiences to learn how to make sense of their own personal histories using transgenic media.

The third section focuses on the ways in which temporal displacement relates to issues of time, narrative and history. In each of the three constituent chapters Booth uses the metaphor of 'time travel' as a heuristic device to examine 'how changes in transgenic media use affect our everyday lives' (p. 107). In the initial chapter this involves an examination of the ways in which transgenic media have introduced a permanence or durability into our personal histories and that this permanence is reflected aesthetically in the narrative structures of the BBC programme *Dr Who*. Time in these narratives is not singularly linear, but involves 'simultaneously co-existent' temporalities (p. 121), in the same way as our pasts persist digitally in online environments. The second chapter in this section addresses the simultaneously present aesthetic of impermanence in the temporal structures of television and transgenic media use. Taking wiki sites as an example, Booth argues that transgenic media destabilize historical time in their infinite mutability, and again, observes this characteristic as an aesthetic feature in the narratives of *Dr Who*. In the final chapter of the section Booth uses the notion of the social network to attempt a synthesis of this paradoxical permanence and impermanence in both mashup television and transgenic media. Booth concludes by exploring the interconnected futures of television and transgenic media. For him, mashup television and the temporal displacements it involves provide an ongoing site for audiences to make sense of and come to terms with the temporal displacements which structure their own lived experience in digital culture.

Time on TV makes an important contribution to the increasing body of research on the mediation of time and mediated temporalities by foregrounding televisual content as a key site for the articulation of emergent temporal structures and characteristics of contemporary social and cultural life. This has largely been neglected to date. By examining television and digital media in combination, Booth is able to develop an analysis which moves beyond a 'silo' based approach to media studies and instead positions media content as part of a wider cultural landscape in which media are meaningful in relation to, rather than separately from one another. It is also important to recognize that in emphasizing the importance of a temporal analysis of media content, Booth takes care not to fall into a purely textualist account of temporality. By continually exploring the ways in which audience engagement and practices of reading relate simultaneously to their lived temporal experiences with transgenic media in social life, and to their identification with the temporalities of televisual narratives, television content is positioned as part of a wider cultural landscape in which media are not only creatively read, but creatively read *between*. Booth's analysis operates at the interstices of audience and text and positions cultural narratives as realized at this juncture. This allows him to integrate the notion of the participatory audience, not only in his analysis of 'transgenic' media, but also in relation to the more traditional medium of television.

However, it is in relation to this point that the argument is at risk of over-reaching itself. While the aesthetic content of television is at various points quite helpfully conceived in terms of a metaphor for the temporal experiences fostered by the use of transgenic media, the extension of this claim to suggest that the structuring of time in televisual content constitutes a deliberate attempt to provide audiences with ways of making sense

of their experience of transgenic mediated temporalities, or that audiences actually use this televisual content in this way, seems on somewhat shaky ground without the production of some empirical evidence. Booth claims that 'by demonstrating mastery over the temporality of a narrative television show, active viewers can satisfyingly return to their digital technology, with all its insubstantial temporality in check', but on the basis of the analysis presented, this seems like a possibility afforded by televisual narratives, rather than a guaranteed outcome of their consumption (p. 209). This also calls into question the extent to which the 'interaction between television and transgenic media' constitutes a radical shift which moves us beyond existing media theory (p. 209) since the extent to which the temporal displacements of either televisual content or transgenic media are actually realized in the viewer's everyday temporal experience, memories and historical knowledge remains to be empirically substantiated. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these observations do not necessarily constitute flaws in Booth's argument – they are merely a call for further enquiry into the important potentialities of temporal displacement in television content that he identifies. Even without this empirical substantiation, the book provides an excellent aesthetic analysis of the ways in which contemporary televisual narratives work and the temporal devices which routinely structure them.

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