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Title: The "Greek crisis' in Europe: Race, Class and Politics

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: As is generally known, the latest major economic crisis of global proportions started in the USA with the credit crunch of 2007-8. Ten years later, in 2018, critics note that the crisis is not yet resolved, with a new – and potentially more serious – one pending. Along with the economic crisis, a broader and multifaceted crisis with political, ecological and social dimensions is advancing, with capitalism being the root cause of it.

The study of the media is one important dimension in the analysis of the crisis, its politics, and its culture. In today's liberal democratic states, it is through the mass media that the policies predicated to alleviate the crisis are publicly explained and legitimised in order to be applied. Studies have shown that the media heavily relied on the official version of the crisis, as articulated by the leading politicians of the most influential states, as well as by technocrats and economists. In the Eurozone crisis context, the media heavily relied on cultural and class stereotypes to explain the causes of the crisis. In this regard, Greece, the Eurozone crisis' epicentre, was mercilessly targeted by mainstream media, and received highly negative, and largely misleading, publicity over its crisis.

The spectacular bashing of the Greek people, and especially its working class, paved the way for austerity to unleash an unprecedented assault on the Greek citizens' social, political and human rights while plundering public and private wealth under the pretext of repaying the debt. At a public level, austerity took on a punitive form for appeasing the "hard-working Europeans". Simultaneously, austerity was also presented as not just rightful, but also, most significantly, the only available policy doctrine to overcome the crisis. The iteration of racist and classist stereotypes by the mass media has been integral to the public legitimation of austerity.

A political economy analysis of the capitalist crisis and austerity offers a systemic understanding of the matter, beyond the hegemonic culturalist and moralist frames constructing the crisis, its causes, and its solutions. It also exposes the propagandistic character of the public construction of the crisis and austerity, which creates a public consensus on neoliberal reforms and their effects on society and democracy, presenting them as necessary and as without an alternative, while blaming the poor and the working class who are those that are struck by the crisis and austerity the most.

This study of the Greek crisis publicity in the EU is based on the analysis of newspapers, journals, as well as news and lifestyle websites from the EU countries of Greece, Denmark, and Germany, which represent main center-periphery dichotomies in the EU. The study focuses on conservative and liberal media because they represent the most dominant voices in the national public spheres of Europe, iterating and reproducing the prevailing crisis' explanations. The analysis is based on three interrelated themes: race, class and neoliberal/technocratic politics. These main themes are further developed through the relevant critical theoretical advances and are analytically disclosed through discourse analysis perspectives.

Id: 19458

Title: Associated Press and the Political Economy of Attention

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Global news agencies remain the primary producers of news and information for the world. The largest news agency Associated Press (AP) has some 250 news bureaus in 120 countries, with a net income of almost $200 million. Yet, despite its size and reach, AP may be the least investigated news media organization. Indeed, AP is seldom mentioned or else appears as background in media studies of news framing, agenda setting, and political economies of the media industry.

This contribution provides the first political economy case study of the structure, functions, and cultural effects of AP to offer some initial observations on global news agencies and their impact on communication and citizenship. To illustrate, a content analysis (sources, frames, contexts) of AP coverage of the Saudi-US war on Yemen is included with the case study. Findings reveal that AP content relies on normative journalistic frames comprised of "legitimate" sources, ideological identifiers, and selective omissions. Evidence also shows that AP copy shortens messages, emphasizes spectacle, and privileges "breaking" news over news context and consequence. Further, as a vital part of a transnational media political economy dedicated to overwhelming human attention and selling news as commodities, AP releases are routinely limited to sensationalist headlines, sound bites, and heavily dramatized events for global sales and distribution.

AP's drive to attract more attention crushes the news. The result has been more news clutter, more news stimulation, and more transnationally hegemonic news frames. As the primary news producer and distributor on four continents, AP thus contributes to reducing public discourse and promoting transnational corporate interests.

Id: 19501

Title: Lost in Translation' Public Policy Input and the 2017 Net Neutrality Repeal

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Although independent regulatory agencies overseeing communications are shielded from some of the political pressures that other political institutions face, they have obligations to the public interest and, thus, to the public. Addressing media problems, many of which have to do with exclusion and inequality, requires a fair and representative process. A growing strand of scholarship examines the politics underlying media policy formation, including the dynamics between various stakeholders and the role of public participation in policymaking (Brown & Blevins, 2008; Freedman, 2008; Gangadharan, 2009; Van den Bulck, 2012). Rather than focusing on policy outcomes, such analyses prioritize questions about opportunities for input, and fairness and legitimacy of the process that yields policies that should serve the public interest. This paper builds on this work by examining the role of the public in media policymaking through the lens of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 2017 repeal of net neutrality regulation in the United States.

Although the legal and administrative rules contouring policymaking at the FCC define a space for public input, asymmetrical power dynamics between policy stakeholders, particularly in favor of industry elites, curtail both public participation and influence. Nevertheless, notable historical instances of media reform efforts suggest that, despite these asymmetries, in critical junctures the public has exercised influence over media policy issues (e.g. Horwitz, 1997; McChesney, 2004; Pickard, 2014). Against this historical context, drawing on news reports and government documents related to the 2017 repeal, the case study sheds light on both the structural and actively political limits on public influence on the policy process. To provide a partial explanation for why public input was largely ignored in this proceeding, this paper invokes and develops the concept of "translation," a discursive practice by political and civil society actors that involves engaging, soliciting, and amplifying public input in the policy sphere (Gangadharan, 2013).

By shedding light on the deeply embedded vulnerabilities of the policymaking process to capture, the study emphasizes the need for structurally sound and resilient regulatory processes as key to the legitimacy of the policy decisions they yield. The case also serves as a reminder that, despite requests for expert input, technocratic language, and purported objectivity, the policy process is fundamentally political, and efforts to mask that are a political decision. Ultimately, while media policy scholarship often focuses on problematic policy outcomes, such as impoverished public journalism or growing media consolidation, too little falls on barriers to public participation in policymaking processes as well as ones specific to various, especially marginalized publics (Perlman, 2015). Yet a fairer, more robust, more representative, and more pluralistic system for

public participation in policy debates impacting the quality of social and political discourse remains essential to more egalitarian media policy.

Id: 19581

Title: From Europe with Love' The Dutch and British Press on Noam Chomsky

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The linguist Noam Chomsky is the most-cited social scientist alive. Much of his scholarly and public recognition stems not from his linguistic work, but his political writings. Half a century ago, in 1969, Chomsky published his first political book and became a prominent American dissident. To date about twenty books assess Chomsky's life, career and politics. They fall into two categories. The largest one consists of explanations and defenses of Chomsky's work by authors who support his analyses. These works contain some critical remarks, but aim to promote Chomsky's reputation and spread his views (e.g. Edgley 2000, 2015; Otero 1994; McGilvray 2005, 2013; Rai 1995; Salkie 2014; Smith and Allott 2016).

Barsky's biographies (1997, 2007) are the best-known books in this category. For all their merits, they are flawed in that they present Chomsky's positions and version of events, often without conducting appropriate fact checks (Shalom 1997). The other, smaller category consists of books by Chomsky's political opponents. These works are flawed because of the frequent distortions of Chomsky's views and a lack of factual basis for the criticisms (e.g. Collier and Horowitz 2004; Knight 2016; Sampson 1979).

No books or other research that discuss Chomsky's politics have systematically investigated the media reception of his work, with one exception. Yet many authors make statements on the media's treatment of Chomsky's political writings (e.g. Barsky 2007: 52). Chomsky's supporters have tended to adopt his perspective on the topic: the American media have almost completely ignored him, and when they do pay attention, they harshly criticize him, whereas many foreign media have paid him more (positive) attention. Chomsky-supporter Sperlich (2006: 10) argues on the basis of one example that European media have also been dismissive.

Thus the characteristics of the media reception of Chomsky's political work are contested. The only systematic analysis shows that the version advanced by Chomsky and his supporters is flawed. It establishes that until 1975 five mainstream American newspapers, especially the New York Times, frequently discussed Chomsky's political writings, and that their commentary from 1969 to now has quite frequently been quite positive (Author, 2017).

By way of a content and discourse analysis of the commentary on Chomsky from 1969 until 2019 in British newspapers (The Guardian and The Times) and Dutch newspapers (de Volkskrant and NRC Handelsblad), this paper examines the volume of attention given to Chomsky in the British and Dutch press. Furthermore, it identifies differences in the volume of coverage over time and between the two countries; it assesses the value of the media's main points of praise for and criticism of Chomsky's political writings; and it infers the newspapers' own ideological limitations from their commentary on Chomsky's political writings. Thereby the paper adds an important case study to the literature on the coverage of dissidence (Gans 1979; Gitlin 1980; Hallin 1989;

Tuchman 1972). The paper finds that the New York Times covered Chomsky more extensively and positively than its British and Dutch counterparts.

Id: 19588

Title: Transportation and Smart City Imaginaries: A Critical Analysis of Proposals for the USDOT Smart City Challenge

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Scholarly attention to the development of "smart cities" around the globe has been focused on the nature of these cities, as well as visions of the futures that these developments would provide for individuals, communities and institutions (Gabrys, 2014; Hollands, 2015; Zook, 2017). Much of the research about these information-intensive projects has been focused on the description of these cities in terms of their primary socioeconomic goals and on the influential roles in their development being played by globally active information technology firms (Kitchin, 2014; Wiig, 2015; Rossi, 2016).

An important, but under-explored focus of this research has been an examination of how local and regional governments have envisioned these projects (Chourabi et al, 2012; Kitchin et al, 2015). This paper responds to that challenge through an analysis of proposals submitted by 78 American cities to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Smart City Challenge.

The analysis begins with an identification of the kinds of descriptive frames that have been relied upon by the applicants to justify their selection as finalists and ultimately winners of this competition. While there are many different frames and points of emphasis that a participant city might choose, we selected a subset identified within the critical literature as being focused on the likely impact of these projects on the underclass (Li et.al, 2018; Vanolo, 2014).

Among those frames, we emphasize those focused on population subgroups defined by age, race and minority status, as well as their identification as disabled, disadvantaged or underserved. Because this literature also stresses the importance of decisions regarding the use of transaction-generated information, as well as that derived from the analysis of social media, the association of these frames with references to privacy and trust are also included.

In an attempt to identify the socioeconomic and political factors that both predict and explain the special character of these proposals, we examine the correlations between references to the terms that serve as anchors of our analytical frames, and measures of the racial and economic status of these cities, or regions in which they are located. Structural measures, such as the proportion of

African Americans, levels of poverty and economic distress, and the extent of racial and economic inequality within these areas emerged as the best predictors of the frames being used within these proposals. Because these proposals necessarily reflect the policy agendas of the USDOT, including those related to civil rights and environmental justice, a comparative analysis of the changes made in the initial frames used by the seven finalists is developed.

We conclude with recommendations for the kinds of research and analysis that should be pursued to extend our understanding of the factors that shape these designs for the future of cities and the well-being of those who will make their homes within them.

Id: 19614

Title: Cracking under pressure: current trends in the global advertising industry

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In the golden age of mass media, the world-wide advertising industry was composed of a stable, interrelated triumvirate of corporate interests: the advertisers, who were the prime movers; the advertising agencies, who brokered media time and space, and created advertisements on behalf of their advertiser clients; and the media, who had organised their assets so as to derive maximum benefit from their command over audiences. In the social media age, these institutional arrangements have been subjected to fundamental challenges – 'disruption' is the buzzword – notably by the rise of digital advertising, and the dominance of Google and Facebook as the major architects and beneficiaries of this shift. Because advertisers can now buy space directly from these and other digital platforms, advertising agencies now find themselves 'disintermediated': they are the middle-men who have been cut out. At the global level, where the advertising industry, and marketing communications in general, has for decades been organised under a handful of holding groups, there has been a proactive response as these behemoths have launched themselves into 'ad-tech', buying up companies with the highly technical skills and services now required to place and manage advertising in the age of the algorithm. However, as this paper will outline, the advertising industry as we have known it is facing other pressures, quite apart from their struggle to stake their claim in the ad-tech landscape. Given the shift in balance towards the technical rather than the more traditional creative side of the advertising business, the agencies find themselves in competition with the global management consultancies, who have now enabled themselves to offer advertising services to their established lists of corporate clients. On another front, over the last decade, there has emerged a trend for major advertisers to confront the agencies on their own turf by bringing at least some of their advertising functions 'in-house'. In general, these clients have continued to retain their external agencies, but are motivated to save on costs and maintain control over their brands by setting up their own internal creative agencies. Finally, there has been one other ongoing and serious challenge to the comfortable manufacturing-marketing-media relationship of decades past, and this has been an entirely self-inflicted 'own goal'. Since 2015, there have been revelations that the agencies had been taking hidden commissions from media owners, and/or buying advertising space in bulk and selling it to their clients at an undisclosed margin. These practices have resulted in a crisis of trust between clients and agencies, and exposed the fiction that advertising agencies serve as 'agents' of their clients. With this foundational relationship having been undermined in such a way, fissures are appearing in the elaborate edifices that the global holding companies have built over past decades.

Id: 19694

Title: Anthropocenic Global Capitalism: Conflicts and Crises of Time

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Evidence from geology, climatology, atmospheric chemistry, geochemistry and oceanography suggest that the earth has experienced a historic step-change in the relationship between human species and the natural world. In Anthropocenic terms human action and earth dynamics have converged; they can no longer be seen as disparate entities. Human inhabitants of the planet have perpetrated, and are facing, unprecedented environmental shifts. They include – biodiversity loss, anthropogenic climate change and disruptions to the carbon cycle and nitrogen cycle. In a warmer world and an impoverished biosphere multiple risks emerge: melting ice flows, rising ocean acidity, extreme weather events, damage to agriculture and unequal social suffering. Most centrally, it is now evident, in retrospect, that the switch from organic surface energy to an underground fossil energy has intertwined the time of earth with the time of human history. The convergence of these different kinds of historical time was prefigured by the externalisation and instrumentalisation of nature as a resource for humanity.

Understanding the capitalist relations of power involved here requires that we re- rethink industrial capitalism in the historical context of a world system built upon unequal socio-ecological exchange between core and periphery. From a critical political economy perspective contemporary global capitalism has intensified the anthropogenic feedback loops associated with CO2 emissions and climate change and universalised organisational frameworks of profit extraction and socio-ecological destruction. However, this is not a smooth, seamless operation. I will argue that anthropogenic global capitalism is riven by time conflicts associated with the earth system and capitalism along with those associated with climate change and greenhouse tipping point scenarios. On the basis of these insights I will further argue that three trajectories of crisis can be derived from anthropocenic global capitalism. Inherent to each extrapolation of crisis is a specific kind of intra-epistemic time conflict. These are- reflexivities of panic versus chronologies of disintegration (time reckoning), continuist versus catastrophic futures (temporality) and catastrophe for all versus catastrophe for some (coevalness). I conclude by assessing the efficacy and popular resonance of these conflicting crisis scenarios.

Id: 19799

Title: Digital Labor: concepts, theories, and an ethnographic study of Chinese IT programmers.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The development of information technology has supported the establishment of informational economy system, triggering the production mode to shift from Fordism to post-Fordism. During this process, what should not be neglected is the mass group of digital labors who sustained this big digital system, and they have, together with information commodities, becoming significant parts that constructed the global information value chain. IT programmers consist one type of digital labors.

This paper will study how transformations in the attributes of work have taken place through the process of digitalization, through revisiting key theories and concepts, including Karl Marx's labor theory of value, and Smythe's audience commodity, as well as a critical evaluation of the social context.

This paper also includes a case study on the programmers, who are the key players in the IT industry. The labor process and characteristics of the bottom level programmers in China will be studied, through the application of Karl Marx's labor theory of value, with the methods of network ethnography and content analysis. It is discovered that the other side of the flexibility of work is instability, and the surplus value created by the programmers are absorbed in a hierarchical way by the industry value chain, also this programmers group have shown a worship of digital skills online.

The theoretical study and case study will both be meaningful in understanding this dialectical issue: does technology bring people freedom, or on the contrary, it brings people alienation? Taking the perspective from political economy, we have to admit there is alienation happening in the area of labor and work, in the arena where capital is trying to expand itself and to communicate all areas of things. There are two paths that may drive us to another version of future: one is the strengthening of social welfare system, such as universal basic income for digital labor; the other is the promotion of dot-communism which turns the digital world as real commons that is owned by all.

Id: 19874

Title: The Environmental Costs of 'Platform Accumulation': Contributions to the Political Economy of Streaming Infrastructure

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The popularisation of streaming media has given rise to new methods of promoting and recommending video content (via algorithms), and encouraged notable shifts in the sites (via mobile phone, laptop) and modes ('binge-viewing') of consumption. Similar to many traditional media industries, online video services are financed largely through advertising revenue, with subscription fees playing an important role for some. Within this new media ecosystem, however, digital 'platforms' (e.g., YouTube, Amazon) serve as central mechanisms of capital accumulation and key levers of power. Crucially, video hosting services (and myriad other platforms) are supported by cloud computing platforms and server farms typified by Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud Platform. The focus of this paper is this seemingly invisible infrastructure that powers modern streaming practices. We examine the political economy of the data server and the cloud computing sector, focusing on: the ways this internet infrastructure governs the power relations between 'old' and 'new' media industries; the environmental implications of reliance on resource-intensive data centres and server farms; and what the modes of capital accumulation characteristic of streaming media reveal about mutations in contemporary capitalism more broadly. In this era of high-def streamable video content and video advertisements, wherein services ranging from Netflix to YouTube to BBC iPlayer offer massive video catalogues to users, the infrastructure that drives the smooth functioning of on-demand, 'always on' content is playing a defining role in the digitalisation of the media industries.

Building on Harvey's concept of 'flexible accumulation' (1989), we develop the notion of 'platform accumulation' to conceptualise the changes that have accompanied the rise of platforms and the streaming infrastructure that underpins them - shifts we understand as an acceleration and intensification of earlier post-Fordist reconfigurations of capitalist systems of production and consumption. Under platform accumulation, cloud/server infrastructure enables the storing of data about user behaviour, the harnessing of 'network effects', and the ability to provide digital content when requested and to 'push' content - the sources of platforms' power and profitability. The energy demands and ecological costs tied to the need to increase content storage, serve up content with the lowest latency possible, and meet peak demand are typically far removed from the imaginary of everyday consumers, as are the role of data servers and cloud platforms in the digital

media environment. Our critical analysis brings together research on internet-distributed television (Lotz 2017), media infrastructures (Parks and Starosielski 2015), and the environmental impacts of media (Starosielski and Walker 2016) in order to explain and evaluate the implications of the digitalisation of video content.

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Id: 19914

Title: Alt.Latino and the Subversion of Public Radio

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: As NPR, the flagship public radio network in the US, approaches its 50-year anniversary, the network is facing an uncertain future. The average NPR listener is 65 years old, which means that the network is pursuing an audience that is older and whiter while the population at large skews younger and more ethnically diverse. In an effort to change course, NPR is looking at digital technology as a way for NPR to maintain its relevance. Specifically, NPR has invested heavily in podcasting as a way to deliver narrowcast, personal media to different segments of the American public. Using a case study of NPR's podcast Alt.Latino, we examine the industrial conditions that enable counter-hegemonic discourses to occur on public radio podcasting. Launched on July, 2012, Alt.Latino showcases Latino music from across the globe. In doing so, the show traverses a number of boundaries, blending not only politics and culture, Spanish and English, but also multiple music genres in an effort to tell a story. I ground this study in Critical Media Industry Studies, an approach that focuses on the economic goals and logics by which large-scale media industries operate, while accounting for the ways in which individual cultural workers negotiate and sometimes subvert the constraints imposed by institutional interests.

Id: 19935

Title: Digital Disruption: Rethinking the State of the Video Game Industry Structure

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: For much of the video game industry's history, the structure of the industry has been relatively stable, with a small number of companies maintaining oligopoly control over the industry. These companies maintained their control through the creation of hardware - typically consoles - and by serving as the gate-keeping publishers of software for those consoles (Williams, 2002). While the there was some change in the companies involved, the industry remained relatively stable for more than twenty years. However, over the last five years, this stability has been disrupted via new technological platforms, particularly the rise of smart phones, and methods of digital distribution. As Nichols (2014) noted, the game industry can be viewed as the result of the interplay between game audiences, the policy and regulatory environment, and the methods of production and interrelationships within the industry. As such, a change in one of those areas tends to require a change in another. Digital distribution, particularly tied to smart phones and other mobile devices, has not only allowed new companies - often, though not always, global giants - like Apple and Google to become key players in the industry. Crucially, such changes result in significant differences across global markets, presenting opportunities for new markets even as they exploit significant labor and environmental differences. (Nichols, 2013; Zackariasson & Wilson, 2012). Building on Kerr's (2017) analysis of the changing games industry, this study examines the current state of the video game industry, focusing on the changes in the major players, platforms of play, and emerging audiences in order to discuss the problems posed by the new industrial formation and the challenges it poses to competition, policy makers, and audiences.

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State, and Future (1st ed., Routledge studies in innovation, organization and technology ; 24). New
York: Routledge.

Id: 19962

Title: Cultural politics of the creative economy in Canada: A case study of 'Creative Canada'

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Nowadays, the term creative economy has become a mainstream development policy framework in
many countries, expecting to restructure their economies to post-industrial ones. In that sense, restructuring their economies to post-industrial ones, expecting the convergence of culture and technologies in the digital era (Hesmondhalgh & Pratt, 2005; Flew, 2012; Newsinger, 2015). Despite its growing use in development policies, however, both definitions and efficiencies are in question and criticized by scholars (Kong, 2014; Banks, 2017). Moreover, the creative economy is criticized by instrumentalizing and exploiting cultural goods and services for economic imperatives, which coincides with neoliberal doctrines (Throsby, 2010). That being said, this study is based on preassumption that the meanings and implementations of this term are dependent on distinctive institutional and national dynamics (Fung, 2017). If so, it becomes too complex to explain the rise of
the creative economy with neoliberal tenets.

In this regard, this paper examines the Canadian federal government's initiative called 'Creative Canada' as a case study. By analyzing governmental reports and its relation to existing cultural programs managed by provincial governments, it investigates the meanings of the creative economy in the Canadian context. Based on the analysis, it finds that the Canadian case of the Creative Economy reflects the path dependency of the nation's cultural policies. The distinctive nature of Canadian cultural policies and its industries invite a different interpretation of this neoliberal instrumentalist idea. While the case of Creative Canada shows off the Canadian state's distinctive implementation of the creative economy, its findings also counter some skepticisms of the state's roles
in the era of globalization and the neo-liberalization of global markets.

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Id: 20021

Title: The Global Internet: An "Incoherent Empire'

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: What constitutes the global Internet? How did it begin, under what circumstances, with what politico-economic and spatial patterns -- in not only the Silicon Valley but also the former Eastern Bloc and the developing world -- which to this day continue shaping this planetary media system, the largest of its kind that humanity has come to possess? Building on a forthcoming chapter by the author, this paper provides a panoramic discussion and critical reflection on the structural and historical patterns of the global Internet from several anchor points: infrastructure, labor, geography, culture, governance, and models and practices of alternative development.

The beginning of the Internet is often traced to the ARPANET of the US military-industrial complex, an understanding that justifies the narrow view of the Internet as a project of global capitalism and Pax Americana. This paper, however, contends that this conventional wisdom is partial and does not hold up to scrutiny if we consider recent volumes on the Internet's non-US origins in Chile (Medina, 2011), China (Wang, 2014), and the Soviet Union (Peters, 2017); if we examine internal contestations against imperialism within the US at the very heart of the Silicon Valley (Hu, 2015), and the repetitive failures of US military and civilian projects since the Vietnam War (Edwards, 1996; Pellow and Park, 2002; Greenfield, 2017).

Drawing on a new body of global literature and the author's field research and action research in Asia, this paper takes a materialistic approach to assess the contemporary complexities of the Internet: the Northern infrastructural biases vis-a-vis the phenomenal technological diffusion especially in the Global South; deterritorialized space of information and capital flows vis-à-vis resurgent nationalisms and fundamentalisms; the tempo of rapid consumption set by corporate giants vis-a-vis incessant social movements for environmental justice and labor sustainability; the authoritarian tendencies toward centralized surveillance platforms vis-a-vis multi-stakeholder democratic decision-making frameworks from WSIS and Marco Civil to platform cooperativism. The global Internet faces numerous structural contradictions. Probably the only way to summarize the current situation is to borrow Michael Mann's phrase: the global Internet today is an "incoherent empire" (2003).

In sum, the main arguments of this paper are that (a) it is excessively simplistic to see the global Internet as an instrument of neoliberal capitalism; (b) in reality, the global Internet is better understood through the many crises it faces and helps to precipitate, be they consumerist and environmental or nationalist and geopolitical; and (c) the global Internet is the site of many struggles and the tool of many movements for social justice, equality, sustainability and a better world.

Id: 20041

Title: How Governments Privatize ' The Sell-Off of the East German Press in 1990/1991

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Based on extensive archival research, this paper looks at the privatization of the East German press and shifting ownership patterns. The leading question is in how far the democratic potential that existed in the moment of revolutionary change in 1989/1990 found its institutional and/or political implementation in the post-socialist East German press. Contrary to current research (Haller, Puder and Schlevoigt 1995; Schneider 1992, 2002), it takes a political economy perspective in analyzing the tensions between the normative role news media hold in a democratic society and the imperatives of a newly developing, or rather established expanding Western market economy.

Next to issues of sales and distribution, the acquisition of newspapers became a major battle field among different (Western) interest groups. In particular financially strong West German publishers secured their future market shares, as early as spring 1990, by means of preliminary joint venture agreements primarily with the fourteen former regional papers (Bezirkszeitungen) of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) – privileged, mass-circulating papers with quasi-monopoly positions in their respective regions. When in August 1990, the privatization of these papers fell to the public administrative body and trust agency Treuhandgesellschaft (THA), it merely followed these pre-established joint ventures and did not, as was the initial reform goal, break their monopoly structures. The THA thereby enabled centralized newspaper monopolies, once established under a political dictatorship, to continue for market reasons. This resulted in a dying of newly established local papers and a highly concentrated press market. This happened with the full knowledge of the federal government that gave lip-service to the importance of a free local press but did nothing to protect or support it.

While the archives of the THA are still closed, this paper gives first archival glimpses into the struggle of local press initiatives and their consistent plea against dominant market practices of the former SED regional papers, the disinterest of the THA and the compliance of the federal government in it.

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Id: 20058

Title: End of empire' Communication surveillance, imperialism, anti-imperialism and sub-imperialism in the post-Snowden era

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In his historic account of intelligence liaison between the major imperial superpowers, Adam Svendsen argued that after the huge costs of having engaged in two world wars, the United Kingdom (UK) pursued an 'end of empire' approach, withdrawing from direct control of their former colonies (Svendsen 2012). In its colonial phase of imperial expansion, the UK preferred to under-develop the intelligence capacities of its colonies, to prevent them from becoming a threat to its interests. However, as it withdrew, the UK assisted its dominions to form intelligence agencies, while keeping them under close scrutiny. Intelligence liaison became the preferred method of continuing to exercise global influence (O'Brien 2011: 16-72; Svendsen 2012). Possibly the most significant intelligence liaison network is the Five Eyes network of countries, which was formed by the United States (US) and the UK in the wake of the Second World War.

In the wake of former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden's revelations about mass communication surveillance abuses in the Five Eyes countries and beyond, the Five Eyes network is being challenged by a new global bloc of countries with a greater orientation towards the global South, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). While mainly an emerging trading bloc, BRICS has attempted to position itself as an alternative to the dominant surveillance relationships of the Anglosphere, aspiring to protect their citizens from unwarranted surveillance by these superpowers, and offer new models of human rights-based internet governance (Thussu 2015: 242).

Svendsen's argument raises some questions. In the wake of Snowden's revelations, to what extent do contemporary surveillance relationships suggest that empires have indeed ended, or to what extent is surveillance being used to perpetuate imperialist relationships, including colonial ones? To the extent that they do, can the realignment of global power towards the BRICS alliance provide countries that have been at the receiving end of imperial power with an alternative, progressive pole of attraction that charts a different path on surveillance? Using documents leaked by Snowden, the whistleblower site Wikileaks and international non-governmental organisation Privacy International's Surveillance Industry Index, as well as insights from investigative journalists on signals intelligence, this paper suggests some answers. These questions matter because, if dragnet surveillance is perpetuating unequal global relations and exacerbating global insecurity, then we really do need to question Five Eyes claims that such surveillance is necessary to ensure global prosperity and security (Five Eyes Ministerial 2018).

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Id: 20095

Title: Silencing Dissent: Precarious Condition of Digital Workers in India and Communication Policies in IT-ITES Companies

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper studies the precarious condition of workers of the Information Technology (IT) and IT enabled service (ITES) industries in India. It argues that communication policies in Indian IT-ITES companies are responsible for the perpetuation of workers' exploitation. The codes of virtual and non-virtual communication insist on non-disclosure and limited political involvement. In order to prevent dissent, these companies use their codes of conduct to silence their workers.

India is a major supplier of labor to global digital companies. However, compared to their counterparts in developed countries, Indian IT workers receive abnormally low wages (Agarwal). The unpredictable nature of digital work, the high rate of labor redundancy in project-based assignments and the looming threat of automation add to the persistent problems of arbitrary termination, mass retrenchment, disputable payment structure, and absence of health-care policies. These nearly-dispensable workers cannot protest against various unfair policies without violating non-disclosure agreements and risking their jobs. The policies even come with incomprehensible clauses and jargon, so that the employees do not get their full implications until it is too late.

The Government of India glorifies IT jobs, and generously supports these companies with land and infrastructure. However, in several Indian states IT workers are not allowed to unionize. Very recently these workers have begun to form online groups, like Forum for IT Employees (FITE) and Union for IT & Enabled Services (UNITES). Their bid to achieve the status of trade unions has met partial success. Members of these groups, who are still employed, cannot risk their jobs by speaking out against organizational atrocities. In his case study of two German companies, Infineon and Siemens, Sidney Rothstein claims that workers in tech-companies devise means that protect them from "challenging market conditions" even though liberalization robs workers of their power resources (2). My research, however, indicates that Indian IT workers have little success in dissent, because workers in developing countries face more insecure situations than their first-world colleagues.

Digital communication has minimized face-to-face interaction. The globally scattered workforce does not depend on geographical proximity. Besides, the shuffling of staff in project-based work in this industry reduces the scope for community-building. The companies also monitor internet and intranet communication of their workers. As a result, online communication of dissenting workers' groups also remains under surveillance.

The paper analyses the communication policies of the three major Indian IT companies—Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro and Infosys. It examines how these companies with their strict

censure of workers' virtual and non-virtual interaction infringe on the latter's right to communicate. The paper uses data collected from a questionnaire-based survey and interviews of Indian tech-employees. Empirical observations from visits to these companies also support this qualitative study.

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Id: 20098

Title: The Extended Audiovisual: dynamics of regulation and supply in Argentina.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The present work is framed in the theme "Power, policy and medical regulation" and presents an analysis of the changes in the regulatory framework and the dynamics of the Extended Audiovisual market (EA) in Argentina. The objective is to systematize current policies for the sector and the forms of production / distribution / commercialization of the different players in the convergent context and strongly concentrated in the structure of the property.
In the first place, the theoretical and methodological elements that frame the research are presented. Second, there is the proposal to think about the concept of EA. The actions implemented in the area of regulation during the management of Mauricio Macri (2015-2019) are systematized below. Finally, identify the EA market forms and remember the question regarding the configuration of the competitive market.
In a process in which communication systems have become increasingly important for the organization of the aspect of daily life, their system undergoes a series of transformations for communication and another for regulatory dilemmas in Latin American countries -more than ten years of the "turn to the left" - experiencing the changes in politics that affect communication policies, their markets and the way in which the right of the audiences is addressed.
The paper addresses the question: How do EA offers fit into Argentina's current regulatory framework? And continues in is the palette available another element in the transition or all that there will be in the Argentine market used to pay to receive audiovisual content? The communication system is a focus in the sense of the notion "communication policies" understood as the result of a dynamic process in the sense of the interaction between the different actors, the integration and the development of communication. The regulation and configuration of media systems (Califano, 2015).
The configuration of the EA is understood from the emergence and expansion of technologies that break inertia and forms of productive organization and consumption in different cultural industries (Marino, 2016). It is integrated by the Film, Television (open and payment, analogue and digital) sectors and online audiovisual content distribution services.
In methodological terms, the list of reforms to the normative plexus of the EA is presented from the assumption of Mauricio Macri to the present. The mechanism or institutional instrument and the actor involved in the decision will be identified. In this way there will be inputs to describe the regulation. Then the players of the market and the configuration of an offer will be identified with leaders who dominate their original sectors and advance - groping - to other spaces -the convergents- in which they try to domesticate behaviors of the audiences. And in those who run into the difficulty of seeing mature business models.

Id: 20182

Title: The Political Economy of Live Streaming: Exploring Live Interactions and 'Platform Capitalism' in Live Streaming Platforms in China.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Watching online videos is a major category of entertainment nowadays, and in recent years new forms of video platforms—user-generated live streaming platforms such as Twitch, YouTube Live, and Douyu have rapidly gained popularity. These platforms allow individual users to live stream their real-time activities including singing, gaming or talk show. Furthermore, audiences can interact with broadcasters by commenting and through donations (Nascimento, 2014). These real-time reciprocal practices facilitate new ways of interaction (Kaytoue et al, 2012; Smith et al, 2013).

To date, researches on streaming have explored how interactive technologies facilitate live interactions (Baruah, 2012; Kaytoue, Silva, Cerf, Meira Jr, & Raïssi, 2012; Shamma, Kennedy, & Churchill, 2012; Summa, 2011; Weisz et al., 2007), the democratic potential of this new mode of broadcasting and interaction (David, Kirton, & Millward, 2017; Gehl, 2014; Martini, 2018; van Ditmarsch, 2013), and politics within live streaming (Witkowski, 2011; Zhang & Hjorth, 2017; Zou, 2018). However, there are few systematic researches on the political economic background of live-streaming in China. In China where live streaming industries are booming, donations from audiences which was initially only a way to support streamers, has emerged as a major revenue generation method for platforms. Rather than merely focusing on advertising revenue, platforms extract and analyse user data to develop multiple strategies to lure donations. Key stakeholders including streaming platforms and agent companies are increasingly monopolizing the industries, commodifying donations, and ultimately shaping streaming practice and live interactions. The complex relationships between talent agencies, regulators and the power structure in live streaming industries of China calls for closer analysis, especially in light of the trend for platforms to influence the broader democratic and pluralistic potential of live streaming practices.

Thus, this article asks the following questions:
1.How is live streaming and the practice of donations being commodified in Chinese media industries and socio-cultural contexts?
2.What are the relationships between different agencies, regulation and power structures that can affect streaming practice and live interaction?

Drawing on the political economic perspective, this paper reviews the concept of 'platform capitalism' (Srnicek, 2017) to understand the transition of live streaming industries in China, particularly the tendency for streaming platforms and agent companies to expand rapidly, as well as incorporating more and more streamers who were previously independent amateur broadcasters.

This research draws on in-depth interview with streamers and people from different agencies including streaming platforms, agent companies, and government departments in order to explore the complex interrelationships between the power structures in live streaming industries of China. Moreover, the research draws on the additional resources of governmental policies, industrial reports, and other relevant legal documents.

Id: 20253

Title: The Business Model of Hybrid News Enterprises

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: According to the Pew Research Center (2014) 308 non-profit news organizations emerged in the United States between 2005 and 2012. Among these are national, local and hyperlocal news enterprises that are hybrids, because they have common characteristics with commercial, public and alternative news media. In fact, they are partially financed from commercial revenue, driven by a public interest mission, and critical of commercial and public institutions from which they are independent. Many scholars attach great significance to the emergence of these news media focussed on public affairs and investigative reporting (e.g. Almiron-Roig, 2011; Benson & Powers, 2011; McChesney, 2016; Pickard, 2014) as they represent a (partial) solution to the crisis of the commercial news model, and the consequent under-production of high quality public affairs and investigative reporting needed by democracy (Benson, 2017).
The contribution to knowledge of this paper is twofold: first, it aims at showing the effectiveness of applying a new methodology to the study of news media organizations, in particular, with a focus on non-profits. This methodology requires the use of the Social Enterprise Model Canvas (Sparviero, 2019), a Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) designed to understand Social Enterprises. The latter were used as model for the establishment of the low-profit limited liability (L3C) fiscal status, and they are hybrids because they represent the intersection of non-profit organizations partially financed by commercial revenue and for-profit organizations with social priorities. Second, using the SEMC and secondary data from the organizations themselves and existing analyses (e.g. in Columbia Journalism, Journalism Research News, PEW Research, Nieman Lab, the Poynter) the paper presents the business model of two hybrid news organizations and success stories: ProPublica and the Texas Tribune. The use of the SEMC on these two organizations allows for uncovering two different business model's archetypes of non-profit news media.

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Id: 20288

Title: [Panel] Infrastructure Power in Video Markets, Panel description

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The competitive terrain of internet-distributed television has disrupted existing audiovisual policy regimes and introduced new sites in which firms exert power and produce noncompetitive marketplaces. This panel addresses shifts in the power relationships and emerging policy concerns and challenges related to what Larkin (2013) terms "the architecture for [media] circulation." Key issues to be addressed include competition effects, governance, and marketplace access implications of internet-distributed video services. We also consider the intersecting issues for cultural and consumer policy. Together, the four papers provide critical analysis of practices emerging in a rapidly evolving field. The transnational reach of many devices and content services and the national or regional (EU) organizations of regulatory regimes challenges our ability to identify policy approaches and solutions for these issues, and this panel connects scholars from

North America, Europe, and Australia in order to explore these issues in multiple political economic contexts.

Internet-distributed television has disrupted existing audiovisual markets and policy regimes, introducing new sites in which firms exert power and produce non-competitive marketplaces. Although media "infrastructure" is commonly conceived of as the facilities such as wires, roads, and mechanisms of video delivery, the complicated and opaque technological relations that support app availability, navigation interfaces, and terms of service and end user licensing agreements are also components of the comprehensive infrastructure required to access internet-distributed video. In this sense, software becomes an essential infrastructure for video distribution, in a context where "platform-based services acquire characteristics of infrastructure, while both new and existing infrastructures are built or reorganized on the logic of platforms" (Plantin et al 2018: 293).

The papers identify and define new operations of power that raise significant social, political, economic and legal questions. They also aim to establish a starting point for policy considerations. They are grounded in analysis of existing practices of industry players, institutions and audiences about which there have been growing concerns and calls for policy action. Technological infrastructures and the corporate relations connecting them have significant power in determining how users access internet-distributed video, what they access, how they are guided to content, and what remains inaccessible. While techno-industrial substrates of video delivery are not new considerations for audiovisual policy, the arrival of internet-distributed video has introduced new technological capabilities that challenge existing policy frameworks and regulatory solutions. Previous distribution technologies—broadcast, cable, and satellite—offered relatively standardized transmission. A consequence of the apparently enhanced choice internet distribution enables is that there are many more sites where entities such as device makers, app makers and related marketplaces, and Internet services providers can exert power that exacerbates inequalities.

Id: 20292

Title: Android TV: Competition and Control in Smart TV Platforms

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: This paper approaches the question of infrastructure power through a case study of Google's smart TV platform, Android TV. 'Smart TV platform' is an industry term used to refer to the operating system of a smart TV or connected device, which controls elements including the home screen, app store, recommendations, and search engine. The leading smart TV platform is Google's Android, which commands a 40% share of the global connected TV software market (IHS Markit 2018). This 40% market share includes not only devices running Android OS (the open-source mobile/tablet OS that is used on millions of mobile phones and generic streaming boxes, especially those manufactured in China) but also the newer Android TV platform, a version of Android custom-built for smart TVs. Android TV is now the platform of choice for TV manufacturers including Philips, Sony, and Sharp. It is also being widely adopted by pay-TV operators for use in their set-top boxes.

This paper asks: what are the implications of Google's infrastructure power in television markets, and how is this power realised at the level of platform design, integration, and interoperability? Focusing on Android TV, the paper will explore how the Android TV interface aligns with Google's wider commercial ambitions and how this is realized through selective preinstallation of apps, search bias, and discoverability. I then draw on recent research in television, software and communication policy studies to identify the policy challenges faced by what Krämer and Schnurr (2018: 516) describe as "discriminatory practices at the OS layer".

Conceptually, the paper aims to demonstrate how the classical concerns of media distribution research – such as cultural gatekeeping, access to culture, and political economy of distribution (Williams 1974, Garnham 1990) – are both enduring and evolving in the age of smart TVs and Internet of Things. A key argument animating this case study is that television research can benefit by moving its gaze 'down the stack' towards the uncharted territory of hardware and software integration.

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Id: 20293

Title: New Forms of Infrastructural Power: The Case of Screen Interfaces

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Internet-distributed video and its affordance of non-linear distribution expand the intermediary interventions of electronic and interacative progamme guides (EPGs and IPGs) and decentralize distribution in comparison with the linear schedule that remains typical of broadcast, cable, and satellite distribution. This decentralization of viewing choice allocates infrastructural power to entities such as device makers and portal services that have not exerted such power over television in the past and has reconfigured the power of those that organize content. While scholarship has analysed the agenda-setting and gatekeeping power of legacy media companies, the role of device makers and portal services in relation to the these media powers is poorly understood and the conditions of their agreements are often obscured from public view. This paper examines how emerging industrial practices surrounding video navigation interfaces reconfigure encoding power, suggests how these practices can be systematically examined, and proposes policy goals and regulatory mechanisms in response.

Id: 20294

Title: Power Dynamics Between Online Audiences and Television Distribution Platforms: Who Is Disrupting Who'

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: To cut or not to cut? This is the question that many viewers are asking themselves nowadays. With 'cord-cutting,' I am referring to those viewers who are 'cutting the cord' of traditional television cable or a satellite video subscriptions in favour of Over-The-Top (OTT) alternatives, accessed through a broadband connection in the form of streamed or downloaded content. Mainstream discourse around this phenomenon often presents one-dimensional interpretations of cord cutters as a fringe audience, overstating the force of its change. This paper advances a more complex and nuanced position, conceptualising cord-cutting as symptomatic of a larger redefinition of television as an institution, an industry and a techno-cultural form.

In their attempt to circumvent the established television systems and their institutional and governance frameworks, cord-cutters are embracing the revolution promised by those internet platforms that claim to free them from spatio-temporal constraints and enable them to control and personalise their televisual experiences. However, by doing so, cord-cutters are entering (and altering) a complex power interplay that is shaping both the economic environment in which the innovation and competition of today's online television industry takes place, as well as its driving set of principles. The Internet, at its dawn, was created as an "anti-television" (Sandvig 2015), a network based on a common set of values, a non-profit ideology and sharing philosophy which ideologically appealed to the 'cord-cutting revolution'. However, ongoing developments of the Internet network are transforming it into a global mass entertainment medium, "the Internet of Entertainment" (Noam 2017), which is centrally organised, operated by commercial providers and driven by private interests. This evolution is partially influenced by a series of industry strategies implemented to recapture the growing ranks of cord-cutting audiences. Triple- or double-play bundling offers, cross-platform distribution strategies like "TV Everywhere" (also known as authenticated streaming or VOD service); horizontal and vertical integrations are just some of the strategies implemented by existing players to recapture these audiences.

In this context, this paper has a twofold goal. On the one hand it aims to culturally and theoretically frame the television cord-cutting trend, conceptualizing it as a burgeoning counter-public whose 'symbolic power' (Bourdieu 1990; Couldry 2003) is re-shaping the socio-technical construction of television and prompting television networks to further invest in Internet-distributed services. On the other hand, the paper critically addresses how these dynamics of resistance and resilience between cord-cutters and television distribution platforms reveal a mutually transforming effect that has political economic implications for the evolution of the online media ecosystem. Indeed, within this multi-layered system, gateways and nodes of control are multiplying, raising fundamental

questions on the gatekeeping role of Internet platforms and calling for potential policy interventions (Barzilai-Nahon 2008; Laidlaw 2010).

Id: 20295

Title: Are the European Union's Platform Policies Sufficient to Ensure Competition and the Public Interest in Media Markets'

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The economics of media has fundamentally changed over the past five years. Whereas broadcasting and also newspaper publishing markets were previously two-sided markets, largely working on the basis of supply and demand, platforms have added multiple layers to these two-sided markets. Amazon, Google and Facebook have created platform ecosystems in which they dictate what is offered on what conditions. They do not only act as intermediaries, but occupy a multitude of gatekeeping functions and are in control of customer relationships, with data being a crucial currency in their platform ecosystems. The issue of platformization as well as the consequences of this development for legacy media has provoked considerable attention in communication sciences, legal studies, and economics. Admittedly, there is some platform hype or mania, but the dominance of some of these super platforms in markets such as search, social media, and e-commerce should not be underestimated either. Given the power of platforms, several scholars and also numerous media companies have called for more European regulation of platforms (e.g. Evens & Donders, 2018; Srnicek, 2017). Not all platforms are the same, however. There are notable differences between AT&T / Time Warner (post merger), Amazon and Netflix. Platforms can behave in pro-competitive, but also in anti-competitive manners. The main research question of this paper is to assess which platform policies the European Commission has developed over the last couple of years and whether its policies are taking into account the differences in platform power. We, first, elaborate a definition of platform power against the background of media markets and identify critical loci of power. We, secondly, analyse the European Commission's initiatives to deal with platforms. On the basis of a qualitative document analysis, we scrutinize (1) the inclusion of platform issues in existing regulatory frameworks such as the Audiovisual Media Services directive and the GDPR; (2) the development of platform-specific rules such as guidelines ensuring fair trading practices and transparency in P2B (platform-to-business) relations; and (3) the treatment of platforms in competition policy. Our main finding is that the European Commission adopts superficial rules on protection of minors on the one hand and old recipes of ex post behavorial remedies in case 'something goes wrong' on the other. This will most likely not suffice, from both an economic and more societal point of view, to overcome the structural deficiencies of some platforms.

Id: 20310

Title: Telefónica: new business strategies as a "company TV' and content producer

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The outputs of the cultural industries are not goods like the rest, since "they administer visions of the world and, therefore, are inseparable from a reflection on their reception conditions". This maxim of Wolton (2004) serves as a conceptual anchor to address, in the environment of analytical proposals linked to corporations, their capital, media power and cultural industries, how some of the transformations that, in these decades of the new century, have occurred in the media environment.

To do this, using the methodology of "case study" and non-participant observation, as well as the epistemic foundation of the Political Economy of Communication (PEC) (Mosco, 1996) and a thorough bibliographic review, the case of the Spanish Telefónica is addressed, with the objective to analyze whether the transformation of the company into a content company (although also as an optical fiber and data provider) has been a wise decision, considering that its competitors Vodafone and Orange have partially demarcated this strategy, or if, on the other hand, Telefónica has enough elements to become a global player, or at least a regional player, as the great Spanish-speaking provider.

To that end, they will be tracked from the first interests of Telefónica to acquire their own content with the creation of its subsidiary Admira (1995) and its change of name by Admira Media in 2001, until the creation of Telefónica Studios, dedicated to producing films and series for its television channels in Spain and Latin America, and the acquisition of 56% of Canal + in 2014 from the Prisa group, and the fact that it became, more recently, a large platform for sports content, thanks to having taken control of the best packages of the Spanish Football League and the Champions League.

In addition, this paper makes a leap in terms of critical and prospective judgment, which gives it a plus of specific weight and that arises in these terms: the profound transformation of Telefónica, under the Movistar brand, made it a formidable competitor in the Spanish market, but also in Latin America. It seems, however, that today, the drift of the company can tend more to the classic activity of online video store, with its 110 million mobile customers across the Atlantic.

Its strategy is to allocate an amount of seventy million euros per year to produce content. That is to say, they have a plan, in 2019, that would allow them to produce a dozen series per year, being able to make a premiere a month. For all this, in 2018 Movistar launched the series, through its Movistar TV platform and the mobile application Movistar Play, present in a dozen countries. But in that market is not alone, if the competition in Spain is strong, in Latin America you will not only meet with Netflix, but also with AT & T / Direct TV / HBO; Viacom / Paramount, and the next Disney video store, among others.

Key words: Media management, Communication structure, Telefónica

Id: 20333

Title: You Say Free Market Economics, I Say Financialization

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: For four decades, economic policy-makers have proclaimed the virtues of free markets and neoclassical economics. Politicians of center left and right have advocated policies which shrink the state, deregulate markets and international trade, free up corporations, release business 'wealth creators', and inhibit unions and others that stand in their way. Opposing them, critics have denounced the growing hegemony of neoliberalism and its social and economic consequences. As this paper argues, although both policy-maker and critical discourse has focused on free market logic, underneath, the more profound transformation of the economy has been financialization. This took place long before the financial crisis of 2007-08 and continues to reshape national economies in less visible but very significant ways.

The case study chosen is the UK economy. The paper briefly demonstrates the figures behind the growth of big finance and financialization in the UK and elsewhere. It then turns to the cultures and communicative networks that emerged historically behind it. It draws on two parallel studies: one on 30 top CEOs (FTSE 100 leaders) and one on 25 past government ministers and civil servants operating in the main economic departments of government (the Treasury and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)). The studies combine elite interviews, demographic audits of such figures, and content analysis of public statements, to flesh out an account of how both business and political leaders produced a very financialized version of neoliberalism. So, while ministers and business leaders publicly talked about freeing up markets, the mechanisms and practices they adopted delivered financialization.

In the case of government policy-making, during the 1980s a majority of ministers in charge of reshaping the Treasury and DTI had backgrounds and experiences in finance rather than industry. In subsequent years, a majority of top civil servants in these ministries came from and moved through international financial networks. Between them, rather than free up industries, markets and the economy, they put it more under the control of the international financial sector. In the case of CEOs, over several decades, an increasing number of top business leaders have come from finance and accounting, regardless of the specific industry sector they work in. Publicly they have regularly supported free market policies and those political parties which advocate them. Privately, they have lobbied for policies that put the interests of international investors over those of companies, employees and communities. Thus, in both cases, while public debate has focused on liberated, state-free economies, private elite networks have ensured that economic management and influence has been transferred instead to big finance. In effect, critical communication scholars need to focus more of their attention here.

Id: 20334

Title: The (Un)visible: Wealthy Business Leaders in Public Policy Making

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The wealthiest classes in society have recently become a subject of interest by virtue of the fact that they have distanced themselves economically from the rest. This paper is based on a study exploring the societal role of the wealthiest 0.1 percent in Finland and explores how wealthy business executives belonging to the 0.1 percent participate in political and public life. Drawing from a network analysis of business lobbies and 32 semi-structured interviews among wealthy business leaders, the paper explores how the top income business leaders participate in political advocacy and public affairs.

Overall, the results suggest that wealthy business executives play a prominent role in political advocacy: as they are prominent on the boards of business lobbies and industry associations, they hold key positions in formal advocacy. These wealthy executives also have favourable access to policymakers: they mingle informally with policymakers and tend to feel confident that their voice is being heard and that access to policymakers is granted when needed. At the same time, these executives are often reluctant to engage in public dialogue and are fearful of the dire consequences that could ensue from publicity. They tend to maintain strong levels of privacy, to the extent that they are unwilling to use social media, or if they do, usage is highly controlled. Many of them recounted unpleasant examples of media, journalism and publicity, and most refrained from using social media.

Overall, the wealthiest business executives make up a crucial part of the networks of the power elite – the leading decision makers in economic and political institutions. These power elite members appear to work in ways that are effective, though hidden from public view. In particular, wealthy business executives refrain from public expressions of political or societal views, although they hold strong views on politics, which they advocate through business lobbies, their advocacy groups as well as among informal elite networks comprised of economic and political elites.

The paper thus contends that public participation should be examined in its social and political context and should probe the questions of who participates and with what consequences. In an ideal democracy, while all citizens should have equal influence on government policy, this research demonstrates that policymakers may respond exclusively to the preferences of the affluent, whose participation remains hidden. Thus, the paper opens up a new realm of research on the need to examine the role of public participation and its true influence on policymaking in other countries and contexts.

Id: 20335

Title: Media, Financial Crises and Public Understanding of the Economy

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: When the British banking system was rescued in October 2008 there was much talk of a 'crisis of capitalism' and even newspapers such as the Financial Times featured articles advising readers to brush up on their Karl Marx. Yet a decade on from the crisis both Wall Street and the City of London have escaped major systemic reform and remain vulnerable to a repeat of the events of 2008. Meanwhile, a banking crisis with roots in excessive leverage and speculation rapidly metamorphosed into a fiscal crisis of the state leading to the introduction of austerity policies. These have helped drive political polarization and the growth of right-wing populist parties some of which espouse openly racist and/or anti-democratic policies.

This paper has two purposes. One will be to analyse the role of economic and financial journalism in influencing public knowledge and attitudes towards both the banking crisis and the subsequent rise in sovereign debt. As will be demonstrated, media reporting of the banking crisis told a pared back story focused on greed, risk taking and the need to restrict bonuses. Far reaching reforms to the sector were rarely raised and the City was routinely presented as a national asset with few voices questioning whether having such a large finance sector might have negative effects on other parts of the economy. Audience research showed many people struggled to understand reporting of the crisis, but what they had picked up - such as the view that the part-nationalisations had been the 'only option' or that the most important issue was to deal with bankers' bonuses - closely reflected media accounts.

The ability of economic journalism to influence public beliefs and attitudes could also be seen in relation to the rise in the UK deficit. Here, news accounts narrated a dramatic story of a country facing interest rate rises, abandonment by international creditors and even national bankruptcy - with the corollary that sharp cuts to the welfare state were unavoidable. Such views were again reflected in audience research. Although many participants resisted media calls for cuts to core elements of the welfare state such as the NHS or education, the message that the rise in the deficit had created an economic emergency was widely accepted. Furthermore, media accounts which demonised immigrants and welfare claimants whilst alleging widespread 'waste' in public spending helped to smooth acceptance of austerity policies by convincing people that cuts would fall on unpopular stigmatised groups and not impact 'frontline' services.

The second aim of the paper will be to reflect on what these results say about media influence, public understanding of the economy and the potential of public service broadcasting to foster a more informed debate on the economy. Particular attention will be focused on how the BBC might

help dispel some of the widespread misunderstandings about the contours of public spending and the relationships between debt, deficits, public investment and economic growth.

Id: 20336

Title: Invisible Power: Is Communication the Blindspot of Money and Finance'

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The primary aim of this paper is to outline the potential value of a communicative framework in understanding forms of money and finance. Both liberal and critical political economy recognise the central role played by monetary forms in capitalist society. Political economy of communication scholars have naturally emphasised the influence of financialization and the relentless demand for increased profitability on the media sector. Seminal scholars such as Dallas Smythe and Robert Babe have respectively noted that communication was a 'blindspot' of Marxist theory and economics more generally. This paper suggests there is a further blindspot within both political economy and communication studies itself in respect to the communicative aspects of money and finance.

Marx recognised that monetary forms and capital more generally. On the M-C-M' circuit, money structures class relations by enabling the extraction of surplus value from alienated labour. On the M-M' circuit, money forms also give rise to financial activities including the issuance of credit and securitization of debt. However, the Marxist framework (particularly the labour theory of value) does not adequately explain the origins of money forms or the creation of fictitious asset values.

The symbolic ontology of money and monetary transactions has been recognised by economic sociologists and anthropologists. However, particularly in the case of micro-level ethnographies, broader questions of how money is implicated in structural power is often overlooked. There is therefore a structure-agency tension between cultural accounts of monetary plurality and agency (e.g. Zelizer's insistence on multiple money practices and earmarks irreducible to social structure) versus structural political economic accounts of money as a power structure (e.g. Fine and Lapavitsas).

Some sociologists (e.g. Parsons, Habermas, Luhmann) have considered money as a communicative form in a systemic, functionalist sense. However, the approach taken here emphasises the communicative aspects of the social relations underpinning monetary forms and draws on the work of Rotman, Ganssman, Kaplan, Schwartz, Goux and Bryan & Rafferty in focusing on the shared codes and semiotic processes of equivalence and reflexivity involved in monetary and financial transactions.

The article therefore proposes a form of cultural political economy foregrounding the constitutive, reflexive communication processes in monetary and financial processes. This will then be deployed to analyse and contrast examples of state-backed/private credit-based money systems (regular currencies) with examples of community-based micro-credit systems (e.g. Grameen), local

currencies (e.g. the Bristol Pound) and crypto-currencies (e.g. Bitcoin). In doing so the paper will highlight the invisible power-relations implicit in monetary forms and identify potential forms of co-option and resistance.

Id: 20337

Title: [Panel] Elite (Re)Definitions of the "Economic' in Public Discourse, Panel Description

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: This panel aims to provide new perspectives on media political economy by investigating how elites define and construct notions of the economic and financial. Panellists looks at elite (re)definitions of all things 'economic' in both public discourse and less visible elite networks. Thus, the panel investigates how those in power define and redefine public and network perceptions of the economy and its component parts. The ability to determine what economies and markets are, their shape, health, practices and means of evaluation, has clear implications for economic policy and regulation. It is also deeply implicated in the rise of inequalities within and between societies and the ever-growing gap between the super-rich and the rest.

Each of these papers investigates these processes of elite definition, redefinition and mis-definition in alternative economic and financial settings. In each case all is not quite what it seems. On the one hand, visible public discourse redefines and mis-defines economic matters to the benefit of particular elite beneficiaries. Public pronouncements deflect attention from private elite lobbying and quite different practices. Powerful elites gain more from working invisible networks of political decision-makers and institutional regulators. On the other hand, agents within elite networks compete to determine how healthy economies and markets function, the key tools and technologies of measurement and evaluation, and the most appropriate regulatory instruments. Those who gain definitional hegemony also gain crucial market and capital advantages, not just over other elites but also over wider publics.

Each paper is based on solid empirical studies of sites and networks where elites have been instrumental in (re/mis) defining the economic. Each uses multiple methods to gain key insights into these visible and invisible processes. Anu Kantola, uses a mix of network analysis and elite interviews to investigate how business elites (the 0.1%) in Finland attempt to influence policy-makers. Her paper suggests that invisible modes of influence via private networks are frequently more effective than public pronouncements as many corporate power-brokers prefer to remain out of the public eye. Mike Berry analyses the construction and consumption of economic journalism in Britain in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-08. Using a mix of content analysis and audience research he demonstrates how media redefinitions of the causes of the financial crisis helped to then justify economic austerity to publics.

Aeron Davis argues that, for several decades, while policy-makers and their critics have focused on free markets and neoliberalism, economies have been reshaped more by big finance and financialization. He draws on elite demographic data and some 60 elite interviews with government ministers, civil servants and top CEOs to show how and why this shift took place. Peter Thompson

deconstructs the definitional power of financial elites as they construct and define values in state-backed and private, micro credit systems. He makes use of a cultural political economy framework to analyse case studies which illustrate the power-relations and distributive practices in money creation systems

Id: 20459

Title: Sharing or enclosing' 'analysis of the Platform Journalism of China by looking at news reversal on social media WeChat

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: China is seeing the "Internet plus" economy advocated by Chinese government. Emerging technology companies represented Alibaba and Tecent in China find the way to take the huge market share and are changing the landscape of the society. Platform system represented by five Chinese internet companies nicknamed as "big five" is leading the platformization of the global society（Jose Van Dijck, 2018）.

Economy of scale and sharability represent the essential doctrine of platforms. The obscure notion of sharing "is merely a new quality of the digital economy: platform capitalism" (Sascha Lobo, 2010). For most platforms, success is not the result of the free play of supply and demand but of specific algorithms supposedly simulating the market mechanism (Sebastian Olma, 2014).

A noticeable phenomenon is the platformization of journalism currently. The platform brings the news production and news dissemination together and dictates both the business model of the company and the ubiquitous news influence over the society.

The paper intends to look at the most prominent social network of China: WeChat, to analyze if the internet business model advocated by Chinese government as "embodying the internet spirit" could facilitate the building of the public sphere, step up the participation in a civil society, and being disruptive of the old order and inequity. In China, government always plays a crucial role in journalistic industry. For instance, the government ruled that people should not forward the self-made current political news on WeChat (News Tribune, 2016).

WeChat is owned by Chinese internet giant Tencent and boasts 700 million monthly active users, and is the dominant messaging service in China (Data tracker Quest Mobile). As more than 62% Americans obtain news through social media like Facebook (Emily Bell, Taylor Owen, 2017), in China, WeChat is the most commonly used platform press for people to get the news. Chinese scholars believe the original journalistic industry of triangle of "public-legacy press-government" has been replaced by the longer chain of "public-platform press-legacy press-government" (Wan xiaoguang, 2017).

WeChat establishes an overpowering social network by sharing news articles through instant communication, forwarding, liking and it's moments. Journalism then has been reshaped and taken on new characteristics. News reversal is a phenomenon usually seen on platform press, which refers to the dramatic inversion to the opposite narrative of the original news report. The paper would take an up-to-date case of the news reversal, hoping to decode how news reversal happens, what is the dynamics between news reversal and the platform press, and how the news reversal reflects and affects the society.

Methods of literature analysis, text analysis, focal interview and case study will be adopted to help answer the research questions. A 10-member focal group, all WeChat users, will be interviewed to ask about the participants' news consumption and the comment on the news event.

The possible finding of the research is that sharing platform press WeChat is actually enclosing territory to secure the profit, while the sharing nature of seeking equity has been lost.

Id: 20524

Title: The Mexican Film Industry 2000-2018. Resurgense or assimilation'

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper presents the structure, development and performance of the Mexican film industry (MFI) during the first seven teen years of the twenty-one century. It addresses the markets and the most salient companies that control them (Televisa, Cinepolis and Hollywood majors). In addition, the study looks at the participation of the Government, which is involved in the development and growth of the industry through cultural policies set in place to support the film industry. The primary goal of this research is to analyze the Mexican film industry in the context of the dominance of the free market logic's and dynamics, particularly under free trade agreements (NAFTA and USMCAN) as well as new scenarios of digital platforms. The discussion of the research address the issues of the performance of the MFI as an assimilated market of US Film industry or as the resurgence of a National Industry that was almost vanished during the 90. In other to discuss this issue the paper analyzed production and exhibition empirical data as well as economic figures from 2000 to 2017 under the guidelines of the political economy of cinema.

Id: 20531

Title: Is reader-revenue revolution really here' A comparative analysis of newspapers reader payments in an attention economy

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The dominance of Google and Facebook in the major Western digital advertising markets has forced news companies to increase their investments on audience monetisation (ACCC, 2019; Hindman, 2018; Author, 2018a; Winseck, 2018). In the context of the political economy of attention, this paper investigates whether news publishers income models have been revolutionised from advertising to reader-supported model. Houston believes that "the reader-revenue revolution is a reality" and suggests that readers have aided news companies to overthrow "tyranny of old ad-only business models" (Houston, 2018). Similarly, the International News Media Association (INMA) observes that disruption in the digital advertising markets has changed the "revenue mix in our industry from its historical equilibrium to one where audience revenue plays a larger role" (Lindsay, 2017, p.9). Additionally, Newman reports that focus on reader revenue means "a huge change of focus for the industry" (Newman, 2019, p.5). However, some recent studies contradict the reader-revenue revolution rhetoric by showing that advertising has remained a "critical part of online revenue" (Nicholls et al., 2018).

This paper examines to which extent reader-revenue revolution is happening. In political science, revolution proposes a sudden change from one constitution to another and this paper investigates to which extent the claim of reader-revenue revolution is valid (Houston, 2018). The paper utilises quantitative data from media companies financial documents and announcements as well as from the relevant previous studies (Author, 2014). First, the paper compares digital subscriptions numbers of the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, the Financial Times, The Times and The Australian in a six year period from 2012 to 2018 to assess revenue from implemented reader payments as well as digital advertising. Secondly, the paper examines voluntary reader memberships and donations to explore if these are aiding news publishers such as The Guardian to move into audience-supported model.

Preliminary findings of the paper propose that newspapers digital subscriptions have substantially increased in a six-year period from 2012 to 2018, and their digital earnings have grown accordingly. The paper offers some evidence that news publishers are moving away from advertising based to reader based revenue model, but it contests the view of the emergence of the reader-revenue revolution.

News companies reliance of monetisation of readers attention has benefits and pitfalls. Benson believes that the "upside" of digital subscriptions is that readers pay money "for something they really want or need", but the downside is that "subscriber funded news caters to relatively high-income, high-education elites" (2019, p.146). Newman agrees that "the rise of paywalls is shutting more people off from quality news and making the internet harder to navigate" which can lead to news avoidance (Newman, 2019, p.6). As Hindman asserts in his book "the digital attention

economy increasingly shapes public life… and ultimately which news and democratic information citizens see" (Hindman, 2018, p.5). Earlier academic studies have found that digital subscriptions, paywalls, may restrict the public's access to certain news and information whereas voluntary reader payments are normally supporting non-profit or digital media outlets which offer content for free to the public (Author, 2018b). Increases in reader payments, both in involuntary or voluntary, have societal consequences which require further investigation.

Id: 20541

Title: Significant Achievements in EU Creative Industries' A review of Juncker Commission's Policy Performance

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Cultural and creative industries are a strategic sector for the European Union. They represent the third largest employer in the EU; contribute significantly to investment, innovation and creation of jobs; provide positive spill over effects in other sectors, such as digital, technology and tourism; strengthen the image of Europe and the European way of life abroad; facilitate exports; and they are a stepping stone to preserve the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe, strengthen European identities and sustain social cohesion (European Commission, 2018: 1).

The EU has different programmes to promote and support this sector . Among them, the Creative Europe programme plays a central role. It was born in 2014 – under the presidency of Jean-Claude Juncker – when it brought together three already existing programmes – MEDIA, Culture and MEDIA Mundus – in order to create a "single comprehensive instrument to increase efficiency, more effectively seize the opportunities of the digital shift and address market fragmentation" (Kern, Le Gall & Pletosu, 2018: 2). It has been for the first-time evaluated mid-term by the European Commission (2018). Based on an external and independent assessment, the main purpose was to determine the progress in its implementation, as well as outline "its achievements while addressing its main shortcomings" (European Commission, 2018: 1).

Attempting to analyse European media policies is not an easy task because, as previous scholarly work concluded, there is "no single competent authority…; no single law with which European media sectors need to comply; no unified actor interests; and no shared objective underlying European media policy" (Donders, Loisen & Pauwels, 2014: 5). Indeed, it is a multi-level and multi-stakeholder environment sustained by a diversity of actors and legal instruments that have a range of "intangible interests of an economic, social, ideological and cultural nature" (idib.: 9). Consequently, the approach taken in this paper is institutional political economy as it allows to understand "the relationships of power, control of resources, and interplay of interests" (Thompson, 2011: 1).

The European elections are approaching and, thus, in some months' time (May 2019) Juncker's 5-year mandate will end. Drawing on findings derived from review of academic literature and secondary data, archival research and policy analysis, this research aims to evaluate the Juncker Commission's performance in relation to the Creative Europe programme: what has been done and

what has not been done. Moreover, this research will also provide an agenda of pending issues that the next elected European Commission's president should not overlook.
406 words

Id: 20683

Title: Economía y políticas de comunicación en Argentina: desregulación y concentración de los medios en el período 2015-2018

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: La discusión sobre los medios en Argentina suele mezclar los efectos fulminantes sobre la economía de los medios tradicionales que provoca la crisis global del sector, con particularidades de la cultura mediática nacional y la valoración de las políticas y reglas de juego cambiantes dispuestas por los últimos gobiernos, en particular los de Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2011 y 2011-2015) y Mauricio Macri (2015-presente).

Fruto de la combinación variable de esos tres factores es que surgen dos certezas: casi nada es hoy como era en el pasado en cuanto al panorama de los medios argentinos y, muy probablemente, casi nada será mañana como es hoy. Ni las rutinas productivas, ni la relación con los públicos que crea(ba) hábitos que Eliseo Verón categorizó como "contratos de lectura", ni los niveles y características de empleo, ni los dispositivos de edición, distribución y uso/consumo, ni la influencia cultural en sentido amplio conservan las regularidades que distinguieron la institucionalidad mediática durante todo el siglo XX y el inicio de este siglo.

La crisis global provocada por la digitalización y emergencia de plataformas en red de distribución de contenidos y el rol iconoclasta de conglomerados como Facebook y Google con su poder devastador para la lógica con la que se organizaban los negocios de los medios, suelen estar hoy en el debate. En cambio, se habla menos del ingrediente local que combina la idiosincrasia peculiar con las políticas públicas en un sector que en la Argentina es muy dependiente de las reglas de juego que marca el Estado.

Si se observa el mapa de medios al final del segundo gobierno de Fernández de Kirchner en diciembre de 2015 con el que fue troquelando su sucesor Macri hasta fines de 2018, se advertirá que no todos los cambios son fruto de la crisis global, ni son exclusiva responsabilidad de la tradicional estructuración mediática nacional o consecuencia directa de las políticas.

Pese al carácter liberal de su discurso, el gobierno de Macri tuvo una activa intervención en materia de políticas de comunicación, con numerosos decretos que eliminaron las restricciones a la concentración dispuestas por la ley audiovisual de 2009. Macri dio un giro de 180 grados en

políticas de comunicación respecto del kirchnerismo. Abandonó el discurso de la democratización de los medios y lo reemplazó por el desarrollo del mercado y la necesidad de atraer inversiones. Con el tiempo, incluyó la promoción de la convergencia como concepto orientador de una mayor eficiencia en sector que de acuerdo a su diagnóstico se encontraba "atrasado". Sin embargo, los sucesivos parches tampoco alcanzaron a diseñar un marco normativo realmente "convergente". La política de Macri en el sector se aparta de la senda trazada por países con legislaciones acordes a la convergencia tecnológica como Reino Unido o México.

El objetivo de la ponencia es mostrar los resultados de una investigación en la que relacionamos los cambios en las políticas públicas durante los últimos años con las modificaciones en la estructura de propiedad del sistema mediático y de telecomunicaciones, con un incremento de la concentración hasta alcanzar un nivel inédito no sólo en Argentina sino en toda Latinoamérica.

Id: 20722

Title: The Effect of the Financialization Period of 1983-2003 on the Formation of Today's Pro-AKP Media

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Media freedom is related to both government rule and the structure of media ownership. Today approximately 90 percent of Turkish media support the authoritarian AKP government that has been in power since 2003. Both the government rule (pressure on media and some anti-terror laws) and the existing media structure are comprehensively undermining diversity of expression. This study focuses particularly on how the financialization period of 1983-2003 led for the formation of the present pro-AKP government profile of the major media in Turkey.

Neo-liberal policies were introduced in Turkey in 1980 with the "Decisions of January 24" (eight months before the military coup of "September 12, 1980" which implemented heavy pressures and tortures on the labor movements and leftists) opening the way for a rapid expansion of advertising revenues; fast growing corporatization; cartel aggrements on distribution and advertisements; and anti-syndical reconciliation between two leading conglomerates (Doğan-Sabah Groups) .

At the same time, over the period 1983-2003, the financial sector became an important source of subsidises for media organisations with every 'big player' in the media sector owning at least one of bank, in addition to investments in key industrial and financial sectors such as energy, construction, and insurance. With the financial crisis of 2001, these media companies went into bankruptcy and their media revenues were concentrated in the hands of the 'autonomus' governmental fund the TMSF- Savings Deposit Insurance Fund - which was supportive of the AKP. It is argued here that this transfer of media revenues was the main driver behind the formation of a pro-AKP media .

Three major media groups -Sabah, Çukurova and Uzan- all had their revenues transfered to the TMSF. The other big group (one of the two main conglamerates)- Doğan Group has been keep alive up to 2018 primarily with continous downsizing, as a result of government pressures.The depth and diversity of the journalism has been further damaged by the nearly five thousand jounalistic job losses that followed the 2001 financial crash.

This paper explores how the political and economic dynamics that gathered momentum over the liberalisation and financialization period of 1983-2000, and the transformation of the media sphere they set in motion, paved the way for the centralisation of economic control over the media effected in the wake of the 2001 financial crisis, and led the formation of the present, almost univocal, pro-AKP government profile of the major media in Turkey today.

Id: 20759

Title: Cross-Media ownership in Indian Vernacular Media: An exploration in Diversity and Plurality

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This research presents a data-driven picture of the cross-media ownership concentration in 13 Indian language media using numerical data from Audit Bureau of Circulation of India (ABC) for Newspaper, Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) – for television and Radio Audience Measurement (RAM) for Radio. The paper attempts to lay bare the emerging cross-media monopolies across languages, regions and genres for use in formulating appropriate policy and regulation or at least media literacy amongst the consumers of media.

Diversity in India is enshrined in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution, which recognizes 22 languages within the country. English was retained as one of the two official language. As per Census 2011, the average literacy rate in India stands at 74.04%. It is lower for women and for rural areas – both of which are important bastions for democracy. A quick study reveals that the literacy agnostic electronic media is present only in 12 of the 22 vernacular languages. The two-language education policy ensures that an average Indian, at best, uses any two of the numerous languages to access media.

Though plurality and diversity are two different concepts and much debated, their link to and impact on public interest sees consensus from all. Pluralism is considered not as an objective but as a means to achieve democratic values (Valcke et al. 2009). Asymmetries of power, revaluing of dissent and right to contest—create an interesting basis for discussing the value of media pluralism in contemporary media policy (Karppinen 2012). Plurality can be defined as a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain an autonomous participation for the development of their traditional culture or special interests within the confines of a common civilisation. Diversity, on the other hand, simply means variety. The diversity in India in terms of language, food, and even media is well known. This paper examines the extent of ownership plurality in media in furthering media literacy amongst audiences.

The measurement of plurality and diversity in media industry has been one of the basic exercises for the policy makers in Europe. Since the 1990s, EU member states have been assessing pluralism in their internal media markets (European Commission 1992a). The media plurality monitor (MPM), as an auditing tool for the purpose, is a result of this continuous struggle. It highlights areas of current and potential risk and allows the member states to compare and address the situation from responses adopted elsewhere.

Kiran Prasad (2015) observes that media pluralism indicators such as ownership and control, media types and genres, cultural, political and geographic diversity have been recognized in principle, but India does not have a comprehensive media policy on media pluralism. As media infrastructure continues to expand post 2000 in a complex digital landscape, media ownership concentration in the vernacular media will assume significance as regulations may be needed for providing access to under- served communities. The risks to media pluralism in India lie mainly in the increasing media commercialization (TRAI 2013) and no restrictions on cross-media holdings (TRAI, 2014), which this paper attempts to measure.

 (501 words)

Id: 20867

Title: Circle the Square: Brand and Disney's Corporate Identity in the Platform Economy

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: For years The Walt Disney Company has invested and expanded into new media, companies, products and other entertainment markets, but their support for Circle with Disney, a platform explicitly regulating Internet use, represents a further encroachment into consumers' homes. The device wirelessly pairs all internet-connected devices, permitting adults to monitor internet usage (including websites, software and/or games) in order to filter or censor social media, gambling, dating, mature and other explicit or malicious content, all while tied to the Disney brand. This paper will explore Circle with Disney as a unique case analyzing how media brand and identity are implemented in the platformization of cultural production (Nieborg & Poell, 2018) in which the "penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into the web and app ecosystems" has fundamentally affected "the operations of the culture industries (p. 2)." This mixture of technical, economic and social factors surrounding the device allows it to extend, censor and limit content, while adhering to the Disney corporation's family-oriented brand.

This paper will first perform a "platform analysis" (van Dijck, 2013) of Circle with Disney in order to map and critically appraise the technology, users and usage, content and cultural form, ownership governance, and business model. This approach particularly highlights that appropriation of popular studios, implementation novel technology, and the sanitization of current properties (i.e. self-censorship) is an effort to maintain a more family-friendly and conservative image that not only allows the company to remain viable, but also validates the political economic advantages of aligning with the Circle device. The MyCircle app, for example, strategically favors Disney operated applications, but the company's alliance with the product also reinforces more conservative values for those interested in the product.

To understand the impact of such findings, first we will track the best uses of the device from consumers' perspectives through extensive exploration of public online forums (such as Reddit) and product reviews (such as Amazon and Best Buy). Additionally, a survey and semi-structured interviews with users about their impressions of "Disney," the company's influence on Circle, and the importance of exclusive Disney-oriented content offered through the device, will be performed. These interviews will offer insights into the consumers' culture, demography of users, the device's most popular uses, and finally its relationship to other compatible platforms.

Preliminary findings from surveys and interviews conducted have correlated strong consumer connections to the device as a result of Disney's association with the product. One owner of Circle with Disney emphasized that, "knowing it was a Disney product influenced [their] decision… because [they] trust the [Disney] brand."

Circle with Disney is non-existent, thus far, within scholarly research. Analyzing the product will elucidate Disney's relatively inchoate entrance into the platforms as a mode of cultural production and platformization of cultural production. However, with the growth of interconnected "smart devices" in the home, and particularly those associated with hallmark brands (Amazon, Google, Apple, etc.), research into how the nature of brand identity, corporate structure and the extension of platforms into physical space is more relevant than ever before.

Id: 20921

Title: Beyond Surveillance Capitalism: Labor and Environment

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The point of departure for this paper is the new tome, Surveillance Capitalism, by Shoshana Zuboff. Critics praise its revelations about the scale of behavioral surveillance that Facebook, Google and others carry out to maximize their control over a "behavioral surplus." Zuboff details how these corporations pillage our personal data like imperialists robbing the Third World of natural resources. Evgeny Morozov issued a useful counter to the critics' enthusiasm in a February 2019 Baffler article, noting that Zuboff's "surveillance capitalism" "emphasizes the former at the expense of the latter." Morozov also notices a "minor genealogical inconvenience for Zuboff" in that the term surveillance capitalism "had been previously used—and in a far more critical manner—" in an important essay by John Bellamy Foster and Robert McChesney.

My paper will address Morozov's and Foster and McChesney's concerns in more depth. But I also want to take the opportunity to examine two aspects of surveillance capitalism that have yet to be part of these inquiries. The problems of surveillance labor and the ecological costs of digital surveillance systems.

The problem of surveillance labor has been recognized in surveillance planning since the 1780s when Jeremy Bentham conceived the panopticon, a key advantage of which was keeping surveillance workers from feeling empathy for prisoners they were watching (Bentham, "Letter VI"). As Bentham put it, control over the under keepers anticipates a "prisoner…appealing to [their] humanity." When I researched analog personal data collection by marketing researchers in the 1990s, I confirmed that ethical concerns among some surveillance workers were inevitable and, at some point, could conflict with the system. The human interface with surveillance subjects has proven to be an unstable means for collecting personal data, as Edward Snowden's political and ethical awakening demonstrates.

In the 1990s, the CIA and NSA funded the "birds of a feather" project with grants to computer-scientists at Stanford who would eventually develop the algorithms that were key to Google's system for capturing personal data, or as their grant put it: "query optimization of very complex queries that are described using the 'query flocks' approach" (Nesbit 2017). What the CIA and NSA got in the bargain was a surveillance system that eliminated the human interface, a form of labor substitution potentially saving huge transactional and operational costs. And without human surveillance workers doing the spying, the ethical dilemma could be removed. With a dumb algorithm in charge, there's no one to think morally about the surveillance subject's humanity at the point of data collection.

The problem of the environmental impact of data collection is also in need of further exploration in the study of surveillance capitalism. In 2006, the NSA's Fort Meade headquarters—the largest user of electricity in Maryland—overloaded the system, causing outages. It's been a problem for years. Its massive facility near Bluffdale, Utah uses 1.7 million gallons of water daily and consumes 65 megawatts of electricity, with massive surges and power outages that destroyed equipment and delayed its completion until 2014 (Maxwell and Miller 2015).

Id: 20933

Title: Ready, Fire, Aim: Bringing the Digital Duopoly'Google and Facebook'to Heel (and Why Platforms are Not Publishers or Destroying the Media)

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Public inquiries around the world are casting a critical eye on the economic and political power that global digital platforms such as Google, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft and Netflix have accrued, and their potential impact on the sustainability of commercial journalism, the media industries, data protection and privacy, open markets democratic institutions and people's daily lives (ACCC, 2018; ETHI, 2018; UK DCMS, 2018; UK DCMS & IGC, 2018; UK ICO, 2018; US, 2018). The "International Grand Committee" convened by the UK House of Commons after the Facebook/Cambridge Analytica data breach exemplifies the point. Scholarly scrutiny of "digital dominance" is also mounting while calls to regulate the internet behemoths as publishers/media companies are finding a receptive audience (Bell & Owen, 2017; Flew, 2018; Gillespie, 2018; Hesmondhalgh, 2018; Khan, 2017; Moore & Tambini, 2018; Napoli & Caplan, 2017; Stucke, 2018). Furthermore, the clout of the mostly US-based internet giants' continues to grow amidst the shift from the desktop internet to the mobile internet, as they vertically integrate up and down the internet stack, and leverage their control over technical interfaces and protocols to dominate multisided markets (Nieborg & Helmond, 2018; Srinicek, 2017).

While the need to bring the internet behemoths under proper regulatory control is urgent, and the potential for stricter line of business restrictions or to break them up altogether should be seriously contemplated, two weaknesses compromise the case: First, while the internet giants' sky-high market capitalization, revenue and market share is often presented as if ironclad proof of the digital duopolies' command over the media and digital economy, such claims trade on the "fallacy of big numbers" with little sense of how those numbers fit within a larger whole. Indeed, while the global market capitalization for the internet giants puts them amongst the world's largest corporations, a closer look at their revenues, tangible assets and the size of their workforces reveals a very different image. Thus, while Google's 2017 global revenue was $110.9 billion (Facebook's $47B), AT&T's revenue was $168 billion in the US alone (including Time Warner)! While Google and Facebook's had a combined market share of 71% of the $88 billion US online advertising market, their share of the $210 billion in advertising spending across all media is under a third. Their combined share of the total $970 billion US media economy even less: 7%. They do not dominate the entire media economy (Canadian figures are similar). Second, the choir of calls to treat internet platforms as publishers/media firms obscures a potentially better analogy between them and banks. For instance, like banks, Google and Facebook are repositories of a major source of wealth: data. Perhaps, like banks, they should have fiduciary obligations to safeguard people's wealth/data/privacy? Furthermore, perhaps platforms should undergo regulated audits? This would open up their "black boxes" to reveal the critical infrastructure and algorithms that increasingly underpin the economy,

society and people's lives. Lastly, just as multinational banks create regulated national branches wherever they operate, perhaps Facebook and Google should be required to do the same?

Id: 20937

Title: The Political Economy of Peer Production

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The labor of peer producers has been described by some commentators as heralding the rise of 'info-communism,' but it can also be seen as part of a broader shift towards a 'new spirit of capitalism,' which values creativity at the expense of wage equality in the workplace. Whether people are working online without realizing it ('digital labor'), or weakening traditional labor safety nets ('sharing economy'), or are being co-opted by firms during hackathons ('open innovation'), the end result is the same: prosumers creating value gratis is a boon for firms. In this paper, I interrogate the intersection of peer production and capitalism to develop a critical political economy of peer production. To do so, I contextualize the rise of peer production within broader structural changes occurring within capitalism and evaluate the extent to which peer production contradicts, or reinforces, these global economic trends. For example, I draw from Marx's investigation of labor processes to compare and contrast the cooperative labor of industrial production and more recent forms of commons-based peer production. Furthermore, I draw from more recent theories of commons value circuits to position peer production as dialectically situated between capital and the commons, which highlights the ways in which communities of peer producers intersect with circuits of capital accumulation. As empirical evidence, I discuss numerous examples of peer production communities and the ways they either willingly interface with capitalist firms or the ways in which the value from their peer production activities is unwillingly extracted by capitalist firms. The overall goal of this survey is to develop a critical political economy of peer production that can be used for at least two purposes: 1) as an analytical tool for understanding the ways in which communities of peer producers intersect with capital accumulation circuits, but also 2) to call for a form of commons praxis, which would preserve the value created by communities of peer production and prevent its exploitation by capital or the state.

Id: 20983

Title: Digitally oriented capitalism: a critical analysis of social stratification and power relations in the digital space

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The paper deals with the social stratification transformation generated by extension of digital space and its invasion to other spaces of the social system (particularly, political and media ones). To analyze the Internet as a realm where new formats of power relations appear, the authors use a critical media theory approach. It considers the relationship between WWW users as a relationship between subjects and objects of the digital space.

Communication technologies provide new sources and new practices of digital power, thus shaping an updated version of the capitalist system. There is a multitude of researchers analyzing it. Among them M. Castells, T. Terranova, M. Hardt and A. Negri, P. Virno, N. Dyer-Witheford, C. Fuchs, D. Chandler, K.-X. Faucher, Y.M. Boutang, J. Dean, T.G. Smith. Following their works, authors develop the concept of exploiting attention digitally oriented capitalism actualizing it on three levels of the digital space (hardware, software and communicative one/wetware).

The authors conceptualize power in digital space as a power: 1) attracting and retaining Internet user's attention on a digital segment; 2) attaching users to some kind of symbolic structures; 3) inspire users trust in this structures; 4) and stimulating digital labor (i.e. everyday, voluntary, and unpaid digital prosumerism). We regard monetary equivalent (real and potential) of this power as digital capital. The authors claim that digital capital is the most important component of power to be invested and used by a digital actor. To capitalize digital power this actor has to fulfill essential functions to perpetuate his position in digital space stratification. These functions determine different social roles of the actor. On a communicative level, a subject can be a "traffic monopolist", a part of a "communicative elite", or a representative of a "digital brand".

Digital subjects are becoming influential power actors capable to compete with media for their audiences and with politicians for their public. Conversely, media- and political actors apply new practices trying to attract Internet users' attention to a certain digital segment, introduce rituals and behavioral patterns, build a reputable digital brand and exploit digital labor of retained audience. The authors analyze relations between all these actors on the following areas of intersection: political and media- spaces, digital and political spaces, digital and media- spaces. Area of all three spaces intersection, which generates very complex configurations and ambiguous subjects' constellations is considered in details. The media and journalists interact with the audience. Political actors apply power practices to the political public. Digital prosumers are influenced and moreover

managed by the winners in the competition for their attention, attachment, trust, and labor power. All these subjects being digitalized have to coexist and flexibly convert different types of capital. In the last part of the article, the authors discuss various empirical methods for 1) identifying digital power actors and their influence to Internet audience; 2) evaluating of mutual influence of digital, media and political power actors presenting on the Internet.

In particular, one of the promising areas is the use of mathematical models and Big data analysis.

Id: 21053

Title: Journalism as collective practice: towards a political economy of digital-first news production and workplace reorganisation in Australian media

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Australian journalists have a long history of organising for decent pay and working conditions in the belief that a strong workforce is the best guarantee of quality news that serves the public interest. Yet, labour relations are a neglected theme in journalism scholarship, and we have limited understanding of how organised journalists' intervene in workplace reorganisation processes to exert their autonomy, co-opt managerial imperatives, or restrain further commodification of their labour.

This paper addresses that gap by examining some of the political economy aspects of journalism's digital transformation. Tim Marjoribanks' (2000) relational model of new technology and workplace reorganisation theoretically frames the study. The model proposes that control over technological innovation in the workplace, and associated shifts in workplace relations, are dependent on the balance of power between labour, business, and the state, which in turn is context-specific. This proposition is tested through an investigation of the relationship between technological innovation and workplace reorganisation at Australia's two major media companies, Fairfax Media and News Corp Australia, following the shift to digital-first news production in mid-2012.

The paper argues while the two media companies were the key protagonists in this key moment of digital transformation of the Australian news media, their change objectives were constrained by the newspaper industry's vertiginous decline and intense competition with the tech giants. Conversely, union representation ensured the journalistic workforce had a voice in the change process with management, but membership decline and occupational change undermined this role, while also driving demands for union revitalisation and new approaches to labour relations. Further, unprecedented volatility in Australian politics, including five changes of Prime Minister since 2010, as well as legislative and policy changes relating to the regulation of work, has added further complexity to these power dynamics by keeping the issues of trade unions, insecure work and wage stagnation on the political agenda, along with media reforms.

Overall, the paper identifies that an analysis of the interaction of workplace relations and technological innovation within the broader institutional and societal context over time makes an important contribution to our understanding of the digital transformation of news media.

Id: 21164

Title: Manufacturing Consent in the Digital Era: Disinformation, Government Propaganda and the 2017 elections in Kenya

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper examines how the government used new media technologies to spread massive political propaganda and disinformation aimed at manipulating public opinion on key electoral issues in the 2017 general elections in Kenya. In the run up to the elections, the Uhuru Kenyatta administration and his Jubilee political party launched mega propaganda campaigns dubbed #JubileeDelivers and #GOKDelivers. The Presidential Delivery Unit (PDU) created an official website (www.delivery.go.ke) to publicize this extensive propaganda and created Twitter and Facebook pages as well as videos on YouTube. The public was also fed with numerous broadcast and print media political adverts on the government's achievements contrary to the Elections Act. In March, 2018 details emerged of the claims by Cambridge Analytica that it engineered a digital propaganda campaign that painted Uhuru Kenyatta in positive light while smearing the image of his main rival, Raila Odinga behind the scenes. Harris Media LLC, a far-right American digital media company also associated with Jubilee is believed to have created two propaganda websites (www.uhuruforus.com) showcasing President Uhuru Kenyatta's accomplishments and the (www.therealraila.com) which was deliberately meant to cause harm to Raila Odinga the person, incite and promote hate speech through fabricated lies.

The Kenyatta administration is also said to have deployed armies of "opinion shapers" to spread government views, drive particular agendas, and counter government critics on social media. Such online disinformation campaigns can create a fabrication of grassroots support for government policies on social media leading to the government essentially endorsing itself. By creating the false perception that most citizens stand with them, the government is able to manufacture consent on the need to advance antidemocratic changes to laws and institutions without a proper debate. For instance, there were attempts to intimidate the Judiciary after the annulment of the August Presidential election results, to change the electoral laws in favour of the incumbent, to demonize the opposition, clamp down on media and journalists perceived to be critical of the government and to justify police brutality on those who demonstrated against the election outcome.

Using Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, this paper examines the extent to which the government can be said to have used new media to manufacture consent on key electoral issues including the outcome of the 2017 elections in Kenya. Data will be collected through interviews with political analysts, and purposefully selected members of the public to establish the impact of government disinformation and Propaganda campaigns. A textual analysis of the various messages spread through Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube will also be done to establish the form and content of the propaganda messages. The Key research question will be: To what extent can

new media technologies be said to have facilitated the manufacturing of consent among voters through the use of half-truths, falsehoods, disinformation, misinformation and 'conspiracy' theories in the 2017 elections in Kenya?

Key Words: Propaganda Model, disinformation, Kenya, social media, elections

Id: 21256

Title: From "Internet Addiction' to "Creative Cultural Industry': The Ideological Reconstruction of Video Games in People's Daily

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Cultural industry is regarded as a new frontier of China's economic growth after the 2008 global economic crisis. Video games, particularly PC games and online games, had a striking development in China in the last decade. It was defined as an important part of "creative cultural industry" in 2009, and got much support from the state. However, before it became a favorite of state policy, video games got a negative assessment in public opinions and media reports. Such negative discourse contradicts state plans and hence must be attenuated if the state wants to promote video game industry.

This paper studies the ideological reconstruction of video games in People's Daily, the most important party organ and the mouth piece of Chinese central government. I accept Althusser' s (2009) analysis of ideological state apparatuses (ISA), and treat People's Daily as an ISA of the Chinese state. By critical discourse analysis and sociohistorical analysis, I aim to unveil how the discourse of video games has been reconstructed since 2009, and how the new discourse legitimizes video games according to the state's goal of economic and national development.

Video games in China are a contested space shaped by various stakeholders, including the state, the game industry, the public, and the player. As a result, as Zhang (2013) points out, it is always dragged by two contradictory cultural discourses. One is pathological that reflects a moral panic over youth Internet addiction, while the other is productive that focuses on the contribution of video games in growing a commodity-based capitalist economy and a national high-tech industry. However, Zhang doesn't elaborate on the discourses in terms of their logic and their correlation to different stakeholders, nor pay attention to the transformation of discourse in state owned media. Few other scholars have discussed these contesting discourses.

I used "video games" as the keyword to search the online database of People's Daily in the period of 1980 - 2018. I analyzed the themes and trends of all news reports I got. Then by typical-case sampling, I chose 10 news reports from the periods before and after 2009 respectively, and did detailed analysis on them.

My finding is that, the discourse before 2009 was mainly around Internet addiction, pathological players, and other harm of video games. After 2009, in line with socioeconomic situation and changing state policies, the emphasis of new discourse shifts from those negative assessments to the great contribution and potential of video games in driving economic growth and cultural revitalization, and in expanding China's international influence.

It is noticeable that the players who were once the focus of the pathological discourse, are almost omitted in the development discourse. It implies that economic and national development weighs down individual development, becoming the top priority of video game policies. Besides, the analysis of the ideological reconstruction shows a way in which the state, as one of the stakeholders, exerts its influence on video game industry. It can be seen as a stepping-stone for future studies that address the political economy of China's video game industry.

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Id: 21265

Title: Knowledge-Based Economies and Highly Qualified Migrations in Latin America

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Since the 1990s, labor markets in the central countries have been extending their recruitment fields into other countries to meet their growing demand for qualified workers, creating an international competition situation. Using the Marxian dependency theory, highly qualified worker international migratory flows are here claimed to account for the consolidation of a specific geography, which involves inclusion as a form of dominion in the development of knowledge-based economies. Social formations arising from qualified migrations bring to the fore both the issue of international division of labor and knowledge, and the contradiction between dependency and the development of knowledge-based economy agendas. Innovation, science and technology policies in central countries continually demand foreign qualified workers. Moreover, their human capital recruitment and retention policies reinforce the political and economic dependency of non-central countries

Id: 21278

Title: Using the Master's Tools: Social Media Advertising and the Rideshare Drivers United Organizing Campaign

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The rise of the so-called "gig economy" highlights how evolving modes of production enabled by mobile ICTs and algorithmic management challenge the classic wage-labor relationship and the legal infrastructure that has governed it. These phenomena have worked to expand what autonomist Marxists call "the social factory," where "labor is deterritorialized, dispersed, and decentralized" (Gill & Pratt, 2008, 7). Such transformations pose problems for traditional trade union organizing which, reflective of its Fordist origins, depends on face-to-face relationships developed on the shop floor and picket line. In addition, the legal changes that have taken place as part of this emerging regime disincentive established unions in the United States from committing resources to developing new organizing models.

This raises the question: might gig workers use the corporate-owned, commercially-funded digital infrastructure that is central to the social factory's expansion to organize democratically?

As part of an action research study funded by the Media Inequality and Change Center (MIC) at University of Pennsylvania, I worked alongside Rideshare Drivers United- Los Angeles, an emerging organization of Uber and Lyft drivers in the Los Angeles area, to understand the usefulness of social media advertising as a tool for building a democratic worker organization. Between October 2018 and January 2019, we spent $4000 on Facebook ads targeted to rideshare drivers. Clicking on the ad brought drivers to the organization's website, where they could become a member, take a survey, and schedule to have a phone call with a volunteer organizer. Organizing calls were made using an app created by an RDU volunteer.

Over the course of the study, RDU, founded in 2015, grew from approximately 1000 members to 2400 members. As more members learned about RDU through social media and contacted the organization, volunteers identified potential core organizers. Activists were recruited to make phone calls and then take on growing responsibilities within the campaign. The organizing drive resulted in a rally of 150 drivers outside of California Governor Gavin Newsom's office on January 30, 2019, the largest protest of gig workers in the United States to date.

While the app-based strategy was essential to the campaign's success, RDU organizers consistently emphasized the importance of utilizing these tools in order, ultimately, to build face-to-face relationships. Such an approach need not celebrate social media's supposedly democratizing impact (Shirky, 2009). Rather, this empirical study suggests that such strategies might help transform relations throughout the social factory by centralizing the dialectical relationship between labor and

communications systems, while highlighting the challenges posed by the lack of institutional organizing support.

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Id: 21359

Title: The Cost of Satire' Censoring Netflix.

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In December 2018, Netflix removed access to an episode of its news-comedy show Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj in Saudi Arabia. In that episode, the comedian blasts the Kingdom and its crown prince using satire. Operating at the legal request of Saudi regulators, Netflix complied but the episode remained accessible on multiple legal and illegal platforms. This Saudi decision was followed by a statement from the public prosecutor that harshly warns the producers or distributors of satirical content online. These decisions reveal how a state's concern with a specific genre has prompted an extensive cyber crackdown. As a genre, satire is not only meant to be humorous but to offer strong constructive socio-political critique for the benefit of the society as a whole. Between 1991-2005, Saudi state-owned television broadcast a highly popular satirical show, Tash Ma Tash (Fizz or not). Over the years, the show has adapted to specific changes within Saudi society commenting on various contentious issues, addressing women's status, the problems of the public sector and religious extremism. This show inspired several young Saudi comedians to establish their own YouTube channels to produce monologues, songs, sketches which were shared across social platforms. These developments renew questions regarding the reach of global media companies, their exercise of censorship, and their ability to circumvent nation-state regulatory systems. Of course, there are precedents with satellite television (e.g. Star TV), the internet (e.g. Google), and of course social media (e.g. Facebook). However, these cases also raise new questions regarding the legal status of streaming platforms, the reclamation of nation-state control over media, and precarious conditions of independent producers. Using a combination of institutional analysis and case studies, the paper examines the context, dynamics and implications of these decisions on global media streaming platforms and on local independent media producers.

Id: 21401

Title: State cinema policies, film business strategies, and audience's taste structures: Exploring comparative film programming analysis for understanding film popularity in three cities in Belgium and Czechoslovakia, 1952

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper, located at the juncture of historical political economy and "new cinema history" (Maltby, Biltereyst, and Meers 2019), focuses on the local distribution and exhibition networks of cities set in two distinct social-political contexts - Ghent and Antwerp in Belgium and Brno in Czechoslovakia during the early 1950s. While in Czechoslovakia distribution and exhibition was regulated by the state and served to ideological purposes of forming a model of a "new viewer" (Skopal 2012), the Belgium experience was that of an open market, with non-compulsory censorship (Biltereyst and Meers 2014). By comparing the cinema programs of the three comparably-sized cities, we investigate how the two different political systems (state-led socialism vs. free-market capitalism) impacted upon patterns of exhibition and distribution and from this whether distinctive patterns of film taste can be identified. We look into questions on the relation between national cinema policies, local business strategies and film popularity. What were the differences in terms of the exhibition and circulation of films within the three cities? What about differences in popularity of films according to genre, origin, etc.? How popular were Hollywood and other kinds of films (cf. US cultural imperialism thesis)?
This historical and political-economic paper is based on a comparative analysis (Sedgwick, Pafort-Overduin, and Boter 2012) of systematically constructed large-scale datasets on film venues (title, location, exhibitor,…) and film programmes (film title, origin, producer,…) in the three cities in 1952 and on data coming from official publications, trade journals and other secondary sources in

the two countries. These rich sources also allow us to make comparisons between the cinema cultures of the three cities, including the vintages and countries of origin of films in circulation, the pattern in which films were diffused in the respective city locations and the statistics of popularity.

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Id: 21527

Title: Algorithmic Exploitation in "Sharing Economy": A Study of Labor Control Mechanism in Didi Chuxing

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Taking advantages of government's dual-innovation policy, assisted by information integration and cloud computing technology, China has witnessed a steep rise and penetration of the "sharing economy". And Didi Chuxing, which bought Uber's China division in August 2016,is now the world's largest ride-hailing platform. Such unicorn company presents tremendous opportunities for those who embrace new technology and business models, but has also caused issues as it often obscures workers' role by the usage of a set of labor control mechanisms. This study will focus on the platform's exploitation and manipulation on Didi's registered-drivers under the background of the "sharing economy" from the perspective of Political Economy of Communications.

The Internet has begun a political-economic transition toward what Dan Schiller calls "digital capitalism". And "digital labor", as Karl Marx's labor theory's further developed, is a crucial foundation of discussions within the realm of the political economy on this topic. In 2013, Sandoval Marisol extends its concepts to include those who are producing computer technologies, electronic equipment and media technologies. I also want to expand the extension of "digital labor" and bring the group of Didi drivers into this category. Meanwhile, with the development of Sharing Economy, many researches observe such platforms. In 2015, Alex Rosenblat and Luke Stark argued that the information and power asymmetries produced by the Uber applications are fundamental to its ability to structure soft control over its workers through its technological design. Mark Graham also analyzed that algorithmic mechanisms have a dark side, digital work signals a global race to the bottom. However, current foreign researches on "sharing travel" mainly focus on the economic model or hidden control of the Uber, Didi Chuxing is often neglected, even if it is, the impact of such platforms on labor markets and its control mechanisms are insufficient. So, This study will focus on this Chinese technological company, especially its series of algorithmic mechanisms, such as system dispatch, dynamic pricing adjustment, evaluation mechanism and other "hidden exploitation" on drivers, expecting it will be an illuminating exploration.

The methods this research adapts will include Case Studies, Interviews and Field Investigations. Last year, in the process of my internship and interchanges with Didi's internal staffs, I had done some Case Studies on its platform structures and corporate operations. This year from March to May, I'm planning to interview 10 different types of Didi's registered-drivers, staying with them under way as a passenger to get the first-hand materials of their working patterns, labor intensity, income, etc. As for the arrangement of text structure, the first part will illustrate the evolution of the concept of the "sharing economy" and the development of Didi Chuxing. The second part is the main part, outlines how Didi's algorithms systems exploit and manipulate the driver, including the dispatch system, the evaluation mechanism, the reward and punishment regulation, etc. The final part both shows the driver's resistance in the face of dual pressure from passengers or capital and summarizes the contents.

Id: 21637

Title: Connecting giants: Wanghong-facilitated synergy between social media and e-commerce platforms in China

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The term influencer, defined as the vocational, sustained, and highly branded social media stars, increasingly embeds a model - or various models - of business that targets key individuals who exerts influence over a large pool of potential consumers (Abiding, 2008). Against the backdrop of the booming e-commerce and social media platforms' aggressive commodification in China, business model of a particular type of influencers - or by its vernacular term in Chinese, Wanghong (short for Wangluo Hongren: "people who got popular on the internet") - the so-called e-commerce Wanghong as well as their incubators is on the rise. Value chain of e-commerce Wanghong starts from gathering followers at the upstream on social media platforms such as Weibo (a Twitter-esque service in China) through Wanghong's self-branding, following the standards imposed by Wanghong incubators; and then Wanghong incubators launch online stores for established Wanghong on e-commerce platforms, mostly common and notably Taobao (the most popular e-commerce platform owned by Alibaba Group, the Chinese and global e-commerce giant), and Wanghong will direct followers into their e-commerce stores on the platform and transform them into consumers there.

Focusing on this emergent value chain, this paper argues that Wanghong and Wanghong incubators have facilitated a synergistic ecosystem which both the social media and e-commerce platforms benefit from and thus assertively promote. Through a case study of the industrial leader of e-commerce Wanghong incubators, Hangzhou Ruhnn Holding, and its close collaborations with both Weibo and Alibaba Group respectively, this paper unfolds two trends of Wanghong value chain in Chinese market. Firstly, e-commerce Wanghong are being highly institutionalized in Chinese market, given the dominant role of Wanghong incubators in imposing industrial, homogenous standards on Wanghong through trainings provided to recruited Wanghong regarding self-branding techniques, content production at social media as well as supply chain management and e-commerce store operations. Secondly, Wanghong and Wanghong incubators have become a critical intermediary that facilitates the synergistic ecosystem between social media and e-commerce platforms, ultimately serving Alibaba's transition toward "social commerce" and the intensified commodification of Weibo aimed by the two internet companies. Such synergy has created new sites for monetizing netizens' online interactions and has contributed to the aggressively blurring boundaries between mundane social interactions and consumptions promoted by dominant players in Chinese internet.

Building on the concept of economic synergy and its social implications proposed by Janet Wasko and Nathan Vaughan, this paper showcases how two powerful platforms, Weibo and Taobao

among many others, have together coalesced to create an informal business ecosystem in which Wanghong and Wanghong incubators serve as the key vehicle to adapt to the flexible production system of post-Fordism. Such informal yet profound business networks tend to be overlooked in current studies of the political economy of Chinese internet platforms that traditionally focuses on issues such as ownership structure, market concentration, and financialization, etc. It also provides a systematic and nuanced analysis of the monetization of contemporary Wanghong group in connection with the broader trend of the commercial development of Chinese internet, which is rarely found in the literature of Chinese internet celebrity studies.

Id: 21674

Title: [Panel] It never went away: the state and political economy, Panel description

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The state remains a critical actor in communications systems the world over, from cosmopolitan western democracies to closed and censorious authoritarian regimes. Far from evacuating power to private bodies and withering away, many states promote and facilitate corporate concentrations of power; far from being entirely 'hollowed out', many states continue to preside over extensive surveillance and security regimes; far from retreating from imperial ambitions, many states are engaged in expansionist adventures and regional conflicts; far from abandoning ideological projects, states are vigorous participants in battles to police both physical borders and symbolic battles.

This panel examines a range of theoretical debates and empirical case studies that highlight the intense, if volatile, relationship between the state and communications. Des Freedman considers why there are significant gaps in media and communications theory with respect to the state and focuses on the multiple roles that states continue to play. Joanna Redden tackles the specific ways in which the British state has used data-gathering to surveil and control different populations, producing a sense of citizens as 'risks' and not autonomous actors. Milly Williamson and Gholam Khiabany discuss how the state uses racism as a crucial source of division and investigate 'official' discourses in relation to recent events in Western Europe and the US. Finally, Joan Pedro brings the debate home by reflecting on the political struggles between Catalan nationalism and the Spanish authorities and asking whether the former is a nation without a state while the latter constitutes a state without a nation. The discussant, David Hesmondhalgh, author of The Cultural Industries, will conclude by assessing how these debates relate to tensions and contradictions within the contemporary cultural industries.

Id: 21676

Title: State. Power. Media.

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The state has virtually been theorised out of existence. Globalization, outsourcing of public services, deregulation, digitalization and financialization have contributed to a situation in which, as Susan Strange once wrote, the "domain of state authority in society and economy is shrinking". For some, the very idea of a body that is able to coordinate vital areas of public life summons up either images of conspiracy and smoke-filled rooms or of authoritarian regimes far beyond the 'complex' power regimes of the West. This paper seeks to distinguish between the territorial concept of the nation-state and the critical notion of the state as an 'instrument' of class power that pervades societies across the world. It considers key theories of the state in relation to their application to contemporary communications environments and aims to grasp the implications of continuing state influence for the exercise of media power and control.

It attempts to highlight the operation of the state in both visible forms (for example surveillance, regulation, and censorship) and less visible forms (for example in its organisation of national representations of 'desirable' and 'undesirable' social groups) where it acts in concert with like-minded political actors). It analyses the state's multiple roles as police officer, policy maker, entrepreneur, ideologue and co-conspirator with respect to media systems and institutions. At a time when globalization is under particular stress, an understanding of the resilience and creativity of different kinds of states in different kinds of conditions is essential if we are to make sense of contemporary developments in politics communications. Despite what many scholars have described as conditions of 'statelessness', it is not possible to argue that the state has somehow 'returned' or is on 'retreat' because it never meaningfully went away. Indeed, neoliberalism has transformed the role of the state and its relationship to other social forces requiring us to pay even more attention to the reconfigured state in evaluating the political economy of communications.

Id: 21680

Title: State policy and the articulation of racism

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The election of Trump, Brexit, and the electoral gains of right wing 'populist' political parties across Europe have given weight to the perception of racism as an expression of 'popular sentiment'. A significant number of political and journalistic commentaries on these developments have lamented the opportunism of various political parties that are said to be exploiting popular racism for electoral gain. However, public responses to the Windrush scandal in Britain, the travel ban against citizens of five Muslim majority countries by the US administration, the recent scandal of children being separated from their parents at the US border, and anti-immigration laws that have become common across Europe (together with other examples of contemporary racisms) clearly warn against such interpretation. Instead, such instances suggest that the state and political establishment as a whole have been, and remain, central in paving the way for the emergence and articulation of racism and xenophobia. The history of racism is indeed also the history of state policy on race relations.

The paper pays particular attention to the state as both the apparatus for the production of racism and an institution that relies on racism for legitimising its growing authoritarian character and for quelling the growth of the very intersectional and broad social movements that are necessary to challenge racism. Rather than conceiving of racism as a product of ideology first and foremost, it explores the links between the contemporary national and international crisis of capitalism and connects the historical roots of racism to contemporary configurations of politics, the state and the media in the production of today's racist ideologies.

Id: 21684

Title: State, nation and propaganda in the Catalan conflict

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: This paper will analyse the role of the state and the nation in the production of propaganda to promote both the territorial unity of Spain and the independence of Catalonia. It will look into structural conflicts and its interconnections with cultural and direct violence from the perspective of Peace Studies (Galtung, 1969; Galtung & Fischer, 2013). The starting point of the paper is that the independence block considers Catalonia a nation in search of a State and that the unionist block attempts to create a nation for the Spanish State (Tortosa, 1996).
The research will show that this contradiction has important structural and cultural dimensions. It will argue that a fundamental aspect of the conflict is the social unrest generated by the structural conditions created by both blocks through the imposition of neoliberalism and austerity policies, as well as by engaging in corruption. These policies and practices were first responded by the 15-M movement, which did not pursue the objective of independence nor focused on the territorial unity of Spain, but instead promoted equality for all and democratisation in all territories. However, as both governments continued with the agenda of austerity, the two blocks embraced the long-standing propaganda technique of diverting attention, by substituting the independence/unity axis for the focus on inequality and authoritarianism. Both central and peripheral nationalism have been intensified to hide structural conflicts. The Spanish state and the media have been used to construct the idea of a nation. The Catalan government has instrumented the Autonomic media and used its governmental power with the aim of creating a nation-State. Both base their strategy on inventing 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 2006) in which a monolithic block with positive characteristics ('us') is confronted with another monolithic block with negative characteristics ('them'). At the peak of the conflict the Spanish state used the police to repress the independence movement, which has advocated for peaceful mobilisation, but has, nevertheless, engaged in some episodes of direct violence.

The paper argues that it is in the interest of the middle and working classes of Spain and Catalonia to join in non-violent action to reverse the structural conflicts and build positive peace. Progressive forces can create a new block by engaging in a culture of peace that changes the axis from independence/unity back again to austerity/anti-austerity and democracy/ authoritarianism. Alliances along these lines can be reached by combining the democratic defence of souverainism (the right to decide) and a project to make the Spanish state more democratic, equal and plurinational.

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Id: 21723

Title: The fragility of communication policies in Brazil and Argentina

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Martin-Barbero (2004) argues that television is very strong in Latin American media culture. It still influences a large part of society, making it clear that public broadcasting policies are essential to ensure that there are spaces available to represent the continent's vast diversity and plurality.

However, the laws in this field cannot be permanent. In this context, changes in the political sphere mean that the public service broadcasting sector is vulnerable to interference from different administrations, both in terms of content production and the approval of budgets. Such types of interference are detrimental to society because communications should be open and free from political ideologies.

This paper aims to understand the fragility of communication policies in Brazil and Argentina as a consequence of changes in government administrations and their political tendencies. I intend to analyse this by evaluating to extent to which these communication policies are being presented as Government or State policies.

If the State plays the role of devising communication policies – which are defined by Ramos (2010 apud Geraldes, 2012) as "normative procedures that, once underway in a given democratic institutional environment, aim at the well-being of the population" – it is also necessary to develop regulatory environments in order to avoid flawed practices.

Albornoz (2010) suggests that conducting a comparative study of the different media policies in different states and nations may offer an interesting contribution to knowledge as long as the specificities of each of them are taken into account. In the context of this paper, I aim to contrast the realities of Brazil and Argentina, following recent changes in government. In 2016, both countries were marked by immediate interference in the media sphere, with the countries' administrations promoting several changes that affected public communication, demonstrating that these are strategic and sensitive areas.

Regarding a feeling of policy discontinuity in Brazil, Pieranti (2017) warns that the future administrations should consider that their policies should not belong to individual governments, but, rather to the State. In Argentina, on the other hand, Segura (2018) mentions other problematic issues. There is a strong incentive to commercial exploration whilst the state-sponsored media becomes increasingly more irrelevant and the allocation of public resources aim to benefit the interests of economic elites over the interests of the citizens.

Many factors demonstrate that public service communications are going in the same direction in Brazil and Argentina. This may reveal the deep interconnection between the media system and the public system in both countries, as Aires and Santos (2017) suggest. In these authors' view, this context makes it easier for communication policies to be seen as "battlefields

between public and private actors and media practitioners as the power dynamics of negotiation are often asymmetrical".

Id: 21732

Title: The Data Commons and the Political Economy of Artificial Intelligence

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper explores the potential of the data commons in the context of Artificial Intelligence (AI). One of the challenges in creating AI systems that advance the public good is the monopolistic power of companies developing them. The success of AI is based on learning algorithms for which data produced by users of digital services is a vital resource (Broussard 2018). Ownership of and access to that data, however, is limited to the owners of platforms. This paper investigates the potential of alternative structures for data ownership and access so that the benefits of AI systems can be shared widely.

We now live in a culture of AI (Elliott 2019). While AI is around for a while, the combination of increased computing power, new developments in machine learning and better performing algorithms, and the availability of large datasets, has led to much talk about its impact on the way we live and work. AI can both lead to a new area of shared prosperity but also to a dystopian future. We need to understand AI systems, how they are developed and what their impact is, so that we can make sure AI will benefit society at large. In this context, we need to be aware that AI simultaneously refers to technical approaches (machine learning), social practices (classification systems, developed by humans) and industrial infrastructures (datasets that are the source of knowledge and prediction) (Crawford 2018).

In this paper I particularly focus on the ownership of and access to data upon which AI systems are built. A political economy approach is needed if we want to understand the politics and power of AI systems and their developers. I will explore the potential of the data commons – building on earlier work on the digital commons (Murdock 2011) – as an alternative structure to deal with the monopolistic power of AI companies around data. While mainly being used by the open data movement and research on data science and computational social science, the data commons might be a promising venue for rethinking how AI systems and infrastructures should look like. It can be a useful way to think about alternative business models, engaging people and organisations with a different set of motivations, and thereby contributing to AI innovations that are there for advancing the public good.

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Id: 21766

Title: China's Pursuit of Soft Power: the Case of the Film Industry

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper explores the role of film in China's drive to enhance its soft power. As many commentators have pointed out, while it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of soft power initiatives, it is possible to evaluate the usefulness of existing soft power indexes.

Following interviews with film experts aiming to understand their views on the current soft power indexes, I analysed the secondary data includes academic debates on the issue of soft power evaluation and existing influential soft power indexes to assess the outcome of China's practice in using film as an instrument of projecting soft power. The measurement of these indexes covers the period from 2001, when the document Implementation Rules of Going-Out Project (Trial) was issued by Chinese government, to 2018, the most recent year for which data is available.

Based on the thorough analysis from both interviews and secondary data, this paper will contribute to debate and analysis around soft power in two main ways. First of all, by focusing on film industry it addresses an under-developed areas in the existing research on the soft power strategies employed by the world's leading authoritarian regime.

Secondly, it addresses the practical issues raised by the feasibility of measuring soft power, issues that currently remain unresolved in both academic research and policy making. The importance of the analysis not only lies in the fact that the evaluation of film as an instrument of soft power has not been sufficiently documented and thoroughly analyzed, but also due to it suggesting the global presence of films as indicators to evaluate the potential of nation's soft power. As a result, the findings of this paper will make contributions to the research on soft power from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

Id: 21902

Title: With Crisis Comes Opportunity: Imagining a Post-Capitalist Future for Journalism

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Commercial Journalism is facing an existential threat by structural shifts in digital economics, especially the collapse of their advertising revenue model. Much of the blame for journalism's recent decline has focused on the role of platforms such as Facebook and Google, which devour the lion's share of digital advertising revenue. Journalism in general, and local news in particular, is increasingly threatened by this duopoly, which takes a combined 85 percent of all new U.S. digital advertising revenue growth, leaving only scraps for news publishers. According to one study, these two companies now control 73 percent of the total online advertising market. Meanwhile, institutions that provide quality news and information—the same struggling news organizations that are expected to help fact check fake news—are further weakened.

While many argue that Facebook should be treated as a media company and held to relevant legal ramifications—as well as norms of social responsibility—Mark Zuckerberg has long refused to even acknowledge that Facebook is anything more than a technology company. This problem deserves close public scrutiny, but history shows us that expecting good corporate behavior simply by shaming information monopolies is a dubious proposition at best.

However, beyond the threat of platform monopolies is a more fundamental problem. The commercial model for journalism can no longer support even minimal levels of news and information, let alone the robust media system that a healthy democratic society requires. My analysis will move beyond the critique of monopoly power to consider systemic market failure, as well as solutions for sustaining public service journalism. I will conclude by discussing proposals that range from platforms being compelled to fund a journalism trust to reinventing a new public media system for the digital age.

Id: 21978

Title: Claiming Rights to Recapture Voice in Food Politics

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Modern foodscapes are fundamentally undemocratic spaces where producers and consumers have virtually no voice or meaningful participation, and only an illusion of choice. They are dictated by Big Food – the agribusinesses, multinational food and beverage companies, and life science corporations that control supply chains. These include mega-merged companies like Bayer-Monsanto which employs a range of emotionally-powerful discourses which frame the world as being food-scarce and itself as the noble saviour to justify its predatory behaviour to political elites and the general public at the expense of human and planetary health. In this paper I apply the concepts of voice and value as central tenets of resistance against the corporate capture of our food system. Examining the discursive power of language and collective rights to food and communication in contemporary food politics, I propose that building a food system based on principles including food justice, food sovereignty, and food democracy demands voices not only be heard but recognised, for – after scholars including Nick Coudry and Nancy Fraser - there is no evidence that voice has been heard and had an impact without recognition. The Campaign for Communication Rights in the Information Society (the CRIS Campaign) offers insight into how communication policy can be framed globally and be used to mobilise constituencies across borders. I draw parallels between this and the global movement for food sovereignty, which promotes the right to food. I argue that the right to food and the right to communicate reflect a shared desire to reclaim voice by contesting a neoliberal food system that seeks to systematically disable voice. Both rights frames provide the CRIS and food sovereignty campaigns with salience in international arenas where human rights frameworks exist. Both sets of rights are based on ideals of participatory democracy in that they assert that all citizens must be included in every governance process that affects them. I claim that the MacBride Commissions' call for the "right to hear and be heard, to inform and be informed" captures the voice claims that are inextricably linked to the right to food, but acknowledge that in each case "even were it enforced [the right to communicate/the right to food], it does not address structural inequality embedded with for instance capitalism and its drive to constantly expand its terrain of control", as noted by CRIS Campaign director Séan ó Siochrú. As a way forward I compare how the organisational capacities of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and the peasant farmers' movement La Via Campesina have connected and coordinated civil society efforts in pursuing each set of rights. By providing centrality and a clear hub and spoke structure with the ACP at the centre, and strong horizontal ties between individual actors and advocacy groups, the communication rights movement was able to accommodate the shift to later debates on Internet governance. A comparable flexibility and scope, coupled with organisational know-how, has similarly sustained the food sovereignty movement as the most influential civil society voice in global food politics.

Id: 21995

Title: [Panel] The India Media Economy: Platforms, Transactions and Markets, Panel Description

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: In India's expanding media economy, platform business models necessarily interact with existing modalities of market exchange. These markets operate at different levels of 'the stack'. In the communication layer, value is extracted through the sale of hardware, software subscriptions, data packs and other forms of access rents. In the distribution layer, value is extracted through content subscriptions, pay-per-view offerings, user-generated content and the bulk of the world's advertising revenues. In the transactional layer, value is extracted from various forms of piece work, user-tracking, data mining and the aggregation of commissions exercised over peer-to-peer exchanges. As such, the affordances of the digital - as a medium of record, as a medium of distribution and as a medium of transactions - have all been progressively developed towards the present nexus of micro-payments, data mining and peer-to-peer market systems.

In recent years, the transactional layer has become favoured as the primary site of extractivism, operationalised through various exchange platforms, and designed to systematically extract value from social economies that were hitherto operating outside of the formal economic order. In India, this includes the aggregation of informal markets for 'services' as well as the formalisation of grey economies. In all these instances, we see useful
exemplars of the expansion of a 'mediated economy' through which an increasing number of economic exchanges are aggregated within portals that allow for value capture at the transactional level. What is more insidious, perhaps, is the simultaneous processes through which everyday interaction and sociability are marketised through P2P communication platforms. With all this in mind, this panel considers how a markets-based approach might help us to comprehend the convergence of distinctive forms of market logic within India's emerging platform economies.

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Discussant: Gerard Goggin, University of Sydney, gerard.goggin(at) sydney.edu.au

Id: 22005

Title: Going Cashless: Digital Transactions in India

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Much has been happening to money over the course of the 'crash decade' that began in 2008. A critical component of the global response has been the creation of different forms and modalities of electronic money on a breathtaking scale. This 'great digitisation' ranges from the vast currency debasements of central banks via quantitative easing to the hyper-volatile fashion for crypto-currencies, which found a large market in India. As part of this larger datafication of money, India made a dramatic intervention on 8th November 2016, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the 85% of the Rupee currency notes in circulation would be 'demonetised' within hours, and made worthless within two weeks unless deposited into the banking system.

On 9th November 2016, virtually every newspaper in India was carrying full front page advertisements for providers of digital 'mobile wallet' services, the leading platform being PayTM. The simultaneity of demonetization and the proposed solution offered by mobile wallets caused many to insinuate that the Government of India must have some stake in these providers, with the meme 'PayToModi' going into circulation. This unsubstantiated assertion nonetheless established that the two phenomena were by no means circumstantial, something that was quickly confirmed as the official rationale for demonetization quickly shifted from flushing 'black money' (where it obviously failed) to the drive towards a 'cashless society' (posited as an unqualified good in its own right).

Digital transactions are, in India as much as elsewhere, an absolutely central component of 'Platform Economies', 'Smart Cities' and 'Digital Society' more broadly. Despite this fact, relatively little attention has been given to the implications of the virtualization of money, a phenomenon that has accelerated exponentially over the past decade. In the developed world, money has established itself over several decades, typically in a context of welfare economics, credit culture and universal banking. In India, where the vast bulk of economic activity operates in cash, electricity is unreliable, and where half the population had no bank accounts or mobile phones, the decision to undertake this 'great leap forward' immediately engendered a crisis in which millions went hungry and unpaid, large numbers died and the growth of the entire economy lost momentum.

At one level, therefore, the demonetization debacle can be seen as an example of autocratic hubris amidst the realities of highly uneven economic development. From the outside, the immediate enthusiasm of foreign commentators as this grand gesture was enacted usefully illustrated some of the ways in which 'Digital India' operates as a laboratory for technocratic interventions in the economies of the Global South. This paper provides a succinct account of the push for digital

transactions as a central infrastructure of the 'Digital India' vision. Given the centrality of money to the operation of each and every social transaction, this paper also emphasizes the cultural, social and political dynamics of a transactional economy, and the broader import of digital money for scholars in media and communications.

Id: 22006

Title: Market Matters in the Indian Media Economy

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The word 'market' is highly conspicuous in media scholarship on India over the last 25 years. Paradoxically, the 'market idea' has gone severely under-theorised in this otherwise expanding scholarship. My presentation reflects on the methodological and ontological pathways that might allow us to grasp the 'market idea' in the context of media markets on India.

I begin by scrutinising approaches to the idea of 'the market' by evaluating conventional neo-classical and unorthodox, especially institutional, variants of understanding markets. I then delineate the peculiarities of media markets in India, as commercial, legal, and political entities— drawing attention to the role of linguistic geographies and extra-market forces in the construction of such markets. The second part of my talk proposes a fresh conceptualisation of 'markets'--- peculiar to the study of the media. The bedrock of my configuration lies in the idea of the "media economy"--- a concept proposed with my collaborator, Adrian Athique— that captures the varied commercial and social transactions entailing the media as a constellation of markets. I propose three levels of analysis constituting what is commonly called "media markets": the macrological level (as a market of markets), the mesological level (a grouping of market spaces), and the micrological level (the marketplace for goods and services).

Through this presentation, I want to catalyse discussions at two inter-related levels. Firstly, I want to lay out the role of the media in spawning a system of cascading markets around their evolving operations. Secondly, I want to instigate a reflection on disciplinarity in the field of communications: that is, a plea to make sociological studies of the media more 'economistic', and to ensure conventional "business studies" becomes more 'culturally' informed. Businesses, after all, operate within markets that are constituted through a larger constellation of social, cultural and political dynamics. By this double emphasis, I seek to engage with the problematic of subject-definition in marking the boundaries of media studies on India at a time where media markets are increasingly integrated, not only with each other but with other economic domains.

Id: 22018

Title: The Networked Media Economy and the Indian Gilded Age

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: For the past decade a common suggestion from academics, politicians and commentators is that Indian capitalism is beginning to resemble the US Gilded Age(Sinha 2011; Gandhi and Walton 2012; Walton 2017; Crabtree 2018). This comparison with the nineteenth-century American robber barons emerges because of the rapid development of a range of Indian billionaires (Ambani, Mittal, Adani) who are particularly associated with so-called rent-thick sectors, including infrastructure, telecommunication and media. Rather than innovative, productivity-enhancing Schumpeterian rents, these sectors are argued to be characterised by extractive rents,which achieve returns above those of'fully competitive markets'via political patronage, preferential access to state-controlled resources and monopolistic market power.

Although concentration ratios in the network media economy were lowered by privatisation and liberalisation in the 1990s, today some Indian regulators are concerned about rising concentration in the rapidly expanding telecommunications and digital media sectors,as major industrial groups enter these markets and pursue merger and acquisition strategies. For instance, in late 2015Reliance Industries, India's largest business group by market capitalisation and second largest by revenue,entered the telecom industry viaits subsidiary Reliance Jio and prompted substantial consolidation,as smaller firms exited or merged with other firms and Jio emerged as the third largest operator.

Drawing on data analysis based on the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy's PROWESS database (e.g. Bhattacharjee&Agrawal 2018; Smith 2015) and detailed industry reports (KPMG, Ernst &Young), this paper reassesses the insights offered by Fernand Braudel's analysis of capitalism for a political economy of the media and cultural industries. From the perspective offered by Braudel's distinction between capitalism and the market economy, capitalists only assent to competitive market relations when other avenues to profit-making are blocked. They instead prefer the exceptional profits of the antimarket, the intentionally opaque zones where Braudel argues 'the great predators roam and the law of the jungle operates'.

The media and cultural industries' organisational structure has long been characterised by the tendency towards oligopoly, if not monopoly, due to specific socio-economic characteristics and political considerations. Nonetheless, according to the Braudelian perspective, recent developments in these sectors associated with politically-patronised corporate expansion, financialisation and vertically integrated concentration have reinforced the inherently anti-competitive context in which the majority of the global media operate. In reviewing such ongoing changes in the Indian media, the paper provides a broader conception of competition based on classical political economy's

notion of real competition(Shaikh 2016),which problematises the divide between 'economic life', 'fully competitive market economy', and capitalism.

Id: 22021

Title: Infrastructure and Platform Anxieties in India

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: I would like to in this presentation explore some aspects and anxieties related to the transactional economy in India by highlighting some examples - the nation-wide connectivity project Digital India (DI) along with what would seem to be consolidations in the e-commerce economy, the sociality of Whatsapp 'lynchings' and cartographic anxieties related to Google Maps. These examples are by no means exhaustive although they do provide insights into the nature of the transactional economy in India and the anxieties of the State in the context of its role as buyer and seller, arbiter and shaper, regulator and controller of the digital, an entity that is both invested in and investor in this economy. In spite of investments in projects geared towards the expansion of the digital footprint in India across many levels, it is clear that the State is not in a position to control or curb disruptive socialities on platforms that thrive on connectivities and socialities such as Whatsapp and Facebook. Such anxieties are arguably overshadowed and compounded by India's lack of preparedness and inability to compete with these global platforms and fundamentally by a lack of comprehensive policies supportive of the transactional economy.

While political parties use platforms for sectarian political purposes, and governments have attempted to regulate platform content, with the exception of the regulator(TRAI's) involvement in Facebook's failed ambitions to dominate mobile access to the internet through the Free Basics initiative, the government of India has until recently, largely been unable and for that matter unwilling to resist the disruptive consequences of the big three partly because it has invested in harnessing its disruptive potential for the advancement of its own electoral politics and its commitment to shaping the Indian economy into a transactional economy. Whether or not its attempts to curb the appetite of Amazon and Walmart in e-Retail will result in a level playing field remains to be seen although the attempts to regulate seem to be motivated by the need to support a favoured government MNC Reilance Retail.

As this paper discusses, there are massive gaps between the government's vision of the transactional economy and its actual operationalisations. Cash remains the preferred mode of payment and the wide-spread distrust of the security of such systems has contributed to the uneven development of the transactional economy in India that is in itself a reflection of existing divides in society. How governments in India respond to the challenges posed by digital disruptions through balancing the need for participation, equity, regulation, sovereignty and control will be of critical importance to India's ambitions to become a modern nation-state fueled by the transactional economy. However, the instrumentalist nature of this project and multiple divides in society in India seem guaranteed to ensure that the transactional economy is bound develop unevenly across the nation.

Id: 22121

Title: The changing role of mainstream Indian media in Modi's social media era

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: The 2014 national election was dubbed India's first 'social media election'. The 2019 election is likely to be dubbed as the 'WhatsApp' election. India has changed in the past decade. The telephone density and wireless subscription have reached nearly 90%, according to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI.gov.in 2019) Nearly 500 million Indians have access to the internet, while 300 million Indians use Facebook and 200 million use WhatsApp, a chat app that is used on mobile phones. The aspiring class is increasingly connected to the world via their mobile phones. Across the world, politicians have realised the power of being able to communicate directly with people through such mobile technology, particularly bypassing the interrogation by the mainstream media.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is known for his use of media platforms when communicating with voters, whether through social media or using the government funded public service broadcasters. Modi keeps his followers abreast of his daily activities using various social networking platforms. He incessantly uses these platforms to push his 'Digital India' agenda, advertising initiatives such as the 'Clean India' campaign and launching various prime ministerial funding schemes for small businesses and digital payment system. Around half-way through his tenure as the 15th prime minister of India, he announced a radical government policy to reduce black money by scraping more than 85% of the Indian currency in circulation. Once again, he shunned the mainstream media, giving one interview during these two months to a chosen news outlet, but incessantly and directly communicating with his followers. He addressed public rallies, posted tweets and used the public service broadcasters.

The strategy of marginalising the mainstream media in India, which is one of the largest news media industries in the world, has left journalists scrambling to cover Modi's articulations on other platforms.Using case studies of Modi's use of Twitter for 'Clean India' campaign in 2015-16, the demonetisation process in 2016-17 and the recent 2019 national election, this paper will present an analysis of Modi's use of social media strategy, his followers, detractors and the mainstream response to this strategy on the micro-blogging site. The paper will examine Modi's agenda building strategy on social media and consider the changing role of the mainstream media in India in the new, hybrid media system (Chadwick 2013). We will consider whether the media's coverage of politics in India is increasingly guided by the 'political logic' rather than the 'media logic', as has often been the case in the free press world (Stromback and Esser, 2014). The use of social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter, by all political parties including the main opposition, Indian National Congress Party, in the 2018-19 elections raises critical issues about the mainstream media's role in the largest democracy.

Id: 22307

Title: Who and where is the civil society in internet regulation'

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Communication policies and regulatory strategies are a fundamental axis in contemporary society, considering the pervasive nature of the global communication network in daily life. The internet is directly involved in matters of fundamental rights, such as the right to communication and information, freedom of association and the right to freedom of expression. Increasingly, other issues such as the right to privacy, the importance of digital memory and network neutrality have been defined, while other rights consolidated in the pre-digital age, in particular intellectual property rights, are constantly being challenged.
Internet governance has been developed through a multi-stakeholder model, which has received little critical attention and has not been sufficiently examined for its development promises (Carr, 2015, Padovani and Pavan, 2007). Multi-stakeholderism is thus a process that needs to be closely monitored because its benefits are not inherent to the process, but rather a construction that depends on the practices and dynamics of the actors involved. Considering the growing commercialization of the digital era, civil society faces increasing power imbalances in the process. Although being a loci recurrently quoted in the literature, it has yet to produce more than marginal results (West, 2017) and needs to be carefully analyzed to assess its true contribution and potential in the process. This communication aims to analyze participation of civil society actors in Portugal, assessing their legal status, their resources, their mission, the strategies (formal or informal, via petitions and / or dissemination actions and / or forms of activism) and liaison with other civil society actors (internally and externally). This study, in which semi-directive interviews with civil society actors will be performed, will allow to know in a systematic way the mechanisms of participation and the actors that seek to influence the governance of the Internet.

Id: 22332

Title: The Onward March of Ecological Crisis and Economic Inequalities and Mediated Communication : Towards an Integrated Analysis

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This IAMCR conference's theme resonates with the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a global milestone centred around the premise that 'everyone had the right to live in dignity'. The Call document notes how communication systems now play a major role in the realisation or failure of such goals, whilst fundamental communication-related rights are under 'increasing pressure and threat' , not least due to the onward march of corporate (often monopolistic) control over communication networks, services. It also draws attention to the 'backdrop of rapidly widening inequalities of income and wealth' both within countries and between different areas of the world, with an 'escalating volume of migrations driven by political and environmental as well as economic pressures' forming one 'visible manifestation' of these trends.

This paper seeks to go a step further, however. The authors examine how these key unfolding trends pose urgent threats not only to the achievement of universal 'dignity', but to the very survival of the modern, global, political and economic system. In sum, they argue that the unfolding ecological crisis requires not only much more urgent attention than hitherto in the political economy of communication, but that its analysis must be integrally linked to engagement with unfolding forms of economic inequality, insecurity and precarity.

Thus this paper is concerned with two key global challenges central to the UN's SDGs : ecological crisis and growing economic inequalities and their implications for critical political economy of communication field. To date, these challenges have been largely treated separately in the research literature, notwithstanding certain exceptions, including work on region-specific cases, whilst the same applies to media discourse and representation. Thus this paper explores how both of these pressing challenges have to be considered as dynamically interlinked and cumulative key features of our time.

We argue that both the study and mediated communication of sustainable development and social change issues require an urgent refresh of conceptual and ideational frameworks. We draw on historical and material frameworks to move beyond certain flaws in prevailing perspectives and

studies of 'crisis'. We explore and expand on the link between economic inequality and climate change, with specific attention to the core regions of the capitalist system. We outline how the analysis of news media, and mediated communication in general, must embrace a new paradigm, one more attuned to the deep, interdependent and global nature of contemporary capitalism. We indicate how most of the prevailing theories fail to make the requisite links or to recognise the pressing dimensions of economic interdependence that transcends narrow national cultural frames or borders.

This paper is informed, in part, by original empirical findings from two research projects: one concerns news media treatment of climate change; the other exploring how news media in four countries engage with economic inequality. The aim is to provide a materially grounded perspective on the adequacy of mediated communication and public discourse concerning these two interlinked issues that are foundational challenges to the realisation of SDGs and the achievement of 'universal dignity'.

Id: 22334

Title: The Spotification of global radio system

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Spotify started its operations in 2006, thirteen years later the swedish company is the platform leader in the global audio market. During the last years, and specially in the beginning of the 2019, the evolution of the platform and the acquisitions policies reveals a clear evolution from a music platform to an audio content platform. Recently, February 6th 2019, Spotify has bought Gimlet Media and Anchor, two of the biggest business of the podcasting american sector. Quoting Daniel Ek (company CEO): "Based on radio industry data, we believe it is a safe assumption that, over time, more than 20% of all Spotify listening will be non-music content. This means the potential to grow much faster with more original programming — and to differentiate Spotify by playing to what makes us unique — all with the goal of becoming the world's number one audio platform." (newsroom.spotify.com, 2019)

At the same time, in the 2018 Spotify report, published before the company debut in the New York Stock Exchange market, established the importance of the global advertising market and the non-music content business (spofify, 2018). Even, they presented in Europe an audience report in 2016 where we can read sentences as "Spotify is the third largest 'radio station' for younger target groups" (TNS, 2015)

Considering these facts, the previous Spotify (Vonderau, 2017; Fleischer & Snickars, 2017; Erickson et. al, 2019) and podcasting research (Gallego, 2012; Bonini, 2015: Berry, 2015) and with the framework of the political economy of the cultural industries this communication tackles the evolution of the platform in the different markets, acquisition strategies, corporate structure and financing. It also pays special attention to the company's last strategies and developments in relation to different partners in a diversity of sectors. We will see how Spotify is not limited to the music sector. In fact, Spotify's policies, in terms of corporate alliances, bring it close to the technological sector, the media and different consumer goods. And, specifically, how this global platform strategies are a new challenge for the traditional radio markets: the market of the distribution, the contents and audiences, and the advertising market.

Id: 22338

Title: DISCOURSES ON AI IN EUROPE: REINFORCING THE IDEOLOGICAL HEGEMONY OF CAPITALISM'

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: 2018 was a crucial year in Europe for the advancement of national and EU strategies on Artificial Intelligence. On the 7th of December, the European Commission and the Member States published a Coordinated action plan on the development of AI in the EU. The EU plan followed the publication in the same year of national strategic reports on AI by France, Germany and Britain, competing to becoming "leaders" in artificial intelligence (AI), with each country committing millions of euros.
This paper investigates how Artificial Intelligence is discursively constructed by national and EU AI strategy reports published by France, Germany, Britain and the EU.
Scholars in political economy of communication have showed how discourses around digital technologies have historically been constructed as modern myths (Mosco, 2004) with major references to utopian worlds and possibilities. Is AI ideologically portrayed in a way that becomes a critical element in the reformulation of the ideological hegemony of capitalism?
Are current discourses on AI starting to reshape certain central conceptions of the capabilities of humans and machines embedded in social institutions?

Id: 22364

Title: Party Colonization and Newspaper Advertising in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq (2014-2018)

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to examine if and how journalism is controlled through advertising in a transitional democracy such as the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
Previous research has shown that news media can be captured by governments through state advertising and announcements, the principle being that the more the government allocates its advertisements to a particular newspaper, the more it has control over that newspaper's content (Moritz Eberl et al. 2018, Yanatma 2016; Yesil 2018). While existing research has generally focused only on the role of state advertising as a means of governmental control, this paper will expand this to include other social actors, such as private companies, political parties and non-governmental organizations.
Given the complexity of the advertising market in a non-transparent media market environment, there exists no reliable source of information about newspaper circulations, media subsidies, and advertising revenues. Such information is routinely hidden, either by government administrations or by media owners.
For that reason, a quantitative content analysis was conducted on the advertisements and announcements in six major weekly and daily newspapers between 2014 and 2018. A diverse selection of newspapers was made, covering both newspapers that identify themselves as party organs (Kurdistan Nwe, Hawler, and Evro) and as independent (Rudaw, Hawlati, and Awene). The content analysis measured how much advertising space (in square centimeters) is allocated to which organization or social actor.
The findings indicate that advertisements are to a large extent allocated to party newspapers, while independent newspapers obtain little advertising, leading to a lack of financial viability. This paper concludes by reflecting on the implications of these results for media diversity and pluralism in the media system of the Kurdistan region of Iraq.
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Id: 22416

Title: Activism and Digital Capitalism

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Oxfam report on global inequality titled "Reward Work, Not Wealth" released in January 2019 shows that India's top 10 per cent hold 77.4 per cent of the country's total wealth, while the bottom 60 per cent own merely 4.8 per cent.

Given the extreme inequalities, declining employment opportunities and severe farm crisis, the last few years have seen the resurgence of social movements around old causes and around newer social fissures that have emerged.

While India has been posting 5+ per cent GDP growth over several years, it has been a straggler in social development indices of health, education and gender.

In what has been characterised as a dual economy that has highly developed urban centres and rural periphery that continues to be frozen in a primitive time warp. India boasts of 1,131 million mobile subscribers (May 2018) of whom 38 per cent are smart phone users. At 241 million (19% of the population), India's Facebook user-base has surpassed that of the United States in actual numbers. This spurt in mobile use has made internet accessible on a large scale, deeply transformed the politics of the country.

The political impact of access to Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and internet in general, is still a matter of research, much of which focuses on Big Data mining the global corporations do and their possible active intervention in the political process.

In their book Digital Objects and Digital Subjects (2019), David Chandler and Christian Fuchs quote David Harvey's caution against ideologically fetishizing Big Data, "It is counter-productive if not counter-revolutionary. It creates a fetish fog – a vast distraction – between political activism and the urban realities, pleasures and travails of daily life that need to be addressed."

Political struggles and activism attempt to re-define hegemonic power and its current signifiers (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) through "discursive articulation". They sometimes also result in broader coalitions of plural political interests that come together to challenge power. The last few years in India saw a new political process articulating itself through broad coalitions of students, farmers, industrial workers and state employees.

The expanded access to social media has also expanded the reach of the "million mutinies" that have broken out on a variety of fronts in India. This paper proposes to look at some of the major social media campaigns conducted over the Internet/social media in India in the last few years. The paper will also collate and critically look at the campaign sites that act as intermediaries for activists.

Id: 22467

Title: [Panel] Resisting Precarity and Exploitation in Media Industries, Panel description

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: This panel challenges the perception that media work--glamorized, precarious, individualized, and intensely competitive--is too difficult a terrain to organise. Drawing on political economy of communication, ethnographic research, and textual analysis, the panelists provide different case studies to demonstrate that workers in media and communication industries are finding new ways to collectively organise. Specifically, media workers employed in the digital game industry, digital journalism, TV series production, and content moderation have chosen to either unionize to counter precarious work or are in the initial levels of organizing against exploitative work. Jamie Woodcock examines the unionization experience of video game workers. Drawing on ethnographic research and interviews, Woodcock considers the lessons that can be learned from Game Workers Unite in the UK. Nicole Cohen and Greig de Peuter investigate why and how a growing number of digital journalists in the US and Canada are organizing their newsrooms. Drawing on interviews, Cohen and de Peuter reveal strategies of self-organization that at times challenge union doxa, particularly around communication practices. Sarah Roberts seeks to explore the initial stages of unionization in dark corners of digital media: content moderation. Roberts explores how workers in a fragmented industry by design seek alternative ways of work and existence. Finally, Ergin Bulut will discuss how workers and performers in Turkey's transnational TV series industry have unionized for purposes of legal recomposition. Bulut's presentation is a call for de-westernizing creative industry studies and expanding the definition of precarity to encompass law and the body.

Id: 22475

Title: "We Need Chemotherapy for the Sector': Recomposition of Turkish TV Series Workers Against Precarity

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: Turkey's transnational TV series (dizi) industry has created more buzz as The Protector (2018) made its debut on Netflix. This was the first time that a Turkish show met the global Netflix audience but Turkish series have for some time been travelling in the Middle East, the Balkans, and even Latin America. For instance, over 200 million people in 43 countries watched the iconic The Magnificent Century (2011-2014), rendering visible Turkish series' global counter-flows. In 2008, the export revenues were around 100,000 dollars whereas they have now gone beyond 300 million dollars, placing Turkey in the top five countries selling TV series abroad. Global fans name their kids after famous actors and actresses. Stars' perfume franchises travel across the Middle East. Fans visit glamorous mansions by the Bosphorus, creating a "TV series tourism." To capitalize on the economic and cultural boom, Istanbul Chamber of Commerce is now drafting "2019 Istanbul Film Action Plan" as revealed during MIPCOM in Cannes.

Turkish television screens are indeed glamorous. Making considerable amounts of money, stars invest in Istanbul's gentrified areas. Yet, glamor and money is unevenly redistributed. Labor is so intensive that workplace accidents, cerebral hemorrhage and even deaths occur in sets. Yet, workers are not helpless and this article examines how TV series workers and performers resist precarity and reform their labor conditions through unions. In conversation with the recent scholarly interest in the politics of unions in media and creative industries (de Peuter and Cohen 2015; Coles 2016; Neilson 2018), I document how the highly politicized rating system has accelerated the precarization of TV series workers. Then, I map the action repertoire of two unions: Cinema and Television Union (founded in 2015, representing workers behind the camera) and Performers Union (founded in 2011, representing performers in theater, cinema, and voiceover).

It's in the spirit of a workers' inquiry from below (Brophy 2017; Woodcock 2016) that I investigate how TV workers are both unevenly put to work and reconstitute themselves as a counter-force in Istanbul as an emerging media capital beyond the Global North (Curtin 2003). My specific goal in this presentation is to demonstrate these unions' various recomposition strategies against capital, and make a call for an expanded image of precarity that takes law and the body into consideration. In that regard, this present work is an engaged effort to de-westernize creative labor studies and capture the multifaceted materiality of unionization in non-Western contexts (Alacovska and Gill 2019).

Id: 22481

Title: Union Organizing in Digital Journalism: Catalysts and Strategies

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: This presentation contributes to the political economy of communication's tradition of researching workers' organizations as collective agents of struggle against capitalist exploitation and managerial power in the media and communication industries (Mattelart and Siegelaub 1983; Mosco and McKercher 2008; Banks 2010; Brophy 2017). Reflecting organized labour's embattled conditions under neoliberalism, journalists' unions in legacy media in the US and Canada have tended to adopt a defensive stance in recent years, fighting to protect existing members amid routine layoffs, newsroom closures, technological transformations, and mergers and acquisitions. In this climate, organizing has not been the unions' highest priority. At the same time, the new generation of digital-first newsrooms appear to be improbable organizing terrain, where unions might anticipate not only the union aversion familiar to white-collar professional work but also a do-what-you-love (whatever the hardship) sensibility and a post-financial crisis millennial cohort acculturated to precarity. And so, it caught many by surprise when in 2015 journalists at the news website Gawker announced they were unionizing, inaugurating what some commentators have labeled a "wave" of unionization in digital newsrooms in the US and Canada. Since 2015, journalists have unionized at 38 newsrooms, mostly digital outlets such as VICE, Vox, and Huffington Post, but also legacy media, including The Los Angeles Times, The Chicago Tribune, and The New Yorker.
Drawing on collective action theory (Kelly 1998; McAlevey 2016; Holgate 2018) and 44 interviews with union staff and journalists leading the unionization campaigns, our presentation surveys why and how these media workers organize. In terms of catalysts, journalists are unionizing in response to pressurized working conditions, precarious employment, and a lack of management transparency. Beyond bread-and-butter issues, however, our research reveals that journalists also see unionization as a way to protect editorial integrity and enhance social equity in their newsrooms. Inequalities rooted in class, gender, and race motivated several campaigns. In terms of strategies, we identify dimensions of the union drives that have contributed to their success, including journalists' access to unions with an organizing agenda, a high level of worker self-organization, and cross-shop solidarity. Digital media workers, we highlight, are strategically positioned to leverage counter-publicity: By using work-required skills in graphic design, their perpetual immersion in social media, and general media-savviness, digital media workers have frequently secured union

recognition in record time and used social media to pressure those CEOs who mounted anti-union campaigns.

The digital media union movement reaffirms labour's capacity to fight back against capital's efforts to wield technologies to intensify exploitation and weaken labour, and shows how an "old" form of collective organizing is being adopted and adapted in a "new", digital media milieu.

Id: 22487

Title: Unorganized by Design': Commercial Content Moderators as a Stratfied, Globally Dispersed Mission-Critical Workforce and Opportunities Beyond

Session Type: Panel Submission

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Abstract: In the past eighteen months, U.S.-based social media firms – erstwhile economic darlings and cultural causes célèbres over prior years – have found themselves in a position of defense. In particular, several of these firms, American in origin but with a profound global reach and impact, have been at pains to explain to an increasingly skeptical press and a hostile public how they might better safeguard user online experience from harm and manipulation, among a host of other negative outcomes now attributed to these firms and their platforms. Breaking with past practices, Google and Facebook both responded during this period to criticisms by touting, for the first time, its own human employees acting as platform gatekeepers and screeners: the commercial content moderators. This represented something of a sea change in the corporate posture: not only were Google and Facebook both going public for the first time about their reliance upon these workers and their labor, but the firms themselves were pining hopes of increasing public trust and staving off regulation directly in relation to the numbers of workers it now acknowledged they had in these roles. Further, each company announced plans to increase exponentially the number of workers in the coming months (Glaser 2018). When tallied, the number equaled a planned workforce of roughly 30,000 – for Google and Facebook alone.
Simple math makes it clear: people working in some capacity as low-status, low-wage professional adjudicators of user-generated social media material over all mainstream social media platforms – the legion that has come to be known as commercial content moderators – are an important globalized workforce whose total likely edges toward 100,000 conservatively (Roberts 2016; Roberts 2017). Academic research, journalistic investigative reports and documentary films have convincingly established that the job is, at best, unpleasant, and at worse, may cause long-lasting deleterious psychological effects just now being perceived and of which the full scope has yet to be determined (Solon 2017). Nevertheless, industry stratification and worker invisibility (even to each other), has precluded meaningful solidarity-building that is key to labor organizing. It all prompts the inevitable question: if commercial content moderators and their work are the mission-critical safeguards of the lucrative social media industry's platforms, products and userbase, what safeguards exist for the moderators themselves?
In this presentation, we will provide an overview of and update to the current state of commercial content moderation work and workers: who and where in the world they are, for whom they labor, and what – if any – protections they are afforded (and what precludes them). Drawing on almost a decade of empirical research mapping the industry and its workers, the presenter will elucidate the contours of this fractured-by-design globalized labor force and describe both the challenges posed to worker organizing, as well as opportunities in and inspiration from new forms of collective action witnessed in the organized response/resistance to the so-called gig economy (Graham and

Woodcock 2018), intervention upon other novel forms of labor devaluation (Irani and Silberman 2013), and their context of platform capitalism (Srnicek 2016).

Id: 22540

Title: Evolving inequalities of power and wealth in the music and audio-visual sectors in Ireland

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Innovations in the sphere of communications technologies have periodically emerged to challenge and change established power relations in copyright-based industries, perhaps music in particular. However, as some recent studies have shown, the response strategies employed by the most significant transnational companies operating across the music (and related) sectors to evolving technological change have proven successful in bolstering and sustaining their established market dominance. In fact, these 'response strategies' have involved extending and expanding their activities in areas where they previously held 'relatively' limited interests, not least in the case of the broader audio-visual sector (film, TV, advertising and other).

Drawing primarily upon a recent (2018-19) empirical study which focused on contemporary developments in the domain of post-production in the Irish context, this paper is primarily concerned with how such organizational restructuring on the part of major music labels has carried severe implications for indigenous, non-corporate producers of both music and audio-visual content in the Irish context. Here, we must consider the wider implications of the concept of copyright for the music and audio-visual sectors. Intellectual property rights (IPRs) lie at the heart of the corporate restructuring described in this paper, and ownership and control of music copyrights have facilitated a 'global' takeover of a 'local' post-production sector. As such, the local political-economy of the audio-visual sector has been transformed in the context of evolving global music industry strategies for the exploitation of music rights.

As such, the paper highlights fundamental contradictions that have emerged between the key potentials commonly associated with recent technological innovations in the domain of music, and the outcome of these same technological processes in this area in terms of access to markets (for producers) and access to content (for consumers).

The paper ultimately highlights diminishing opportunities for indigenous, non-corporate actors operating in the music and audio-visual domains, and demonstrates how the technological, organizational and legal changes outlined in the empirical study are taking place against the backdrop of widening inequalities of wealth and power across the music and audio-visual sectors in Ireland.

Id: 22597

Title: Debates sobre la regulación de Servicios audiovisuales en Internet. Abordaje conceptual, rol de organismos internacionales y casos nacionales

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Este trabajo propone una discusión sobre los desafíos regulatorios que se presentan en la configuración del sistema audiovisual frente al surgimiento y proliferación de nuevos jugadores que ofrecen servicios audiovisuales a través de Internet. Para ello se realiza un desarrollo conceptual sobre los principales cambios que atraviesa el sector, para luego avanzar en el análisis del modo en que los organismos internacionales de orden técnico y económico (OMC, OCDE y UIT) y aquellos con preocupaciones culturales (UNESCO y Relatorías de Libertad de Expresión de ONU y OEA) han incluido en sus agendas la problemática de los nuevos actores surgidos de Internet. Por último se estudian casos de distintos países (la perspectiva europea, norteamericana y el abordaje de países latinoamericanos) prestando atención a sus modos de intervención.
La perspectiva de análisis parte de la mirada crítica de los estudios de economía política de la comunicación, con un abordaje metodológico basado en la revisión de investigaciones que dan cuenta de los cambios introducidos por los nuevos actores en la conformación del sistema de medios audiovisuales y cómo eso impacta en la discusión sobre la necesidad o no de regularlos y cómo hacerlo. También se realiza un análisis normativo y de documentos de organismos nacionales e internacionales sobre los distintos abordajes existentes en la materia.
Entre los principales hallazgos es posible mencionar en primer lugar la ausencia de consenso internacional sobre el concepto de OTT, incluso no todas las agencias utilizan esta denominación. Por un lado, organizaciones como UNESCO, ONU y CIDH centran sus preocupaciones en la libertad de expresión, no aluden al concepto de OTT sino que hacen referencia de modo general a cómo Internet cambia las condiciones de circulación de la información y la necesidad de aplicar el marco de derechos humanos al entorno digital.
Desde una perspectiva de mercado, organizaciones como la UIT, OMC y OCDE sí han aludido a la regulación de los OTT, lo que da cuenta de la injerencia de los criterios de telecomunicaciones y del comercio sobre las reglas de gobernanza de Internet. De modo general, estas instituciones han enfatizado en las reglas de competencia entre distintos tipos de actores, promoción del comercio y de la innovación.
En el plano nacional es posible agrupar los casos analizados en cuatro modos de abordaje de la problemática de los actores audiovisuales en Internet. Por un lado, la perspectiva europea que combina preocupaciones de índole económica con una mirada de derechos para extender aspectos de la regulación del audiovisual tradicional hacia los nuevos jugadores. En el caso de Estados Unidos, a partir de la tradición regulatoria del país se plantea un enfoque más reactivo hacia la intervención estatal.

En tanto en América Latina predominan los enfoques tributarios, más alineados con las agendas vinculadas al comercio –a pesar de que muchos de los países han ratificado los instrumentos de UNESCO- aunque con variantes.

Id: 22648

Title: El servicio público de televisión en el marco de la reestructuración del Estado en Colombia (1991 ' 2018)

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Esta propuesta es resumen de la tesis doctoral del autor. Se elabora desde el enfoque teórico de la reestructuración del Estado en Colombia y en América Latina, la cual se ha venido adelantando desde los años noventa del siglo pasado. Ello implicó una serie de reformas propuestas por el Banco Mundial y por el Fondo Monetario Internacional, consignadas en los planes de ajuste estructural para los países en vía de desarrollo.

El informe del Banco Mundial de 1997, inicialmente denominado Reconstruyendo el Estado, luego conocido como El Estado en un mundo en transformación, estaba inspirado en la reforma o reestructuración del Estado, y en que el desarrollo sostenido –económico y social- no debía depender del Estado (Banco Mundial 1997). La reestructuración del Estado apuntó a la privatización que los estados capitalistas impulsaron en sectores sensibles y de amplia cobertura en la sociedad como educación, seguridad social, transportes férreos y aéreos, sistema financiero, y telecomunicaciones (telefonía y radiodifusión).

En Colombia, la administración César Gaviria (1990-1994) impulsó el proceso de reestructuración del Estado bajo el lema Modernización del Estado. Uno de los sectores objeto de dicha reestructuración fue el de telecomunicaciones, en el que se ubica la televisión, proceso que condujo a reglamentar el servicio público de televisión. De allí salió el modelo de televisión que ha operado en Colombia hasta la fecha, y que, actualmente, el gobierno nacional busca transformar mediante un proyecto de ley que cursa en el Congreso de la República.

En el marco de la reestructuración del Estado en Colombia, el concepto de servicio público de televisión, establecido por la Constitución Política de 1991, elevó la televisión a rango constitucional y determinó la autonomía de ese medio de comunicación frente a los poderes políticos y económicos. Sin embargo, la captura del Estado, por parte de agentes privados, y la recurrencia de prácticas clientelistas de la política en Colombia frustraron el propósito de autonomía de la televisión. Esto generó que el modelo de servicio público de este medio no garantizara el pluralismo, la diversidad, el derecho a la información y el derecho a la comunicación entre los colombianos.

El estudio se hizo desde la economía política de la comunicación, por cuanto esta área de estudios se ocupa de dos temas específicos: industrias culturales (estructura de propiedad, concentración y monopolios, relación capital/trabajo, bienes simbólicos) y concepto del servicio público de los medios de comunicación masiva (formas y garantía de la prestación del servicio, políticas públicas de comunicación, regulación estatal).

Id: 22652

Title: Contested governance of brand sponsored media content

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: This paper provides a theoretical, analytical and empirical mapping of the contested governance of branded content, advancing a contemporary critical political economy approach. Amid falling display advertising and subscription revenues, sponsored content has offered publishers the potential for increased earnings, and marketers a means to tackle ad-avoidance and boost engagement. Advertising that resembles editorial long predates the digital age, but marketers are increasingly involved in the production of publisher-hosted branded content. Such practices are controversial and contested, including critiques of 'stealth marketing' and the extension of invasive advertising across digital communications. Governance issues range from labelling and consumer identification, to editorial integrity and marketers' share of voice, with challenges made on behalf of digital rights including transparency and data controls. Despite ongoing regulatory convergence, a diverse range of agencies regulate, and self-regulate, branded content, reflecting historical, institutional differences across publishing, broadcasting and audiovisual, public relations and advertising. These arrangements are being tested and challenged by brands' increasing involvement in media content production and distribution.

This paper provides a mapping of key sources and agencies of governance and contestation of branded content. It examines sources ranging from formal law and regulation authorised by supranational bodies, state actors and agencies, to industry co- and self-regulation (including automation), market power mechanisms (including ad blocking) and civil society action and protest. This mapping provided an analysis of the range of actors and processes though which relations of power are produced, sustained and contested. Conceptually, governance is helpful in addressing the interacting range of formal and informal regulatory mechanisms, the proliferation and liquidity of actors, the significance of automation and AI, and modes and sites of contestation. The paper makes a theoretical contribution by advancing the analysis of governance as a tool to extend and integrate political economic, policy and cultural analysis. Such governance research is concerned with regulatory outcomes, but also with practices and behaviour, and so draws together social science and humanities approaches, including culturalist and critical political economy analyses of converging media and marketing communications industries. This paper is therefore designed to make a cross-disciplinary contribution by articulating steps, and challenges, in mapping governance across production, publication, reception and engagement.

The paper presents original research, including findings from interviews with more than 30 UK marketers, and systematic analysis of UK and international professional trade bodies, trade and general media, corporate and other literature. It draws on UK and cross-national analysis of sources and forms of prevailing governance, and policy debate across stakeholders, including those

advancing proposals for media reform and digital rights. The paper also outlines wider sources of challenge and resistance to marketing integration. This forms part of a project to analyse governance of branded content across Europe, North America, and selected countries worldwide, involving a network of international scholars that builds on the AHRC (UK) funded Branded Content Research Network project (AH/N007719/1).

Id: 22722

Title: Fragmented Platform Governance in China: Through the Lens of Alibaba and the Legal-Judicial System

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: By leveraging lawsuits against Alibaba, this paper accounts for the elephant in the room, that is, the commercial internet in China, from a policy and governance perspective. In particular, we first conduct a systematic empirical study of Alibaba's IPR litigation, which reveals platform immunity, or so-called "safe harbors," from legal risks in dealing with third-party content and actions as the cornerstone of the legal-judicial system presiding over online litigation. We then historicize platform immunity as a conceptual and institutional construct embraced in China with adaptation, discordance, and difference and assess the range and nature of articulation and disjuncture across global, national, and local scales. Through the dialectical relationship between the construct and praxis, between governance and political economy, between industrial policy and grassroots practices, the paper further reveals how interrelated incongruences surrounding platform immunity were assembled into a fragmented governance model and why fragmented governance that assembled from multiple sequences and determinations is composite, contradictory, and dynamic. Ultimately, we argue that China's law, policy, and jurisprudence are neither the direct results of the US hegemonic imposition from the inter-national perspective nor the state's unitary or unilateral design from top-down; instead, they try to stay in sync with the platform-based sphere where corporate logic strives to capture and subsume social relations, cultural practices, and economic inventions that seek to adapt to, and also to derail, the corporate scheme. As China's online platform economy has reached the critical threshold of seeking wider extraterritorial expansion and further downward societal incorporation at once, the platform-based sphere is likely to become a glocally networked space of discordance and thus renders China's governance model that unevenly presumes platform immunity inherently instable going forward.

Id: 22825

Title: El audiovisual español en el catálogo de Netflix: una aproximación desde la perspectiva de la diversidad cultural

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Cada vez son más numerosas las voces que sostienen que el desembarco en España de Netflix está transformando el sistema audiovisual español. Los argumentos que están detrás de esta afirmación se fundamentan, por un lado, en la rápida penetración de la plataforma de Los Gatos (California) en los hogares de España -según el último Panel de Hogares de la CNMC (2018) en apenas tres años ya cuenta con dos millones de suscripciones en nuestro país- y, por otro, en una multimillonaria inversión en producción audiovisual que parece estar insuflando nueva vida a un sector que llevaba casi una década en coma -Monzoncillo y Villanueva (2016); García Santamaría (2018)-. Sin embargo, lo cierto es que todavía sabemos bastante poco sobre la actividad y la repercusión reales que el gigante estadounidense está teniendo sobre nuestro sistema audiovisual (por culpa, sobre todo, de la opacidad en el tratamiento de los datos que caracteriza a Netflix). Para empezar a cuantificar de una manera más precisa cuál es ese impacto, en esta comunicación se trabaja con los resultados de una foto fija del catálogo Netflix-España que hemos realizado entre los meses de Octubre y Noviembre de 2018. Gracias a esa foto fija sabemos ya cuáles son las series y películas españolas a las que pueden acceder los usuarios de la plataforma y podemos acometer un análisis en términos de diversidad –Napoli (1999); Albornoz y García Leiva (2017)- de dicho catálogo. Además de clasificar los títulos a partir de una serie de variables (productora, género, macrogénero, tipo de relato, etc.) en esta comunicación se presta especial atención a un caso concreto: Las chicas del cable (2017-). La serie, de la que ya se han emitido tres temporadas y actualmente se rueda una cuarta, es una producción para Netflix de la empresa española Bambú. A través del estudio, tanto de sus características de producción y difusión como de su dimensión estética y narrativa, pretendemos dar respuesta a preguntas como las que siguen: ¿Qué tipo de relación contractual establece Netflix con las empresas con las productoras españolas que están detrás de los llamados "originals"?; ¿en qué otros catálogos nacionales de Netflix se incluye la serie?; ¿las características formales y narrativas de Las chicas del cable son, en algún sentido, extrapolables a otras producciones impulsadas por Netflix?; ¿en qué medida influyen en el diseño de sus "originals" los datos sobre el comportamiento de los usuarios que atesora la empresa?

Id: 22835

Title: Understanding Commitment of Digital Labour in Creative Industries: The Role of Worker Motivation and Passion

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Digital labour has aroused increasing interests among scholars recently. However, few have examined into the micro mechanisms of digital workers' commitment in creative industries, which is crucial to labour productivity. In this regard, we conducted a quantitative study to explore the determinants of digital workers' commitment in creative industries, so as to provide fresh insights on the growing digital labour.

Rooted in the participatory culture, Chinese online literature platforms have seen their rapid development and commercialization since early 1900s. This has created a huge digital market at a valuation of $13bn-15bn with more than 378 million users by the end of 2017. Simultaneously, an increasing number of online literature writers participate in the creative production, investing considerable time and efforts. In the context of casual employment and flexible payment, most of the online literature writers are low-paid and lack of basic labour protections. So an urgent question is that: why are they still willing to work continuously?

In serious leisure studies, 'Passion' consists of two related parts: harmonious passion referring to one's willingness to engage in an activity, and obsessive passion indicating an uncontrollable urge toward an activity. Both of them are regarded as outcomes of individual motivations and drivers of commitment. In worker motivation literatures, utilitarian and hedonic motivations are considered as key factors predicting job participation and commitment. Thus, we integrate worker motivation research with dualistic passion model to assess their roles in online literature writers' continuous commitment.

Using a sample of 599 valid respondents recruited from online literature platforms, we find that:
1)   Utilitarian motivation (b=0.452, p<0.001) positively predicts continuous commitment, while hedonic motivation has no direct effect.
2)   Obsessive passion (b=0.176, p<0.001) positively predicts continuous commitment, while harmonious passion has no direct effect.
3)   Obsessive passion mediates the relationship between worker motivation (utilitarian & hedonic) and continuous commitment(0.087, p<0.01).

This study contributes to the digital labor research by shedding light on the psychological antecedents and mechanisms underlying digital workers' commitment. And we also extend the

dualistic passion model by integrating worker motivation theory and tested it in the context of online creative work. Contrary to the previous studies which see hedonic motivations as crucial drivers of short-term digital labour, we argue that it is utilitarian motivation that really matters in predicting long-term digital work, such as generating serialized literature works. In other words, the pursuit of reputation, skill development and monetary rewards plays a more significant role in workers' persistence. Though harmonious passion is found to be positively associated with workers' commitment in other fields, we argue that only obsessive passion can help low-paid creative workers to overcome the obstacles and conflicts from other life domains. And both hedonic and utilitarian motivations contribute to the obsessive passion, which demands sacrifices and risks, thus to increase continuous commitment. The exploitation and alienation of digital labour are also discussed.

Id: 22852

Title: Towards a typology of media tycoons

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Political economy of media is usually focused on structures, linking particular media-related phenomena to general tendencies and contradictions of various versions of capitalist system. On the theoretical level, there is only a limited attention paid to the role(s) of powerful actors who control many media organizations: the media tycoons. On the other hand, there are many accounts about them that suggest that they are not all the same: some are colorful characters trying to push their own political agenda, some are dry businessmen strictly denying any interference in their media outlets, some are solely focused on media and for some, it is just a little hobby on the side. In short, there are different types of media tycoons with potentially different roles. This should be explored further.

This paper provides a draft of a typology of media tycoons. They are categorized (1) by the degree of importance of their media business in comparison to their other activities and (2) by their relationship to political status quo in the country where they operate. In the spirit of de-westernizing media studies, the paper provides examples from Russia, China and the Czech Republic. These three countries with their diverging political and economic trajectories represent three main models of post-Communist media landscapes and provide a wide range of examples of media tycoons.

From a comparison of the contemporary situation in the three countries it seems that the tycoons solely focused on media would have a wide range of attitudes regarding the status quo while the tycoons with vast business empires and therefore only partial interest in media would be in principle supporters of the status quo of which they are the main beneficiaries. Especially in China but also in Russia there are also tycoons who politically serve as proxies of the dominant political power, but the most interesting are tycoons with political ambitions of their own and therefore with somewhat contradictory relationship with the status quo. Their cases suggest that it is problematic to talk about political status quo as something stable, permanent and devoid of its own contradictions because their fortunes are products of the exact same status quo they claim to challenge in their quest for their own political power.

Id: 22983

Title: Selling Alternative Sexuality through Fifty Shades of Grey Merchandise

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Hollywood and its associated subsidiaries have sold love and sexuality from the inception of the industry; "sex sells" is a common refrain in the business. What makes the Fifty Shades of Grey (the films in the trilogy were released in 2015, 2017, and 2018) phenomenon unique within Hollywood (and contemporary mass media in general) is its framing of alternative sexualities as a glamorous lifestyle choice that one can access through consumer purchases of products ranging from franchise-branded sex toys, themed teddy bears, official franchise wine, and much more. Within the world of the Fifty Shades of Grey, BDSM (bondage, dominance/submission, sadism/masochism) is aligned with an opulent and wealthy lifestyle. The products associated with the film reflect the values of a capitalistic system that holds opulent sexual products as more valuable than sexual knowledge, wisdom, or engagement with one's partner(s). However, the branded merchandise brings in a lot of revenue and publicity for the stakeholders and associated companies. LoveHoney, the sex toy company selling Fifty Shades of Grey branded toys, experienced a huge increase in revenue after the debut of the line. Other adult companies have experienced similar revenue boosts without even carrying any of the branded merchandise.

This paper seeks to examine the problematic ideological implications of the brand's merchandise using a critical political economic approach. The Fifty Shades of Grey franchise, on a scale unlike any other media text in recent memory, capitalizes on the commodity market of middle class, middle-aged women. By creating a diverse line of tie-in products, the text works in tandem with physical cultural goods that are full of dangerous misinformation regarding sexual health and well-being in the name of "empowerment." A critical political economic analysis of the Fifty Shades of Grey merchandise, informed by Meehan's work on the gendered commodity audience (2002), will be conducted at the intersection of discourse surrounding BDSM (Barker, 2013; Bonomi & Altenburger, 2013; Bonomi, et. al. 2016; Leistner & Mark, 2016) in the interest of critiquing the corporate system that capitalizes on the feminist rhetoric of sexual empowerment to further subordinate women both ideologically and economically. A specific emphasis is placed on the role of NBCUniversal in the production and dissemination of Fifty Shades of Grey franchise material in conjunction with its self-proclaimed understanding of its role as a media-creator to produce work that encourages critical dialogue among the audience. Additionally, this paper fills a gap in the literature surrounding the production of Fifty Shades of Grey itself, specifically the use of merchandise to promote the brand. By looking at this aspect of production, an examination and critique is conducted of the way in which this text and its associated products, with its underlying ideologies surrounding issues of alternative sexualities and sexual empowerment, are intimately involved in the lives of the audience.

Id: 23221

Title: The regulation of the digital audiovisual market in Latin America

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Today there is a consensus in recognizing that the audiovisual landscape is characterized by regulatory asymmetries between traditional broadcasters and new audiovisual players. Some examples of these regulatory asymmetries are evidenced in the relations established between companies and consumers (some players respect the jurisdiction of the country where the service is used, others do not), taxation (some players pay taxes in the markets where act, others do not), content quota obligations (some players have while others do not) or compulsory contribution to national or regional audiovisual production (some players are integrated into national ecosystems of financing national and/or regional audiovisual works while others are not).

In this context, the possible state intervention to regulate video on demand (VoD) and video-sharing platforms or not is one of the key debates in the audiovisual sector. This discussion is taking place in different parts of the world in different ways; for example, while the European Union (EU-28) has recently amended the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) in order to regulate VoD platforms, the Mexican regulator (the Institute Federal of Telecommunications) has declared that there in not plan to regulate the new digital services because this "would stop the innovation" (IFT 2018).

In this regard, in the Latino American region, the private companies confront the possible public intervention: their positions range from the defence of the State's intervention to deregulate the linear audiovisual sector in order to compete with new online players (e.g. traditional broadcasters nucleated in the International Association of Broadcasting – IAB 2018) to the claim of State non-intervention (e.g. the Latin American Internet Association – ALAI 2018). Deregulation and non-intervention arguments – that evoke notions like innovation, competitiveness or consumer free choice – are "old" and well know… These arguments totally ignore that government delegations and civil society entities have been voicing the need to examine the impact of digital technologies and to promote the modernization of policies and cultural tools in the digital era (Guèvremont 2013, Beaudoin 2014, Kulesz 2014, Rioux et al. 2015, Albornoz and García Leiva 2017).

This paper aims to introduce the current debate about the audiovisual new players regulation in Latin America and to analyse some interesting new initiatives that are taking place in some South American countries. Although the regulation of the digital audiovisual market by the states faces serious opposition, it is possible to recognize a widespread tendency in South America countries to incorporate audiovisual digital platforms into traditional tax schemes through tax reforms (Colombia, Argentina, Chile…). Also, there are some cases in the region that deserve attention: Argentina, that launched a public VoD platform called Cine.AR Play (former Odeon); Brazil, that since 2015 is living a vivid debate about the regulation of VoD services; and Paraguay, that created Audiovisual National Fund financed 50 per cent by the tax withholdings generated by commercial operations performed over the Internet (Audiovisual Promotion Law N° 6.106).

Id: 23298

Title: Algorithms, Autonomy & Political Activity: How Social Media AI Affects Democratic Societies

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Recent questions about the role of social media in the 2016 U.S. elections have sparked public debate on the role of social media in public opinion and trust in democratic institutions. Simultaneously, there has been a growing divide in scholarship: some scholars have argued that social media reproduces political echo chambers through confirmation bias while others claim develops diverse, democratic spaces through increased network heterogeneity (Lee et al. 2014). However, aside from initial research into search algorithms and platform economies, scholarship has yet to fully address the co-constitutive nature of technology, information, and public participation, especially since the launch of AI initiatives like the Google Brain in 2016-2017 (see also Noble 2018; Gillespie 2018). My analysis examines the determination of YouTube recommendation features through AI and the role of the algorithmic features in constructing and legitimizing mediated publics on YouTube (owned by Google). The Google Brain is constituted by deep neural networks that "learn approximately one billion parameters and are trained on hundreds of billions of examples" (Covington, Adams, and Sargin 2016, 191). Furthermore, this system integrates user data from other websites and platforms owned by Google like Gmail, Google maps and drive. While users may initially search for a specific video or purpose, over seventy percent of users' time spent on YouTube is determined by the site's recommendation engine and approximately eighty percent of users claim to watch the recommended videos (Smith, Toor, and Van Kessel 2018). The impact of YouTube on political events like the 2016 U.S. election is speculated to have been much deeper than originally thought and it illustrates the need for scholarship that considers the political economy and cultural relations of social media alongside the technical.

I use a multimethodological approach that combines critical technology studies and political economy to examine the formation and effects of mediated publics by social media design. Because these publics appear as naturally formed, rather than constructed as they are, they hide the modes of production and design, i.e. the AI and data collection. As YouTube is a site of mass political and social information dissemination, examining the technology behind it exposes the ways in which digital culture and information infrastructure contribute to methods of democratic participation engineering. This not only produces ambivalent political effects but undermines the democratic potential of YouTube. Through a case study on the 2016 U.S. presidential election, I interrogate the complex interplay between consumers, producers, developers and technology to delineate power relations and determine the political as well as productive modes of social media. While we may believe that posting, liking, or sharing online is an example of individual autonomy, the increased use of YouTube for political participation has led to more rules, user agreements, and normalized

behaviors as well as the expansion of corporate monopolies. As we look to the future, I argue that the naturalization of mediated publics and determination of power by social media is an essential consideration that needs to be incorporated at the level of design for new communication technologies.

Id: 23334

Title: Imaginaries of neoliberal sincerity: Emergent antitrust traps versus the necessary logistical turn in media reform activism

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The Trump Administration in the U.S. currently faces legal and legislative pushback for its rollback of network neutrality, amongst other rollbacks of public protections and programs—even the effective self-removal of the longtime communications regulator, the Federal Communications Commission, from jurisdiction over broadband networks itself. Left deliberately in its place is a desiccated form of antitrust as a distant substitute for consumer protections, an outcome long sought by industry interests and their allies. Stimulated by these decisions as well as controversies surrounding tech giants as Facebook and Google (both real and contrived), competition law is experiencing its own seeming renewal, illustrated by the surprise splash of law student Lina Khan's "Amazon's Antitrust Paradox" (2017). The FCC's own former General Counsel, Jonathan Sallet, has entered the fray (2018), as has Tim Wu (2018). All emphasize that a focus exclusively on price in antitrust is insufficient given present market dynamics; Stucke and Grunes' (2016) magisterial study of data-extractive industries reaches similar conclusions. As Stucke and Grunes note, competition policy has ignored the role of big data collection and analysis in the growth of market power; even the European Union, with its more stringent rules, miss any number of theories of harm. They suggest past mergers be evaluated to draw out how data issues should have been considered, and alongside calls to break up large tech companies, new legislation has already been offered to allow for after-the-fact evaluation of regulator decisions. A renewed focus on competition has entered public discourse as well, appearing in the political runs of Tim Wu and Zephyr Teachout and in popular press books as Robert Reich's 'Saving Capitalism: For the Many, Not the Few.' Pushback against the dismantlement of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ring just as familiar, even with the addition of the democratic socialist tag attached in Senator Bernie Sanders' case.

The network neutrality debates of the last two decades have much to teach regarding these emergent controversies—and, horrifyingly, the wrong lessons are being learned. Perhaps paradoxically, antitrust's new epistemic fluidity is not a sign of hope; it is the gears winding up again on familiar terrain when a refocus on the logistics of present-day production of value subjects is what is necessary to move forward. What media reformers are fighting now is not a rational debate even as it clothes itself in its garb: they are battling a deep-rooted institutionalized understanding that possesses strong material support networks. This paper seeks to respond to present day trajectories of debate in this sphere—traps, really—and outline new directions in an era in which media consumption becomes a crucial piece of wider circuits informing production and distribution chains that will impact media policy in both predictable and unpredictable ways. Those concerned with communications policy must think beyond its classically liberal aspects as production and

dissemination of content. Communications policy is blurring into broader fields of logistics policy operating at multiple, often contradictory levels, and activism will need to account for all these levels at once.

Id: 23370

Title: LaMula.pe: A Peruvian model for online news'

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Peru's dramatic history of media corruption during the Fujimori regime(1990-2000) led to a crisis and distrust in journalism. This coincided with the changing media landscape brought about by technology, which provided an outlet for newer forms of delivering information. A newer generation of journalists and concern citizens decided to challenge the status quo of information with the creation of LaMula.pe, a digital platform.

This work traces the history and impact of LaMula.pe, one of Peru's most successful online platform founded in 2009 based on a model that combines citizen journalism with professional journalism. Furthermore, this work will analyze LaMula.pe's influence over legacy media and other local online news outlets. LaMula.pe many times serves as an agenda setter by focusing on topics that mainstream media ignores, but once it trends on LaMula they have to also follow and cover the issue9s). This work will also give attention to LaMula's diversification and lately role as co-producer or sponsor of documentary and fiction films that cover human rights issues and challenge official stories and the official history of Peru's recent political past.

Utilizing political economy of communication as the framework, this work will probe the history and development of LaMula.pe, its structure and funding model, and its sustainability as a new model for news and cultural media producer and outlet.

Id: 23468

Title: Algorithmic Necessity: On the Key Characteristics of Algorithms in Capitalism

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: In technological jargon algorithm can be considered as a "method for solving a problem." (Finn, 2017: 18) In this view, narrow problems are instrumentally defined by engineers and entrepreneurs that develop code with an aim of overcoming these problems. Even at first glance, it is clear that such abstract definitions cannot explain why algorithms now play one of the central roles in almost all spheres of society, from politics and economy to culture and interpersonal relationships (Pasquale, 2015). From the most basic functions of the biggest search engines and social networking sites, to the ways formerly laborious operations are simplified, how financial institutions operate or how whole labour processes are now fully automatized. Because technologies are inevitably embedded within the social context in which they develop, this paper looks at the key characteristics of algorithms in competitive and inherently unstable capitalist society (Streeck, 2012).

While it may seem capitalism has little to do with algorithms, it - quite on the contrary - has everything to do with them. It is no technological or technical necessity inherent in algorithms, because of which they should become so omnipresent and all-encompassing. Companies using algorithms, however, potentially have significant market advantages in specific markets when using them. This means non-adoption can similarly bring disadvantages, in time leaving these companies further behind. What Marx (1990/1867: 433) called "the coercive laws of competition" thus has direct consequences for general expansion of algorithms and how they develop. This leads to what I term "algorithmic necessity", increased inevitability that different actors and institutions will use algorithms.

In this context basic features of algorithms include: (1) opacity and complexity, (2) automatization, (3) datafication, and (4) hyper-rationalisation. Obviously, social consequences of these characteristics are multifaceted. Amongst them are: Firstly, incomprehensibility and secrecy, connected to opacity (1) and the fact most algorithms are developed by capitalist companies. Secondly, social acceleration and naturalization, which are mainly connected to the automatization of processes and decisions (2). According to Rosa (2013; 2014), social acceleration is a constitutive part of modern societies; in late modernity, however, it becomes a self-propelling system "that incessantly drives itself." (2014: 31-33) Algorithms can be seen as an important part of technological acceleration, which is a dimension of this closed acceleration-cycle. Naturalization is similarly connected to the fact that socially constructed processes, which become automatized (2), appear self-evident. They are supposedly based on objective (calculative, computational) logic that has no inherent biases. Naturalization is therefore also connected to datafication (3), as algorithms today increasingly need large quantities of data to perform their key functions. Mass surveillance, enabled by digitalization, is the third consequence that is raising big concerns. Fourthly, hyper-

rationalisation (4) leads to intensification of what Horkheimer (1974/2004; 1974/2012) or Marcuse (1941/1955) called instrumental reason. They related it to the development of modern capitalism and its specific forms of rationalization, especially economic rationality that becomes predominant. For Fuchs (2009, 8), instrumental reason is "oriented on utility, profitableness, and productivity", with its objectives reduced to cost-benefit calculations, further feeding "algorithmic necessity".

Id: 23676

Title: The Paradoxical Role of 3C Internet Celebrities in the Labor Process: Re-interpreting Audience Commodity Theory in the Digital Age

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: The exploitation of audience labor concerns Dallas Smythe greatly. The media, he critically argued, puts audiences work for advertisers. Viewers' eyeballs are sold in exchange of media profits. Advertisers want more from audiences in the digital age. Many YouTubers share their product experiences online. These messages are more persuasive than regular commercials. Their brand expertises have a great deal of impact on the purchase decision-making process of other consumers. Nowadays, some of popular YouTubers have been recruited by advertisers to promote branded commodities.

According to eMarketer, the advertising spending worldwide reaches 628.63 billion dollars in 2018. Digital media account for 43.5% of all costs due to shifting viewership from traditional TV to digital channels. When audiences turn their eyeballs to the interactive platforms, such as Youtube, advertisers begin to invest more on the Internet celebrities who produce video contents to generate millions of viewers. This study intends to investigate the exploitation of audience labor on Youtube channels and the paradoxical role of YouTubers. Van Dijck (2013) argues that Youtube is homecasting. The audiences can decide what content and what time to watch empowered by search engine. Also, Youtube audiences belong to various fan communities. Unlike television audiences, YouTubers and their fans are close to one another and regularly share viewing experiences together. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2002) believe that digital technologies empower audiences to co-create values with advertisers. YouTubers express their own viewpoints toward branded products and build fan communities on them.

My research targets are 3C Internet celebrities. In Taiwan, 3C stands for computer, communications, and consumer electronics. Generally speaking, 3C Internet celebrities maintain a consumer identity, and they currently like to introduce electronic products on Youtube, the most popular Vblog platform. First, the researcher will select the 3C Youtube channels which generate the most viewing eyeballs by tracking their Youtube Analytics. The commercial values of YouTubers are based on the quantities of fan communities and the supporting strength from them. The semi-structured interviewing is suitable for this study. The researcher will interview ten Internet celebrities who run the 3C Youtube channels with highest viewing ratings. Questions will be about the paradoxical role that YouTubers take in the labor process. They must decide how to justify commercial interests and product evaluation. Second, this study will focus on the marketing strategies of the major 3C advertisers on Youtube. The researcher will interview the marketing managers of the top five 3C brands in Taiwan. Questions will be on how the managers evaluate the audience commodities they buy from Youtube channels. Youtube Analytics offers more in-depth data than television ratings. The marketing strategists can monitor the performance of each channel

and videos with up-to-date metrics and reports, like the watch time, traffic sources, and demographics analysis.

Id: 23682

Title: Neoliberalism and the Academia: international communication research in the Global Age

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: To understand the origins and evolution of communication studies it is always necessary to analyse the political, socio-economical and institutional context on which they take part. These factors should be considered as a constitutive element of the discipline, as the knowledge interest related to these contextual issues and structures are determinant to understand the scope of research, the theoretical frameworks and the methodological procedures. Without this contextualization of communication research and of the institutions on which they are performed it is impossible to have a detailed image to understand this specific field of the social sciences.
Communication studies refers to a changing object of study, which material delimitation depends on the specific context in which it happens. The neoliberal transnationalization of media industries in a global market of services and innovations provides a particular scenario for a progressive convergence between different media business such as broadcasting, telecommunication operators and knowledge industries, merging forms of financial capitalism and creative industries. This, combined with a strong de-regulation of media systems in a logic of glocalization by adopting cultural identities in a global consumer society, points to a combination of a pretended diversity of communicative uses and interactions, but in the common background of a global cultural-cognitive capitalism. In addition, it must be considered the particular context on which research activity is performed, which includes different components such as journal standards, professional and research associations, top universities rankings, competitive funding calls, impact of research measures and the evaluation of academic activity. This institutional framework developed over the past decades would have provided an academic work-ethic based on the professional status that must be analysed in the neoliberal logic of competition.
This presentation aims to describe the role developed by the current economic, political and institutional structures as determinant factors to understand current communication research. It will expound arguments to understand the influence of neoliberal ideology into academic and research procedures. The analysis will focus on the economic and institutional dimension of research, as determinant factors to understand research standards related to shared working routines, methodologies, objects of study, academic backgrounds and professional strategies in a global arena. In this regard, the institutionalization of a research canon and agenda shared by researchers will be interpreted nor only as a consequence of adopting international standards for research

activity, but also as criteria for research activity and for professional careers development in a context of global competency for working opportunities and professional reputation.

Id: 23805

Title: Graham Murdock: Celebrating a Career in Communications Research

Session Type: Individual submission

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Abstract: Professor Graham Murdock has made essential contributions to communications research for almost fifty years from his early work on demonstrations to political economy of communication to the digital commons and citizenship to his recent work on communication and climate change. The extraordinary scope of his interests and the global perspective he adopts mark him out as one of the most original and engaged scholars in the field. As well as being a key, critical thinker, he is also a wonderful and generous colleague and teacher held in great affection by generations of faculty and students alike.