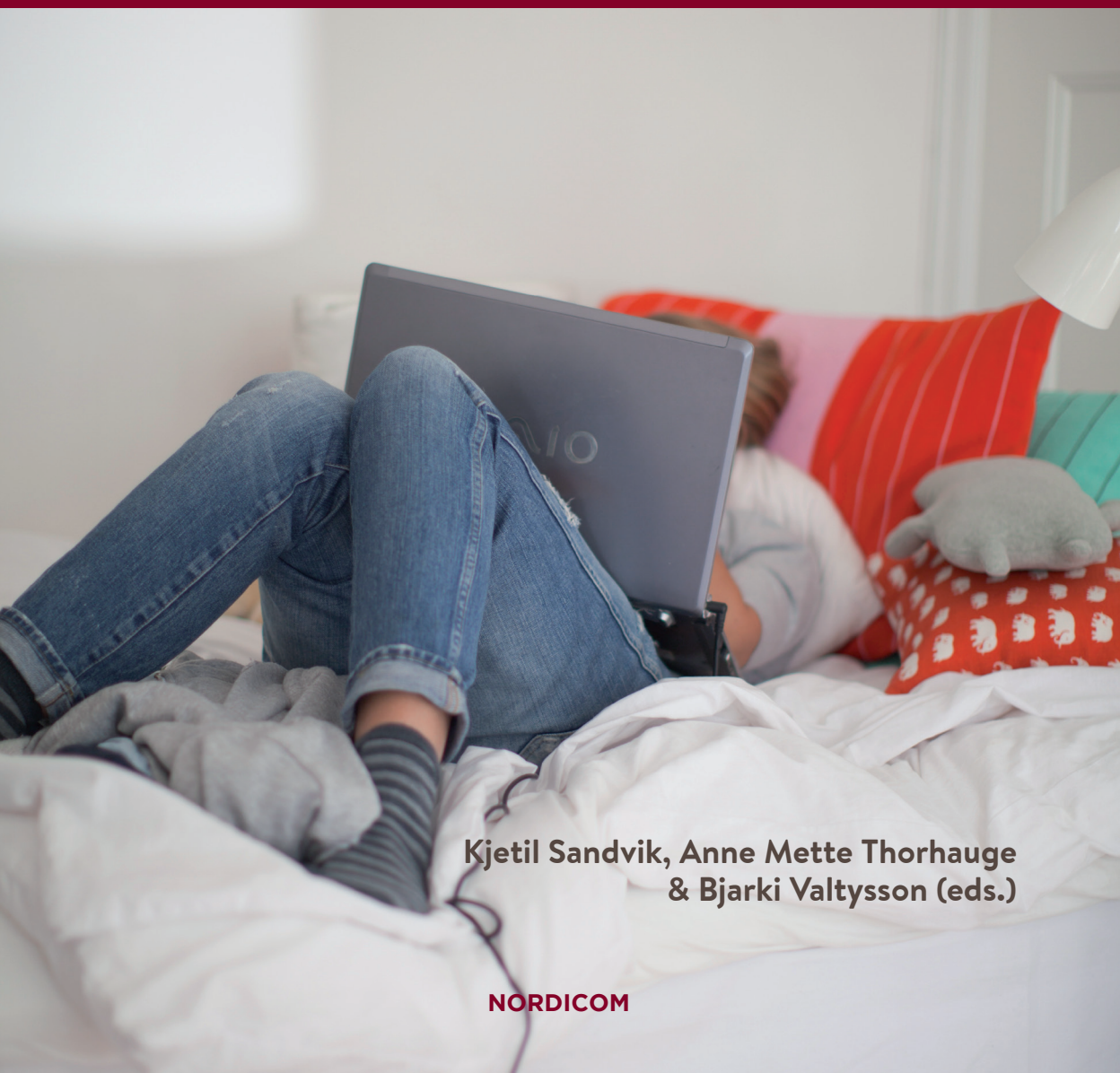
The Media and the Mundane

Communication Across Media in Everyday Life



Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge
& Bjarki Valtysson (eds.)

NORDICOM

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ISBN 978-91-87957-38-3 (print)
ISBN 978-91-87957-39-0 (pdf)

The publication is also available as open access at www.nordicom.gu.se

Published by:
Nordicom
University of Gothenburg
Box 713
SE 405 30 GÖTEBORG
Sweden

Cover by: Per Nilsson
Cover photo: Johan Strindberg/Bildhuset/TT
Printed by: Responstryck AB, Borås, Sweden, 2016

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Acknowledgements

This book is the result of a 3½ year research project *Meaning Across Media – Cross-media Communication and Co-creation*, funded by the Danish National Council for Independent Research and housed by the Department of Media, Cognition and Communication at the University of Copenhagen. Taking the fact that uses of media are changing substantially with great significance to individuals as well as society as its starting point, the project has been researching new roles of and relations between users and producers caused by the occurring and rapidly development and proliferation of mobile and networked media and cross-media communication.

The project has focused on how today's media users increasingly apply a manifold of media in their everyday life with various purposes. The project has produced new analytical, theoretical, and methodological insights into the scale and character of today's media use and the new roles offered to us, the users. Particularly, social media change our possibilities as users from being mere consumers of media content to being active co-creators sharing, editing or producing new content.

We would like to thank the members of the project not appearing in this volume: Klaus Bruhn Jensen, Jakob Linaa Jensen, Mette Mortensen and Jacob Ørmen. We would also like to express our thanks to external project associates Nancy Baym, Axel Bruns and Nick Couldry for valuable discussions and contributions throughout the project.

Copenhagen, October 2016

Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson

Introduction

The Media and the Mundane

Communication across Media in Everyday Life

Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson

'Everyday life' and the 'mundane' are frequently used terms in media, communication and cultural studies. There is a great amount of literature that in some way or another touches upon these issues, often vaguely, sometimes in a more structured manner. Celebrated works like de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life* (1991) automatically crop up as important, but varied contributions to the study of everyday life, and the concept has been key to major streams within media studies such as cultural studies (Hall 1980) and domestication theory (Silverstone et al. 1992). Within these streams of research, everyday life is generally approached as meaning those mundane contexts of use where the encoded meanings and affordances of media and media technologies are translated into the lived experiences of ordinary people. Indeed, everyday life has on some occasions been defined as all those informal or mundane activities that fall outside the 'formal worlds of work and politics' (Haddon 2004) and the formal world of media systems could be added to the latter.

One reason the concepts of everyday life and the mundane have remained key areas of concern in media studies is that they are often more or less directly related to the perspective of recipients and users, as a counterpart to the perspective of media systems, institutions and professionals. That is, the study of media in the mundane contexts of everyday life has been part of the endeavour to expand and contextualise both a recipient and a user perspective of the media. In this book we will continue in a similar vein, asking not just how media are used, but also how media are used in combination in the contexts of everyday life. We find this issue very important for several reasons. Firstly, the popularisation of the internet and digital communication technologies since the 1990s brought a proliferation of available media technologies in everyday contexts, making media choice and media combination a key area of research (Helles 2013). Moreover, this plurality of media and their possible combinations have primarily been approached from both a platform and producer perspective, leaving the user perspective less described. Finally, the increasing number of available com-

Sandvik, Kjetil; Thorhauge, Anne Mette & Valtysson, Bjarki (2016). Introduction: The Media and the Mundane. Communication across Media in Everyday Life, pp. 9-15 in Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson (eds.) *The Media and the Mundane. Communication Across Media in Everyday Life*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

munication technologies in everyday life also creates opportunities for cultural and political participation, as seen from the point of view of the user, and with potentially wider implications for cultural policy and political systems.

Cross-media communication in a user perspective

Current studies in cross-media communication have primarily focused on the production and dissemination of media content. As such, cross-media content is typically defined as 'an intellectual property, service, story or experience that is distributed across multiple media platforms using a variety of media forms' (Ibrus & Scolari 2012: 7). The producer perspective implies that the experience is created for the user so that the producer controls which content is available on which media/platforms, and with which navigation possibilities. The focus on media and everyday life in this book implies that we should move away from the producers and the dissemination of media content (media texts), towards the actual users themselves, considering 'the broader set of *practices* related to media' and as such 'the distinctive types of *social process* enacted *through* media-related practices' (Couldry 2012: 44). There is thus a shift in perspective: the mediated experience is created by the user even though the media content originates from a producer. As stated by Sandvik et al. (2012) individual media users increasingly use a wide variety of media types and genres in their everyday lives. Media users do this for the diverse purposes of communication; pleasure, politics, planning and organising, interpersonal relations, and so on. As media develop into rich and interlinked platforms (the computer, the mobile phone, the internet), media users come to use this variety of media not just separately but in shifting combinations. These patterns of communication transgress traditional communication patterns and may develop into more participatory modes of communication. Communicating across media in everyday life is not just a question of choosing and combining different content and media-platforms, it is also a question of choosing and combining different modes of engagement. For instance, news may be consumed by reading newspapers (off-line/online), watching television news (bulletins or text-TV), subscribing to online news services, and so on, but news may also be appropriated in a more participatory mode: by commenting on news stories, participating in forums debating news issues, or sharing news stories on social network sites (e.g. Facebook). Finally, users may engage in co-creative activities, such as citizen journalism, documenting important events they happen to attend, and making them available to others, be they media or other groups, as 'audiences' (see Jensen, Mortensen & Ørmen 2016). In this way, users apply different modes of communication across media when engaging as distributors, remixers, and producers in their own right (Sandvik et al. 2012).

The concept of cross-media communication may be approached from a producer perspective and from a user perspective, involving highly divergent types of questions

and fields of research. In the current volume we will focus on the latter perspective since this has not been sufficiently addressed in media studies. We will also deal with the user perspective on cross-media communication within the contexts of everyday life, foregrounding the rather mundane practices and motives that frame the combined use of multiple media platforms and services by individual users. In doing this, we will not limit ourselves to one specific theoretical 'take' on everyday life and the mundane, quite on contrary; we will offer a range of possible theoretical and empirical approaches to the way in which everyday life and the mundane frame cross-media communication. The common denominator of these approaches will be the 'spaces of agency' formed by social structures and practices on one hand, and media technologies on the other.

Everyday life as a space of agency

Focusing on cross-media communication as it unfolds in everyday contexts, the idea of this book is not to provide a universal definition of 'everyday life' but to provide different insights into everyday life from a user-centric perspective on cross-media communication. A key contribution of the book will be a more general discussion and qualification of everyday life as a 'space of agency' constituted by the range of (media) technologies being used within the frameworks of everyday life practices. The media technologies analysed throughout this book condition user-manoeuvrability in different ways, and therefore both constrain and enable the kinds of user patterns that can be expected. In other words, media technologies in various combinations shape spaces of agency, but users operating different media technologies in mundane contexts also shape this space of agency, for instance by applying different platforms, social media and apps, in different, and sometimes unintended, ways.

In this context *agency* may be defined as 'the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices' (Barker 2004: 448), however it will prove productive to see agency, along the lines of Gidden's *structuration theory*, as an intertwined and mutually independent dyad of individual acts and societal structures. In this way everyday life is not just series of individual actions, but neither can it be reduced to social forces (e.g. tradition, institutions, moral codes and established ways of doing things): 'Society only has form, and that form only has effects on people, in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do' (Giddens & Pierson, 1998: 77, see also Gauntlett 2002). Seeing media technologies and their affordance as part of the framing structure of the agency taking place, we see clearly – throughout the chapters of this book – how people in various everyday contexts adapt to the media on the one hand, and on the other hand how media are being appropriated in combination, and thus challenged as framing structures by users.

The content of this book

These three concepts, *everyday life*, *cross-media communications* and *space of agency*, have served as the guiding light for all contributors. We asked all authors to address these components in their chapters. The structure of the book is based on three theoretical chapters, followed by six case studies. The theoretical contributions are meant to provide different insights and inspire further discussions on the topic at hand. As such, the theoretical chapters address the domestication framework in these current times of cross-media communication; they offer theoretical approaches, from critical realism to the problem of locating and understanding mobile media from an everyday life perspective, and they investigate the transformations in the experienced social world that are brought about by cross-media technologies and practices, expanding former phenomenological sociology frameworks with concepts and questions originating from the phenomenology of technology. The following case studies deal with cross-mediated communication patterns in different everyday, mundane life situations, spanning from micro-coordination and micro-routines in an everyday life context, the role smartphone exercise apps play in the everyday practice of exercise, illness and how participation in Facebook groups affects the agency of users in everyday life, and cross-media uses in everyday practices of grief, to how digitised cultural heritage is made available through specific media platforms and how respondents relate to this digitised restaging of the past in everyday contexts, and finally to a study which addresses the potential political implications of social media by looking into everyday appropriations of the political opportunities offered to active citizens.

Domestication theory has been influential when studying technology and everyday life, and therefore Leslie Haddon addresses the domestication of complex media repertoires in *Chapter 1*. In this chapter Haddon asks to what extent the domestication framework has coped with the vastly greater range of media available now, compared to the period in which the concept was first formulated. A more complex repertoire of media involves newer and older media interrelating in a variety of ways, captured by terms like 'cross-media consumption'. The chapter first examines studies illustrating what this entails before exploring both the classic formulation of domestication and how the framework later evolved. This is relevant because the original principles of domestication were very broad but the approach also needs to be understood through the ways in which people apply and enhance it. The final section of the chapter summarises three studies that show, in different ways, how domestication researchers have analysed the ways that people manage the greater variety of media options.

In *Chapter 2*, Rasmus Helles applies a theoretical approach from critical realism to the problem of locating and understanding mobile media from an everyday life perspective. Margaret Archer's sociology is used to argue that existing theories of media use in everyday life are inadequate for capturing the role of mobile media in contemporary society because of their exclusive focus on routinisation and equilibrium as hallmarks of everyday life. The chapter uses Archer's sociological theory to

develop an alternative framework that focuses on the ways in which mobile media enhance individual reflexivity in daily life, and argues that mobile media play a key role in promoting social morphogenesis.

Finally, in *Chapter 3* Maria Bakardjieva rounds off the theoretical discussions by investigating the transformations in the experienced social world brought about by cross-media technologies and practices. Bakardjieva expands the phenomenological sociology framework put forth by Alfred Schutz with concepts and questions stemming from the phenomenology of technology. The chapter provides a foundation for a user-centred critique of communication technology and practice, highlighting the substantive changes in the human condition associated with the immersive cross-media milieu and the prevalence of new mediate sociality. The chapter argues that this new mediate sociality opens a range of opportunities for individual emancipation and mutual understanding, at the same time as it also invites risks of exploitation and alienation. The chapter therefore offers a critical-analytical grid that could inform future empirical studies.

In *Chapter 4*, Anne Mette Thorhauge will address the way smartphones are integrated into the spatial and temporal patterns of everyday life. As communication technologies, smart phones are mobile, individualised and diversified in the sense that they cover a wide range of communication patterns and services. They thus function as a versatile tool for tracking the (communicative) actions of individuals across the various contexts that make up their everyday lives. The chapter will present an empirical study documenting, on one hand, how smartphones are integrated into the everyday routines and whereabouts of individual users, and on the other hand, how users strategically configure their phones in order to manage the way the smart phones blend in with other activities and balance the communication flows of everyday life.

In *Chapter 5*, Stine Lomborg presents an empirical study of the role played by self-tracking technologies, and more specifically exercise apps, on the smartphone, in the everyday practice of exercise. Apps such as Strava, Runkeeper and Endomondo allow for the detailed monitoring and analysis of exercise habits based on aggregated data about the individual. They also allow users to share their activities across media, for example, by interlinking apps with wearables such as running watches or social media such as Facebook, thereby integrating the cross-media communication flow concerning exercise with other everyday communications. This chapter explores the integration of the self-tracking of exercise in the flow and conduct of the individual user's everyday lives, focusing on: a) how self-tracking is practiced and exercise balanced against other activities, duties and personal needs, and b) the role of cross-media use in this practice. The analysis informs a discussion of how the communicative affordances of exercising apps support exercising practices in everyday life, and, elaborates the user perspective on cross-media composition, that is, cross-media as the practice of choosing and combining media.

In *Chapter 6*, Troels Fibæk Bertel presents an empirical study of the use of self-organised Facebook groups for civic participation among individuals who are suffering

from disabling chronic illness and who feel that they have, in various ways and for various reasons, been 'caught up' in the Danish municipal system. Doubly challenged by their illness and by their experiences interacting with the municipal system, these individuals have turned to online groups to communicate with others with similar life experiences, for information and support. Based on an analysis of qualitative interviews grounded in online observation, the chapter examines the use of – and the potential and problems associated with – networked communication, in facilitating mundane, everyday civic participation among these individuals.

In *Chapter 7*, Dorthe Refslund Christensen and Kjetil Sandvik analyse the way that combinations of established media and occasional media (materialities gaining media status in specific situations) play an important role in periods of grief and in the everyday practices of bereaved parents. In this chapter cross-media practices primarily connote the various everyday uses of different media – or materialities (and even physical places) with media qualities (from small tokens like a ring, to engravings on a tree, to the beach and sea as communicative environments) – used in various combinations for the purpose of communicating to/with the dead child (keeping presence/close proximity) or about the dead child (with others). The focus is, as such, on everyday cross-media communication as a meaning-making activity among bereaved parents.

In *Chapter 8*, Bjarki Valtysson looks into the digitisation of cultural heritage and how respondents perceive the appliance of digital cultural heritage in everyday contexts, leaning particularly towards Maria Bakardjieva's concepts of mundane citizenship and the everyday lifeworld. Valtysson looks particularly at the 'Danish Cultural Heritage' project, which relates to a larger trend within national digitisation projects, as well as supra-national ones, like Europeana. The purpose of the chapter is to inspect how this profiled platform is framed by technology, how it makes use of cross-media communication and how this framing constructs certain user-manoeuvrability. The chapter builds on interviews, observations and focus groups and gives an informative view of how respondents relate to this digital restaging of the past and how they envisage its use in everyday life.

Finally the book moves from the cultural dimensions of everyday life to political dimensions. In *Chapter 9* Tobias Olsson and Sofia Larsson address the potential political implications of social media by looking into everyday appropriations of the political opportunities offered to active citizens. It presents and analyses data from interviews with 33 Swedish citizens participating online to gain insight into how they work both with separate and in-between (cross-) internet applications as part of their political participation. What communicative roles are various applications designed to play? How do they move within and between applications in their everyday practices so as to participate? Their data includes interviews with two sets of citizens who are participating online; citizen media writers and social media participating citizens. They were interviewed in two separate case studies and represent two modes of online participation. The analysis reveals differences in cross-media use, both in terms

of what participatory values are ascribed to different online applications and what communicative roles they are shaped to play for everyday participation. Among other things, the chapter distinguishes between a 'broadcasting' and a 'networking' mode of online participation.

In the *concluding chapter*, the editors sum up the contributions in a critical discussion of everyday life and the mundane, as key perspectives on the way media are used and combined. As pointed out at the beginning of this introduction, it is not the book's intention to provide a clear-cut definition of these concepts but rather to identify and articulate some of the shared issues, views and perspectives that appear at the intersection between the theoretical frameworks and empirical domains brought forth by the individual contributions. By comparing and discussing concepts and distinctions brought forth in the theoretical section with the empirical observations and perspectives brought forth in the subsequent case studies, we will suggest that they can all be seen as dealing, in one way or another, with everyday life as a particular space of agency which is framed, on one hand, by a complex environment of communication technologies enabling and constraining agency in particular ways and, on the other hand, by the particular social structures and situations of everyday life similarly enabling and constraining the individual.

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1.

The Domestication of Complex Media Repertoires

Leslie Haddon

Abstract

To what extent has the domestication framework coped with the vastly greater range of media available now compared to the period in which the concept was first formulated? That more complex repertoire of media involves newer and older media interrelating in a variety of ways, captured by terms like 'cross-media consumption'. Hence the chapter first examines studies illustrating what this cross-media entails before exploring both the classic formulation of domestication and how the framework later evolved. This is relevant because the original principles of domestication were very broad but this approach also needs to be understood through the ways in which people apply and enhance it. The final sections summarises three studies that show, in different ways, how domestication researchers have analysed the way people manage the greater variety of media options.

Keywords: domestication, re-mediation, media repertoire, spaces of agency, social constraint

Since the introduction of the concept of domestication in the early 1990s, the range of ICTs available has increased greatly, especially, but not only, through the development of the internet. There are far more media channels, more communication options, more games possibilities, or, put more generally, there are more ways of achieving goals and more goals that are achievable. Greater choice brings potentially greater complexity in managing a repertoire of media, but also more scope for investigating decisions about when to use different technologies and services, and in what combination.

Does this have implications for the domestication framework itself? To what extent has this approach coped with the way in which the technoscape moved on since the 1990s, such that we have far more media choices and relationships between media to consider? In fact, there are two issues here. One concerns how much the original formulation of domestication could address the interrelationships between the media that we now use. The second is how, over the past few decades, domestication researchers have been developing the framework, and how this work provides a basis for approaching current complex media repertoires. That distinction is important for

Haddon, Leslie (2016). The Domestication of Complex Media Repertoires, pp. 17-30 in Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson (eds.) *The Media and the Mundane. Communication Across Media in Everyday Life*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

researchers who want to utilise the domestication approach by referring the classic formulation, but who pay less attention to the subsequent developments.

This chapter progresses through a number of stages. The first section of the chapter considers not just the proliferation of new ICTs over the last 20 years, but the different ways in which researchers have examined how these technologies and media interrelate. While one research question may be about the factors that influence choices between a greater number of ICT options, we need to think about the other dimensions that a domestication agenda might address – for example, the different ways in which media might be used in combination. The second section introduces the classic formulation of the domestication framework and explores how it dealt with these media interrelationships. The third section examines ways in which the domestication literature has itself evolved over the period, as relevant for the later examples of cross-media analysis. This is important because domestication is not just defined by classic texts, but consists of the different ways that researchers have applied the framework, and through this process developed this approach. The final section summarises three recent domestication case studies in order to demonstrate how contemporary research has drawn on these developments within domestication in practice, and also added to them, when studying our complex media repertoires.

The interrelation of media

Although some contemporary discussions of ICT consumption use relatively new terms such as 'cross-media'[1], the question of how different parts of our media consumption interrelate is far older. There has been a long-standing interest in how the arrival of a new medium influences an older one – for example, in society more generally, does this involve a process of one technology displacing another to varying degrees? In its more nuanced form 're-mediation' (Bolter & Grusin 1999) focuses on how the arrival of a new technology can change the role of an older one (a point later picked up in the work of Jenkins (2006)). One good example would be when radio moved to a more niche position in many people's lives with the arrival of television. A newer example would be the way the communication channels of social networking sites have displaced texting among younger people for one-to-many communication, but texting still retains a role in one-to-one communication (Helles 2013).

However, this is only one way in which media interrelate. One study embracing the entirety of our media consumption (excluding interpersonal media) asked about the general nature of our media repertoires (Hasebrink & Domeyer 2012). This involved, amongst other things, exploring the diversity of media elements and the overall balance of the different media used by various social groups. It was then possible with quantitative research to chart clusters of people with similar repertoires (e.g. those more oriented to more traditional audio-visual media versus those less focused on these older media because of the predominance of the internet in their lives).

That particular exploratory empirical study also charted some of the reasons for the balances of repertoires in people's lives, including diverse considerations such as the wider context of their lives (specifically time structures), people's judgements about the prestige of some media content, or whether some ICTs were considered time consuming. The study then went on to make observations about the reasons for an individual's particular media choices on specific occasions (or choices about consuming a particular combination of media). This can reflect media preferences, but can equally well be influenced by the social context of consumption, such as whether this involved co-viewing, a ritual involving group consumption, or the fact that the person was mobile at the time. The role of social context was also singled out in other research into how we consume news, noting how an individual's awareness of news is assembled through different modes, reflecting different everyday situations, such as setting aside blocks of time dedicated to 'dig in' to news, 'stumbling' across news inadvertently, or 'checking in' frequently, but in a fragmented fashion, to see if anything important has happened (Ørmen 2015).

Another strand of research considered an individual's progression through media (Baym 2015). Many years ago Ling (2000) was already noting how groups meeting online could move to individual telephone calls and face-to-face group meetings. He then went on to explore the ways in which young people might first encounter someone who was a potential romantic partner by passing through a combination of communication media, such as texting and internet channels, and eventually moving to more sustained 'offline' contact. In this analysis the 'pros' and 'cons' of different media for different purposes at different stages were considered, and there was a migration between channels over a period of time, to achieve an individual's overall project.

A different emphasis on the relations between media can be found in studies of how a particular cultural form is distributed, and also experienced, across media, as captured in Jenkins' (2006) notion of 'transmedia story-telling'. A pre-'new media' version of this would be how people come to know a particular fictional world, via a book, film or game and thereafter experience that world through these other media – which can involve, for example, a nostalgic return to older experiences or emotional re-enactment (Klastrup & Tosca 2015). A more focused form of this is perhaps fan culture, (but also games cultures – see Sotamaa (2005)). Here we find studies of how participating in 'subcultures' such as being a *Harry Potter* fan (Jenkins 2006; Terrell 2015), or engaging with TV dramas (Mascio & Paltrinieri 2015) can involve the use of multiple platforms and multiple channels, newer and older, including interpersonal ones. This is not in itself a new phenomenon, nor a new research topic, although nowadays more of this experience across media probably takes place online.

In sum, the relationship between the elements in our media repertoires is multi-dimensional. It perhaps not surprising, then, that terms like 'cross-media', 'transmedia' and 'intermedia' can have multiple meanings, and be used to refer to the different relationships between the media outlined above. These are some of the different questions about our complex media repertoires that are being investigated, and we now

turn to the extent to which the classic formulation of domestication was, in principle, capable of dealing with them.

Classic domestication

The domestication framework, which first arose out of British media studies, examines how information and communication technologies (ICTs) entered and found a place in people's lives, and in the first formulation specifically how they entered their homes (Silverstone et al. 1992). The term 'domestication' itself refers to domesticating animals, taking them from the 'wild' and 'taming' them. Appling this metaphor to technologies involves examining the agency of adopters and users in engaging with ICTs, albeit an agency that acted within social constraints. That framework also drew upon anthropological and consumption studies, most noticeably in terms of conceptualising technologies as symbolic goods that had meanings for people. Domestication had a number of key sub-concepts that referred to various processes at work, although how they fitted together varied in different publications.[2] In the article that launched the concept, the process of 'appropriation' captured the types of negotiations and considerations that led to the acquisition of technological goods. 'Objectification' mainly referred to where ICTs were located spatially within the home. 'Incorporation' drew attention to how people used them and more specifically how that use was fitted into people's routines and hence their time structures. 'Conversion' dealt with how people mobilised these ICTs as part of their identities and how they presented themselves to others, for example, in how they talk about and display these technologies. In addition to these processes, the notion of the 'moral economy' referred to the values of household members and how the symbolic meanings of goods were judged against those values. While these were key elements of that classic formulation, the empirical study that accompanied this formulation indicated even more clearly that domestication made sense of how people engaged with technology (or did not if they chose to reject it) by looking at the wider context of people's lives (Hirsch 1996). This might include, for example, their economic circumstances, as highlighted more clearly in subsequent studies (e.g. Silverstone 1995) but not in the classic 1992 text. Such aspects of people's lives as their finances, the domestic spaces available to them (and how in general they wanted to organise those spaces) and the time structures in which they operated, could thus also be seen as either providing social constraints on their agency, or as providing the boundaries within which they could then actively choose how they would fit ICT into their lives, in effect spaces for agency.

Subsequently, some scholars speculated about whether we could think about a more macro version of domestication, asking, for example, about the processes by which technologies such as the car, TV and the internet have been domesticated in society as a whole (respectively, Sørensen 2006; Morley 2006; Peil & Röser 2012). Most of the domestication literature has focused on the micro-level processes outlined above,

however, although the site of analysis subsequently broadened out from the home, as will become clear later in this chapter.

One feature of the earliest formulation of domestication is that it was clearly holistic in terms of trying to understand the acquisition and subsequent use of ICTs in relation to the rest of people's everyday lives. However, little was actually said in that first statement about the relations between ICTs, even though a number of contemporary writers were addressing this. Bausinger (1984) argued that researchers should treat ICTs (in the home) as an ensemble, while McCraken (1990) noted how the acquisition of new goods (by implication, ICTs included) could affect our relations with older ones. Even in the late 1980s and early 1990s there was a background understanding in early domestication research that we should look at ICTs collectively.

At that period in time the array of media used by most people was far smaller than today. Nevertheless, watching TV live competed with watching videos (pre-recorded or time-shifted), and games could be played on consoles or on the computer. For a minority of early adopters there were some forms of email, alongside fixed telephony, meaning there were choices between different forms of communication. Sometimes ICTs were used in conjunction with each other, as when the games console or some home computers (e.g. the *Spectrum* in the UK) utilised the TV screen as a monitor. For a domestication researcher at that time there was always an awareness that ICTs competed for time and space, and generally that the presence of one could affect the use, or adoption, of another. If domestication was interested in how ICT consumption was affected by the social context of everyday life, the other ICTs present and the options they offered were simply part of that context.

Domestication as an evolving body of literature

How domestication subsequently evolved was in large part influenced by what researchers did with the framework, and what issues they addressed. As its originator, Roger Silverstone, noted: 'All concepts, once having gained the light of day, take on a life of their own. Domestication is no exception' (2006: 229). Our awareness of what can be done with this framework, how it can be used, and also how it can be developed, is in part based on the body of empirical literature that has built on this approach.

While some developments are important within the domestication literature generally, they are less relevant for this particular chapter, such as the exploration of quantitative methodologies and the combining of domestication with other frameworks (for a general review of this literature see Haddon 2011). This section will thus focus on the refinements that were specifically used in the case studies to analyse interrelationships within media repertoires.

Although the first formulation was associated with British researchers, their Norwegian colleagues pioneered some of the first empirical studies of domestication (Lie & Sørensen 1996). They also add concepts like 're-domestication' (giving an existing

ICT new roles and meanings) and 'de-domestication' (ceasing to find a place for a technology in one's life). One of the factors that could lead to these changes is the arrival of newer ICTs, as captured in a second wave of British studies that looked at the careers of technology in the longer term (Haddon 2004), and which anticipated the concept of re-mediation noted in an earlier section.

If the classic text demonstrated key principles of domestication, and a single case first illustrated these being applied, subsequent studies quickly examined patterns of domestication that entailed similar ICT experiences across certain households and individuals, in part reflecting their shared contexts. This is perhaps best exemplified in the work of Bakardjieva (2005), discussing how common 'life situations' such as being an immigrant, a battered spouse or a person made unemployed, underlie certain shared types of internet use.

Whereas the original work on domestication focused on the home, researchers in this tradition very quickly turned to domestication processes in locations outside the domestic sphere (Håpnes 1996; Hynes & Rommes 2006; Vuojärvi et al. 2010) including in work settings (Pierson 2006). This move into other spaces also involved the application, or extension, of the framework to cover portable technologies, especially mobile phones (Haddon 2003; Scifo 2005; Bertel 2013). In fact, this in itself is a good example of domestication being adapted to engage with the new ICTs that became widespread after the first exposition of the concept, and in this case included positing processes of domestication within social networks (Haddon 2004).

Finally, there have been debates about aspects of domestication research that could be strengthened, with, for example, Bakardjieva (2006) arguing that studies should pay more attention to the social consequences of ICTs, especially if they lead to forms of empowerment.

These are some of the ways in which domestication has been developed, and we now turn to how domestication researchers have drawn on such refinements when responding to the broader technological landscape.

Domesticating the new technoscape

The argument so far is that while the repertoire of media options has vastly increased, the original premise of the domestication framework – at a most general level, the requirement to be sensitive to social context – is still valid: indeed this is why so many researchers still find the approach to be useful. But over and above this, our understanding of the potential of domestication also reflects what has been achieved in empirical research. How domestication studies cope with the richer media repertoires that many people now experience will be demonstrated through a summary of three contemporary studies, one German, one Italian and one Pan-European.

Through a series of projects involving qualitative and quantitative studies, the *Mediatized Home* programme explored the increasing use of the internet over

time in German homes (Peil & Röser 2014). The researchers involved particularly highlighted the changes that occurred when the mobile internet, accessed through laptops and then smartphones, made it possible to go online in different domestic spaces. Reflecting the search for patterns in domestication studies, one first step in this work was to identify the various common responses to new media possibilities. Some households embraced the new online possibilities and used older ICTs less (a response characterised by the researchers as 'internet as convergent medium'). Others used the internet in a more limited fashion ('internet as marginal medium'). The main pattern in Germany, however, was for people to use the internet for certain practices, while other older media continued to have a role ('internet as integrated medium'). Following Jenkins (2006), the German team argued that this shows how new media in general do not simply displace older ones, but that the two coexist – citing, for example, the continued importance of family rituals such as watching TV together on a communal television set.

In addition to looking at choices between media, this research also demonstrated how media can be combined, as new media can also be used to augment the experience of older ones – such as using a second screen to look up details of the TV programme being viewed (Röse et al. 2014). Finally, this study makes a more general point, but one that potentially applies to the interrelationships between media; that we have to look beyond a narrow focus on the uses of, and activities with, media to appreciate the more general meanings that they can have. In one example, a couple were together in the living room, one partner watching TV while the other was answering emails and dealing with their social networking profile. The respondents pointed out that their social activities still took place in that shared space because, despite the different activities, they were compatible enough in terms of being leisure activities, that the couple felt they were still keeping each other company by their co-presence. In contrast, this shared sense of company would not exist if one partner had to deal with work-related online activities, in which case that person would usually retreat to a separate room.

In summary, the German domestication researchers dealt with the issue of remediation, while appreciating the influence of established domestic rituals that allowed, but also limited, the way in which new media displaced older ones. In the discussion about augmentation, we see some specific details of how new and old media actually interrelate. Finally, we see how appreciating different levels of meaning – here 'keeping each other company' – can allow both newer and older media consumption in the same space.

In a study of the 'cross-media diets' of Italian youth (here operationalised as 14-24 year olds) Mascheroni et al. (2011) examined young people's experiences of different media with a sensitivity to the social constraints arising from the domestic context. For example, in terms of their engagement with the appropriation of ICTs, many of these Italian youths played a lesser role in the initial acquisition of larger, more expensive ICTs. Parents mainly decided such purchases, based on the utility of devices or services for the family and, in the case of PCs, on such things as educational benefits – reflect-

ing parental values. For their part, many of these youth invested their own funds and interest in devices like MP3 players and mobile phones, because of their lower relative cost (at the time of the study smartphones were less common).

As regards media choices, while there may be fewer parental rules constraining young people of this age compared to younger children there was often still negotiation with siblings over access to devices like the PC. This dynamic had a bearing on the extent to which young people were free to communicate via internet services or had to switch to a mobile phone to text. Spatial factors such as whether young people had some kind of computer in their own room also influenced the scope for individualised use. This work also illustrates how time and space should not always be viewed simply in terms of being constraints on use, since they also provided a framework for agency, as noted earlier. For example, the Italian researchers observed that these young people could find enough time to organise the downloading of material as a background activity, or else saw the opportunity to fill interstitial times (e.g. breaks in study, moments of socialising at school, journeys to school and work) with the use of their mobile technologies (not just for communication but also for viewing music videos).

While paying attention to the new activities in this expanded media repertoire, the study also noted how some consumption was still influenced by the inertia of everyday domestic routines. There may have been a decline in watching analogue TV, but as in the German study, TV still retained a role as part of ritual shared family practices (i.e. watching TV together), albeit nowadays this co-existed with more individualised activities such as viewing audio-visual material that has been downloaded. As in the German study, the Italian work drew attention to the combination of media, highlighting the processes by which the TV, although still dominant (in fact, it was often viewed first before selecting audio-visual material for storage or circulation), itself influenced the use of other ICTs, thus prompting the additional use of other media. In keeping with the domestication principles, we can also see shifts in the meaning of technologies that accompany new patterns of use. The researchers felt that young people had re-defined (drawing on re-domestication) the PC as being a device increasingly more for networking than for gaming or studying.

Following moves within the domestication literature to look outside the home, the study outlined some of the roles of peers in influencing choices between different media activities. At the time of the research, Instant Messaging/MSN was in fashion, 'symbolic of group belonging', but the desire to be appreciated by peers was also reflected in what the researchers refer to as 'social spendability': downloading audio-visual material (institutionally produced or user-generated) that was valued by peers for distribution or trade in order to enhance social capital. That said, such social considerations were not the only factors influencing the choice of communication mode – deciding when to text, IM or email – depended in part on the affordances of the channels. For example, texting continued to be practised in part when there was less access to a PC, but it was also especially suitable for ultra-short term micro-coordination, to enable these youths to meet up.

Finally, while there was clearly an appreciation of the extent to which cross-media diets were becoming embedded in everyday lives, the Italian researchers also addressed the consequences of this shift, exploring what had altered because of this changing repertoire. They pointed to the intensification of experience through gathering related materials, and prolonging consumption experiences through repeated viewing of, for example, stored audio-visual material.

To sum up the contribution of this study, the Italian research illustrated how experiences of different media and the choices between them at a number of levels are grounded in key tenants of domestication: how the decisions about what technologies to buy and which to use at any one time are influenced by domestic considerations such as the financial circumstances of young people, parental value systems, negotiations with other family members, the organisation of domestic space and collective family routines (watching TV together sometimes). These provide them with spaces for agency as well as constraints, as was illustrated by managing time for downloading. As in the later studies using domestication, we see here how influences outside the home (peers) clearly had a bearing on decisions about the use of different media. The work addressed one of the cross-media issues of how the use of old technologies (here TV) can subsequently influence the use of others. It examined the changing meaning of technologies (in this case, the PC), given new roles as tools for networking. Finally, the researchers drew on exhortations within domestication debates by making an effort to think about the social consequences of the new media options experienced by these youth.

The third study, again of children and young people (9-16 years old), was the Pan-European *Net Children Go Mobile* research, which looked at smartphone (and tablet) use (Haddon & Vincent 2014; also the UK study Haddon & Vincent 2015). Even more so than the Italian study, this research emphasised that children may be active agents in their cross-media consumption but that agency is very much bounded by some of the constraints noted within the domestication literature. While adults experience such social pressures, being dependent in an adult world means children experience even more pressures to act in certain ways, as parents and schools try to impose rules about what young people can do online, and when and where they can use ICTs like the internet. For example, parents often advised their children not to talk to other players in online multiplayer games because of parental concerns about 'stranger danger'. In practice many children exercised their agency and resisted this particular edict, both because it was interesting to chat about mundane things (like favourite football teams) as well as about the games themselves, and because they thought they had strategies to cope with any problematic encounters. Parental rules about the amount of screen time children can experience and its timing also limited their agency. However, that in itself could lead children to adopt complex forms of media consumption: for example, because one 10 year old game-player was restricted by his parents to playing only on certain days, in response he decided that on the other days he would use that time to look up online material about the

game instead. Limitations can be found in school rules (in some countries and in some schools more than others) that forbade children to use smartphones on the school premises in school time (even if children sometimes broke those particular rules, and some teachers thought twice about always enforcing them). The study also pointed to warnings to children from both teachers and parents that they should not use smartphones in certain public spaces (from a fear that they might be stolen). When asking about media repertoires, this study thus underlined the fact that it is also important to understand why some ICT usage is not happening, or at least not at certain times and in certain spaces.

Financial constraints were important in myriad ways, as regards choices between media, as the young people in this study were generally cost conscious, and were often encouraged to be so by their parents. The particular devices that children were allowed to have, such as cheaper brands of smartphones, could therefore have implications for the speed and memory available to them and thus how children could use the different ICTs. This includes routine decisions about where to store things. For example, one 10 year old girl made videos with an iPad, but her parents regularly transferred these to the PC and deleted them from the tablet to free up the latter's limited storage space. Parental rules about how much their children could spend often led them to download free apps, and sometimes seek out free media options, such as online newspapers. Trying to control running costs affected other media choices. Some young people noted that they preferred to use channels such as WhatsApp for texting, partly because they were free. Others would not dream of accessing audio-visual material over 3G, but might watch a film or YouTube video on their smartphone if in a location where the Wi-fi access was free. Yet others used their 3G for only brief periods because of cost, again affecting how they could consume media.

Aside from such constraints, the Pan-European study showed the wide range of different aspects of social context that can have a bearing on what children do with media. Yes, the affordances of technologies were important, such as when the participants in this study argued that smartphones were not best suited to some activities, such as doing homework or watching films because of their small screen size. On the other hand, others reported that they sometimes watched a film on the tablet rather than at the computer because it was simply more comfortable to view while lying in bed, that they used the smartphone to look up details of a TV programme because it was more convenient than walking upstairs to go online on the PC, or that they played games on other games consoles rather than smartphones because they had already invested time loading those games onto the consoles. Even if they preferred one mode, or one device, they would sometimes switch to another if access became problematic – for example, if a sibling was using a shared laptop, or if the smartphone was on charge. The first point to make, then, is that contingencies also influence many choices about which device to use. Second, it becomes clear in this study, and the point may be true of the others, that compared to the early days of domestication analysis, the greater availability of media options may mean that children and adults are spending more

moments in their daily lives making such decisions about media, and being conscious of media, even if these are very small, mundane choices as noted above.

Lastly, as in the Italian study, the Pan-European research showed the influence of peers' social norms, and especially fashions, that often led these young people to gravitate towards one channel rather than another because that was what their friends were now using – for example, switching to communication via WhatsApp rather than via Facebook. If they did not use the channel that was in favour – such as Blackberry Messaging at one point in time in the UK – some young people thought that would be cut off from seeing their peers' current interests.

In sum, this Pan-European analysis also had clear roots in some key themes of domestication. We see the parental (and teacher) pressures on their children, sometimes reflecting adult concerns about the dangers that children face or how adults feel children should behave (in the case of school rules). These, alongside financial constraints, often had a bearing not only on which media young people acquired and used, but also on how much they used them, when they used them and where they used them – even if children sometimes rejected these pressures or else responded creatively to them. As in the Italian study, peer influence also played a role in media use. Lastly, and crucially, for cross-media interest, we see multiple ways in which the social context influenced decisions about which devices and media to use at particular moments in their everyday lives.

We have seen in these three studies how contemporary empirical domestication researchers react to the fact that people's media repertoires have evolved considerably over the last 25 years. They draw inspiration from the classic formulations of domestication – looking at such things as the timing of use, decisions about use in certain social spaces – and the general spirit of putting ICTs into various social contexts, such as financial constraints. These studies also build upon the domestication literature that emerged over the following decades, however, exploring such aspects as reasons for shared patterns of use, the re-domestication of ICTs when new ones arrive, the role of peers, and addressing the social consequences of a broader media repertoire. Lastly, in their different ways these studies incrementally contributed to that body of research, in the discussions of newer media augmenting the experience of old ones (or looked at another way, old media prompting the use of newer ones), and the diverse contingencies that affect the greater number of choices we may routinely make between options within the media repertoire.

Conclusion

The initial question addressed the extent to which the domestication framework could cope with the far more complex media repertoires available today compared to when the theory was first formulated. At one level the principles behind domestication are very general, making sense of people's particular patterns of ICT use through un-

derstanding their social world, and within it their space for agency, and that guiding message can apply to understanding how people choose between and combine media today. Although the classic texts said nothing specific about the interrelationship of the fewer ICTs, or media, available at that time, researchers appreciated that ICTs should be viewed collectively.

Since that classic formulation, the domestication framework has also evolved through the ways in which researchers have used it. That body of literature reflects a broad church. Through empirical studies in particular, various analyses have demonstrated new ways in which domestication principles can be applied, and new aspects to be considered, including how researchers can address the arrival of new technologies, and the development of rich media repertoires.

Finally, the three domestication case studies were then used to demonstrate how our relationship to complex media repertoires and the interrelations between their elements can be analysed. The studies that are available illustrate some of the cross-media issues discussed at the start of the chapter more strongly than others. For example, the researchers involved in these particular studies emphasised social factors influencing choices between parts of the repertoire, and in various ways each study comments on the interrelationships between newer and older media that are of long-standing interest beyond domestication. These particular studies did not cover how we progress from one media to another, as was demonstrated in Ling's (2000) study, or how we experience the related media content across channels, as in fan culture, yet these experiences will also involve forms of agency within constraints. Thus, in principle, domestication provides a framework with which to engage the full range of cross-media communication, as its contribution is to explore how and why we act in relation to media, given the social and technological contexts in which we live, as well as the consequences of that agency.

Notes

1. This chapter was first developed when the author attended the conference Users across Media at the University of Copenhagen. This provided a chance to see the diverse ways in which the notions of 'cross-media' was being used – hence several examples are cited from this conference.
2. For example, in contrast to the description given here, Silverstone and Haddon (1996) characterised objectification and incorporation as sub-processes within appropriation. In the literature in general, it is the first 1992 formulation that is most commonly cited.

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2.

Theorising Individual Media Use

Mobile Media in Everyday Life

Rasmus Helles

Abstract

This chapter offers a theoretical approach to the problem of locating and understanding mobile media in everyday life based on critical realism (Archer 2013, 2012). Archer's sociology is used to argue that existing theories of media use in everyday life are inadequate because of their strong focus on routinization and equilibrium as hallmarks of everyday life. Because mobile media permits users to shift communication across temporal and spatial boundaries, they contribute to the erosion of routinization as a central coordination mechanism of everyday activities and communications. The chapter uses Archer's sociological theory to develop an alternative framework that focuses on the ways in which mobile media enhance individual reflexivity, and thereby extends the scope for an individual shaping of everyday life. It argues that mobile media play a key role in promoting the transformation of established structures of everyday life, and links this to Archer's theory of late modernity.

Keywords: coordination, trans-situational agency, modus vivendi, routinization, morphogenesis

The advent of portable broadband-enabled media devices such as smartphones and tablets has paved the way for a series of changes to the ways in which media can be used and integrated into our everyday lives. Media for interpersonal communication, such as telephony, text messaging and social media, are increasingly used in the home as well as at work and in school, and traditional broadcast media formats, such as radio and television, are becoming available as both digital flow and on-demand services. The development of mobile, digital media and communication services is extending the total matrix of media that are available to the ordinary citizen in most Western countries – either as alternatives available immediately on unpacking a new smartphone, or as downloads from app stores (Jensen 2010).

Even if the easy availability of new media services has not ensured that users find them relevant enough to fit them into their everyday life, several new media forms have already begun to interfere with established patterns of media use, and virtually

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all media forms that were available by the 2007 breakthrough of the smartphone are now also available in a portable, digital version. This includes media for interpersonal as well as broadcast communication, media that originated as analogue media forms such as newspapers and books, and digital media such as discussion forums and email. These remediated versions of 'old' media have since been joined by formats native to mobile platforms, and some have gained additional functionalities that make use of the affordances of the platform mobility.

The addition of new possibilities and the remediation of old media forms to mobile broadband platforms have sparked new research into the many new uses that people have discovered based on the new media landscape (Lomborg 2015). The purpose of the present chapter is, however, not empirical exploration, but to develop a theoretical perspective that has so far been under-prioritised in attempts to engage the new media landscape, namely the role of individual reflexivity in the everyday use of mobile media.

We shall first look at characteristics of existing ways of conceptualizing the relationship between media and everyday life, and then discuss some core points of Margaret Archer's sociological theory, with a special emphasis on reflexivity and the relationship between agency and structure. In the final section, the observations about Archer's theory will be used to analyse mobile media as devices that facilitate individual agency vis-à-vis the social world.

The new place of media in everyday life

A central affordance of mobile media (Helles 2013) is that they dissociate the use of media from specific contexts. In the days of the landline telephone, a telephone number was addressed to a household, and thus often more than one person. With the shift to mobile telephones, we began to call individuals instead (Helles 2013; Katz & Aakhus 2002; Ling 2014). Previously the use of many of the most popular media was tied to specific locations and was subject to the types of social control and negotiations that applied to the specific location of use. Today the context of the use of any digital medium or content can, in principle, be chosen at the discretion of the user; parents find it increasingly difficult to keep track of the media habits of their children, and workplaces have had to implement new rules in order to keep employees' private communications at a tolerable level, just as employees have to negotiate ways to free their leisure time and holidays from work-related communication.

The availability of media across all contexts of everyday life, and the fact that many media services today are centred around the individual, have played a part in redefining the place of media in the everyday life of (almost all) people in affluent societies. Our everyday life has become one in which easy availability of media and communication services is the norm (Ling 2012), and this has in turn extended the range of contexts in which we can act communicatively throughout the day.

The everyday is not what it used to be

Many of the most influential accounts of the place of media in everyday life describe the processes where media becomes integrated in everyday life. A central example is the domestication framework (Haddon 2004; Silverstone 2006; Silverstone & Hirsch 1994 [1992]). Departing from the logic and theories of early studies of television audiences (Morley 1980; Silverstone, Hirsch, & Morley 1994 [1992]), domestication theory has been used for more than two decades to describe the process through which media become part of the everyday life of households. The domestication approach emphasises the way that new media technologies are adapted to the so-called moral economy of the household through a series of steps, in which the household members integrate the possibilities of the technology into the everyday culture of the family; a central reason for the success of the domestication approach is the nuanced account of the flexible relationship between the established everyday practices of the household and the affordances of the technological artefacts. Domestication is described as a mutual process of adaptation, which allows both for a (partial) reform of family norms in the face of the new technology, as well as a selection of technological properties that can play a part in the everyday life of the household.

The domestication approach was developed during the 1990s, and the strong emphasis on the home and the household as the primary site of technological integration is a clear sign of the debt owed by the approach to audience studies, which began with the study of audiences located at home in front of a (very) immobile television set. The empirical and conceptual reach of the approach has been questioned in relation to mobile media, which by their very nature are not confined to the domestic setting, and which are also rarely shared between family members in the way television sets are (Bakardjieva 2006; Berker, Hartmann, Punie, & Ward 2006; Hartmann 2006; Morley 2006). Despite its shortcomings, the domestication approach is relevant to the present discussion because it embodies an explanatory scheme that is not confined to this theory alone, but applies to a broad range of approaches in the study of everyday life: by describing the process of the integration of new media technologies, the domestication approach also implicitly states that the endpoint of the explanation is reached when a new equilibrium has been achieved. Once the medium has undergone the final stage of domestication (the conversion stage), the process is over, and everyday life in the household can continue, based on a new and updated moral economy. This implies an understanding of *routinisation* and *habits* as central hallmarks of everyday life. This is often taken for granted in both the theoretical and empirical approaches to everyday life, in media studies and elsewhere (Neal & Murji 2015: 811). Recent approaches in the literature to the sociology of everyday life have questioned the continued relevance and explanatory power of routinisation in studies of everyday life (Archer 2012; Neal & Murji 2015; Pink 2012). Claiming that routinisation and habit played a larger part in everyday life in earlier phases of modernity than they do today, these and other authors have gone on to develop new theoretical perspectives for understanding how

people engage with the world through everyday life. Rather than focusing on repetition and routine, these new approaches emphasise the changing and uncertain nature of everyday life, and, in the case of Margaret Archer, whose work will form the basis for the following arguments, advance theories that underline individual reflexivity and deliberation as core elements in a theory capable of describing everyday life in late modernity (Archer 2007, 2014). Shifting our understanding of everyday life in this way also entails a different view of the role of mobile media in everyday life. Rather than focusing on the re-establishment of routines in the wake of the arrival of a new medium, this new approach asks how the many possibilities and choices that follow the adoption of mobile media are used and appropriated in everyday life, in an on-going process of reflexive adjustment. Seen from the individual's point of view, everyday life spans multiple contexts, and mobile media makes it possible to format our engagement with these different contexts in a multitude of different ways. As explained below, these new possibilities for linking the contexts of everyday life in new ways, connect the role of mobile media in everyday life to larger issues of social change in late modernity.

Archer offers a comprehensive account of both the current phase of late modernity and a systematic, sociological theory which describes the ontology of social structure and agency and their mutual relationship. Both elements of her opus contribute to an understanding of the declining role of routinisation and the increased importance of the individual reflexivity that replaces it. Individual reflexivity is, on the one hand, a consequence of the dual ontology of agency and social structure: in contrast to dualist theories of social ontology such as, for example, Giddens' (1984), Archer maintains a realist stance, and claims that social structures and social agents belong to different, ontological strata (1982, 1995, 2000). A central claim of the realist stance is that each stratum – structure and agency – has distinct powers of its own, and that the way they interfere with each other is mediated through these powers. Reflexivity is a key power of social agents, and that which allows us to adapt to the conditions of possibility of our situation, which is in turn shaped by social structure. Reflexivity is particularly important in the realist account of socio-structural transformation, as it is through the reflexive actions of social agents that new social structures are brought into being (Archer 2012).

It is a central tenet of Archer's theory of late modernity (Archer 2014) that the modern social world is changing rapidly, in ways that increasingly lead to patterns of social situations, experiences, roles and structures that are incompatible with those of the recent past (Archer 2012, 2013). The shift from the modernity of industrialised society to the globalised reality of late modernity began in the early 1970s, and stems from a combination of influences from the reorganisation of the global economic system, and from developments in information technology, migration and environmental factors (Porpora 2014). Archer characterises the period of late modernity as a period of social morphogenesis (Archer 2013), which in her vocabulary means a state where social interaction leads to substantial changes in the structuring of society. The opposite process, morphostasis, is a state where social interaction primarily leads

to the reproduction of established social structures. Archer's characterisation of late modernity as morphogenic implies that social development results in the continual production of new social structures that are without direct precedent in the recent past. This has direct implications for her understanding of the way that social actors engage with contemporary society, and for any conceptualisation of everyday life that may be derived from her theory. The continual transformation of social structure means that established templates for social behaviour are increasingly rendered inadequate as guides for many of the situations and dilemmas that people finds themselves in. In historical situations where morphostasis dominates, social structures persist over time, and enable the transmission of social templates of behaviour from one generation to the next. For example, following the career path of your parents was relatively straightforward, and allowed young people to build a life for themselves, which was similar to the one they knew as children. Under conditions of morphogenesis, it may still be possible to establish the broad framework for such a life, but it will be difficult to use the behavioural dispositions that are brought from childhood, as the contextual parameters have changed. With reference to Bourdieu's theory of the habitus, Archer maintains that as a purely dispositional theory of the socialised actor it precludes reflexive deliberation, and is incapable of adequately describing conditions of morphogenesis (see below).

In a broad sense, Archer follows other central voices in sociological theory, such as Baumann and Beck, who also claim that the present represents a distinct phase in modern social evolution (Bauman 2000; Beck-Gernsheim & Beck 2002), but at the same time she is very critical of these other approaches. With reference to Bauman, for example, she argues that his notion of liquid modernity renders the relationship between established and emerging social structures and agency unnecessarily opaque and chaotic (Archer 2014: 1). Instead she argues that the critical realist ontology of structure and agency indicates that we should expect morphogenetic transformation of social structure to progress in tandem with a continued, but abating, influence from older social structures (Archer 2014: 6ff.).

Reflexivity and individual agency

In contrast to views such as Bourdieu's, of the way in which social structures influence individual action, Archer has advanced an alternative theory, which bestows a degree of freedom on the individual in relation to the conditioning influence of social structures. In Archers' theory, the agential power to act in ways that do not simply mirror the socio-structural conditions of our society is located in the individual power of *reflexivity*, which emerges through the constant internal conversations we have with ourselves. Internal conversation allows a social agent to reflect on their own current situation, and to identify and mentally experiment with possible courses of action and their potential outcomes. From this perspective, the internal conversation becomes

a site for the individual incorporation of the diverse influences and requirements that stem from the many different structural contexts and demands that make up the totality of everyday life.

A key purpose of our internal conversation is deliberation about how to advance what Archer calls our life projects (Archer 2003b, 2007); that is to work out what courses of action may further our interest in bringing about a particular state of affairs. In this context, 'life projects' do not necessarily designate grand plans ('I want to be a millionaire before I'm 30'), but may simply be the wish to maintain the status quo, to get a new job, to be a slightly better parent, or to overcome some crisis. Even living a perfectly uneventful life can, in this context, be seen as a life project, in that it may well require substantial deliberation and activity to maintain: many of the factors that influence our lives are not of our own making and choosing, and they may shift in ways that are not always foreseen. This can raise the opportunity costs of getting a particular state of affairs to materialise, and make it hard work simply to maintain the status quo.

While it can be said that the long-term outcome of our internal conversations is our own contribution to the shape our life takes, the short-term outcome is the *modus vivendi* (Archer 2003b) we employ in dealing with everyday life. As such, the way we deliberate about our projects and concerns shapes how we engage with everyday life. An important caveat about the internal conversation and reflexive agency is that while both are predicated on an ontological distinction between structure and agency, this does not mean that social actors have correct, objective knowledge about their situation, only that it is possible to have such knowledge, and that our powers of reflexivity are ontologically distinct from the social conditions at which we direct them (Archer 2000, 2003a).

The internal conversation encompasses all relevant aspects of our life situation; or at least all those that we are aware of. This will often, for example, include (aspects of) our economic situation, other people in our life, our employment situation, and so on. In this way an important part of everyday life can be seen as the project of managing how these different contexts are fitted together by the individual social actor. Using Archer's vocabulary, this amounts to employing the *modus vivendi* we have developed in order to handle the demands and constraints offered by the various contexts, vis-à-vis our everyday life. It is important to note that in significant ways, this balancing act is unique to the individual; even if job profiles and patterns of household composition may be broadly similar across large segments of the population, they are never truly identical. Instead, each person's specific arrangement of the different spaces of agency included as part of everyday life, requires a unique effort in reflexive tinkering and management through their specific *modus vivendi*.[1] This implies that there is a personal component to the *modus vivendi* that we develop in order to manage our day-to-day existence: if I were to step into someone else's everyday life and to take over their preferred life project, I might not be inclined to handle their particular set of constraints and possibilities in the same way. Depending on my own trajectory of experience, I would likely employ a different set of strategies in order to achieve the same ends.

This individual path dependency in our recipe for orchestrating everyday life is central to Archer's rejection of the relevance of routinisation and habituation to individual agency. She has developed her critique, in particular, as part of her rejection of Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus*, which she criticises for eliminating the scope for individual agency, and instead subsuming it under a set of dispositions (the habitus) incorporated in the social subject during early life (Archer 2012 esp. ch. 4; Archer 2010). The fact that a social actor's specific life trajectory of translating reflexive deliberation into social interaction has led to the development of a particular style of preferred reasoning does not amount to the same thing as a habitus in the Bourdieusian sense. Crucially, it is not tied to specific socio-cultural constellations in order to develop, nor is it limited to functioning under similar conditions. It should be noted that Archer's position on Bourdieu has been a topic of debate, both from oppositional positions and from positions departing from Archer's own theory (for recent overviews and core arguments see esp. Akram & Hogan 2015; Elder-Vass 2007; Farrugia & Woodman 2015).

Introducing the notion of the life project as something (big or small) that serves to guide the way people live their everyday lives, shifts our view of everyday life away from pure routine, and what goes on between the important parts of life, and into something that may be involved in the completion of projects that are important to the individual. Mobile media may fit into these projects in any number of ways, since they can help individuals configure their everyday life in many different ways, depending on the priorities that follow from their reflexive understanding of their own situation and the opportunity costs associated with taking different courses of action.

Cross-contextual agency and the reflexive organisation of everyday life

The individual, reflexive organisation of everyday life that is conducted via the *modus vivendi* specifically involves all the diverse spaces of agency in which a given individual has a stake. The opportunities and constraints that we manage according to our *modus vivendi* stem from the social and material organisation of the world around us, and thus ultimately from the social structures of society. In a situation of morphogenesis, social interaction no longer reproduces stable patterns of social structure, but gives rise to the development of new patterns. As mentioned above, Archer includes information technology as one of the key drivers of the morphogenic character of late modernity, but her discussion of it remains at the general level. In the following I will bring the perspectives that follow from Archer's thinking about the morphogenetic character of late modern society and the role of reflexivity, to bear on the role of mobile media in everyday life, and examine some of the consequences for the way we may think about mobile media in everyday life.

Starting with Archer's theoretical perspective, we can derive two core assumptions:

1) Routinisation should not be expected to hold the same explanatory value vis-à-vis contemporary everyday life as presupposed by theories such as Bourdieu's practice theory or domestication. Instead, we should expect routinisation to be a more transient phenomenon, developed and re-developed by the individual based on reflexive deliberation in the face of changing circumstances.

2) One key driver in promoting social morphogenesis is information technology, as it makes communication and information available across time and space. Mobile media must be seen as a particular instance of this, so to understand the relationship of mobile media to everyday life we should ask how they contribute to morphogenesis. Following Archer's theory of structure and agency, we can expect their role to be linked to the reflexive power of human agency.

In relation to mobile media, the *modus vivendi* described by Archer translates into an emphasis on the ability to exercise *trans-situational agency* (Helles 2012), that is, the ability to act in one context while physically embedded in another. The *modus vivendi* represents the dynamic mode that individuals employ to coordinate the totality of the different demands and opportunities that they meet in everyday life. As such, the *modus vivendi* already transcends the present context of an individual by pointing out that an individual in a given situation carries obligations from contexts already traversed or to be traversed in the future – and that the requirements and opportunities of those contexts shape the scope of possible involvement in a given situation. Mobile media radically extend the scope for the individual to shape these requirements vis-à-vis each other: an on-going exchange of work emails may be shifted to a phone call in order to end it more quickly if we need to be somewhere else soon after. Voice-mail can be used to learn the reason of a call from an old friend without committing to the rituals of a phone conversation straight away. Checking the balance on your bank account via an app on your phone may prompt you to change your plan to ask your date to a restaurant at the last minute, and checking news apps during the day may change your appetite for an hour-long evening news show on TV, which your partner never wants to watch with you anyway. In this sense, individuals may use the constant availability of all mediated forms of communication to craft new ways of engaging with others in the spaces of agency that make up their everyday life.

To fully appreciate the relevance of mobile media to the morphogenic process of social evolution, it is important to note that mobile media, of course, also bestows new forms of constraints and demands on individuals. Mobile media enable others to form new types of expectations about our ability and willingness to act across contexts (Baron 2008). In this sense, established social structures (such as the normative frameworks that govern communication or the distinction between work and leisure) come under pressure through the combined efforts of all social actors to establish new norms. In relation to the diminished role of routinisation, it is important to note that from an individual point of view, there is no absolute distinction between activities in

different spaces of agency: the *modus vivendi* is geared to handle the combined effect of the different spaces on an agent's possibilities.

Contextual change machines

A central way in which the spread of mobile media contributes to morphogenesis is through their ability to invite the individual to contribute to the reflexive re-appropriation of established social structures. Since the publication of Joshua Meyrowitz' (1985) pivotal work on the role of television in undermining the social hierarchies typical of 1950s society, the way media interfere with the contextual economy of the social world has been a recurrent theme. Meyrowitz' classic text deals with television, and shows how the circulation of information (e.g. about the constructed nature of parental authority) into the communal living room, rather than in designated, contextual arrangements with limited access for children, helped undermine established patterns of authority.

Taking Archer's definition of reflexive agency into consideration in the study of mobile media in everyday life, we may propose a similar type of effect from the introduction of mobile media, albeit based on a different medium and derived from a different sociological theory. Mobile media enter everyday life as tools that can be used to re-shape our individual *modus vivendi*, but by doing so, they accentuate the centrality of our reflexive agency: all the modalities of mediated content and communication that a smartphone offers are with us at all times, and thus stimulate our recognition of the fact that we have degrees of freedom with respect to the way in which we organise things.

The way mobile media can contribute to increasing the scope of reflexivity can be exemplified by looking at the use of mobile media at two different levels: the level of communicative practice and the level of technology. A very straightforward and Meyrowitz-esque example is the frequent confrontation of other people's back-stage talk in public: since the advent of mobile phones, the delimitation of what it is appropriate to discuss in what setting, has come under pressure. It is, however, not just the occasional discussion of (excessively) private matters in inappropriate locations that is important here – the mobile phone teaches us that the location and use of more or less all genres of interpersonal communication can be lifted out of what used to be their normal context. It also continually reminds us that we have this freedom to lift genres out of their supposedly normal context, and our experience of managing it (and observing others manage it) stimulates the invention of new ways to put this freedom into practice. The immediate and practical outcome of owning and using a smartphone in the everyday is the increased ability to reflexively organise the use of all sorts of communication and media in new ways, in our everyday life. On a more general level, it affords us the opportunity to experience the diminishing importance of context and the scope for reflexivity in itself. Despite being a device that offers

engaging, communicative activities, the smartphone also constantly reminds us that communicative engagement is something that can be managed and used to orchestrate the trajectory of our everyday life.

Another example is the technological malleability of the device itself. At a practical level, many smartphone applications announce their presence in one way or another, and invite user intervention, for example by disabling notifications from certain programmes or constructing regimes of settings that adjust the appropriate level of intrusion according to situation. This is, of course, primarily oriented towards the logics of given physical and social contexts. However, interfering with the behaviour of apps and devices that we carry with us at all times may also allow us to reflect on the relationship between ourselves and the organisation of everyday life at a more general level: deleting a social media app that generates too many notifications, or deciding to leave the office calendar off the phone, are choices that articulate the border between different social spheres and invite a reorganisation of our *modus vivendi* to better accommodate them.

Conclusion

The application of Archer's sociological ideas to the conceptualisation of the relationship between mobile media and everyday life presented here began by emphasising the increased importance of the individual's power of reflexive deliberation as a key element in the morphogenic process of late modernity. It further suggested that the relevance of the category of everyday life in the analysis of mobile media should not be found in theories that saw everyday life as a site of routinisation and equilibrium. Rather, the analysis of mobile media in everyday life can fruitfully be seen as the exact opposite, an element that draws the development of society further in the direction of morphogenesis. Mobile media such as smartphones enable an enhanced experience of the importance of individual reflexivity in the renegotiation of old and – crucially – the development of entirely new social structures.

As noted in the discussion of Archer, there are similarities between some of her most general observations, in particular about the nature of late modernity, and other influential theories (Bauman 2000; Beck-Gernsheim & Beck 2002). It is, however, important to note that Archer insists that the process of morphogenesis unfolds in continuation of the structures inherited from the past, and that the challenge in understanding the process of morphogenesis is to identify the mechanisms by which it becomes possible to develop new social structures instead of reproducing the existing ones. In this way, and in contrast to some of the more speculative theories of late modernity, Archer's sociology points directly to the need for empirical exploration.

Her general observation that reflexive agency takes on a renewed importance in periods of morphogenesis – since patterns of sociality and social behaviour no longer match current conditions – has implications for our understanding of the role of mobile media in everyday life. I have argued that a smartphone enhances the experience and

practice of reflexive agency, specifically because it is an individual device which follows the owner through all the contexts of everyday life. At the same time, it facilitates the recombination of contextual parameters by letting the user exercise trans-situational agency in a way that is without historical precedent.

Taken together, these observations should alert us to a new perspective on the use of mobile media devices in everyday life; if everyday life is a site for the creative development of new social structures, then sociological studies of mobile media in everyday life are potentially about much more than the simple re-invention of old habits on a new footing. Mobile media's enhancement of reflexive agency points to a more direct involvement in social transformations at a much larger scale than the mid-level theories often employed in media sociology imply.

One avenue of research following from this is empirical investigation of individual media choices and repertoires, with an emphasis on the way mobile media serve as tools for fulfilling the kinds of life projects mentioned above. Understanding the individual dimension in the construction of everyday life through media is under-researched compared to the strong emphasis on communities and groups.

A morphogenic approach to everyday life and mobile media suggests approaching everyday life as being more open-ended and in a permanent stage of transformation, rather than as routinised and stable. It also suggests that this quality of everyday life is linked to more fundamental dynamics of late modernity. This suggests that comparative studies of media use across different cultural and social contexts could help shed light on the way macroscopic differences in media use are linked to these dynamics, and how media (and information technologies) are contributing to them.

Note

1. An earlier version of this argument, dealing with personal media and the conduct of everyday life, and based on the sociological theory of G. G. Voss, can be found in Helles (2010, 2012).

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3.

Intersubjectivity across Media

The Structures of the Lifeworld Revisited

Maria Bakardjieva

Abstract

This chapter investigates the transformations in the experienced social world brought about by cross-media technologies and practices by expanding the phenomenological sociology framework put forth by Alfred Schutz (Schutz & Luckmann 1973) with concepts and questions stemming from phenomenology of technology. It provides a foundation for a user-centred critique of communication technology and practice highlighting the substantive changes in the human condition associated with the immersive cross-media milieu and the prevalence of mediate sociality. The paper focuses on conceptualizing the new conditions of forming social relations as well as the new forms of user agency required in the cross-media milieu. To what extent are these conditions critically reflected upon by users and policy-makers? Can they be consciously shaped, navigated and challenged? Can users break their personally meaningful and emancipatory paths through the thicket of mediated connections and representations? The chapter offers a theoretical framework for approaching these questions that could inform future empirical studies.

Keywords: phenomenological sociology, Alfred Schutz, phenomenology of technology, intersubjectivity, sociality, agency

This chapter takes up the invitation extended by the editors of this volume to consider the widely discussed 'convergence' of contemporary digital communication media from the user's perspective. What does it feel like to live amidst, and routinely employ, a variety of seamlessly overlapping means of communication? How is the individual's mundane experience shaped by the handy availability of such tools for communicative expression and social interaction? How do the users of this complex of interlocking media see their social world through it, and what kinds of action does this picture prefigure and encourage?

'The mundane,' another central concept in this anthology that can be approached from various angles, is defined here as commensurate with the 'everyday lifeworld,' a key category in the sociological phenomenology developed by Alfred Schutz. This everyday lifeworld presents the individual with objects, material arrangements, social

Bakardjieva, Maria (2016). Intersubjectivity across Media. The Structures of the Lifeworld Revisited, pp. 45-58 in Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson (eds.) *The Media and the Mundane. Communication Across Media in Everyday Life*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

relationships and institutions that are taken for granted; it defines his or her cultural horizon of meaning-making. The everyday lifeworld in Schutz's definition is also 'the arena, as well as what sets the limits, of human action' (Schutz & Luckmann 1973: 18). Hence, Schutz insists, the problems of action and choice have a central place in the analysis of the lifeworld. It follows that any questions concerning human agency need to be rooted in an account of the possibilities and limitations discernible within this world of everyday experience (see Bakardjieva 2005).

Importantly, the everyday lifeworld is a world shared with other people, it possesses a social dimension. It encompasses other individual and collective actors in relation to which the subject sees herself as standing in various relations of proximity and distance, actual and potential reach, and engagement and indifference. The perceived arrangements, or the imagined map of that everyday *social world*, guides the individual as she goes about her mundane business of making choices and steps in connecting with other people, engaging in interaction, and conceiving of collective projects with them. The capacity for agency, understood as the potential for reflecting on and changing the conditions of one's existence, is certainly dependent on one's perceived positioning within the configuration of other actors and institutions that constitute the social world.

The argument that I intend to develop in this chapter starts with a simple hypothesis: as the proliferation and re-combination of various technologies, formats and practices of digitised communication inserts itself into the daily lives of individuals in late-modern societies, there must be changes going in the way that they perceive the world and their own position in it. My attention in what follows will be focused specifically on the transformations in the *social arrangement of the lifeworld* experienced by these individuals – the way they encounter and form relationships with other people. Schutz captures this sector of the mundane outlook in a suggestive image:

> I experience other men in various perspectives and my relation to them is arranged according to various levels of proximity, depth and anonymity in lived experience. The breadth of variations in my experience of the social world extends from the encounter with another man to vague attitudes, institutions, cultural structures and humanity in general. (Schutz & Luckmann 1973: 61)

What interests me in my investigation is precisely this 'breadth of variations' in one's experience of the social world: what changes occur in it in a media environment where technologies and functionalities intersect and overlap; and what ramifications for reflexivity and agency this reconfigured spectrum of perspectives and relations to other people could bring about.

As the editors of this volume rightly point out, we need to consider the transformations in the contemporary digital environment not only with an eye to the multiplication and diversification of technologies and formats, but also to the effect of their combination and intersection. I will refer to this phenomenon as *media fusion*. Media fusion blends the functionalities and modalities of different communication media. It creates an amalgamated media equipment that is experienced by users as

ready-to-hand (Heidegger 2000: 98) – not as a set of distinct tools and products to be taken up with specific goals in mind – but as an immersive environment, a *cross-media milieu* in which one can and does routinely encounter other people in a nuanced and infinitely plastic variety of ways. This *cross-media milieu* becomes an integral part of the new 'paramount reality' (Schutz & Luckmann 1973: 3) to which a person wakes up every day; it produces a new configuration of 'proximity, depth and anonymity' of possible interactions and relationships with other people. I will label this differently structured horizon of the social world *the new mediate sociality*. I will argue that it opens an exciting range of opportunities for individual emancipation and mutual understanding, and at the same time harbours darker risks of exploitation and alienation. These different vectors of the new mediate sociality can and should represent a critical-analytical grid to be applied in future studies of the communicative phenomena transpiring amid the cross-media milieu.

Human-media-technology relations

Schutz' phenomenology offers a uniquely sophisticated account of the contents of human mundane consciousness, the accomplishment of 'intersubjectivity,' and the constitution of the social world, however it has little, beyond passing remarks, to say about how the technological conditions faced by subjects pursuing their projects in everyday life shape their horizons of deliberation and action. This is an unfortunate omission because it precludes the possibility of a systematic examination of the numerous forms of encountering other people beyond the context of immediate co-presence. The evolution of late modern societies has decisively 'disembedded' interpersonal interactions and social institutions from local contexts (Giddens 1984, Thompson 1995), not least due to an explosive growth of information and communication technologies. In order to prepare the ground conceptually for the mandatory consideration of media technologies within the framework of the sociology of the everyday lifeworld, another school of thought – the phenomenology of technology – needs to be introduced.

Following Heidegger's lead, philosophers such as Albert Borgmann (1984, 1999) and Don Ihde (1990) scrutinised the prominent presence of technology in contemporary society and culture by theorising the vicissitudes of the human-technology relations. They highlighted the formative role of technology in shaping the ways in which humans have seen and interacted with their world. Theirs is a 'substantive' (Feenberg 1999) perspective on technology that stands in opposition to the instrumentalist view of neutral technology that is characteristic of modern thought. These philosophers capture the function of technology as both lens and filter for experiencing the world and, by virtue of that, for its social constitution. It is worth noting that few of these otherwise important and insightful analyses have focused on the role of the technologies of communication. Where Schutz had little time to spend discussing technology at all, these more recent authors have predominantly examined the phenomenological

aspects of technologies standing at the interface between humans and the physical world, with little attention given to the technologies facilitating social intercourse among people. I therefore feel compelled to bring together these distinct schools of thought. I will attempt to fill some of the gaps left in each one of them by drawing on insights offered by the other.

Of particular utility for this endeavour is the typology of 'human-technology relations' proposed by Don Ihde (1990). Ihde distinguishes four types of such relations. The first type, which he calls 'embodiment relations' (73), is where technology is taken into sensory experience as a means of perceiving the (physical) world, thus transforming the subject's perceptual and bodily senses. My glasses are 'taken into my own perceptual-bodily self-experience thus: (I–glasses) – World' (73). The description of this relation clearly resonates with McLuhan's (1964) understanding of media (technologies) as extensions of our senses. Ihde further draws attention to an essential ambiguity existing in this relation: it has a necessary 'magnification/reduction structure' (74). Embodiment relations simultaneously magnify and amplify, or reduce and place aside (screen out), certain facets of the world. If we substitute the general notion of technology in Ihde's formula with the more specific case of communication technology or medium, we could transfer his observations to the realm of social interaction. The person experienced through the telephone is brought to me across a great distance at the expense of being reduced to a voice. More recent communication technologies are taken into the perceptual and bodily experiences of users so that others can be heard and seen across distance and within freely chosen timeframes, for example: (I–Skype) – Other. Logically, a set of amplifications and reductions in the user's experience of another person pertains to this embodiment relation.

Ihde terms his second type of human-technology relations "hermeneutic relations" (80). The technology in these types of relations carries a representation of some entity that otherwise remains outside the subject's direct sensory perception. When focusing her attention on the technical artefact, be it a written text, screen or map, the subject sees not the artefact itself, but rather a reference to something beyond it, for example, a landscape represented by words or cartographic symbols. In this relation, the subject must possess a code about how to read the indications of the instrument, the text, the image, or other kind of symbolic representation. The formula with which Ihde describes this relation is: 'I – (technology – World)' (86). Transferred to the field of communication technology, the hermeneutic relation takes the form: I – (medium– Other). The self-expressions of the Other are technologically and symbolically objectified and relayed to me via the communication medium. I need a set of literacies in order to access, read and interpret that representation. The medium, as both technology and message, decisively shapes my experience of the Other.

The third type of human-technology relations identified by Ihde (1990) are the 'alterity relations' (97) in which technology is experienced as an Other or quasi-Other, an animated being different from myself. Finally, Ihde (1990) recognises a fourth type of human-technology relations he refers to as 'background relations' (108). This

is a relation in which technologies affect some of the conditions of daily life without being drawn into the foreground of the action or interaction. In media technologies, such a relation exists when communication infrastructures become the taken-for-granted environment in which others are encountered and experienced. The different programmes and algorithms that run in the background of online communication platforms stand in this kind of relation with users. While we do not engage with them directly, they invisibly define the setting where our social actions and relations unfold.

According to Ihde, there is an inherent amplification/reduction trade-off in all technological artefacts, and in the corresponding relations that they help to establish between humans and the world. What is gained and what is lost in such amplifications and reductions? This kind of questioning stance is most acutely needed in the case of the media technologies involved in the re-framing of our social world. How is the user's vision of her social world expanded and curtailed in a culture where media are fused, boundaries between distinct types of interaction collapse, and communicative affordances blend in a cross-media milieu? I will turn again to Schutz for help in tackling this puzzle.

Schutz and the media

Mediacy is an inalienable property of human sociality. In his influential book on the intellectual history of the idea of communication, Peters (1999) quotes American philosopher William James's postulate that there is a hard line separating 'me' and 'not-me', or the Other. According to James (1890, quoted in Peters 1999) the 'mutual insulation of consciousness is given in the human condition' (4). The breaches between different people's streams of thought 'are the most absolute breaches in nature' (4). Peters argues that the individualist culture brought about by early modernity posed the problem of communication with unprecedented force, and led William James' generation of thinkers to discover communication as both bridge and chasm (5).

Schutz (1964, 1970; Schutz & Luckmann 1973) continues the investigation of this 'problem' in depth led by his interest in intersubjectivity as the basis of all social life:

> The everyday life-world is therefore fundamentally intersubjective. It is a social world. … Interpretation of meaning, 'understanding,' is a fundamental principle of the natural attitude with regard to my fellow-men. (Schutz & Luckmann 1973: 16)

Schutz introduces the term 'sign' to refer to 'vehicles of thought,' objects, facts or events in the outer world that make possible the comprehension of the Other's thought (Schutz 1970: 200). Signs produced in purposive communication originate in the 'actual manipulatory sphere' (202) of the communicator, and are apprehended by the interpreter as objects, facts or events in the world within his or her own immediate reach. In other words, for subjective meaning to be shared intersubjectively, it has to be 'objectivated' in some form. In face-to-face communication the medium of production of such ob-

jectivations is the communicator's body (the body as a field of expression) – his or her facial expressions, bodily movements and speech. Beyond that, Schutz directly points to media of communication such as the telephone and television as possible carriers of expressive signs when the manipulatory sphere of the communicator and the world within reach of the interpreter do not overlap. In more complicated cases of communication, he notes, 'any number of human beings or mechanical devices might be inserted into the communication process…' (203) alluding to media systems, institutions and professional roles. Schutz moves on without investigating any such cases more closely. As pointed out earlier, for him the materiality and technical makeup of these 'vehicles of thought' (200) does not seem to be of particular significance.

Schutz's main theoretical objective is to outline in systematic detail the two 'limiting,' or boundary forms of the spectrum of social relationships, in his terms, the *we-* and the *they-relation* that structure the experienced social world, yet he suggestively insists throughout his work that a rich variety of intermediate ideal-typical forms of relations exist. In fact, he sees the social world as constituted by a multiplicity of overlapping 'zones of anonymity' spanning the distance between the immediate we-relation (in the face-to-face situation) and the remote awareness of the existence of anonymous 'types' of individual and collective social actors.

Schutz maps out the social arrangements of the lifeworld, starting from the most immediate experience of an Other with whom one shares a sector of the lifeworld at a particular moment in time. These are my 'fellow-men' who inhabit the sector of the world available within my embodied perceptional and actional reach (Schutz & Luckmann 1973: 62). They are the people whom I (the generic human being) encounter face-to-face. When I turn to you as you do to me, a 'we-relation' takes hold. We-relations are established at different levels of closeness, depth, intensity, and reciprocity – from the most intimate, to the passing exchange of glances with a stranger. Tracking these different 'gradations of immediacy' further (69), Schutz moves into the zones of the social world populated by 'contemporaries.' This term refers to the others whose lives unfold at the same historical time as mine, and with whom I stand in a they-relation (69). My experience of contemporaries is qualitatively different from that of fellow-men and -women. I may possess various degrees of knowledge about their existence, but there is a dramatic decrease in the 'abundance of symptoms through which the conscious life of the Other is accessible to me' (69). Contemporaries are therefore experienced as more or less anonymous 'types' (75), not as concrete conscious human beings 'like me,' but as bundles of typical attributes and behaviours exhibited in connection with typical functions and typical situations, that is 'typifications' stored in my stock of knowledge. The sector of the social world inhabited by contemporaries is stratified into personal types (e.g. people of particular character), functionary types (people playing particular social roles), and typifications of social collectivities (e.g. generalisations encompassing groups of people such as nations, political parties, and humanity in general). The anonymity of a typification is inversely proportional to its *fullness of content*, which is determined by the *origin of the typification* – whether it is

derived from the immediate experience of an earlier fellow-human, or was a representation of social reality handed down to me by other people, social institutions or the cultural stock of knowledge. The degree of anonymity of any social type, in the end, and importantly for my following argument, depends on how easily my relation to it can be changed into a we-relation:

> The sooner I can immediately experience the typical characteristics of someone as properties of a fellow-man, as components of his conscious life, the less anonymous is the typification in question' (Schutz & Luckmann 1973: 81).

The mutual tuning-in between fellow-humans sharing a community of space and time (in the we-relation) and the mediate experience of a highly anonymous social type (in the they-relation) represent two polar points between which many intermediate kinds of relations can be discerned. It is exactly these intermediate social relationships that are most profoundly connected to the affordances of communication media. Evolving communication technologies open new possibilities for filling with concrete content they-relations that have previously been abstract and anonymous. They afford new techniques for restoring old, and attaining fresh, we-relations. They help further refine the gradations of the im/mediacy of human encounters and, by virtue of that, intervene in the re-structuring of the experienced social world.

Spectrum of (im)mediacy

Despite the absolute breach between two persons' streams of thought, pointed out by James (1890, quoted in Peters 1999), a relative immediacy[1] of interaction occurs when two persons share a community of space and time in the embodied we-relation. They orient towards one another as human beings and participate 'polythetically,' or continuously, step-by-step and moment-by-moment in each other's conscious life. Schutz says, about subjects finding themselves in such a relationship, that they are growing older together. A complex interlocking of motives and experiences and a mirroring of each other's selves takes place in this situation. The common environment and overlapping of perspectives bestows upon the world within their mutual reach its intersubjective, social character (Schutz 1964: 31).

> It is only from the face-to-face relationship, from the common lived experience of the world in the We, that the intersubjective world can be constituted. This alone is the point from which it can be deduced (1970: 193)

The category of 'mediate relationships' (Schutz 1970: 218) is fundamentally different. In mediate relationships, the partners do not share a unity 'in vivid present,' or a community in space and time. Their respective here-and-now are separated. The Other appears to the actor as a *partial self*. That self is perceived in the 'quasi-present,' in which the results of its communicative acts (the written letter, the printed book, and other

examples of hermeneutic technologies in Ihde's (1990) terms) are interpreted by the actor. These categories of the social topography – 'vivid present,' versus 'quasi-present,' 'partial self' versus 'fullness of content' (Schutz 1970: 218) characterise 'mediate relations' and point in the direction of different forms of mediation. By virtue of this, they offer a way of inserting communication technologies into the Schutzian taxonomy of Self-Other relations. Once the place of the media in stratifying the experienced social world is located, it becomes possible to examine more precisely the changes in the subject's social horizon in the cross-media milieu.

Schutz describes the transition from the immediate experience of the fellow-wo/man to the abstract awareness of the contemporary as a 'spectrum of decreasing vividness':

> At one moment I am exchanging smiles with my friend, shaking hands with him and bidding him farewell. At the next moment he is walking away. Then from the far distance I hear a faint good-bye, a moment later I see a vanishing figure give a last wave, and then he is gone. It is quite impossible to fix the exact instant in which my friend left the world of my direct experience and entered the shadowy realm of those who are merely my contemporaries. (1970: 219)

This is a graphic illustration of how the symptoms of the conscious life of an Other decrease with the increase of physical distance and fade to the point where he or she who was our 'fellow-human' until a minute ago slips out of the we-relation into the shadow of relative anonymity characterising our relations with mere contemporaries. We co-exist at the same time, but we only relate to one another through personal memories or representations (and their inherent typifications) received from various sources. My friend who walked away becomes a type, a very concrete one to be sure, and I still know quite a bit about her unique personality. However, I am unable to keep up with the ebb and flow of my friend's conscious life. I do not know whether on the other side of the distance that separates us she laughs or cries, whether she enjoys the film she is watching, or whether she is watching any film at all. As she goes through new experiences of which I am unaware, she undergoes changes; she becomes a somewhat different person, whereas I cling to the idea of the personal type that was once my fellow-woman.

Another of Schutz' examples takes account of communication media: the "spectrum of decreasing vividness" this time stretches from a face-to-face conversation, to a telephone call, to an exchange of letters, and finally to messages exchanged through a third party. In these mediated interactions, our subjective space-time-dimensions do not intertwine, we do not grow older together, I lose sight of the fullness of conscious life of my fellow-wo/man and thus I experience her only as a partial self.

The dynamics of such gradual movements across the spectrum of im/mediacy of human relations can be traced in the cross-media milieu. We could start with the spectrum of decreasing vividness with which one experiences the conscious life of a departing friend. Let us say my friend has disappeared around the corner, as Schutz has it in his example, and thus she has plunged into the shadowy world of mere con-

temporaries, removed from the here-and-now of my direct experience. Our streams of consciousness no longer overlap, and we do not grow older together. This presupposes that from now on we will be turning into ever more vague typifications for each other. Then my mobile phone rings in my vivid present and summons me to orient myself to the symptoms of the conscious life of an Other that have suddenly rushed into my here-and-now. Sure enough, this is an instant message from my friend telling me that she has caught the train and is now on her way home. This is indeed a brief and fleeting representation of what she is going through at the moment; a quasi-presence brought to me through a hermeneutic technology – I – (technology – Other). Later this evening, our space-time dimensions and streams of consciousness will intersect (albeit incompletely) when we have a Skype conversation and she shows me the blooming tree under her window via her webcam – furnishing an embodiment relation of the kind (I – technology) – Other. It might be only a partial self and a quasi-presence that we will project and experience in the course of these mediate interactions, but they will nevertheless disperse the anonymity setting in between us to some degree, and will fill our respective constructs of one another with richer content. They will allow us to engage in social action – discussing an issue, planning a project, comforting or advising one another despite the distance that separates us. In fact, the media we use will constitute a shared communicative environment in which we will establish a *quasi-community of space and time* and will attempt to constitute a common world. Certainly, to invoke Ihde's analysis of human-technology relations, this technologically assembled communication environment will render both amplifications and reductions. We may or may not reflexively account for them all as we follow the recipes for mediate interaction that our culture has taught us.

In a different scenario, once my friend disappears around the corner I may orient my attention in my here-and-now to the acts of her self-expression as objectivated on her Facebook profile, where her status has been updated to "on the train home," and where later her selfie with the blooming tree in her yard is posted. More than this, however, I can trace these objectivations back in time in the digital record to find the symptoms of my friend's conscious life in her there-and-then as she was growing older polythetically, through a long series of individual experiences, not really shared, but available to me through a hermeneutic technology. While farther removed from the vividness of the immediate we-relation, the hermeneutic I – (technology – Other) relation established between us in this way is not completely anonymous either. I will inevitably use some typifications while interpreting the meaning of the experiences these representations portray, but due to their durability and accumulation, it will be possible to translate them into the personal characteristics of a wo/man – this particular avid traveller or gardener – my friend. Once again, a specific configuration of amplifications and reductions will shape my interpretative actions, and I may not necessarily stop to consider this configuration critically.

In a reversal of Schutz's example, one can envisage a situation in which I, the actor, first encounter a tiny fragment of the partial self of a mere contemporary in a

quasi-present, in which the results of that contemporary's communicative acts – her blog, her YouTube video or tweet – are perceived and interpreted by me the actor – I – (technology – Other). In the cross-media milieu, this anonymous and highly typified contemporary can easily be engaged by me in some form of mediate interaction (by comment or e-mail, live textual or visual chat), which would make the symptoms of her conscious life grow in vividness, and might even draw us into a direct we-relation in a community of space and time. I, the actor, could delve into repositories of mediate representations to come to know an anonymous social collectivity better, and eventually reach out to an individual human being associated with it – this particular member of government, activist, refugee or politician – thus de-anonymising the collectivity (group, or institution) and engaging in direct interaction with it. Elsewhere, I, the author, have reported actual instances of this kind of escalating interaction across zones of anonymity under the heading 'mundane citizenship' (see Bakardjieva 2012). The two defining characteristics of mundane citizenship are: first, that it is intertwined with the routine activities and concerns of the everyday lifeworld; and second, that it is crucially enabled by the cross-media milieu. In this milieu new means of connecting to distant others and de-anonymising entities of the public world have become available to actors. Consequently, there has arisen a variety of forms of intersection between everyday life and the realms of citizenship and political participation.

This spectrum of relational possibilities is furnished by the combinations between embodiment and hermeneutic technologies made practicable by media fusion. As a result, a multiplicity of finely calibrated they- and potential we-relations expand the social horizon of the individual in the cross-media milieu. A bright light is shone over the once shadowy world of contemporaries and it erupts into a bustling scene of different social types, variously distinct and alive. The boundaries that separate the discrete zones of anonymity making up this newly emergent social world are negotiable and penetrable. 'Vicarious travel' (Thompson 1995) across zones of anonymity, and the volitional construction of a diversity of mediate interaction situations, become routine experiences of individual everyday life in the cross-media milieu.

This strikingly fine-grained spectrum of im/mediacy can be conceptually organised in several analytical dimensions using the categories of the Schutzian model: the temporal dimension in which relations are formed is marked out by oblivious co-existence in the same historical time (mere contemporaries barely aware of each other) at one pole, and conversely, the direct embodied intertwining of subjective time and streams of consciousness, in which fellow-wo/men grow older together. The spatial dimension is demarcated by the absolutely impenetrable distance between the locales occupied by two subjects on the one hand, and their embodied co-location on the other. Finally, the dimensions of relevance, volition and attention define orientation (one-sided or reciprocal) and the intensity of engagement between I and Other. When the affordances of intersecting hermeneutic and embodiment technologies of communication are considered against this conceptual space, it becomes evident that numerous different relational figures and trajectories can be carved across it. Hermeneutic technologies

allow the selectively timed and directed flow of technologically produced representations of varying modality and fullness of detail (e-mails, SNS profiles, blogs, comments, videos, etc.). Embodiment technologies, for their part, facilitate the extension of sensory and actional capacities (calling, talking, hearing, seeing, showing) across space, time and even across the gradients of volition and attention (I can call you when you least expect or want to hear from me). The continuum of possible I–Other relations enclosed between highly anonymous typifications and detachment on the one side, and individuality, fullness of content, and intensive mutual orientation on the other, thus implodes in an abundance of intermediate kinds of 'quasi-presence' and differently configurated 'partial selves.'

If we accept that the structures of the social world experienced by an individual living her everyday life in the cross-media milieu could be represented by this model, then where does that leave her agency as a knowledgeable and ethical subject, and as a media user?

Mediate sociality and user agency

The landscape of the social world confronting the individual in the cross-media milieu is densely colonised by the objectivated fragments of the conscious lives of her contemporaries. These objectifications are characterised by different degrees of depth, detail and durability, different origins and accessibility, and different material properties. Representations of partial selves and they-relations to others can be assembled from them at will, at any chosen time, and in line with the individual's unfolding pragmatic project and system of relevances. These objectivations often crop up in ongoing we-relations and give them a new feel. The son says to his mother: 'No point in telling you about that, I have posted pictures on Facebook.' Your friend urges: 'I have to run now, but check out my blog.' Apart from their boundary cases, the I-Other relations are less a product of traditionally ordered spatial and temporal environments than of pragmatically chosen goals on the part of the actor for whom the possibilities rendered by the technological apparatus lie ready-to-hand. Because of its material and relatively fixed objectivated nature, the social world captured in the digital record can be reflexively surveyed and strategically navigated.

The individual herself generates a constant stream of objectivations of her conscious life that can and do travel far from the immediate here-and-now of her zone of embodied perception and operation. Thus she extends her social quasi-presence across space and time, but inevitably, accepts the prescriptions of the materials and technologies within which her objectivations are engraved. She relinquishes the unique sides of her personality and typifies herself to a greater or lesser degree so that she can be interpreted outside the local context and by the prevailing hermeneutic standards of encoding and decoding. She loses control over the partial selves that others will assemble as her representations in contexts and for purposes that she cannot know or envisage.

It is my contention that user agency, vis-a-vis the social world structured in this way, has to be understood not only as reflexive navigating of, and capitalising on, the amplifications, but also as critical judgment and counteraction to the reductions implicit in the cross-media milieu. Based on the key characteristics of the mediate sociality it engenders, three types of user agency can be distinguished.

The numerous new ways in which social relations can be built in the we- and they-oriented mode and in combinations thereof, offer novel possibilities for achieving mutual knowledge and understanding, and for constructing shared worlds with a variety of others. They expand the individual's horizons of meaning and action. The individual actor is also presented with the chance to scrutinise and reflect on the processes and structures of his or her own social world, taking a reflexive stance and gaining clearer awareness of the opportunities and risks involved. This boost of *communicative agency* explains the responsiveness and excitement with which users have met the recent waves of technological innovations in the media sphere.

The creative realisation of new communication possibilities, however, is not the only process at work in the field of mediate sociality. The flexibility of the new tools, materials and situations also affords instrumental rationalisation, which takes the Other not as a fellow-human to attune to and understand, but as an object to be handled carelessly, or callously manipulated and exploited. Objectivated partial selves are exposed to manipulation by known and unknown others, originating from different, often remote, zones of anonymity. Anyone, from my friend needing a favour, to an anonymous commercial or ideological merchant peddling their wares can summon my attention in my here-and-now directly, or through the objectivated products of their conscious acts. I, myself, can survey the types of people constituting my social world as a reserve to be instrumentally drawn upon in the pursuit of my pragmatic interests. Thus, in various measures, the actor can find herself in both the role of a manipulator, or manipulated vis-à-vis the Other. Such relations have always existed in the social arena, however in the context of prevailing mediate sociality, they can take over the span of the individual's subjective and biological time and crowd out the individualised, more intensive, responsible and authentic relationships with others. This state of affairs calls for the committed exercise of *ethical agency*, which embraces and sustains the value of dialogical relations and mutual understanding as the cornerstone of intersubjectivity and a shared world.

The ongoing massive objectivation of the conscious lives of individuals in the cross-media milieu, as we are now well-aware, does not remain contained within the processes of social interaction for which it is originally intended by its authors. The technologically rendered material products of individual expression and communication become alienated commodities circulating in the system of capitalist markets. Taken out of the concrete meaning and experience contexts of their production, these symbolic artefacts are drawn into cycles of economic activity, of which individuals have no knowledge or understanding. One such area of economic activity is the engineering of the very communicative environment in which mediate sociality occurs. The

technical configurations of the cross-media milieu are strategically shaped with a view to making the social objectivations and interactions of users profitable. It is of decisive importance to the future of mediate sociality that these systemic reductions of human experience in the cross-media milieu be resisted. This requires the mobilisation of *critical user agency* that recognises the value of an authentically constructed and freely expandable social world and the need to defend it from the onslaught of alienation and exploitation. In order to inform such agency, the Schutzian framework would need to be further augmented by integrating insights from critical theory and pedagogy.

Conclusion

The application of the conceptual apparatus offered by the sociological phenomenology of Alfred Schutz to the analysis of the social arrangements of the lifeworld in the new media age, yields results that are multidimensional and certainly not easy to interpret. It is not straightforward to adapt an analytical system developed in a historical period characterised by taken-for-granted customs and techniques of sociality markedly different from the technologies and practices of the present day. Diverse new forms of mediate sociality have proliferated, comingling intimacy, mutual orientation and intensity of engagement with anonymity, typification and distraction in various proportions. These forms owe their specific shapes to the complex patterns of amplifications and reductions characteristic of the media systems in combination with meaningful human choices and pragmatic interests. A further close and systematic examination of the emerging spectrum of mediate social relations is an imperative task for interpretative sociology and social constructivism. These historically specific and technically buttressed arrangements of the lifeworld represent the matrices in which the culturally shared social world is constituted. In these matrices, human actors either manage or fail to discover possibilities for meaningful action, communicative understanding of each other, personal emancipation and growth: thus their philosophical and political importance.

Note

1. Immediacy in this context is defined, following Schutz and Luckmann (1976: 22), as a characteristic of the domain of the social world in which others are experienced directly in a shared sector of space and time; 'the world which surrounds us is the same and *my* conscious processes are an element of this world for him just as much as *his* conscious processes are an element of this world for me.' Relationships in this domain can be unilateral or reciprocal, and can differ in the degree of their intimacy and intensity. All interactions and relations in which 'the other person is beyond the actor's reach during the course of the act' (Schutz & Luckmann, 1989: 71) are mediate. Thus, immediacy refers to a *quality of human interaction*. For comparison, Bolter and Grusin (1995) theorise immediacy as a *quality of media representations* defined by a sense of liveliness, immersion and spontaneity. To achieve this quality, the medium producing the representation needs to become transparent, to disappear from view. Immediacy in the Schutzian sense could be pursued, but never fully accomplished, through various strategies for recreating immediacy through media representations in the sense suggested by Bolter and Grusin.

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4.

Balancing the Flows

Cross-Media Communication in an Everyday Life Context

Anne Mette Thorhauge

Abstract

This chapter analyses the ways in which smartphones are integrated into the patterns of everyday life. Being an individualised device, comprising a wide range of communication types and services, the smartphone represents a key perspective on the way cross-media communication is practised by individual citizens on an everyday basis. This chapter presents a detailed mapping of specific users' application of smartphones throughout the course of a single day and the way this use blends with everyday activities and locations. The chapter demonstrates how the smartphone is integrated into the effort of keeping everyday life together, and how this represents a different perspective on cross-media communication compared to content or platform centred approaches. The chapter will argue that cross-media communication can be seen as practices of enabling and balancing the communication flows of everyday life as part of the more general effort of making ends meet.

Keywords: micro-routines, micro-coordination, smartphone, flows, activities between activities

In this chapter I will analyse and discuss the way smartphones are integrated into the patterns of everyday life. As a highly individualised device, comprising a wide range of communication types and services, the smartphone represents a key perspective on the way cross-media communication is practised by individual citizens on an everyday basis. The empirical study that serves as a starting point for this analysis consists of a detailed mapping of the use that twelve participants make of their smartphones throughout the course of one day, and a description of the way this use blends with their everyday activities and locations. The analysis will rely on Rasmus Helles' concept of 'everyday life conduct' as described in this volume, as it foregrounds 'the logic we apply in order to make the various parts of our everyday life fit together' (Helles 2012: 337). The chapter will demonstrate how the smart phone is integrated into this effort of keeping everyday life together, and how this represents a wholly different perspective on cross-media communication as compared to a content or platform centred

Thorhauge, Anne Mette (2016): Balancing the Flows. Cross-Media Communication in an Everyday Life Context, pp. 59-73 in Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson (eds.) *The Media and the Mundane. Communication Across Media in Everyday Life*. Göteborgs universitet: Nordicom.

approach. More specifically, the chapter will argue that cross-media communication can be seen from the point of view of the individual user as a practice of enabling and balancing the communication flows of everyday life as part of the more general effort of making ends meet.

Managing the communication flows of everyday life

By taking an everyday life perspective on cross-media communication, this study builds on a rather long tradition of including the context of the user in the study of media. The 'ethnographic turn' (Drotner 1994) brought about by the cultural studies tradition marked a general shift of focus away from the analysis of media texts toward an analysis of the particular contexts in which they are decoded and consumed (Lull 1980; Morley 1986; Radway 1984). Following this tradition, domestication theory has included a 'science and technology' perspective on the fundamental malleability and interpretability of media technologies, and emphasised how they are adapted and interpreted into the 'moral economy of the household' (Bakardjieva 2006; Silverstone & Haddon 1996). Much recent research into mobile technologies continues this tradition with a general focus on mobile phones as 'everyday tools' used for the micro-coordination of everyday life (Ling 2004), interlacing of activities (Baron 2008) and the management of tasks, including those that are introduced by the phone itself (Burchell 2015). This chapter will focus in particular on the individual strategies involved in making these activities and tasks of everyday life fit together. This has been defined by Rasmus Helles as 'the conduct of everyday life' (Helles 2012), that is, 'the way we individually create coherence and balance between the different social obligations, limitations and opportunities we face in our everyday life' (Helles 2011, my translation). It is in the everyday conduct of individual citizens that the different situations, organisations and institutions in which we take part are integrated (ibid.) and this activity is highly dependent on the particular life situations that are faced by individual citizens. That is, the conduct of everyday life represents a 'compromise between my obligations and the degrees of freedom which are afforded by the various institutions that enter into my life' (Helles 2012: 338). In the current study, for instance, living alone or with others, having children at various ages, having a job or study to follow, greatly affects the particular obligations, limitations and opportunities offered by everyday life and the individual's leeway for dealing with these.

Communication and interaction with other people obviously constitutes one key aspect of everyday life that takes place in person as well as via the smartphone. This has been studied in depth from a range of perspectives, including communication on mobile phones as an act of 'micro-coordinating' physical meetings (Ling 2004), the social rules and strategies involved in the coupling of physical and mediated communication contexts (Hampton & Gupta 2008; Humphreys 2005) and smart phone use as a question of actively controlling interactions (Baron 2008). To explain the com-

munication patterns foregrounded in the current study I will introduce an alternative theoretical perspective with a long tradition in media studies – the concept of flow. 'Flow' was originally introduced by Raymond Williams as way of directing attention toward the general programming schedule of television as an object of analysis (Jensen 1995; Waller 1988; Williams 1974). When making sense of television as a medium it is necessary to direct attention to the more general sequences that frame individual television programmes and the strategic scheduling behind it. In this way, the concept was originally coined with television broadcasters in mind, but was later developed and applied in a broader context. By distinguishing between channel, viewer and superflow, for instance, Klaus Bruhn Jensen points out that flow can be seen as an aspect of the individual broadcast channel, the viewer's choices and a combination of several broadcast channels and the totality of channel flows available (Jensen 1995). Much in the same manner, Jensen later suggested flow as a relevant concept for dealing with networked communication, by distinguishing between information, user and context flows (Jensen 2002). In the current chapter I will deal with the diverse instances of communication on participants' smartphones as a question of flow. I will look beyond the individual acts of communication toward the general patterns of communication of which they are part, and how these are embedded in the spatial and temporal structure of everyday life. Moreover, I will look specifically at individual strategies involved in this process, and how users actively create and combine their 'user flows' from the more general 'information flow' of the Internet. By changing the analytical focus from specific content toward the more general configuration of communication and interaction on the smart phone, the concept of flow has proven very useful as a perspective on the way that participants in the study manage their smartphone. Indeed, their way of using their smartphone as part of their more general conduct of everyday life can be interpreted as an effort of continuously enabling, balancing, opting in and opting out of different communication flows throughout their day.

A day in the life: Mapping the spatial and temporal patterns of smartphone use

'A day in the life' is the name of a qualitative multiple-method study that maps the use of smart phones across different contexts in everyday life. Due to its focus on a detailed description of smart phone use as part of the more general conduct of everyday life, it combines two key methodological principles: an in-depth description of a small number of participants that differ with regard to their life situations, and a combination of several, complementary types of data that allows the detailed mapping and contextualisation of smartphone use patterns[1]. As regards the first principle, the study includes twelve participants who were sampled with a view to a maximum variation of their life situations, including age, gender, occupation and family situation. The sample included three women aged around twenty engaged in secondary education, two of

them living with their families and one living in a rented room; two women and two men in their thirties with full time occupations across the private and public sector, living with their families; two men in their forties similarly with full time occupations across the private and public sector and living with their families; one woman in her thirties with a full time occupation in the private sector living alone with her child; one man in his fifties working as a freelancer and living with his second family; and, finally, one woman in her fifties, working in the public sector and living alone. As appears from this overview, some groups were more difficult to recruit, particularly young men, divorced people, the unemployed and the elderly, who are for this reason underrepresented in the material. This obviously has consequences for the scope of the analysis. Most importantly, the elderly and the unemployed represent life situations that differ considerably from the somewhat demanding and hectic everyday life lived by the majority of participants in the study, and this may have consequences for the way the smartphone is used. It could be interesting to look further into this, in a follow-up study. The available data still allows for a thorough analysis of the way particular life situations affect smart phone use patterns, and in particular how the stationary or mobile characteristics of particular occupations, as well as different family constellations, sets the framework for diverse uses.

The second principle, the combination of complementary data sources, involves the combination of automatically and manually logged use data and qualitative interviews. The participants registered their locations throughout the course of one day by way of a GPS tracker and took a screenshot each time they used their phone. Shortly hereafter, they were interviewed with the aim of creating a profile of them and their everyday life, a verbal description of the day just passed and a categorisation of names and content in order to anonymise data. This inclusion of automatically and manually logged use-data in a qualitative study is rather unconventional, and it has been described in more detail elsewhere (Thorhauge & Lomborg 2016). Most notably, the inclusion of manually logged use-data in the form of screenshots foregrounds aspects of use that are rarely documented by other methods such as checking time or noticing notifications without acting on them. (Such uses are not identified in studies based on automatically logged use data because they do not involve any actions that can be detected by a logging system). The analysis of this data involves an identification of the temporal and spatial patterns of use by mapping the screenshots onto clock-faces and maps. These patterns have been further contextualised with participant statements about what happened that particular day. In this way it has been possible to foreground how the documented use patterns reflect activities on the day of use and how they blend in with activities that are not visible on the phone. In the following sections I will discuss three aspects of this. First, I will discuss how the documented use reflects the more general life situation of the participants in the study and how this challenges current studies in mobile communication. I will then look in more detail at the way the documented use blends in with other activities in everyday life, more specifically, how it is 'wedged in' between other activities in the form of micro-coordination and

micro-routines. Finally, I will demonstrate how the participants deliberately deal with and regulate these patterns by configuring their phones in particular ways. In the two concluding sections I will firstly suggest how cross-media communication may be defined on the basis of the documented use patterns, and secondly suggest 'the management of flows' as an approach to cross-media communication as an aspect of the everyday life conduct of the participants.

Making ends meet

At the beginning of this chapter I explained the conduct of everyday life as my key perspective on 'the mundane'. Rather than looking at everyday life as something that belongs to specific contexts or activities, I look at everyday life as an individual's ways of making a whole range of contexts and activities fit together. By sampling participants with very diverse lives it is possible to compare how this takes place across very different situations. For instance, being a young student living in a rented room and spending the day on the move between classrooms and cafes is very different from being a parent with a full time job, spending the day in the office and the evening at home. Both situations have to be managed but in very different ways. In the first case, encounters have to be arranged and social relationships have to be maintained, in the second case, encounters and relationships are to a large extent given, whereas the tasks associated with work and family life have to be balanced and prioritised. These differences are somewhat, but not solely, tied to age. The younger participants tended to be more on the move and more preoccupied with maintaining relationships, and older participants tended to be more stationary and preoccupied with balancing work and family life. Being divorced or having older children seemed to reintroduce the micro-coordination of encounters and maintenance of relationships as a key activity, however, and workplaces may differ greatly with regard to their degree of physical confinement. For this reason it makes more sense to distinguish between three general factors that are somewhat, but not solely, related to age: the degree to which social relationships and encounters are either given or subject to negotiation, the degree to which the physical patterns of everyday life are either given or subject to negotiation, and the type and number of obligations to which the participants are held responsible. Young students, due to their particular life phase, indeed seem to have more negotiable relationships and encounters, and participants with employment and nuclear families seemed to have less, however, as just stated, being divorced and living alone seems to reintroduce some of these negotiations into everyday life irrespectively of age. Participants with full time employment do tend to spend a greater part of their day in specific locations and young students do spend more of their time on the move between classrooms, however, participants taking a day off, having a meeting elsewhere or for other reasons having a physically dispersed workplace break with this pattern. Finally, the participants were responsible to different types and numbers of obligations

to school, work, family, friends and others. For younger participants, not surprisingly, school and friends played a larger role, while the continuous coordination of work life and family life becomes a key issue among those participants with children.

These differences are important for the use of smart phones in diverse contexts. For instance, the young high-school student who has a considerable degree of mobility, many negotiable encounters and obligations limited to school and friends tends to use their phone primarily for upholding and coordinating a geographically dispersed network. In comparison, a middle-aged person with children and full time employment uses their phone for coordinating practical aspects of work life and family life, and social relationships and encounters are more or less given. As they deal primarily with college youth, current studies of mobile communication tend to focus on the first pattern, that is, social networking, and the others tend to be ignored. By including a wider range of life situations this study demonstrates that many other patterns exist and deserve attention.

Micro-coordination, micro-routines and activities between activities

As emphasised in the former section, the use of the smart phone tends to reflect the particular life situation of the participants involved, and it tends to blend in with other activities in everyday life in particular ways. One of the first things noted is how the phone is used as a tool between activities, that is, whilst cycling, on the train, on the way back from a lunch break right after a meeting, and so on. The use of the phone rarely represents activities directly but instead all the things that are going on in between. The general categories of 'work' and 'leisure' are also too crude to label these activities. When going over the work- and schooldays documented in the material, it becomes clear that work-life as well as leisure cover a whole range of focused and less focused activities that allow, to various degrees, for secondary activities. Focused activities include meetings, lectures, and eating in the company of other people. Such activities are generally represented as 'blank spaces' in the data. Less focussed activities include transportation, coffee breaks and television viewing, where secondary activities on the phone seem more appropriate. Of course, the distinction between primary and secondary activities is not always straightforward and the balance may shift. For instance, the amount of non-work and non-study related communication seems to rise towards the end of the work- or school-day, when attention becomes somewhat scattered.

As regards the activities taking place on the smart phone between activities, the data generally confirms Rich Lings (2004) description of the cell phone as a tool for micro-coordination of everyday life , but due to the specific methodological approach applied in this study it is possible to qualify and nuance this perspective. Micro-coordination, as observed among the participants in the study, differs with regard to time

horizons, and includes practical coordination of the current situation, the practical coordination of the upcoming situation and more general planning. A typical example of micro-coordination related to the current situation are the activities associated with getting from A to B. This includes buying bus tickets, ordering taxis and looking up addresses. Micro-coordination related to upcoming situations falls neatly into Rich Ling's concept of iterative planning, settling on a specific time and location for physical meetings. Finally, more general planning may range from checking fitness schedules in the afternoon to considering going to the cinema during an upcoming holiday. It is characteristic of these more general planning activities that they are to a lesser degree tied to specific situations, and to a greater degree related to the more general management of the 'everyday time budget', that is, turning 'passive time' into 'active time' and also, in some cases, planning as a kind of 'pastime'.

The activity of micro-coordinating everyday life across different time horizons appears in conjunction with recurrent 'micro-routines'. Micro-routines are derivative use patterns. They involve recurrent use sequences on the smart phone that tend to follow specific patterns, such as running through a specific series of apps or news sites. They differ from the more general routines of everyday life (such as having dinner at certain times, or getting to work in particular ways) by involving very short time periods and no practical accomplishments. Indeed, they are embedded into those larger routines of everyday life and tend to be repeated throughout the day in accordance with them. They differ from Rich Ling's (2004) concept of micro-coordination in various ways. They are more about entertainment or pastimes than organising, they often span a range of communication types and patterns, and they seem to be an aspect of the more habitual ways that smart phones are integrated into our everyday activities. The clock-face below will serve as an illustration. It belongs to a 40 year old man who lives in Copenhagen with his wife and his two sons. The clock-face shows the afternoon and evening of the workday that he has documented. As indicated by the grouping of the screenshots, his smart phone use tends to consist of small 'outbursts' of use throughout the day.

Several of these 'outbursts' tend to consist of more or less identical selections of apps, as the slice below illustrates. It highlights the time period around six o'clock in the evening, and covers four 'outbursts' or micro-routines. Three out of four routines include glancing at an email inbox and Facebook, and two involve a set of Danish news sites. This is very representative of his smart phone use throughout the day.

The occurrence and frequency of micro-routines differs among the participants and does seem to indicate different personal styles as well. For some, the steady repetition of particular micro-routines is a key characteristic of their smart phone use. For others, this pattern is less predominant. The micro-routines differ with regard to the types of apps and media genres they comprise, and with regard to the elements by which they are 'triggered'.

The observed micro-routines are interesting in a cross-media perspective because they seem to combine a wide range of media types and genres according to a logic that

Illustration 1. Afternoon and evening of a 40 year old man working in the bank sector and living with his family in Copenhagen

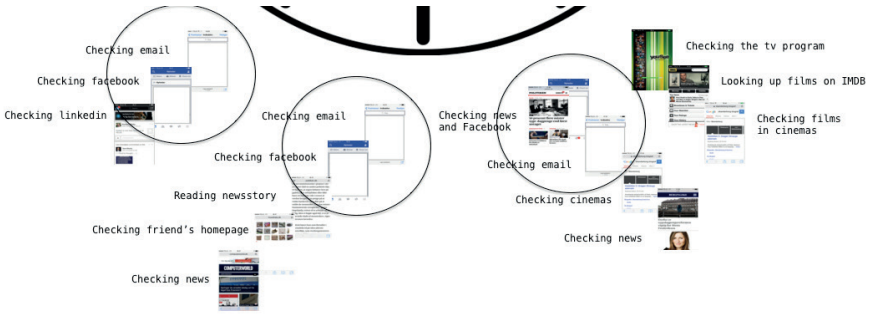

Illustration 2. Slice from illustration 1 – smart phone use around six o'clock in the evening

has less to do with specific media content and more to do with patterns of everyday life. In the example above, for instance, email and mass communication (news sites or Facebook newsfeed) are the predominant media genres, whereas various types of messenger services are clearly dominant in the example below. The clock-face below represents the afternoon and evening of a 17 year old high school student living in a rented room in Copenhagen. While the occurrence of micro-routines is also apparent in her use patterns, her micro-routines include very different media types with Facebook messenger clearly the most dominant app. Altogether her smart phone use throughout the day mainly consists of different types of personal and group communication platforms, with mass communication (even the Facebook newsfeed) taking up only a diminutive part. In this way, micro-routines can include very different selections and combinations of media types and genres.

Illustration 3. Afternoon and evening of a 17 year old high school student living at a rented room in Valby

Micro-routines seem to be triggered, on one hand, by specific everyday situations and on the other, by the phone's notification system. An example of the former are the 'morning routines' apparent among most of the participants, except for those who do not use their smartphone as an alarm clock. The morning routine seems to be an extended micro-routine that includes, beyond the typical apps, some planning for the day including checking weather information, meetings and calendar events.

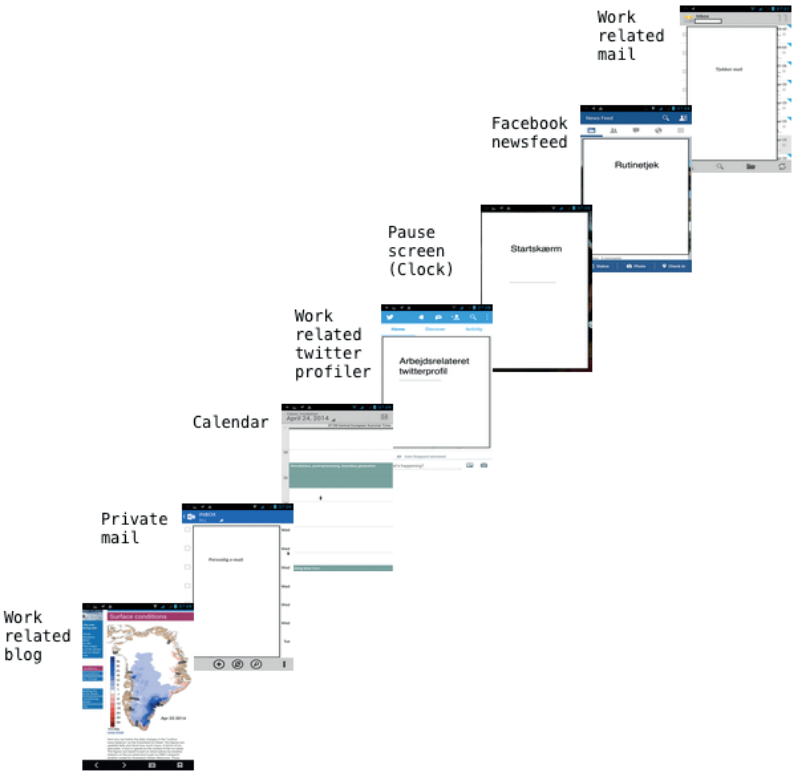

Illustration 4. Morning routine of a 36 year old woman working at DMI and living with her family in Copenhagen

In this way, the micro-routines are partly triggered by specific activities and situations in everyday life, however, another key element triggering the repetition of micro-routines seems to be the phone's notification system. In Illustration 3, for instance, most of the dark-coloured screenshots are notifications and, as can be seen from the illustration, they tend to trigger a series of activities on the phone. This pattern can be seen in the use patterns of most participants but some have deliberately turned off all notifications, while others have chosen to prioritise which apps to include in the notification system. In this way, the amount and character of notifications and their implications for the repetition of micro-routines is very much a matter of personal style and a matter of explicit deliberation or strategic configuration.

Strategic configuration

By strategic configuration, I mean the deliberate setup of the phone in order to manage the character and amount of information that appears on the phone throughout

the day. Two clear examples in the empirical data at hand are the configuration of notifications and the setup of private and work-related e-mail. As regards the former, some participants have clearly reflected on the importance of notifications to their patterns of use, and taken action on the basis of this:

> I actually deliberately don't get notifications on my personal account or Facebook account because I think it is too distracting (36 year old woman with full-time job, living with her husband and two children in Copenhagen).

Others take a more laissez-faire attitude toward this issue:

> It's my Google account or what it is (…) it asks about certain info and you just say yes, fine with me, and suddenly you get good advice about the distance to work, it guesses how long time you have to work, how much time it will take (…) that is, Google knows everything about me and I hide nothing… (32 year old woman working full time and living with her partner and son in Copenhagen)

The deliberate segregation of private email and work email represents an alternative attempt at managing when and where to receive particular information. The most typical strategy is to receive private e-mail on the phone and work-related email on the computer:

> A: Is there any particular reason you check your email on the phone right there?
>
> M: It's probably because it is easier than logging into my Gmail account on the computer.
>
> A. So it's your private email?
>
> M: It's my private email
>
> A: And you check this on your phone?
>
> M: I have deliberately turned off my work e-mail on my phone
> (37 year old man working full time and living with his wife and two children in Frederiksberg)

According to the citation above, this man has chosen not to set up the e-mail client to receive private mail on the computer, and he has similarly turned work-related e-mail off on his phone. In this way the setup on the phone reflect a more general attempt at balancing work-life and private life. Similarly, the setup of the notification system strongly affects when and where micro-routines are triggered. In Illustration 3, for instance, the relatively predominant Facebook messenger routine is triggered on several occasions by a notification directing attention toward a new message. The degree of strategic configuration, as well as the types of communication that are considered relevant for such deliberation, varies greatly among the participants. To judge from the small number of participants involved in this study, life situation can explain some of the variation, in the sense that the number and complexity of obligations faced

by the individual participants require different amounts of effort with regard to the balancing and priority of these obligations. The need to actively configure the flow of everyday communication depends very much on the amount of flows and obligations that have to be managed, and tends to rise in accordance with age and the growing significance of the work/life balance.

Altogether, the analysis presented in the previous sections introduces a range of relevant perspectives on the key theme of this anthology: cross-media communication in everyday life. Firstly, the explorative, bottom-up approach to everyday smart phone use patterns allows for a discussion of the very concept of cross-media communication. Secondly, micro-routines and strategic configuration as key themes indicates a more general conceptualisation of cross-media communication of everyday life, as an act of balancing communication flows.

The concept of cross-media communication as derived from everyday use patterns

As regards the first perspective, cross-media communication is a rather broad term with a range of different meanings. On one hand, it can be seen as a specific communication strategy (Davidson 2010), or as a production culture (Erdal 2009), on the other hand it can be seen as a more general aspect of the current media environment, as implied in Couldry's (2012) concept of the 'media manifold' or Madianou and Miller's (2012) concept of polymedia. Couldry, and Madianou and Miller put their primary focus on cross-media communication as an aspect of the general media environment, but my approach, as elaborated in the initial section of this chapter, is cross-media communication as an aspect of the individual's strategic agency when handling their everyday life; that is, the individual's way of navigating this cross-media environment. The use patterns observed in the current study allow at least two ways of looking at how the individual combines media in the context of everyday life. Cross-media communication can be seen as the combination of different devices as an aspect of the participant's everyday whereabouts and it can be seen as the combination of different media genres and communication patterns on the smartphone as an individual multimedia device.

Although the study presented in this chapter focuses solely on the use of the smart phone as a specific communication platform, the interviews contextualising the documented use patterns point to several other communication platforms that are also included as activities. Most importantly, the computer can be seen as an 'invisible twin' to the smartphone, in that the same type of activities may take place interchangeably on the two different platforms, depending on the situation in question. This depends greatly on the degree to which the individual participants are mobile or not. When participants are sitting in front of their computers it seems to have a range of uses that would otherwise take place on the smartphone. Such situations are represented as 'blank spaces' on the participant's clock faces. Obviously the relatively

stationary or mobile character of the participant's everyday lives greatly affects these patterns, however, the interchangeability of computers and smartphones also appears on various occasions as a 'workaround' where computers replace smartphones or smartphones replace computers due to breakdowns or specific needs. For instance, if a cloud service accessible on both platforms does not work on one device, it will be accessed from the other to see if it is due to a service, network or device error. Similarly, the smartphone may become an alternative to the scanner when a network connection between computer and scanner fails to work. Finally, the different platforms seem to serve specific purposes in relation to other media. Most importantly, the smartphone seems to work in relation to the computer as a monitoring device, while the large screen and keyboard of the computer allows for the handling of more complex communication. In the high school student's example above, for instance, a messenger thread involving seven people is continuously monitored on the phone while active participation takes places on the computer. An even more sophisticated example involves the divorced woman living with her young child, who communicates with her ex-husband simultaneously by email and computer throughout the day. According to her own explanation, the communication in question – planning who will take care of the daughter in the upcoming holiday – is rather complicated and not suitable for text messaging. On the other hand, to 'keep the line warm' a text message is sent along with the email to make sure the other party is aware of an email arriving. In this way, a number of the documented smart phone uses don't really make sense if other devices or platforms are not taken into consideration.

As a multimedia device in itself, the smartphone allows for a range of cross-media strategies defined as the combination of different communication genres and services as part of individual instances of communication. From this perspective it is possible to distinguish between cross-media practices as an aspect of practical purposes, or of habits. The participants may indeed have combined different communication services and genres for practical reasons, such as paying the dog walker by way of a banking app after receiving a text message notice of the amount due. Such instrumental couplings of communication patterns and genres do appear in the material as examples of ways that people make active use of the available communication services on the phone. The predominant pattern, however, seems to be one of habit, in the form of micro-routines. On most of the occasions where the use of different communication services and genres seems to appear in concert, there is no instrumental link between the services but rather a habitual link, such as automatically checking Facebook, Twitter or preferred news sites when an email notification has caused the participant to use the phone in the first place. From this perspective, cross-media communication performed specifically on the smart phone cannot really be tied to specific purposes or practices but rather to the prominent role of habits in everyday life, appearing in the form of micro-routines.

In sum, cross-media communication covers various different aspects of smart phone use, depending on the approach: as a combination of devices or a combination of different communication services and genres on the same devices. Common to

both perspectives, however, is the relative predominance of the casual, mundane and habitual nature of use, which challenges the notions of purpose and instrumentality. Behind these two approaches to cross-media communication, moreover, there lies another that has to do with the more general strategy of the individual when dealing with the masses of information entering everyday life.

Everyday cross-media communication as an act of balancing flows

In the theoretical framework introduced at the beginning of this chapter, 'the conduct of everyday life' (Helles 2011) was defined as the individual strategies involved in the continuous balancing of needs and obligations in everyday life. Within this theoretical framework the smart phone use patterns presented above can be interpreted as balancing the communication flows of everyday life, among other means, by way of strategic configuration.

The flow perspective becomes important in this regard since the specific purpose of individual communication acts are, as stated above, often difficult to find. Instead they find their meaning as part of a more general micro-routine, much in the same way as Raymond Williams originally drew attention away from the individual media text and toward more general programming. The flow may refer, from this perspective, to the information flow of online news media, or Facebook newsfeeds or messenger threads as more general flows that the individual may opt in or out of on different occasions: channel and information flows. It may also, however, refer to the micro-routine of the individual smartphone user and how this combines communication services and genres in specific ways: viewer or user flows.

Apart from changing the analytical object of cross-media communication, the introduction of flow also directs attention toward more general user strategies beyond individual instances of use. The strategic configuration and setup of the phone greatly affects the way individual flows take form. This is apparent in the deliberate set-up of the notification system in order to manage when to opt in and opt out of various communication flows, such as the flow of public mass media or the flow of peer communication in Facebook messenger. It is also apparent in the deliberate attempts to keep private and work-related communication apart by setting up email in particular ways. In terms of cross-media communication, these findings are important because they introduce a more genuine user perspective on the way different media content is selected and combined in everyday life, as compared to the perspective held by content producers and platform owners. Metaphorically speaking, cross-media communication can be seen as streams of information travelling through the cross-media landscape of everyday life, sometimes barred by network or device breakdowns, sometimes led on by workarounds and very often actively formed by the strategic configurations of users.

Note

1. I would like to thank research assistants Niels Gommesen and Arni Einarsson for their hard work on transcribing and coding data. Moreover, I would like to thank programmer Andrea Del Popolo for his expertise and helpful assistance in visualising the data

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5.

Exercising with the Smartphone

Stine Lomborg

Abstract
This chapter presents an empirical study of the role self-tracking on the smartphone, in the everyday practice of exercise. Apps such as Strava, Runkeeper and Endomondo allow users to monitor and analyse their exercising habits based on aggregated exercise data. They also allow users to share their activities across media, for example, by interlinking exercise apps with running watches and social media, thereby integrating the cross-media communication flow concerning exercise with other everyday communications. This chapter explores the integration of self-tracking of exercise in individual users' everyday lives, focusing on a) how self-tracking is practiced and exercise balanced against other activities, duties and personal needs, and b) the role of cross-media use in this practice. The analysis informs a discussion of how the communicative affordances of exercise apps support exercising practices and elaborates the user perspective on 'cross-media composition', that is, cross-media as practices of choosing and combining media.

Keywords: self-tracking, media choice, data flows, cross-media composition, exercise

This chapter presents an empirical study of the role that self-tracking technologies, and more specifically exercise apps on the smartphone, play in the everyday practice of exercise. Not only do such apps allow for detailed monitoring and analysis of exercise habits, based on aggregated data for individuals, they also involve the potential to enhance communicative practices concerning exercise – one-on-one and many-to-many. Apps such as Strava, Runkeeper and Endomondo allow users to benchmark their individual exercise performances and habits vis-à-vis themselves and other users of the apps. They also allow users to share their activities across media, for example, by interlinking the app with wearables such as running watches or social media such as Facebook, thereby integrating the cross-media communication flow concerning exercise with other everyday communications.

In exploring the integration of the self-tracking of exercise in the flow and conduct of individual user's everyday lives, I analyse how self-tracking is practiced and exercise balanced against other activities, duties and personal needs. Specifically, I combine a

Lomborg, Stine (2016). Exercising with the Smartphone, pp. 75-89 in Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson (eds.) *The Media and the Mundane. Communication Across Media in Everyday Life*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

focus on the individual practices of exercise with the concept of *cross-media composition* (Sandvik 2011), to examine how an individual self-tracker's choice of applications and use of their specific affordances are tied to their personal preferences, social needs, and their life circumstances in general. The analysis thus informs a discussion of how the communicative affordances of exercise apps support exercise practices in everyday life, and, develops the user perspective on cross-media as practices of choosing and combining media.

Self-tracking defined

Self-tracking is typically associated with mobile digital technologies such as smartphone apps and wristbands for recording, monitoring and analysing aspects of an individual's everyday conduct (e.g. sleep pattern, calorie intake, heart rate or exercise). While practices of self-tracking have historical precedents in, for instance, keeping a paper log of weight and mood (Crawford, Lingel, & Karppi 2015; Fox & Duggan 2013), in this chapter I define self-tracking as the personal use of mobile digital technologies for logging specific activities and personal features in daily life (Lomborg & Frandsen 2015; Lupton 2014).

The emphasis on everyday life is, in a sense, new to research into self-tracking. To date, most research has focused on either extreme users associated with the so-called quantified self movement (Wolf 2010), self-tracking in the context of health care and patient empowerment (Lupton 2013a; Swan 2009 2012; Wang et al. 2014) or on issues of design (Ahtinen, Isomursu, Ramiah, & Blom 2013; Consolvo et al. 2008; Epstein, Cordeiro, Bales, Fogarty, & Munson 2014; Li, Dey, & Forlizzi 2010) and surveillance (Klauser & Albrechtslund 2014; Reigeluth 2014; Till 2014) (for a detailed review of existing studies of self-tracking, see Lomborg and Frandsen (2015)). The lack of studies of self-tracking as embedded in the flow of everyday life is somewhat surprising, given that much of what can be logged – from counting steps with a pedometer to tracking sleep patterns or running routes (weight loss and exercise being the dominant uses (Fox & Duggan 2013)) – is not in itself extraordinary. Arguably, as will be demonstrated in the analysis that follows later in this chapter, self-tracking for ordinary users (including people who do not have severe health conditions and are not elite athletes, such as those considered in the present study) is quite mundane and simply plays a practical and pleasurable part in already-established everyday activities and habits, and in the pursuit of maintaining a healthy lifestyle (e.g. Lupton 2014; Rooksby, Rost, Morrison, & Chalmers 2014; Ruckenstein 2014). I use 'the mundane' to refer to the highly typified, organised and habitual ways in which tracking technologies become integrated and attain meaning in individual practices of exercise (Garfinkel 1967; Pollner 1987).

Self-tracking may also be seen as an empirical example of cross-media practices, in that self-tracking exercise often involves the integration of several platforms (e.g. a smartphone app and a running watch or wristband) or the automated flow of data

across services (such as the integrated tracking of diet and exercise, or the posting of auto updates on exercise across dedicated apps and other social media). Arguably, as will be illustrated in this chapter, the analysis of self-tracking practices may expand the analysis of cross-media use by highlighting – as examples of cross-media – not only the distribution of content across media, but also the technical and data-centred integration of media, and the purposeful combination of media, as reflected in user choices of, and practices with, self-tracking media.

Cross-media composition: practices of choosing and combining

Whereas the cross-media literature has, in general, been occupied with issues of media production and the spread of content across platforms (e.g. Jenkins 2006), the research project which underpins the work reported in this chapter aimed to develop a user-centred perspective on cross-media communication. A basic part of cross-media use involves the choice and combination of media in the pursuit of communicative purposes.

In Sandvik's typology of cross-media (2011), the idea of communication as composition is used to describe the agency of users in choosing, appropriating, and combining media, depending on the affordances of different media (Hutchby 2000; also Sandvik 2015). This type of cross-media has a close affinity with the medium-theory-inspired conceptualisation of intermediality, which underlines how media refer and adapt to one another and to the possible combinations of media in communicative practices (Helles 2013; Jensen 2015). For the present purposes, I dub the individual user's practices of choosing and combining from the media menu *cross-media composition*. With a smartphone at hand, the media menu comprises all types of media, available on one single platform. Choosing which medium to use in specific contexts and for specific practices depends on how the affordances of each medium correspond to personal preferences and needs (Helles 2013).

Defining self-tracking services as media available on smartphones and on wearables such as running watches, the choice of applications and the use (or non-use) of specific functionalities within the specific self-tracking applications testifies to individual preferences, motivations, gratifications and constraints with regard to exercise in everyday life. For instance, the very choice of one application over another may depend on the system's abilities to monitor and visualise specific aspects of interest, and its abilities to integrate and interoperate data. Indeed, data integration was a motivating factor in the appropriation of specific apps for exercise, for some users in the analysis below.

Following from the concept of cross-media composition, user agency, understood in terms of individual media choice and the practices of self-tracking and communicating about exercise, becomes the starting point for the analysis below, of the self-tracking of exercise as a (cross)media practice in everyday life.

Research design

In the present study of self-tracking, I was broadly interested in how tracking devices and services were appropriated for exercise in everyday life; and how they possibly change the experience of exercise. The focus on cross-media was included as one particular aspect of self-tracking likely to affect how exercise is practiced, experienced and communicated about.

The study relies on complementary sets of qualitative data gathered in Spring 2014[1] from a purposive sample of twelve Danish self-trackers. In Denmark, we have witnessed quite a significant growth in individualised and self-organised forms of exercise in recent years, such as running (Forsberg 2012; Laub & Pilgaard 2013; Pilgaard 2012). This is especially the case for 25-to-40 year olds, a cohort of people who may be described as in a particular life phase or situation that is typically characterised by establishing a career and having children. For individuals in such a life situation, arguably dealing with strong demands and pressure from their surroundings on many fronts in daily life, individual flexibility becomes crucial if exercise is to be fitted into the schedule. At the same time, this cohort of people is characterised by a high degree of appropriation and use of digital media, including smartphones and social media. The study sample thus focuses on self-trackers aged 25 to 40. We further ensured an equal representation of men and women in the sample, knowing from the literature on computer-mediated communication (CMC) that there are qualitative differences in the way men and women tend to use digital technologies (e.g. Herring 1999; Herring & Paolillo 2006), which could also be the case for self-tracking. Finally, we sought maximum variation in terms of the participant's exercise profiles (from casual joggers to very committed, hard-core amateur athletes), and their experience of using self-tracking technology (from new exercisers to long-time self-trackers). While Endomondo and Garmin Connect are the most common self-tracking services in the sample, some participants also use Runkeeper, Strava, and Workout Trainer by Skimble. Some of them only use their smartphone for self-tracking, while others combine smartphone and desktop applications with tracking via a running watch.

The empirical data was collected through a combination of methods: a one-month registration of the participants' actual exercise activities and communications on their self-tracking platforms and services, and interviews with these users about their broader exercise habits, the role of self-tracking in planning, executing and reflecting on exercise, and their experiences of exercise while self-tracking. Each participant was interviewed once for about one and a half hours. The tracking registrations served both as preparation for the interviews and as data for initial analytical insights into basic usage patterns, the role of sharing and peer communication in tracking and cross-media.

The interview data was first thematically categorised and coded by three independent coders, using a combination of pre-established categories and codes derived from our respective research questions, and open codes emerging from the data itself. The

coding scheme was then adjusted and developed further, based on a comparison and negotiation between the independent first codings, and the coding was repeated based on the new scheme. The thematic categories in the final scheme were: a) body and exercise, b) cross-media, c) everyday life and exercise, d) uses of self-tracking, e) changes in exercise initiated by self-tracking, and f) social networks and their role in the exercise experience. For the purpose of the present chapter, I focused on the cross-media, everyday life and exercise and uses of self-tracking categories. The codes under these categories were further elaborated and connected to the concept of cross-media composition, with the assistance of my research assistant.[2] The resulting analysis is presented below.

Analysis

I will first explain the relationship between the choice of self-tracking tools, and the personal motivations of individual users in the sample. Next, I explore concrete practices of self-tracking, as reported by the study participants, by way of three interrelated self-tracking 'meta-practices': planning, executing and reflecting upon exercise. I link each of these to specific uses of functionalities in the self-tracking services, experiential qualities, and to broader concerns in the everyday lives of participants.

Cross-media compositions: Affordances and motivations for self-tracking

The study participants reported a number of different reasons for self-tracking. For some, including those for whom exercise was not a lifelong habit and those who aimed to lose weight in particular, tracking their exercise simply served as a way to keep them going – for instance by way of mapping exercise sessions into a calendar or using an app as a sort of personal trainer. Endomondo and Runkeeper, which are the most common apps among these users in the sample, offer features such as voice-based status updates during training (e.g. 'you have now reached one kilometre'), and push notifications that remind the user to exercise today or sign up for a training programme. Such features nudge the user to keep exercise. Doris[3], a 29 year old woman who started exercising only after having a child and claims to be lazy by nature, reports: 'I have found this fancy programme that says I have to walk for one hour, and then I walk somewhere I feel like going'. A training programme in her Workout Trainer by Skimble app demands that she undertake an exercise session according to a specific goal that she then follows, deciding only the route herself. Doris' choice of self-tracking app thus suggests she needs an app to function as a manager, in external control of her exercise practice – it puts her to work. Along similar lines, some of those who were new to exercise in the sample reported having established a circuit of apps

that 'speak' to one another with the purpose of supporting the users in mapping and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. 40 year old Alice, who initially started training to lose weight and improve muscle power, combines Runkeeper, which tracks her exercise, with dietary and weight apps to obtain fuller monitoring of her health. She originally chose Runkeeper over Endomondo, specifically because it could integrate data from the weight and dietary apps she used, thus supporting a cross-media data flow and constant updates between apps. This, in turn, functions to notify her to exercise a little extra when her weight is increasing. For Alice, self-tracking is thereby integrated in a communicative system that is systematically coordinated with, and integrated into, her everyday habits of keeping track and taking care of her body. This seamless integration of data across apps may be said to constitute a specific type of cross-media use that depends on automated processes and features in the chosen media.

For those participants who already had a strong sports identity, self-tracking is more often motivated by a wish to improve, to set and follow training goals and analyse training data. Users with this training profile often had several gadgets to support their training: a running watch typically supported by Garmin Connect and one or two smartphone apps for exercise tracking. Platforms and apps were chosen to provide as much relevant detail to their exercise as possible. For instance, a running watch allows heart rate monitoring, which is not supported by smartphone apps such as Strava and Endomondo, which, on the other hand, may be better at detailing and visualising specific time slots during training in terms of pace, routes and so on. A more detailed tracking of performance is typically seen as a way to fine-tune training habits and improve oneself. Whereas improvement for most is about achieving a new time-based personal best in running or cycling specific distances, for some, other types of improvement become attainable and visible with self-tracking tools. Heather, who is 36 and a very experienced exerciser, practicing spinning, dancing and weightlifting, says about her self-tracking data: 'I think it is fun to see how much my heart rate rises [during spinning] […] and to have a low resting heart rate, I think it is interesting to see how far down I can go'. In contrast to the new users referred to above, Heather seems to find pleasure in studying her data. Sample participants who, like Heather, have a long record of practicing sports, generally seem to be driven by an intrinsic motivation to get better at the type of exercise that they practice. To support this motivation, their choice and combination of self-tracking tools is thus to a large degree dependent on the type and level of detail in the accumulated tracking data.

Finally, for both new exercisers and experienced exercisers, self-tracking is a way to make training sessions a social experience, despite their individual character. For Kyle, aged 31, who has small children, for instance, the cross-platform integration of Strava and Garmin Connect offers constant contact with his family while he is cycling or running. With Garmin:

> I can make a live track, so my family can see where I am when I am cycling, if I bring my smartphone, that is. Then there is a Bluetooth connection between them [the

> running watch and the phone]. And that is pretty cool, and my little ones at home really appreciate it. (Kyle, 31)

Oscar, a 34 year old male who shares an interest in running with colleagues at the school where he teaches, uses the live-tracking feature in Endomondo to receive live pep talks from his running mates when he is running alone. For these two, as well as other participants in the study sample, the choice of self-tracking tool is thus further informed by the ability of the tool to keep an open line to relevant others – training partners, family, etc. Several of the participants report that their original choice of application for exercise had to do with the tools people in their social networks were using, and thus the networking features in Runkeeper, Strava and Endomondo were appropriated to keep in touch with peers. This, in turn makes self-tracking of individual exercise a social experience, not only in the here-and-now, but across space and time. For instance, the accumulated log data of an individual or their peers can serve as a conversation starter when meeting friends for dinner or during breaks at work (also, Lomborg & Frandsen 2015). Such communicative flows between peers across media and contexts of communication may be understood in terms of 'media multiplexity', as developed by Haythornthwaite (2005) to designate the relationship between media that support a specific context of communication – in this case exercise. For some of the participants practices of talking about exercise with relevant others move between app-based and face-to-face communication, and thus become constitutive of social relationships across media.

Practicing self-tracking: Planning, executing and reflecting upon exercise

Planning

Exercise was one activity alongside many others in the everyday lives of the participants. In the interviews, they recounted their strategies for fitting exercise time with the structural and relational demands of work, family life and social life. Self-tracking services and other media, to some extent, play a role in these strategies.

It was characteristic of those participants who had small children that exercise sessions needed to be planned in advance, typically on a weekly basis. Planning is a way to negotiate time for oneself vis-à-vis family time. It is also a way for the individual to ensure that exercise is prioritised. Oscar, who is the father of a young child, thus explained that he cannot train and self-track with a specific goal in mind (such as improving his pace on a five kilometre run, or preparing for a half marathon): 'I must take whatever I can manage to fit in' and Endomondo is suitable for keeping at least a kind of record of his very inconsistent training pattern. Another father of young children, Paul (31) finds Endomondo's visualisation of periodic training activity with its mapping of exercise onto a calendar, a helpful and motivating tool for reminding

him to plan future exercise. The study participants with children particularly reported that everyday life clearly delimits the amount of exercise that is manageable, and self-tracking was found to be useful for negotiating various demands and needs – both in facilitating planning and keeping record of exercise. That is to say, tracking technology underpins exercise by way of structuring and stabilising training patterns.

The very practice of planning exercise with self-tracking applications may assume different levels of detail. For Carina, a 27 year old mother of two who is also quite an experienced runner, planning simply amounts to plotting on a calendar when to exercise. When actually exercising, she runs without a planned route and lets her legs decide where and how to run. She reports that self-tracking provides a sense of freedom when exercising. Because Endomondo automatically logs routes, speed and the length of her runs, she can keep a record, while maintaining flexibility, variation and spontaneity in the individual exercise session. For others, like Michael, aged 36, married, and training with goals of running a marathon and improving personal records at key distances on the way, exercise is based on a detailed programme – in Michael's case, a tightly structured programme that he has received from a professional running coach. For this purpose, Michael appreciates the perceived measurement accuracy of Garmin Connect and uses it together with Endomondo and external applications such as Google Maps to plan routes, terrain and so on ahead of training. He also uses his coach's blog when planning, so that he can try out new tips in coming sessions. In terms of planning exercise, the participant's practices of using self-tracking as well as other media as sources of information and inspiration for exercise are thus constitutive of a sequential cross-media flow that precedes and prolongs concrete exercise sessions.

Executing exercise

Just as self-tracking apps may serve as a structuring tool for fitting exercise into the daily flow of activities and duties, they serve as a structuring framework in the actual practice of exercise: from the point of turning on their running watch or preferred tracking app on the smartphone and hitting the button that starts registering exercise, to the point of stopping it again upon returning from a session, exercise is taking place. Most of the participants describe an almost ritual demarcation of exercise time, involving a fixed set of procedures that they consistently repeat as part of exercise with their smartphone (e.g. tying their running shoes, putting on music, and then hitting the application start button and beginning to run; and similarly, after exercise: stopping the timer, briefly checking data and making notes before showering and moving on to other activities). In this section, I home in on the uses of tracking devices and applications during training to analyse how self-tracking becomes part of defining exercise time and practices.

Beyond the general pattern of framing training sessions with the on and off buttons of the self-tracking apps used, the use of a smartphone and apps during exercise mark different ways of defining training, and by extension, different types of experience for

the participants. Most of the experienced exercisers, who were also those participants who typically trained with a goal of improvement, report checking their pace, heart rate and so on several times during exercise. This allows detailed structuring and adjustment of the exercise session to fit their goal. Typically, a running watch and smartphone app are combined during training to support different needs: the running watch is considered the more accurate measurement, which accumulates consistent training data over time, and the smartphone app allows for ongoing feedback during training (e.g. Endomondo has a voice feature that reports to the user after each kilometre) and instant checks immediately after training. The simultaneous use of a running watch and applications seems to suggest a division of labour between tracking tools, based on their affordances for supporting and measuring exercise.

For some, like Tyler (26) and Kyle, who both practice cycling alone and together with friends, continually checking themselves may involve an element of competition with others or with themselves, despite exercising alone. They both use a specific functionality of Strava, 'segments', which are stretches of a route defined by users, to motivate themselves during exercise. As Tyler explains: 'I have studied the route from home, which segments are on it […] so I know exactly where I have to give it a punch if I am to obtain a good performance on this segment'. With Strava every exercise session thus entails competition and, arguably, a strong social element even in individual exercise. In contrast, Tim, a 38 year old former elite runner and now personal trainer, reports using his running watch simply to validate his own sense of the body. He further asserts that he finds running with a tracking device restrictive and, therefore he sometimes chooses to leave his tracking devices at home when going for a run. This allows him to better sense his body and to use exercise time as a mental break. This practice implies that the skill and habit of sensing the body in order to act upon it may be lost in pursuit of 'datafying' it, at has also been argued by, for example, Lupton (2013b) and Rettberg (2014, pp. 61-63).

For others, particularly those participants in the sample for whom exercise is not in itself considered a pleasurable activity (typically the new and casual exercisers in the sample), bringing a smartphone with them during exercise affords an entirely different type of experience. Rather than enabling them to immerse themselves in training as a bodily and competitive experience, the smartphone affords distraction. Several participants report listening to music, podcasts or even audiobooks while exercising, as this allows them to refocus their attention from the pain and boredom and simply sink into a rhythm and another mental state: 'Using audiobooks, I think about something completely different. If I follow an exciting crime novel then I don't think about it [running], the legs just move' (Alice, 40). This suggests that the smartphone offers a pathway to mental escape from training – a somewhat paradoxical complement to the detailed recording of activity. The various media used in concert during exercise have a clear division of labour amongst them. Tracking apps fixate the training experience for future attention, whereas the other media diverts the user's attention from exercising in the here and now.

Both the detailed use of tracking apps to motivate during exercise and the use of other smartphone apps to escape from exercise seem to hold experiential qualities that have to do with a bodily and mental 'being' and sensing of exercise that in different ways enhance the practice of self-tracking exercise in the here-and-now (also, Lomborg & Frandsen 2015).

In terms of cross-media composition, the empirical data demonstrates various individual choices of combining media simultaneously in the practice of exercise, in multi-platform as well as platform-internal cross-media use. The media used seem to have a clear division of labour, yet it is their concerted use that defines the practice of exercise with the smartphone. The smartphone might be less precise, heavier, less convenient, and thus more annoying to run with than a running watch, but it enables audio feedback from the system during exercise and allows for automated tracking while doing other things such as listening to music or catching up on favourite podcasts. The characteristics and purposes of the media combinations of individual participants come to define how they each experience exercise time: as a joyful immersive activity, a necessary but not particularly pleasant activity, or simply as a clearly demarcated time-out from the daily grind.

Communicating and reflecting on exercise

As briefly mentioned in the previous section, participants typically check their tracking applications immediately after finishing a workout (what was my pace, how far did I go? etc.). Some also look more closely at their tracking data between exercise sessions and use these extra activities to reflect upon their training and themselves, plan future training sessions and so on. In this final analysis section, I look into what happens in self-tracking after training, in terms of practices of sharing and reflecting upon exercise. A key distinction regarding the use of self-tracking after completing exercise is between personal and social uses, as practices directed mainly at oneself and at an external audience, respectively.

In terms of the personal use dimension, several of the study participants reported conceiving of their exercise logs as a crucial part of making exercise feel real. Seeing, in raw numbers and visualisations, how a session went matters just as much as the bodily sense of tiredness, wellbeing and so on. As Susan (34) states, 'it makes it visible to myself that I am actually active'. This need to see evidence appears particularly prominent among the new and casual exercisers in the sample. For some of the casual exercisers, seeing their data is the added value of self-tracking that makes the effort worthwhile. For them, data is perceived as a fact-based assessment of the self, which is more accurate than their bodily sense of improvement. In these cases, self-tracking becomes a tool for disciplining and controlling the bodily self (Lomborg & Frandsen 2015; Rettberg 2014; Ruckenstein 2014).

The personal use of tracking data may take different forms: from briefly checking the basics immediately after training to the detailed study of one's development (or

stability) over time, benchmarking against peer's data, and future planning in one's leisure time. Whereas every participant in the study checks their stats immediately after a workout, the immersion in data outside training sessions seems to be more prominent among the more experienced athletes, and those who socialise with peers through exercise and self-tracking. Kyle, Michael, Hannah (39) and Susan, for instance, regularly check their tracking applications to orient themselves against peer's exercise. In Kyle's case, his peers are close friends from college, whom he does not see very often, apart from during their occasional weekend cycling sessions, because they all lead busy lives with careers and small children. Strava allows him to see if any of them managed to get some exercise during the weekdays. This, in turn, serves not only to push him to get out and exercise; it also facilitates a sense of being consistently in tune with the everyday rhythm and training of his friends. For Susan, who shares a recent interest in running with, and is connected to a few close colleagues through Endomondo, checking Endomondo provides updates and input for conversation about exercise during breaks at work. In both of these cases, the personal and social uses of self-tracking data seem to intertwine.

Reflecting on and sharing exercise is, in principle, afforded by all of the self-tracking tools present in the sample, in that they allow users to annotate individual sessions and connect with friends. Some of the study participants made use of these functions, and Endomondo in particular seems to function as a social network site centred on training, where users share training updates and receive likes and comments from their network. For other participants, media combinations appear to be useful in supporting their need to communicate about exercise. In terms of cross-media integration, several participants report making data on their personal exercise flow across platforms and applications – either automatically or manually. Some transfer data automatically to other tracking services (typically from Endomondo or Strava to Garmin Connect) to access better analysis and visualisation functionalities, but most of those who transfer data do so to social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Typically, the tracking data from a specific session is then coupled with a more qualitative assessment of training in the form of prose, as in the case of Tim: 'I can play with it and make it a little more entertaining than if I just wrote down my time. Yesterday I wrote about the hail shower that I ran into. Then some comment, some think it is fun'. Tim shares his updates by manual effort on Twitter and in the closed group on Facebook that he has created for running enthusiasts in his network. He asserts that this group functions as a sort of running community where participants encourage and inspire one another with tips, ideas and so forth (also, Stragier, Mechant, & De Marez 2013). Sharing may thus enforce a sense of group identity grounded in exercise. Others in the sample chose to share their exercise data via auto updates that feed directly into their public Facebook timeline. This type of sharing is both directed at oneself, by functioning as a way to stay committed to exercise (if others can see it, it may be easier to motivate oneself), and at others, in that it may aim to motivate and inspire people in the participant's networks to start exercise, and serve as a conversation starter in other contexts, such as face-to-face encounters.

Communicating about and reflecting on exercise through self-tracking data seems to serve a variety of personal and social functions for the study participants: from being a stick that keeps them going, to being a crucial part of the social glue of exercise. Playing with data is a simple source of enjoyment for some; it offers input for future planning of and goal setting for exercise; it facilitates competing with oneself and with others despite exercising alone. In sum, it affords a range of activities that may validate and augment the training experience for the individual user.

Conclusion

With regard to the advancement of theory of cross-media use, the chapter has developed the concept of cross-media composition to account for the agency of users in the choice and appropriation of self-tracking technologies in everyday life. The concept was developed in the analyses of self-tracking practices, by way of using the empirical findings to elaborate the vocabulary for talking about cross-media practices as the active and purposeful combining of media. Media may thus play a role in exercise and self-tracking practices in a sequential flow or simultaneously, with a clear division of labour between the platforms and applications involved, or with a seamless integration of platforms and media through automated or manual data flows across platforms and applications. These cross-media practices may form the basis of a typology, summarised in Figure 1 below, that describes the habitual and purposeful combination of media in pursuit of the fulfilment of personal and social needs through self-tracking:

	Sequential cross-media use	**Simultaneous cross-media use**
Clear division of labour between the chosen media	e.g. using websites and blogs as resources for idea generation and planning exercise, and testing out new ideas in the actual, self-tracked training sessions	e.g. using audio books or music as a distraction from self-tracking while exercising
Seamless integration of the chosen media	e.g. communicating about training across tracking applications, social media sites and face-to-face encounters	e.g. combining data from running watch and smartphone tracking applications

Figure 1. Typology of cross-media composition in self-tracking

This tentative typology of cross-media practices as purposeful media combinations may be further developed in empirical analyses of practices that cut across media in other everyday contexts. Certainly, cross-media is only one part, albeit a key part, of the practice of self-tracking, and the typology simply elaborates general parameters concerning the choice and combining of media for this practice. It may further serve as a useful starting point in accounting for the highly diverse individual purposes of specific combinations or strategies of using media in concert, and their habitual character, beyond the practice of self-tracking.

In this chapter, the self-tracking of exercise has been analysed as a set of quite mundane (cross-)media practices that are carried out in various ways and with different purposes, using the communicative affordances of self-tracking platforms and applications. The way that personal needs and preferences, and the relational and structural demands of everyday life, shape individual user choices of self-tracking technologies, and their engagement with and practices of self-tracking exercise have been highlighted. In particular, the empirical analysis suggests that a user's life situation (e.g. having small children), training history and goals influence the way that training is practiced and what role self-tracking plays in exercise. The analyses further demonstrate how self-tracking attains meaning for the individual through its inscription in the flow of everyday life: by creating personal spaces and 'time-outs' for oneself, vis-à-vis the wealth of demands and duties that meet us during the daily grind, and by providing fuel for socialising with our peers across media and contexts, both networked and face-to-face.

The empirical study of self-tracking as a mundane media practice in a sense obscures critical aspects of this media use. Because it is so integral to their exercise habits, the users tend to see self-tracking as unproblematic, yet the issue of control is an underlying tension in the study. The automated measurement of exercise as a tool for controlling the self, and for pleasurably motivating and augmenting the practice of exercise, also takes something away from the experience: the sensing of the body, and the experience of the self that cannot be captured in data.

Notes

1. Data collection for the study was carried out in collaboration with Associate Professor Kirsten Frandsen and PhD student Joeb Høfdinghoff Grønborg at Aarhus University.
2. A huge thanks to Cæcilie Kolling-Wedel for her competent work on the project.
3. All participants have been pseudonymised but appear with their actual age the first time they are introduced.

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6.

‘There’s Just Nowhere Else to Turn’

Illness, Casework and Mundane Citizenship on Facebook

Troels Fibæk Bertel

Abstract

This chapter presents an empirical study of the use of self-organised Facebook groups for civic participation among individuals who are suffering from incapacitating long term illness and who experience that they have, in various ways and for various reasons, been “caught up” in the Danish municipal system. Challenged by illness and their experiences interacting with the municipal system, these individuals have turned to groups on Facebook – often closed and secret – to communicate with others for information and support. Based on analysis of qualitative interviews grounded in online observation, the chapter examines the use of – and the potentials and problems associated with – networked communication in facilitating mundane, everyday civic participation among these individuals.

Keywords: illness, casework, mundane citizenship, civic agency, Facebook

Recent years have seen the rise of a number of self-organised Facebook groups for individuals who suffer from incapacitating[1] long term illness, and who experience that they have – in various ways and for various reasons – become ‘caught up’ in the Danish municipal system. Being in an oppositional relationship with the authorities responsible for handling their cases and support can be a complex, intimidating, difficult and often lonely struggle for individuals who are already challenged by illness. In this context, Facebook groups that provide easy access to collectives of sympathetic others – who are or who have been in a similar life situation, or who are otherwise knowledgeable about such situations – become central resources of experience, knowledge, support and understanding on which the users can draw. Although not all users are likely to experience such groups as equally important or helpful, for some they come to serve as important spaces for the enactment and support of personal agency, vis-à-vis the municipal system, and form venues for civic interaction which centre on the rights and obligations of users, and collective interaction around what is, at its core, a political issue. The names of some of the more prominent and well-known of these groups aptly illustrate their concerns and civic orientation: ‘Ill in a sick system’ (‘Syg i et sygt system’); ‘Ill individuals demand

Bertel, Troels Fibæk (2016). ‘There’s Just Nowhere Else to Turn’. Illness, Casework and Mundane Citizenship on Facebook, pp. 91-104 in Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson (eds.) *The Media and the Mundane. Communication Across Media in Everyday Life*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

decent casework' ('Sygdomsramte kræver anstændig sagsbehandling'); 'Treat us decently' ('Behandl os ordentligt'). [2]

This chapter presents a study of the use of groups such as those described above, examining the consequences for personal agency and civic participation from the perspective of individuals who suffer from incapacitating long term illness and who experience being caught up in the Danish municipal system. It is beyond the scope of the chapter to examine whether these individuals are actually caught up in the system or not; their histories with illness and municipal casework are confidential and, even if they were to be made available, would be prohibitively long and complex for a study of this kind. The users do, however, experience that they are caught up in the system, and they behave in accordance with this experience when participating in the groups. The chapter asks: how does participation in these groups on Facebook affect the agency of their users in everyday life and what conditions does this particular type of venue set for civic participation among its users?

Context

Before proceeding with the sections on theory, method and analysis, some background information is needed to contextualise the analysis below and to clarify why some individuals may experience being caught up in the system, as well as what this term means to those who use it.

In the Danish welfare system, social and unemployment policies are connected, and benefits pertaining to unemployment – whether due to illness or otherwise – are administered based on a principle of *quid pro quo* (Kolstrup 2014a, 2014b).[3] In this system, individuals receiving unemployment benefits are required to be available for the labour market to the extent that this is possible – for instance by actively looking for work and participating in various forms of activation, education or rehabilitation.

Individuals suffering from long term illness must also work to the extent that this is possible, for instance in special part time positions, so-called 'flexible jobs' (European Commission 2015: 41). If unable to work, these individuals are expected to participate in various forms of assessment, training, rehabilitation or resource building activities, with the long term goal of being able to return to some degree of employment. The permanent disability pension, where recipients are not required to work, has become difficult to obtain with recent reforms (Petersen 2014).

It is the responsibility of the local municipal authorities to administer various forms of benefits and support, and to bring unemployed citizens back to work force participation. Many, though not necessarily all, of the problems these users may experience in the course of their cases are thus in some way associated with the municipal authorities.

Although the above is only a rudimentary account, the central point from the perspective of this chapter is that there may be many temporary steps (e.g. assessment, training, rehabilitation, resource building activities) that ill individuals must go

through before reaching a more permanent solution (e.g. employment, flexible job, disability pension) and when things for various reasons are more complicated than usual or go wrong, the path to such a solution may be long and difficult.

Being 'caught up' ('klemt', 'i klemme') in the context of illness and municipal casework, then, is a label used to describe negative experiences interacting with the municipal authorities. The term appears to be used most often in more severe cases, e.g. when individuals experience that their casework drags on as they are passed around the system from one caseworker, consultancy, committee, assessment, or activity to the next – sometimes for several years – without a clear end in sight (for illustrative cases see Nygaard 2012).

When individuals experience becoming caught up in the system, this is often associated with significant uncertainty because the prospects for the future are unclear and because being caught up may be associated with various negative consequences (e.g. as regards financial security, health, stress).

Everyday life and mundane citizenship

The following section will briefly introduce the two central theoretical concepts of everyday life and mundane citizenship which frame the analysis in the chapter. The concept 'everyday life', despite its widespread use, remains 'vague and problematic' (Highmore 2002: 1). Its meanings vary widely and the concept belongs simultaneously to the spheres of common sense and academic scrutiny, where many definitions have been offered but theoretical consensus has not been achieved (Jacobsen & Kristiansen 2014). One recurring problem is the question of whether or not it is only mundane 'everyday' activities that are to be the focus of studies of everyday life. Indeed, such an understanding may to some extent have informed empirical research on media use in everyday life contexts; as Haddon notes, such studies have in practice 'tended to deal with those parts of life outside the formal worlds of work and education' (Haddon 2004: 1).

An exclusive focus on the mundane, however, is not appropriate in the present context. From a certain perspective, being ill may in itself be considered a specialised context, characterised by special concerns, vocabulary and so on. From a related but slightly different perspective, the users of the groups continuously and routinely oscillate between the mundane practices of living with illness and the specialised worlds of medicine and public administration. Thus both the mundane and the specialised belong to the everyday lives of these individuals, and this must be acknowledged by the theoretical framework.

For the purposes of the investigation in this chapter, then, we will draw on a *symbolic interactionist* approach to everyday life, which sees everyday life as consisting of people engaging in meaningful action (Blumer 1969; Storey 2014). In the course of their lives, people encounter objects (situations, things, other people) towards which

they must act. In order to do so they must assign meanings to the objects, defining to themselves and others how the objects are to be thought about, and what actions are possible and appropriate towards them. The meanings of objects are defined and negotiated through interaction with other people and it is this continuous process of meaning-making and action that characterises everyday life (for a more elaborate account, see Blumer 1969). Significantly, in the present context, there is no principled difference between mundane and specialised practices and contexts in this view, as both are subject to the same processes of meaning-making and action.

The concept of 'citizenship' has a long history and, like the concept of everyday life, is associated with a multitude of different meanings (Magnette 2005). In its modern conception, citizenship has mainly been associated with the rights and obligations of individuals in the context of the nation state, but this conception has been contested and expanded (Isin & Turner 2011).

Of particular interest to the purposes of this chapter are recent theoretical developments which have approached citizenship from a cultural studies perspective, and which have highlighted the importance of civic practices outside traditional contexts such as voting and legal rights and obligations (Couldry 2006; Dahlgren 2009). Bakardjieva's concepts of 'subactivism' (2009) and 'mundane citizenship' (2012) have been especially instructive in guiding the analysis in the present chapter. Where subactivism refers to the subjective ethical or political positionings of individuals, which often take place in the imaginary and which may not become known to others (Bakardjieva 2009: 96), mundane citizenship refers to participation associated with the public articulation of those same positionings within 'a dynamic context of intersecting and shifting public discourses and flexible collectives centred on social and political issues' (Bakardjieva 2012: 1358). Central to both concepts is the understanding that civic participation is rooted in mundane everyday practices – individual and collective – and the recognition that these practices are increasingly connected to the wider public world through networked information technology.

Method and methodology

The study was conducted using a symbolic interactionist grounded theory methodology, following Charmaz (2006). Over the course of approximately one year, fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with informants who suffer from incapacitating long term illness and who participate in the groups that are the focus of this chapter. In four cases a partner joined the interview, making the actual number of interview participants nineteen: thirteen women and six men. The informants were aged from their late twenties to early sixties with a bias towards the upper range. Interviews were conducted in the homes of the informants, which were dispersed across rural and urban areas of the three main geographical regions of Denmark (Jutland, Funen, and Zealand), and participants were paid a modest fee.

Informants were recruited through a form of snowball sampling (Jensen 2012). Initially, the central persons in a number of groups were identified, contacted and interviewed. Next, these individuals, on their own initiative, offered to assist with further access – for instance by relaying my request for further informants to their less central and outspoken contacts and facilitating contact and access to groups.

It is likely that the informants in this study are more resourceful and engaged than the average user of such groups: choosing to participate in a study like this one is an investment of time and resources that not all members of this population would be able or willing to make, and talking about one's use of these groups with an outsider such as the author may also be considered a somewhat risky activity, as will be elaborated below.

In addition to the interviews, the author was invited to join two closed and secret Facebook groups (per Facebook's privacy settings), of which several of the informants were members, to conduct observations (Hine 2015) on the condition that no direct reference could be made to what was discussed in the groups. Participation in the groups provided insight into group interactions as they occurred in their natural contexts and made it possible to ground the interviews in concrete examples of observed behaviour, yielding richer and more detailed accounts by aiding the memory of the informants and focusing the interviews. In the context of this chapter, the observational materials serve mainly as context and background for the interviews, and they will not be subjected to separate analysis.

Data analysis was conducted by the author through an iterative process of initial and focused coding, following Charmaz (2006), which allowed categories to emerge from the data in line with the grounded theory approach.

Analysis

With this analysis focusing on the use of Facebook groups about illness and municipal casework, a pertinent starting point is to stress that the groups are of course not the only places that users encounter information on this topic. Rather, the groups in question are embedded in an extensive network of other communication opportunities – situations, people, media – where such information may be generated, shared and discussed. At the centre of this network are individual users, who engage with the communication opportunities available to them in the meaning-making processes of everyday life. As such, these users are, to quote Schrøder (2011), 'inherently cross-media', if we follow Jensen's (2010) assertion that human bodies, too, are a form of media. Although the Facebook groups are just a few of a number of communication opportunities in the communication repertoires of users, they do occupy a central position. When focusing on technologically mediated communication, which is of special importance to this group of users, as we shall see later in the analysis, it is clear that although other online venues for discussing matters pertaining to illness and casework are available and known to at least some of the informants (e.g. the online

community found at www.k10.dk), for most of them Facebook is the only such venue they use. This, of course, in part reflects the monolithic position Facebook occupies in the Danish mediascape (Jensen & Tække 2013), but also the ease with which users can engage with other individuals, collectives, and causes via the Facebook platform.

'Reach' and agency

A key function of the groups is that they enable interactions with others who are not in close spatial proximity, effectively drawing these others into the user's mundane everyday life through technologically mediated contact.[4] Often these individuals would not able to engage with peers – or indeed to participate in any sort of community extending beyond the immediate local context – were it not for such online venues. Illness sets firm limits on the sorts of activities they can engage in, as being physically or socially active may often come at a cost (e.g. immobilising pain in the days following a demanding activity), and energy has to be prioritised. Limited financial means may also prohibit them from owning a car or using public transportation except when absolutely necessary. Meeting with others for purposes of civic participation, then, would often be difficult, and meeting with expert or lay-expert users from the other end of the country – which the informants may routinely do in the Facebook groups – would be an extraordinary event. One female informant summed up the significance of Facebook in enabling this kind of peer-interaction:

> Physically we have a hard time meeting up. [Facebook] covers the whole country and none of us have a lot of money for travelling. Or, to be more precise, we have no money for travelling. This kind of thing does not exist in our budgets. And physically for most of us it is not possible. So Facebook is ideal in that way. (A, female, 60s)

With Bakardjieva's (2005) use of Schutz' terminology we might then say that the Facebook groups extend the actual and potential reach of the informants in terms of the zones of the world they can act upon and participate in. This extended reach helps users overcome and transcend some of the limiting consequences of their circumstances, allowing them to draw distant peers and geographically dispersed (lay-) experts into their mundane everyday lives, and enabling a participation, negotiation of meaning, and enactment of a civic agency that would in many cases not be possible without information technology.

Social support and information sharing

Having extended their interpersonal reach by joining groups on Facebook, what do the informants use these groups for? The support of peers and the exchange of information are core uses reported by the informants, a finding that corresponds

to previous observations from the literature on online communities in general, and health-oriented online communities in particular, and thus is not surprising (see for instance Bakardjieva 2003; Preece 1999). In terms of social support, one element which may, however, be special for these users is that the welfare system in Denmark is generally perceived to be relatively generous and well-functioning and thus outsiders may not understand how it is possible to get caught up in the system, what individuals who are unfortunate enough to be in this situation are going through, and what the consequences – economic and otherwise – are for them. Adding to this, recent years have seen an intensified critical discourse – in politics and the media – about the levels of financial support provided to 'the groups at the bottom' and the ability and willingness (or lack thereof) of these groups to work. This may contribute to stigmatising individuals outside the work force, even if a longer-term change in the general public perception of these groups has not been detected (Larsen 2015). When it cannot be assumed that outsiders understand or, for that matter, are sympathetic towards one's situation, it is clear that the (closed and secret) groups offer users rare safe forums in which to communicate with others who understand what it is like to be in their situation, and where they do not need to continuously justify themselves or their circumstances. As one informant explains when asked why she uses such groups:

> There's just nowhere else to turn. I don't have any friends who are ill or in a similar situation. Most people don't understand (…) Even some of my family, not my parents but some of my, like, more distant family, they don't believe that you can be on social assistance [kontanthjælp – the bottom net] when you're ill. In fact, they don't believe that I am ill since I am on social assistance. Then it's pretty much an uphill struggle. (B, female, 30s)

In terms of access to information, the groups function as resource pools that users can draw on when faced with problems they cannot deal with on their own, as the following statement illustrates:

> If I hadn't had the groups, I don't know where I would have ended up. That's where I go and ask when I have a problem. I also know which groups to go and ask to get a relevant answer. And over time I've also come to know the people well enough that this person knows something about this, this person knows something about that. (C, female, 50s)

While the sharing of information and pooling of knowledge is by no means unique to these groups, one aspect that is special to them is the extent to which information sharing is used in opposition to the municipal authorities, which are perceived with a high degree of mistrust. Examples of typical perceptions among the informants are that municipalities, in trying to cut back on spending, are not properly informing citizens about the rights they have and the benefits they are entitled to, or that they are preferring to offer one type of assessment, resource building activity, or similar, over another, based primarily on economic concerns – offering the cheapest one

when possible – and not sufficiently taking into account the wellbeing of the citizens in question. Against this perceived background, trusting information from the municipalities may be problematic, and accessing alternative sources of information in their communication repertoires becomes an important measure in looking after their interests and claiming personal agency in the handling of their cases. The following statement illustrates both the desperation driving the need for such information and the kind of help users might offer and receive in these groups:

> You're looking all over the place for someone, 'help me for god's sake!', right, 'I need help!' because [the municipality] they're not helping and they're not bringing you any information. You're writing in this direction and that direction, nothing's coming, nothing's happening. And you're sinking deeper and deeper into shit and finally you're in up to here [the neck] and it starts coming in through the mouth. And then suddenly some people pop up, you know, like worms out of the woodwork (…) you're let into some secret groups with some people in them. It can be social workers, it can be law students, it can be anything. It can also be people who are just extremely experienced in this field and who have worked with legal matters for several years, who might not have a degree but who know the legislation. They're the ones who give you some clues, they're the one who say go read this thing and that thing, go do this and that. (D, female, 50s).

Examining the empirical material, it is clear that access to information from peers is valuable to the informants. Information about their rights and obligations from friendly sources can help users determine whether what they are being told and offered by the municipalities is correct and appropriate, and what their options are. Information about how the municipalities operate may help users to be prepared when interacting with the system; for the informants, knowing whether anyone is receiving a disability pension following the latest reform, what a rehabilitation team is, how others have been treated by the local municipality or how the local municipality usually reacts if they wish to record a meeting for documentation, all helps to reduce the uncertainty individuals may experience when facing the system. Finally, information of a more contextual nature helps users to keep updated and informed on their situation more broadly. In this case the groups may serve as hubs where information (e.g. links to newspaper articles, rulings, commentary or personal cases of general interest from other groups) collected from across the multitude of media in the communication repertoires of users is shared, recirculated and discussed.

While the above information is useful in many situations, it may also be associated with certain challenges. Some users with limited resources may have difficulties understanding and using the information they receive, as the advice may often be technical (e.g. specific sections of laws) and complicated. Some may not have the educational background to use the information, and some may experience cognitive challenges (e.g. limited attention, concentration, memory) due to stress, illness or medication. There is also the problem of misinformation, which may, for instance,

occur when individuals want to help but have only a limited understanding of what is being discussed, or have been misinformed themselves. One strategy for dealing with misinformation of this kind is finding trusted experts or lay-experts to ask or follow.

Group participation and civic agency

As mentioned previously, Bakardjieva's concept of 'mundane citizenship' has been instructive in guiding the analysis in this chapter. Mundane citizenship highlights the fact that civic agency is rooted in mundane practices which may fall under the radar of established theories on citizenship; furthermore, it highlights that these mundane civic practices are often enabled by digital media which forge the connection between the private and the public spheres.

The groups examined in this chapter form rare venues for the enactment of civic agency for their users, and serve as a potential source of empowerment for the individual citizen vis-à-vis the municipal authorities. New media play a central role in maintaining the connection between the private worlds of users and the collectives found in the groups; in many cases these individuals would not be in a position to engage in such collective interaction were it not for the increased interpersonal reach provided by digital media.

The motives for participating in these groups are often pragmatic and mundane, as we saw above, centring around the exchange of information and social support, and the civic agency found in the groups often stays at an interpersonal level within the groups. That is not to say that the civic activities of individuals in the groups do not sometimes spill over into other forms of political action; indeed, they do. Some of the informants have chosen to publicise their stories in open groups and – in some cases – the mainstream media. Some informants are politically active, engaging municipal authorities and politicians on Facebook, in letters or by attending hearings and municipal meetings when their health and other circumstances allow. Some act as representatives ('partsrepræsentanter') or observers ('bisiddere') for others. The groups may in various ways support such activities.

Often, however, civic activity does not transcend the Facebook groups and the communities contained therein – although it may, of course, have consequences that extend beyond the groups (e.g. empowerment as mentioned previously). Furthermore, the degree to which users contribute to the groups may vary significantly. It was clear from the interviews and observations in the two groups that a large proportion of users are rather passive, and that the main contribution of these users is articulating a civic position on the issues at hand by virtue of being a member of a politically-oriented group. The fact that it is often a few users who contribute most of the interaction in online forums while the majority of users remain passive is, of course, well known from other research (Baym 2006). The limited participation in – and beyond – the groups, however, may also be related to the special conditions these users find them-

selves under. In particular, limited resources and the fear that their participation will be held against them by the municipal authorities may deter some from participating.

As regards the limited resources (e.g. energy, financial means) of the users, it is clear that suffering from incapacitating illness may limit the ability of individuals to engage in civic mobilisation. Even if it would be physically and financially possible for them to attend an event such as a demonstration, hard choices must be made since energy is scarce, and spending it on demonstrating may come at a cost (e.g. increased pain in the following hours or days). As one informant put it:

> The problem is that when you're ill you don't always have the energy to be standing for two hours in the town square while the rain is pissing down. Then you'll be miserable afterwards. (E, female, 30s)

Another informant, who has been active in trying to mobilise others for street protest against the municipal authorities, describes the unsurmountable and demotivating difficulties she and her co-mobiliser experienced in the process:

> People were simply too ill to take action (…) This other person and I have done a lot together, it's crazy how much work we put into this [trying to mobilise others]. We have both lost the spirit now, as far as this goes, and we don't have the energy because of our own cases and illness (…) we don't have the strength right now. I left the group, or I didn't leave, but I am not an admin anymore. We couldn't mobilise people. No matter what (…) I have also become more ill and I am also… my case is moving now, right. So I have to help myself. (C, female, 50s)

This example, furthermore, also illustrates how changes in the intensity of symptoms over time may make sustained active engagement in groups difficult.

As regards the concerns of informants that their participation in activities – protests or otherwise – will be held against them by the municipal authorities, they are first and foremost worried that, if they are active, this may be taken out of context as an indication that they are in fact not as ill as they claim to be, and consequently should not get the type of help or benefit that they are receiving or are hoping to receive. The consequences of illness, however, often vary over time, with some days being better than others, and on good days a higher level of activity may be possible than usual. Individuals suffering from illness may also to some extent economise with their energy, spreading it evenly over time or choosing to use it all at once on rare special occasions (Charmaz 1991). This variability may not be understood by outsiders, however, and so participating in activities which may to such an outsider be taken as evidence that one is not ill (e.g. demonstrations, protests, social activities or simply being active on Facebook) becomes risky behaviour:

> But then we also know that the municipalities are entering our Facebook groups to see if there's something they can use to nail us (…) if someone has baked buns for instance and they… when you haven't been able to for a long while and then they make an effort and then bake some buns. Then you're proud and post a photo. To

> the municipalities this means that they have a lot of [residual work] resources (…) then they're not ill. (F, female, 50s).

While the statement above reflects a general fear that municipalities may monitor user activities – or photos and other traces of activities – on Facebook for evidence of their resources, others have more concrete experiences with the risks and consequences of attracting the interests of the municipality via posting on Facebook:

> It is a big problem. They have taken my adapted automobile from me for the same reason. I am too active and can manage on my own (…) The municipality could see on my Facebook profile – which was public at the time, it no longer is – that I could walk 700 meters on a good day (…) and yoink! there went the adapted automobile because [they thought] I could easily walk to the bus stop. (…) I had been doing a little too well on Facebook and a little too well when I went to the doctor. They pulled my file. And there I had been boasting almost that I could walk those 700 meters (…) I can, on good days, but on bad days I don't get out at all. There I just sit here on my couch and can [only] walk to the bathroom and back. But they didn't take that into consideration (…) And that taught me not to boast about anything. I am not going to cheer because I might get hit over the head with it. (G, female, 30s)

The fact that others may, in an easy and undetectable way, monitor one's activities on or via Facebook can be seen as a negative side to the increased interpersonal reach the platform provides to users. The potential for such interpersonal surveillance on Facebook is well known and has led some scholars to refer to the platform as an 'omnopticon' (Jensen 2007).

Less prominent among the informants than the fear that information will be used out of context are concerns that participation in activities that are critical of the municipal authorities will be held against them:

> People are also afraid that if they [publicise their stories and] go against the system then they will also be treated even worse than they're already being treated, right? (H, female, 30s)

> I happen to know that our municipality is one of those that take revenge. So, if you say something bad about the municipality then punishment will come at some point, it almost never fails. (I, male, 50s)

The above statements illustrate the perception among some informants that the municipalities may be 'out to nail them' if they get the chance, and that it may have serious consequences if one attracts unnecessary attention. The question of whether this is the case is beyond the scope and interest of this chapter, but what is clear, however, is that it is perceived as fact among some informants and that this perception of the municipal authorities as a sort of panoptic adversary comes to influence their actions and behaviour, limiting what they dare to say and do, on- and offline:

> That's also something I've been struggling with quite a bit, that the freedom of speech is under threat for ill people. In part because we're afraid that it will hurt our cases. (C, female, 50s)

Conclusion

The self-organised Facebook groups discussed in this chapter serve as rare forums where individuals who are suffering from incapacitating illness and experience being caught up in the Danish municipal system can communicate with peers. The groups extend the reach of users in terms of spatial and interpersonal agency and provide users with a means for interacting with others with similar life experiences, which for many would not be possible without the use of digital media. This gives them the opportunity to give and receive support, as well as to exchange information, knowledge and experience, which may help them prepare for interacting with the municipal authorities and claiming personal agency in the management of their cases. The groups can in this way be seen to function as a type of supportive and reflexive resource pool which may serve to empower users vis-à-vis the municipalities, the interactions with which are – to some degree – rendered more mundane and manageable in the process.

Participation in groups is to a large extent civic in the sense that their use is predominantly motivated by a struggle which is, at its core, political, and the fact that groups focus on the rights and obligations of individuals. In line with the concept of mundane citizenship, civic agency often remains at the level of mundane interpersonal interactions within the groups and is motivated by pragmatic concerns such as the need for information and social support. Here the groups play a central role by enabling users to engage with peers, (lay-) experts, and political issues within their mundane everyday lives, helping them to overcome some of the limiting consequences of their situation.

While participation in groups may help empower users, certain factors also make participation problematic. Users suffer from illnesses which are to varying degrees incapacitating and which may make sustained engagement in the groups difficult. Similarly, few users have the resources to protest or otherwise participate in civic activities outside the groups. It was a common perception among the informants that civic participation in and outside the groups may be precarious activities, as municipalities may be watching them, holding their participation as evidence that they are not ill or punishing them for being critical. In both cases, fear that participation will affect their case negatively may limit some users from participating.

In sum, then, the Facebook groups discussed in this chapter may serve as central spaces for the enactment and support of civic agency for their users, however, the opposite side of the coin is that participation in the groups (or other semi-public communication online) is also perceived by users as a somewhat precarious activity, which may have negative consequences for their cases.

Notes

1. The terminology used in this chapter that pertains to unemployment and illness is based on the document 'Your Social Security Rights in Denmark' by the European Commission (2015).
2. The three groups mentioned here are visible to non-members (not set to 'secret'). 'Treat Us Decently' ('Behandl os ordentligt') has a somewhat broader focus than the two other groups mentioned here as it is also concerned with a range of issues not related to illness.
3. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to enter into a detailed discussion of the various types of benefits and support. An English language overview is available from the European Commission (2015).
4. The ability to create such a 'spaceless proximity' is not unique to the Facebook groups of interest in this chapter, but well known from the literature on online communities (Baym 2006: 38).

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7.

Grief and Everyday Life

Bereaved Parents' Negotiations of Presence Across Media

Dorthe Refslund Christensen & Kjetil Sandvik

Abstract

This chapter demonstrates how everyday practices among parents who suffer the loss of a child include the use of both analogue and digital means, both established media and materialities occasionally functioning as media in order to create meaning-making relations to the dead child, the bereaved as well as to the surrounding world. Based on an in-depth interview with a mother to a dead child combined with 8 years of observation studies and qualitative content analyses of both children's graves and online memory profiles, this chapter explains how these are articulated through everyday media use. The chapter focuses on the cross media connection between offline and online activities and demonstrates how the loss of a child initiates processes which are not about *letting go and moving on* but rather *keeping hold while moving on* articulated through communicational practices of keeping a sense of presence to the physically absent child.

Keywords: presence, griefwork, continuing bonds, materiality/materialities, occasional media

How can we apply the concept of cross-media communication in order to analyse and theorise the ways in which parents of stillborn children (or children dying shortly after birth) perform practices that establish the child as a being with whom a relationship is built, maintained and developed, in order for the parents to, eventually, integrate the dead child into their everyday parental and family life? Furthermore: how can we apply the concept of everyday life in order to analyse and theorise how these practices are embedded in a cross-media *space of agency* characterised simultaneously by 1) the uses of established media in relation to non-everyday or extra-ordinary practices in distinct, time-limited periods of grief with a strong sense of loss and pain on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by 2) the uses of invented/occasional media in the everyday living with the dead child: the continuous everyday practices of keeping the child present despite its (physical) absence?

This chapter focuses on how the loss of a child initiates processes that – beyond the recognisable period of grief – may be fruitfully conceptualised as *performing*

Christensen, Dorthe Refslund & Sandvik, Kjetil (2016). Grief and Everyday Life. Bereaved Parents' Negotiations of Presence across Media, pp. 105-118 in Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson (eds.) *The Media and the Mundane. Communication Across Media in Everyday Life*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

parenthood and as *performing family* in everyday life. These processes are articulated through communication practices resembling everyday parental activities (playing with the child, reading bedtime stories, celebrating birthdays or just bearing the dead child in mind), the purpose of which are to keep the dead child as a present part of the parents' and the family's continuing life. We argue that these practices are best understood as parents relating themselves in their everyday lives to *a child they have* rather than to *a child they had* or *a child they did not get*. The practices involving graves, online memorial profiles and other types of mediated activities are more than anything about negotiating, (re)appropriating and performing parenthood, not only in relation to the dead child and to the parents themselves, but also to the child's older or younger siblings and the family as such, to their peers (other bereaved parents) or to their surroundings at large. This is done through a *manifold* (Couldry 2012) of intertwined and interacting media.

We argue that the child's continuing existence and presence is *inscribed* in everyday life through uses of existing media (from photos to web applications and digital media), physical objects working as media and/or ascribed with media qualities – even the parents' own bodies in the case of a memory tattoo: As stated by one of the parents in the exhibition 'Mindesmærker'[1]: 'The tattoo is about giving the children presence and having them with me always' (Hejler 2015: 93).

Media have communicational purpose and affordances. This implies that when we use various materialities for communication, these achieve the status of being media (see Jensen 2010). In this chapter, we use the concept of media in a rather inclusive way, in that it encompasses both what we generally conceive of as media (e.g. a website) as well as materialities that are turned into media (achieve media status) through everyday practice. As such, our cross-media uses relate both to how everyday practices adopt media logics and the ways in which we both invent new media and (re)appropriate and change existing media to suit our needs.

The focus on media and everyday life in this book in general, and in this chapter in particular, focusing on practices among bereaved parents, implies that we are moving away from both the producer perspective and the dissemination of media content (media texts) so common in cross-media studies, towards considering 'the broader set of *practices* related to media' and as such 'the distinctive types of *social process* enacted *through* media-related practices' (Couldry 2012: 44).

In this chapter, cross-media practices will primarily connote the various everyday uses of various media – or materialities (and even physical places) with media qualities (from small tokens like a ring, to engravings on a tree, to the beach and sea as communicative environments) – used in various combinations for the purpose of communicating to/with the dead child (keeping presence/close proximity) or about the dead child (with others). The focus is thus on everyday cross-media communications as meaning-making activities among bereaved parents.

Changing paradigms

While most people still share the mundane idea of grief, in that its end-point is to let go of the dead and move on in life, both the practices we are empirically observing and research within death sociology (cf. Walter 1999) and palliative care (Stroebe et al. 2005; Taubert et al. 2014), have moved towards a new and more profound understanding of grief processes, not merely as a matter of 'letting go of the relations to the deceased' and 'moving on', but rather 'keeping hold' as a basic condition for moving on. In the logic of this new *continuing bonds*-paradigm, grief is an integration and re-integration process, the aim of which is to establish and develop lasting bonds to the dead which make it possible for the bereaved to gradually re-integrate themselves into society (Christensen & Sandvik 2013; 2014a; 2014b; 2015a). This perspective implies that grieving is not allocated a specific period of time (a time of mourning). Even though this new grief paradigm has been around for a couple of decades (Klass et al. 1996; Walter 1996) and seems to match the actual bereavement experiences accounted for in various empirical studies, it still leaves a number of things to be explained in research. First and foremost: How exactly do the bereaved live on with the dead in their everyday lives? Which everyday practices are used in this *living with the dead*? Which media? And in what ways are the reworking of the relations to the dead that are performed during grief, a precondition for a continued life with the dead? How can we, as researchers, theoretically and analytically establish an adequate understanding of the interrelations of grief and everyday life that is dynamic, and that implies adequate perspectives on media and materiality? Finally, but not least, how can we move beyond the still influential stage model-based understanding of grief (cf. Kübler-Ross 1970; Stroebe et al. 1994) that implies that first comes grief, then comes the everyday?

We present some theoretical reflections and analytical examples of practices that reflect the interrelationships of grief, media and everyday life. The analysis is based on observation studies performed since 2008 on children's graves, and the Danish online memorial sites Mindet.dk (Christensen & Sandvik 2013; 2014a; 2014b; 2015a) and furthermore includes interviews with bereaved parents (this chapter makes use of one particular semi-structured interview[2] with the mother ('Mother') of one of the children whose grave we have been observing over the past 8 years[3]). The analysis does not claim to be generalisable nor exhaustive in regard to parental practices, however we claim that the material does present itself in a way that is suggestive in forming a theory about how parents continuously perform parenthood, including the dead child in family life, and, more generally, on how grief and the everyday is interwoven, however being very different by nature.

Using, inventing and combining media

In his book *Speaking into the Air* (1999) John Durham Peters – in the chapter 'Phantasm of the Living, Dialogues with the Dead' – suggests the notion that 'every new medium is a machine for the production of ghosts'; the recordings of people who have passed away fixed in photographs, sound tapes, film and in all kinds of digitised formats for registering and archiving, and thus overcoming time and space is a one of the 'key existential facts about modern media': the possibilities for the living to interact with 'the communicable traces of the dead' (ibid.:149). We find this notion of media enabling communication with the dead most fruitful for our study. As argued in our previous work (Christensen & Sandvik 2014a), the use of media and materialities ascribed with media qualities allows us to 'deal with and come to terms with death without being dead ourselves' (ibid.: 1). We would like to broaden the scope of Durham Peter's reflections, however, suggesting that the way in which parents communicate to/with the dead child is not just a matter of speaking one-way into the air, but rather a matter of two-way communication, implying that the child is answering back.

We apply Meyrowitz' three media metaphors (Meyrowitz 1973) to understand the cross-media uses of bereaved parents as something which constitutes media as *conduits* (transportation or transmission vehicles mediating between people – both dead and living – and between worlds); as *languages* (specific sets of semantics defining the practices) and as *environments* (specific contexts framing and signifying the practices). We have also been observing, primarily on children's graves and on designated online memory profiles (Christensen & Sandvik 2013; 2014b), uses of media creating communication flows between the parents (and other members of the family such as siblings) and the dead child, and between the parents and others.

The mediating environments frame a specific vocabulary, a specific language constituted by the use of objects as media on the graves. Popular religious terminology (see Walter et al. 2011; Walter 2016) is typically applied: the child as an *angel* residing in some heavenly place (often sitting on a cloud). This is found in inscriptions, angel figurines (blending in with the plastic cows and dinosaurs commonly present on children's graves), and small items – e.g. oval stones decorated as ladybirds – with handwritten messages to the dead child. The same vocabulary and imagery are found on online memorial profiles (and sites for bereaved parents, such as discussion groups; groups for support and so on). Most objects on graves, and the use of texts and pictures on online memorial profiles, can be said to be transporting messages: they carry specific content adding to the communicational practices at play; the encounters with the loss, with grief, displaying messages of presence, of being close and being thought of and remembered. 'Smilla's stone' (found on one child's grave as a greeting from the child in the 'next-door' grave, see Christensen & Sandvik 2014b: 262-263) is at one and the same time an example of objects as media-as-language and objects as media-as-conduits. In the latter case, the ladybird stone with its inscription[4] becomes a vehicle for transporting a specific message: a story of empathy and understanding

between peers and a story of dead children being kept close and alive in the lives of the parents and their families. Construing this particular type of mediating language and environment, the present, yet absent, dead child can be communicating back, waving from a cloud, moving the windmill on the grave or simply being present in the changing of light, in seasons passing, in waves rolling.

The common use of the term 'angel' for the dead child (angel child) and for the parents (angel parents) implies that the child and the relationship with it is embedded in everyday life as a continuous existence, instead of solely as something with just a past (the child died and now it is gone and now we miss it): as an 'angel' (as opposed to 'soul', see Walter 2016) the child is still there, it can be communicated to/with and it can be communicated about in ways that contain more than the narrative of loss and the child that died. This co-existence with the living (the everyday presence of the dead child), conveys the ways in which the 'angel child' is ubiquitously mediated through a variety of media, from the 'memory tattoo' to online photo albums on Instagram, from closed groups on Facebook to open discussion forums on various websites for parenthood, pregnancy etc., from the designated online memory profile to the burial site.

Media serve as relation-building and relation-maintaining devices – also when it comes to death. This holds true for a vast and expanding variety and complexity of media, from simple objects used for ritual practices (for example, small items of affection, containing important biographical fragments, used for keeping the dead in mind and maintaining the bond) to the new and constantly evolving digital and networked media. Cross-media uses facilitate relation-building processes and provide access to various possible worlds – various places and temporal spheres – that 'can be shared with others in communication' (Jensen 2010: 6). Different media – due to their specific characteristics and affordances – extend our capacity 'to imagine, represent, and communicate about possible and actual worlds, also in each other's absence. Present media allow for absent realities, absent communicators, or both' (ibid.: 7). This holds true not just for media used for maintaining relationships with faraway places and distant friends and relatives, but also for creating and maintaining relationships with the dead. This expands on Durham Peter's notion of media enabling 'dialogues with the dead'.

Grief and the everyday

For the time being, we define grief as moments with a strong sense of loss and pain, and we define the everyday – in regard to the dead – as a continuous sense of presence and close bonds. We understand everyday life, including when it comes to continuing bonds, as self-organised, shaped and structured by the individual and with no formally established behavioural or conductive framework, while grief, in this context, is an extraordinary life event, which is met by formalised and institutionalised practices such as burial, cremation and/or other traditionalised rituals. While the latter are

'eventified', the everyday escapes this time-space encapsulation because it consists of continuous activities. These are turned into 'routine practices' (Bakardjieva 2011, p. 60; see also Thorhauge's chapter in present volume), and sometimes even into new rituals (Christensen & Sandvik 2013; 2014b) but, basically, we do not invent the structures of conduct in our everyday life on an everyday basis. We suggest that grief and the everyday should not be regarded as separate spaces but as co-existing or even overlapping realms within the same space of agency. We are thus much in line with Storey, who argues that 'the everyday includes the extraordinary, the wonderful, profound sorrow and profound joy […]'. Storey argues that the everyday should not be limited to 'a residual category, the place for human experience once we have removed the beautiful and the sublime' (Storey 2014: 2).

Then, what are the experiential and social characteristics and dynamics of grief and the everyday, respectively? 'Grief refers to the emotions that accompany bereavement' (Walter 1999: xv) and is basically, we argue, based on the (sudden) experience of loss of a loved one and the sense of absence and insurmountable distance; of belonging in two different worlds. Death is a condition that can only ultimately be transgressed through the death of the bereaved. Bereavement is therefore an ultimate existential condition that calls for actions that the bereaved does not necessarily know of yet. Still, the bereaved needs – more than anything – concrete actions that they can perform in order to manage their existence and fill the voids that death has instigated. Traditions, rituals with their propositions of formality: existing cultural practices are available as practical reservoirs that can be made use of and that can help the bereaved to overcome the lack of specific experience in what to do.

The everyday, as defined above, stands as opposed to this lack of specific competence. In everyday life practices, we are immediately competent: we have a large number of implicit matrices that organise our everyday sociocultural performances. When we take the dead with us into the realms of the everyday, we turn ourselves into competent agents and this agency also includes our relations with the dead. By continuing our bonds to the dead in our everyday lives, distance and absence can be turned into presence, and the possibility of living with the dead despite their (physical) absence. Consequently, we suggest that grief and the everyday are two separate, however mutually inclusive, realms within the same space of agency; that they co-exist concurrently. We have suggested (Christensen & Sandvik 2014b: 256) that Foucault's concept of *heterotopia* may be applied in meaningful ways: in using this concept we may understand the dual existence of grief and everyday practice as a time-space 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place [e.g. a child's grave] several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (Foucault 1984: 6).

Grief is the realm where the loss of a loved one, as a physically present being with specific agency, results in painful experiences of absence, while the everyday and its constant repetitions of mundane actions, in addition to constituting the life of the bereaved, also become a platform for actions across media that can maintain the sense of the dead being present in the life of the living, which can then be used for

the purpose of keeping hold of the deceased while the bereaved is moving on in life. We further suggest that this is done through ritualisations in which designated small time-spaces serve as platforms mediating the contact with the dead. In this sense, the bereaved person's everyday agency is indeed in including the dead, and the ongoing relationship with them.

Analysis: everyday cross-media use in performing parenthood

For the purpose of this analysis, we have developed a model (Figure 1) displaying the *heterotopic* time-space of, on the one hand, bereaved parents' griefwork with its basic sense of absence and, on the other hand, bereaved parents' everyday practices with their basic sense of presence.

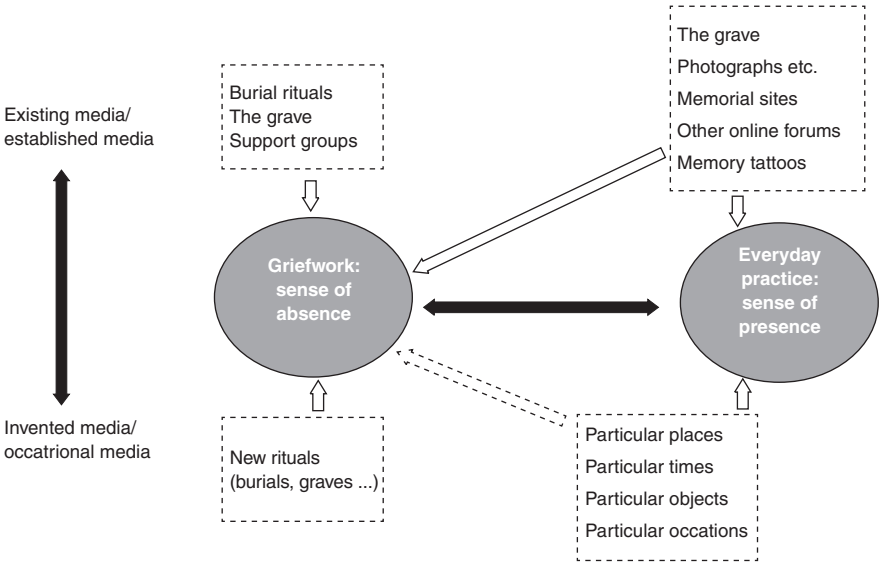

Figure 1. Cross-media use in the griefwork and everyday practice of bereaved parents

The model displays that griefwork and everyday practices may be looked upon as separate spaces of agency, but at the same time the model displays the interrelations between these two spaces: Thus, the black double-arrows connote interplay between: a) griefwork and everyday practice, and b) existing/established media and invented/occasional media.

The model suggests that various media are being used both in griefwork and in everyday practices, but not necessarily in the same way or with the same significance. For instance, the grave is both a place for mourning the lost one and a place for more cheerful activities involving continuing bonds, as will be explained below. Communicative practices can be conceived both as expressions of grief, with its sense

of insurmountable distance, and as expressions of close-proximity loving and caring parental everyday practice: as the Mother says in the interview, 'they are expressions of the love to my son'[5]. The engraving on the son's gravestone expresses both the painful feelings inherent in the absence of a living child and the continuing – loving and caring – bond: 'You gave us a day that lasts forever'.

As stated above, we see media as materialities being used for communicational purposes. Some of these we immediately recognise as media, such as photographs, online memorial sites and other types of online forums that can be placed under the category of (social) media. Others are distinguishable as media if we apply an understanding of media as particular spaces of agency with particular objects serving as communicational tools. The model operates with two categories of media: 1) existing/established media, implying media that exist due to conventions and tradition; 2) invented/occasional media that are materialities becoming media – possibly for a very short time or just right here and now – due to specific contexts (particular occasions). These may also influence existing and established media. Over the last decade, we have seen significant changes when it comes to burial rituals and practices related to griefwork expressed in (offline and online) support groups, and on online memorial sites and other online forums, and these may be most visible when it comes to the graves of the stillborn and children dying very early. Children's graves are, as opposed to adult graves (most prominently graves for people dying of old age), *not* places of rest but of continued life, of parental love and care, which necessitates new rituals and thus new communicational materialities (Christensen & Sandvik 2014b). New practices in closed support groups on social media, for instance, are – similarly – paving the way for new practices addressing the silence and taboo surrounding the death of a child (cf. Hård af Segerstad & Kasperowski 2015: 39, see also Christensen et al. forthcoming). We note the existence of webshops like Mind My Angel,[6] that provide objects for the grave (candles, figurines (angel figurines being dominant), decoration stones etc.), but also for other spaces, like the family home (picture frames, designated decorations for the Christmas tree etc.) materialising and concretising the abstract aspects of death and loss, and addressing the continuing bonds and the performance of parenthood inherent in the urge to 'give something to the dead child and to nurse and cuddle the child'[7]. The lines between griefwork and everyday practice are thus blurred but still distinct, in that the first is characterised by a painful sense of loss while the other is characterised by performances of presence: the parent can 'perform things for the child' (ibid.), thus showing continuing love and care.

Uses of established media, such as photographs on photograph-walls in homes or on graves (contrary to what is custom on graves in Protestant countries like Denmark, we have noted pictures of the dead child engraved on grave stones), and uses of imagery and text on online memorial sites, are typically part of parents' griefwork when it comes to the often very painful process of establishing the existence of children that, in our casestudy material, were only briefly physically alive, if at all (Christensen & Sandvik 2013). Detailed illustrations in texts and pictures about, for example, the

pregnancy and the birth, are found on memorial sites, helping the parents establish a child that was physically there and may be remembered and thus mourned. The increasing use of memory tattoos has the same function when it comes to griefwork-related media use: parents establish the child and their status as parents by 'carrying the beloved but absent child not just in their minds but as permanent marks on their bodies' (Christensen & Sandvik 2015b: 7).

At the same time, the ways in which graves are designed and constantly re-decorated, and the use of imagery both offline and online relate to the everyday practices of continuing bonds to the dead child and to performing parenthood. Keeping the dead child as a present part of the family is vital: 'We are family and we have the same practices when it comes to our living children and our dead child'[8]. Having pictures of a dead son not only on the grave, but also at home among photographs of his parents, his siblings and his relatives, is an important part of this effort. From a broader death studies' perspective this relates to older traditions of depicting dead children as part of family portraits, and as such to the revitalisation of traditional, romanticist death strategies, according to which the relationship with the deceased is not ended, but rather re-worked (Klass et al. 1996; Walter 1999). The use of memory tattoos may also be understood in this context:

> When I go by the cemetery but do not have the time to go in there, I can give a kiss on the wrist. The tattoo also means that other people can see that I have a son even though I cannot walk with him holding his hand. (Hejler 2015: 15)

Regarding the use of invented/occasional media used in everyday practices, the interview with the Mother exposes a variety of objects, places, times and occasions functioning as tools for communication with her dead son or including him in mundane actions taking place. 'The body remembers', and being in specific and significant places evokes specific memories and feelings and creates occasions for 'expressing love and sensing his presence'; places like the beach with the light and smells of the ocean, or the woods with their changing seasons and trees that can 'be hugged' or have 'hearts carved into them'[9].

In our analysis of parents' practices at their children's graves (Christensen & Sandvik 2014b) we have demonstrated how objects function as communication tools. The Mother writes in the small laminated book that she keeps on her dead son's grave about how the little windmill moving in the wind is perceived as the dead son 'saying hello'. He may thus be present in various objects, like the gravestone from the grandparents' garden where 'he could have played'[10]. He is also present in 'the ring on my finger' (ibid.). He is present in his younger siblings, in the shared family characteristics, in the fact that he weighed the same as his recently born sister. Obviously, there are numerous objects (and even persons) gaining this quality of occasional media playing roles in keeping the dead child present as part of the parents' and family's life. On the blog at Mind My Angel, a bereaved mother tells the story of how her family has a christening gown which has been used for all the children in the family, with their

names and dates of birth embroidered onto it. When her son died at birth his name was also added to the gown, but at the same time a piece of lace was cut out, leaving an empty space communicating both absence and presence: the child who did not live and created an empty space that cannot be filled, but is still included in the family. Through the communicative affordances ascribed to this particular christening gown, the dead child continues to be present yet absent[11].

As part of this, there are several occasions in the family life that include the dead son. At birthdays, lights are lit for both the dead and the living, even though there is a pronounced difference between the dead child who could have had a birthday (and thus get older) and the living children who are having a birthday and actually growing up. The dead son's birthday has – in Carey's terminology (Carey 1989) – become a communicating ritual of its own, and is described in the book on his grave (see Christensen & Sandvik 2014b: 270). His parents always take the day off and the entire family celebrates the day, for instance by lighting candles and sending lanterns to the sky. The Mother mentions other occasions, from passing through the cemetery wishing their son a good summer before going on vacation, to the inclusion of the son in the bedtime songs that his father invents and sings to the younger siblings. These everyday practices also include family conversations about the dead son, such as the question of whether he can see his new little sister (and concerns about whether the sister can die like he did).

In summary, what the interview suggests is that everyday practices among bereaved parents – consisting of ongoing expressions and negotiations of continued bonds and performing parenthood, thus keeping the child present in the everyday family life – make use of both existing or established media and of remediations of said media use in meaning-producing ways that are combined with what we suggest may be called *occasional media*. These might be of very transient character ('the first crullers we buy at Christmas time make us talk about our boy'[12]) but being important communicative tools for the everyday roles of being parents to a child that did not live and who is absent yet present.

Living with the dead

The letting-go paradigm presupposes an idea about the bereaved person's recollection of the dead; of their presence being encapsulated and left behind, for the bereaved to live on in life, *without* the dead. The dead must be boxed in and thus turned into a distant other and the box must remain closed. Now and then, the bereaved can open the box and look into it, however this should not be too often. In opposition to this, the holding-on-and-moving-on paradigm presupposes the protection of the deceased's potentially continued presence as a condition for the bereaved to actually move on. This should sharpen our attention towards the very modus of grief itself as being a negotiation that aims to safeguard that the dead can be maintained close:

The bereaved's relationship with the dead and the bereaved's own agency in regard to the dead may be kept in a position that, certainly, does not close or block anything but indeed prepares for the everyday life that can and shall be lived without – and with – the dead. Absence must be negotiated and turned into possibilities of presence; the closures that are the consequence of death must be transformed to openings or possibilities of passage. From this perspective, grief is a preparation for everyday life, the living with the dead that can be performed when the bereaved is ready and has found their ways of doing so.

One might argue that grief within the continuing-bonds paradigm produces such preconditions for bereaved parents' continued life with the dead child as described above, however, these are not, by far, simple matters. The loss of a child must be handled on both practical and emotional levels and the circumstances of death must be processed and understood: Why did our child die? Are there things we could have done but did not do because we were unaware of the possibilities? Because we were not allowed to? Was everything handled correctly at the hospital? Did we hold our baby long enough? Did we get to name it? Dress it according to our wishes? Were the grandparents and siblings there to meet the baby and to cuddle it? Did we get a chance to bury the baby as we wanted? In summary: do the bereaved parents feel that they have had the chance (and assistance) to make the right choices, and realising it in the care of the baby from whom they had to take their leave before life started?

The choices in grief most often imply that the parents draw on the reservoir of cultural possibilities provided by their social reality. This reservoir is often, loosely, termed *tradition* and involves all sorts of practices: choice of burial type, songs, hymns, clothing, rituals, communication around death, social inclusions and exclusions, etc. These are practices that are available to us or made known to us by others, when we are grieving and must find ways to perform *this* particular grief and that are turned into *our* grief, practices from the reservoir of practices others have found, used, bestowed on us and refined through the ages. This implies that grief is also a process into which we inscribe ourselves and, not least, the baby, in the world, and in the socio-cultural reality, through the application of rituals and traditions. The dead child is given a reality, a context, to resonate through the socio-cultural enrolments of our griefwork.

If the bereaved parents are assisted in finding the opportunities to make decisions that give them the sense of having done the best they could for their dead child and, in taking this feeling with them in their continued life, this gives them the opportunity not to be *stuck* at the point of death, and with their painful loss, but to move on, both without and, not the least *with* the child. It is important to note that the break with the letting-go-and-moving-on paradigm and the stage-model (as suggested in our previous work) indeed imply that experience of absence and painful loss will re-occur as time-spaces of grief in the continuing lives of bereaved parents (particularly present on red letter days such as birth- and death days, and celebrations such as Christmas etc.) but will do so in co-existence with everyday practices.

Feeling that the right choices were made around the death has a liberating function: this is not a liberation *from* grief and loss, obviously, but a liberation *towards* returning to inhabit one's everyday life by taking the steps and at the speed possible: this is not a stage- or phase- conceptualisation of griefwork, but a different way of conceptualising grief: as a preparation for life *without and with* the child.

Conclusion

As opposed to grief, in which we are often shaken and irresolute, most people are perfectly competent when it comes to everyday life. In grief, big irreversible decisions must be made that we are not familiar with, and faced with which our competences seem small and insufficient. We can be painfully aware of the risk of making the wrong decisions. Of not doing *enough*. The actions of the everyday most often do not activate the same painful vigilance about our own competences, possibilities and pitfalls. We simply perform actions that we are familiar with and some might be ascribed with new meaning or simply come to give the bereaved a sense of presence. The ongoing life *with* the dead child takes place in this space: through the everyday effortless entertaining of ubiquitous media and materialities we discover actions, spaces, and temporalities with heterotopic qualities, in which materialities occasionally, spontaneously or planned, are turned into a media facilitation of contact with the dead child; for a sudden sense and confirmation of *presence*. These spontaneous sensations can be developed into small refined heterotopic ritualisations by the bereaved parents, some of which will, eventually, be turned into regular, repetitive ritualised actions performed on certain occasions, at certain times, and will, at a certain point make up a basic vocabulary of ritualisation in everyday through which the child is recognised. This is what we mean by everyday life with the dead.

Parents perform practices that establish the child as a being with whom a relationship is built, maintained and developed in order for them, eventually, to integrate the dead child into their everyday parental and family life. The practices performed in both private and public spheres (at home, on graves, on online memorial sites and social media, through personal memory tattoos, family photos, the use of material objects etc.), are – more than anything – about negotiating, (re)appropriating, (re)mediating and performing both parenthood and the existence and presence of the child. As such we propose that parents' strategies for transforming their relationship with the dead child and keeping the dead child in their lives, should be studied in relation to what has traditionally been conceived of as grief and mourning, *and* by challenging this tradition – not by opposing it but by extending it – through re-approaching the practices not only as examples of mourning, but in a larger setting that re-contextualises them in everyday socio-cultural life.

The everyday practices include the use of a variety of media and the complexity and significance of this cross-media use cannot be deduced from observing one sin-

gle media environment, such as an online memorial profile or a grave. They 'cannot be seen as final expressions of how grief is performed: it only includes a tiny snippet which may say something but by far everything'[13]. By enriching methods of observation with qualitative interviews we are able to analyse the complexity of communication among bereaved parents, both when it comes to formalised griefwork and the more fluid, ad hoc, and continuously changing character of the everyday practices of continuing bonds and the performance of being family and being parents to a child that did not live physically, but continues being part of the parents' and the family's life. We can explain how practices of grief and everyday continuing bonds are not separate stages, but interlaced and interfaced heterotopic realms within the same cross-mediatic space of agency.

Notes

1. 'Mindesmærke' would correctly be translated as memorial or monument, but in the case of exibiting tattoos the correct Engelish translation would be 'memorial marks'.
2. Interview November 26th 2015.
3. As documented in e.g. Christensen & Sandvik 2014b we have since 2008 been systematically observing and photo-documenting a number of children's graves, primarily at the cementary Nordre Kirkegård (Northern Cemetery) in Aarhus, Denmark, paying particular attention to decorations, use of objects and communicational tools such as pictures, texts and so on, and how these are changing througout the seasons and over the years,
4. 'To Albert. We take care of each other in Heaven. From Smilla'.
5. Interview November 26th 2015.
6. http://www.mindmyangel.com/ This particular webshop was established by two women (both mothers having lost a child) with the intention of designing everyday loving and caring practices for the bereaved, and providing various objects (both for special occation, for various seasons and for the average everyday) for these practices.
7. Interview November 26th 2015.
8. Interview November 26th 2015.
9. Interview November 26th 2015.
10. Interview November 26th 2015.
11. http://www.mindmyangel.com/blog/25_Familie-daabskjolen-hvor-der-nu-mangler-noge.html
12. Interview November 26th 2015.
13. Interview November 26th 2015.

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8.

Restaging the Past

Constructing and Consuming Cultural Heritage Online

Bjarki Valtysson

Abstract

This chapter uses the Danish Cultural Heritage project as a case, in order to scrutinize the interrelations and dynamics of digitized cultural heritage, cross-media communication and participation in everyday contexts. The Danish Cultural Heritage project makes available large amounts of digitised material from the archives of numerous Danish cultural institutions, and the aim of this chapter is to account for how the material is made available and how respondents relate to this particular form for restaging the past in everyday contexts. Specific attention will therefore be given to how the Danish Cultural Heritage portal is framed by technology, how this framing constructs certain user-manoeuvrability, and how these correspond to the general objectives of the project. Finally, this chapter discusses certain features of cross-mediated communication patterns facilitated by public cultural institutions and commercial social media, as well as highlighting the importance of context awareness when analysing such patterns.

Keywords: digitisation of cultural heritage, user-manoeuvrability, everyday lifeworld, participation, space of agency

The digitisation of cultural heritage has been high on the agenda, in that resources are given to projects that concern processes of digitisation. This has been the case in large-scale projects initiated by commercial actors such as the Google Cultural Institute and also within the EU's cultural sector, where the Europeana project has been the most dominant, and still is, judging by the recent Digital Agenda for Europe. In the context of this chapter, Europeana is of particular interest, as it serves as an aggregator that disseminates digitised cultural heritage made available from numerous providers largely situated in the EU's different nation states. The case discussed in this chapter, 'Danish Cultural Heritage', can therefore be seen as belonging to a larger trend involving local, national and supranational levels, namely the digitisation of cultural heritage.

I have on other occasions treated Europeana (Valtysson 2012) and 'Danish Cultural Heritage' (Valtysson 2015) from a policy point of view, scrutinising the dominant discourses that these projects are influenced by at EU level and Danish national level.

Valtysson, Bjarki (2016). Restaging the Past. Constructing and Consuming Cultural Heritage Online, pp. 119-133 in Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson (eds.) *The Media and the Mundane. Communication Across Media in Everyday Life*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

This chapter, however, looks further into how digitised cultural heritage is made available through the 'Danish Cultural Heritage' project and how respondents relate to this digitised restaging of the past in everyday contexts. The aim is therefore to inspect how this particular online portal is framed by technology, how it makes use of cross-media communication, and how this framing constructs certain user-manoeuvrability. Special attention will be paid to how respondents perceive the appliance of the portal in everyday contexts, and here the topic in question, cultural heritage, is of great significance, and will be studied further in relation to concepts such as mundane citizenship (Bakardjieva 2012) and the everyday lifeworld (Bakardjieva 2006).

The 'Danish Cultural Heritage' project

'Danish Cultural Heritage' (DCH) is a portal that makes available large amounts of digitised material from the archives of thirteen Danish cultural institutions, and is hosted by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR). This material is facilitated through different access points, including smartphones and tablets, and is stored on the site as sound, videos and pictures. The DCH project feeds into a larger policy framework that focuses on digitisation, and in particular the digitisation of cultural heritage. Here, digitisation strategies issued by the Danish Ministry of Culture from 2007-2015, along with specific reports on the digitisation of cultural heritage,[1] are significant, as they serve as an overarching framework for practitioners and cultural workers within the field, as well as providing concrete examples of how digital culture and digital cultural heritage are understood at a policy level. Findings (Valtysson 2015) from an analysis of these documents indicate that even though the dominant discourses detected at a policy level are those of administrative and managerial effectiveness, cooperation, increased production, innovation and competitiveness, discourses on participation and user-engagement are also prominent. These can be seen in the strategies, the reports and in the external communications conducted on DCH. The latter is exemplified by phrases such as 'the goal is to give the Danes access to actively use and share the digital cultural heritage' (DR's kulturarvsprojekt, n.d.) and 'DR and partners experiment with new ways of future dissemination, user-involvement and collaboration around the digitized cultural heritage' (DR's kulturarvsprojekt, n.d.). These discourses emphasise that digitised cultural heritage should be something to share, and that users should not be perceived as 'static' but as dynamic co-producers and co-creators of cultural heritage. This is why this chapter primarily examines how respondents perceive this restaging of the past in everyday contexts, and whether DCH facilitates these dynamics of user-involvement and collaboration.

When users interact with the platform they are provided with seven seemingly arbitrary themes to select from.[2] If users do not relate to one of these and choose to look further into the portal, they are confronted with 207.345 results.[3] The search filtering allowed by the platform is according to the contributing cultural institution,

sound, picture or film, title, relevance, number of views, time of publication and most recently uploaded. When users select an item, they can stream the films, stream the video and look at pictures. The individual institutions have the copyright for the items they have submitted, and meta-data and further descriptions of the items are scarce. Direct user intervention is facilitated by tagging items and sharing on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google+ and via email. These social media are, however, not given the same importance, as on the front-page of the portal it is Facebook and Instagram that are pushed forward as preferred social media, and where the profile is active.

Method

The results presented in this chapter are part of a larger research design where focus is on covering the policy dimension, the project/portal itself and how respondents perceive this particular way of restaging the past. I have therefore applied critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992, 2003) to the official documents that constitute the digitisation strategies and the specific reports concerning digitisation of cultural heritage, and presented these results from a policy point of view (Valtysson 2015). I have also conducted an analysis of the portal's interface, looking at how technology shapes use/usage, and what kind of content this shaping facilitates and in which contexts. In order to understand more closely how respondents actually receive and discuss questions of access and use, I conducted three focus groups (Stewart & Shamdasani 2000; Bloor et al. 2001), sixteen qualitative interviews and observations with citizens (Creswell 2009; Gaskell 2000; Kawulich 2009; Schrøder, et. al 2003), and ten interviews with policy experts and experts from the cultural institutions that deliver material and tailor access to the portal. These involved a total of 46 respondents[4]. As the topic of this chapter is concerned with how respondents react to the portal, the analysis is primarily based on data from the three focus groups and the sixteen semi-structured interviews. All were conducted June 2013-October 2015, and as the DCH project is meant to reach out to Danish citizens in general, the composition in terms of age is broad. Focus groups (8 male, 12 female; age 22-67) consisted of beta-testers in the first group, people with no prior knowledge of the project in the second, and both in the third group. Qualitative interviews were conducted with sixteen respondents (nine male, seven female; age 18-54). Respondents were introduced to the DCH portal and encouraged to engage with it. Interviews were therefore supported by observations. Excerpts of interviews (in Danish) were translated to English by the author; respondents are kept anonymous and will be referred to as male/female and by age. Material from the observations will not be used for separate analysis, but supports the data extracted from the interviews.

For this chapter the data was thematically categorised using both pre-established codes that relate to the research questions and theoretical framework, and codes emerging from the interview and focus groups data. In this context the themes in question

are those of *user-manoeuvrability* as a space of agency, *cross-media communications*, and *cultural heritage*, the digital construction of the same, and how this relates to mundane communicative acts and everyday lifeworld.

Digitised cultural heritage, cross-media communication and participation in everyday contexts

As previously stated, policy documents concerned with digital cultural heritage are preoccupied with the potentials of dialogic communication, interaction and co-creation. The general idea is that users are not only receivers but also active co-creators. This idea is also prevalent in literature on mediated participatory cultures, where users are referred to differently, such as produsers (Bruns 2008), users-turned-producers (Castells 2009) and interactive audience (Jenkins 2006). What this language implies is a fundamental change in the relationship between senders/producers and receivers/consumers/users. In a larger cultural perspective, however, it is also understood to create a polarisation between the empowered and the disempowered. Much in this vein, Lessig (2008) talks about RW (read-write) cultures versus RO (read-only) cultures; Gauntlett (2011) talks about 'making and doing culture' and introduces the notion of 'sit back and be told culture'; and Castells (2009) emphasises the emergence of a creative audience.

A bulk of literature that treats participation in digital environments from a critical perspective has also emerged. These voices share concerns regarding the exploitation of unpaid value-generated digital labour, issues of privacy, data mining and commercial targeting (Andrejevic 2013; Fuchs 2013; Ross 2013), and what Dean (2005) refers to as the fantasy of participation, arguing that the degree of participation in excessive online contribution and content circulation can indeed be questioned. These considerations are particularly important in the case of DCH, as participation and user-engagement is primarily encouraged and facilitated through commercial social media. Questions of access to the material, the kind of interaction it facilitates, and the kinds of participation patterns that emerge, are of importance in this context, however, as van Dijck (2013) puts it, we should not only be attentive to how a platform like DCH as a technology constructs specific forms of communication, staging users and content in particular ways, but also of elements of political economy. Van Dijck more specifically emphasises the importance of ownership, governance and the business models that also shape the participative potentials of different online platforms – be it Facebook, Instagram or 'Danish Cultural Heritage'.

The notion of conditioned participation (Valtysson 2014) is also useful, as it illustrates how technology conditions users and user-manoeuvrability, and importantly, how different contexts relate to this conditioning. In the case of DCH, users don't have much manoeuvrability in terms of engaging directly with the material, which means that their space of agency is limited. Users are therefore framed more in terms of a

'read-only' culture and a 'sit back and be told' culture, as the direct input from users on the DCH portal is restricted to user-tagging the material. Otherwise direct input is left to commercial social media.

By promoting the link from public cultural institutions to commercial social media, however, DCH constructs a cross-mediated communication pattern where participation is conditioned by the technologies in question. Furthermore, the context in which these communication patterns arise also has to be taken into account, as different contexts encourage different communications. In this case the context is the digitisation of Danish cultural heritage, and as will be evident in the analysis, this shapes the way respondents relate to the material from the viewpoint of their everyday lifeworld.

Cross-media communication is an important term when discussing co-creation and participation, as moving across media platforms allows for different kinds of interaction and user-engagement. In this case, the platform is not tailored to provide different interfaces and user-manoeuvrability on different hardware, for instance by accessing it through a computer, a mobile phone or a tablet. Streaming the material from DCH on a computer or a tablet does therefore not open up a fundamentally different way of engaging with the content. From the viewpoint of this case, therefore cross-media should be understood in the way the social media in question provide communication channels for the content that originates from DCH. When this takes place, content is encapsulated within the specific contexts shaped by the functionalities of Facebook and Instagram. These communicative acts across media not only create different user patterns and socially shape the way people engage with content and create new associations to that content, but they also open up for a critique of these kinds of communications between national non-commercial public institutions and commercial social media with international scope. When perceived from this viewpoint, topics such as the exploitation of unpaid value-generated digital labour, privacy, data mining and commercial targeting, amateurs vs. professional cultural curators, and the fantasy of participation, become of great interest.

The take on cross-media communications in this chapter is thus partly in concordance with Madianou's and Miller's account of polymedia, at least where it states that 'polymedia is an emerging environment of communicative opportunities that functions as an 'integrated structure' within which each individual medium is defined in relational terms in the context of all other media' (2012: 170). It differs however, in how the term 'polymedia' encourages a shift 'from a focus on the qualities of each particular medium as a discrete technology, to an understanding of new media as an environment of affordances' (2012: 170), as the consequence entails a shift in primary concern 'from an emphasis on the constraints imposed by each medium (often cost-related, but also shaped by specific qualities) to an emphasis upon the social and emotional consequences of choosing between those different media' (2012: 170). I would however argue that it is the context in question that dictates primary and secondary concerns, as it is not clear how much 'poly' it takes for these emotional consequences

to be primary. It is relatively easy to think of contexts where this is certainly the case, but in the context of DCH there are really just three platforms in question; the Danish Cultural Heritage site itself, and its encouraged communications on Facebook and Instagram. It could, of course, be argued that choosing between these different media has emotional consequences, but the data from the focus groups and interviews points in other directions.

In terms of user-engagement and participation, the different interfaces of the cross-mediated platforms obviously play an essential role in terms of usage and content. According to van Dijck, again, this also has consequences in terms of political economy, as different business models, governance and ownership also shape the way user-manoeuvrability is defined. However, as already claimed, it is not enough only to look at these issues, but it is also necessary to be aware of the context in question. The fact that the DCH project disseminates Danish cultural heritage cannot be overlooked, as national cultural heritage immediately suggests common values, history, symbols, geographical proximity and certain community 'kinship'. As Laurajane Smith points out, however, these relationships do not emerge from thin air, as the construction of authorised heritage discourse is always a process of selection and de-selection: 'Consequently, this discourse validates a set of practices and performances, which populates both popular and expert constructions of 'heritage' and undermines alternative and subaltern ideas about 'heritage'' (2006: 11). Cultural heritage can therefore never be said to be just about a common past, a kind of a cultural reservoir, as there is always an institutional, political, economical process involved as well.

An interesting line of enquiry is how the process of digitisation, as in the case of DCH, affects this process of selection and de-selection, which items are chosen to be represented and how these are made available for access and use to the general public. Here, theorists like Silberman and Purser take an enthusiastic stance in terms of online participatory cultures, stating that:

> This wholehearted acceptance of re-creation and adaptation as essential aspects of heritage significance places a new emphasis on process rather than product, thus opening up exciting new potential for digital technologies as facilitators of people-centered cultural heritage. (2012: 13)

It is important to be aware that different platforms condition this participation in different ways, however, and they are always tied to a larger system of political economy. This is particularly so when a cross-mediated approach is chosen, where the platform feeds into the functionalities, data policy, and terms and use of Facebook and Instagram.

The topic of cultural heritage, and the context of its dissemination, remains crucial, as the data demonstrates certain tensions between social engineering and feelings of common history, nostalgia and common values. Here, Bakardjieva's take on domestication is rewarding, as she makes a conceptual shift from technology and the household to technology and the home as a phenomenological experience:

> Home is the container of interpersonal relationships that are supportive of my identity project, nurturing of my personal development and, overall, encouraging to the growth of my human capacities. Home is where I, as an agent, maintain my integrity and devise my strategies for action in places less hospitable, or in the face of oppressive forces. (2006: 68)

Bakardjieva's conceptual shift 'allows for the dynamic of a constantly changing relationship between exterior and interior to be adequately considered' (2006: 69), a point that is only more vital in the age of mobile and pervasive media. Bakardjieva also points to the importance of both phenomenological aspects, leaning towards Schutz and Luckmann, as well as (in echoing Lefebvre) being attentive to processes of consumption, differences and conflicts. Thus, domestication in Bakardjieva's terms is about consumption when seen from the viewpoint of designers, producers and marketers, but when seen through the lens of users, 'it is part of everyday life' (2006: 70). As she points out, everyday life as an analytical category is a complex phenomenological construction that relates to everyday lifeworld and constitutes 'the region, in which man experiences other people (his fellow men), with whom he constructs a shared world' (2006: 70). In this context, national cultural heritage is significant in constructing this shared world, but as Bakardjieva also points out, everyday life in the taxonomy of Lefebvre also accounts for 'all the specialized and structured activities characteristic of formal organizations and bureaucracies' (2006: 70). The significance of cultural heritage in constructing the lifeworld of everyday life in the phenomenological sense can therefore not be perceived without also taking economic organisations and other institutional and bureaucratic organisations into account. As the data demonstrates, this also resembles the way respondents perceive the construction of DCH and its relationship to their everyday lifeworld.

This relates again to another of Bakardjieva's conceptualisations, mundane citizenship. According to her view, mundane citizenship has two defining characteristics. It is 'intertwined with the routine of activities and concerns of everyday living' (2012: 1356) and it is 'crucially enabled by new media of communication' (2012: 1356). Furthermore, mundane citizenship 'is firmly rooted in private experiences, needs and concerns, but it sheds this shell through collective identification and movement from private to interpersonal, group and public discourse' (2012: 1358). In this context the mundane is thus to be understood as unglamorous and even trivial acts and practical manifestations, which primarily belong to the private realm. As will be apparent when the data is scrutinised, this concept is closely linked to the way respondents perceive cultural heritage as an important element in defining their everyday lifeworld. This is, however, not the case when cultural heritage is digitised and made available on DCH, as respondents feel that this is a communication space that stifles agency and user-manoeuvrability.

Restaging the past: user-manoeuvrability, cross-media communication and cultural heritage

As previously mentioned, this analysis focuses on the respondents' utterances based on focus groups and interviews, and is structured according to the identified themes of *user-manoeuvrability* as a space of agency, *cross-media communication*, and *cultural heritage*, the digital construction of the same and how this relates to mundane communicative acts and everyday lifeworlds.

User-manoeuvrability

As already noted, Silberman and Purser (2012) see great potential in digital technologies as facilitators of people-centred cultural heritage, however, DCH does not seem to trigger such engagement amongst respondents. Indeed, they are critical about how technology tailors the portal's space of agency and their user-manoeuvrability, a point that they repeatedly associate with the visual identity of the site, lack of meta-data, information about items and searchability:

> But there is not much [*information*] here. I think it would be good if there was a little bit more, what this is about, when it was aired, and maybe a bit of a historical comment to it, what is it and in which context it was made, or something that could be relevant to it. (male 35)

This comment directly addresses the question of volume and access, and therefore stands as a critical remark on why so much material is digitised without providing adequate meta-data in terms of information and searchability.

When it comes to direct the accessibility of downloadable files and formats, thereby feeding into participatory policy discourses, respondents do not claim this is something they are interested in: 'I'm not interested in editing material, or using bits for someone's 50th birthday where I've made a collection of small bits. Not at all, I would never do that' (female 35). The potential to engages users in terms of RW culture and 'making and doing' culture is therefore not to be seen, at least not when it concerns sound and film clips. Here, respondents claim that they are accustomed to accessing these kinds of materials as streamed files, and that they are content with the same, however respondents repeatedly see the potential for using pictures in everyday activities related to projects, school, work etc.:

> The pictures can be used for many things, maybe a historic picture which has a tight relation, that would be useful for many. Just to go in and use it, write where it came from, that would be really useful for people, high school students, people at the university that just need something for illustration. (male 35)

In terms of accessibility and general policy objectives concerning RW and 'making and doing' cultures, one user claimed:

> There is so much political rhetoric in this in terms of accessibility, access, the digital committee that has made a report where it is stated that it's incredibly important to involve the users. But in reality, this does not happen and as a user you access the site and feel that this is inaccessible cultural heritage. (female 25)

Finally, in terms of user-manoeuvrability, respondents are generally discontent regarding their own participative ability on the site and wish for a more direct way of contributing to DCH, either through conversational 'reply' functions or by uploading their own material:

> I think it's all about us being able to put something on the site. It works on social media, on digital platforms. It works because you participate. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook work because you are allowed to create part of the site. […] You could upload pictures. It could for instance be a young Danish person whose name is Sofie and is 18 years old and just had made a family tree that goes 300 years back. Something she feels is her cultural heritage, to be able to see her family throughout 300 years. How a Danish family has evolved through 300 years. That she can post pictures from her grandmother when she was young in the '30s. (female 23)

This respondent ascribes value to such contributions, which Bakardjieva associates with everyday lifeworld and the mundane. Seemingly unglamorous and trivial acts become significant through collective identification, as they become a part of cultural heritage and cultural memory.

However, as Smith noted, this kind of participation relates inevitably to processes of selection and de-selection, professionals and amateurs, on what should count as cultural heritage, and what should not, and respondents are divided about this. As the excerpt above indicates, some respondents want to make use of the potential functionalities of digital media leaning towards people-centred cultural heritage, while others are wary of such disturbances in the balance between amateurs and professionals, and wish for environments that allow for 'edited' user involvement: 'It would be a good idea to have a combination of the two, that professionals start contributions and then people can bring their own inputs, and if they are relevant, they can be posted' (male 34). User-manoeuvrability can therefore not only be dictated by the functionalities that DCH allows, but also by the context in question and how DCH facilitates communication across different media platforms.

Cross-media

When focus is turned to cross-media communications, respondents are attentive, and somewhat critical when reflecting upon how participation is encouraged on social media and not on DCH. As was also demonstrated in the previous section, this particular respondent misses the opportunity to comment and discuss things directly on DCH:

> I don't think tagging is enough in terms of participation. There isn't really any participation on the site. Apart from going to their Instagram and Facebook sites. But it should be possible to participate in the site. Otherwise it's too passive. (female 23)

In terms of content production on the internet and how that feeds into the DCH project, the following respondent had this to say:

> I think that reality shows that it is realistic that people generate content on the net, but just not on the platform Danish Cultural Heritage. They do it on YouTube, or by writing on blogs or Wikipedia which has thousands of editors all over the world. So it's out there, it just needs the right platform for the right type of drive to contribute to the internet's content production. (female 35)

As previously demonstrated, however, this view is opposed in several responses that lament the fact that no clear user-manoeuvrability is promoted on DCH and find it disrupting when engagement is promoted externally via social media:

> I think it's weird that they don't promote participation on the site because it's split when there is someone discussing things on Instagram and another discussing things on Facebook. You don't have all the material available when they are promoted on Facebook or Instagram. (female 23)

Respondents are also attentive to the different functionalities of the platforms in question, how these media environments condition participation and facilitate certain user patterns:

> I also think it's in Facebook's DNA that you only write when you are feeling good and not that much when you're not feeling good […] The media itself of course contributes to certain presentation that in some cases can be said to be a problematic form for participation. (female 40).

Interestingly, interviewees perceive the cross-media communication between DCH and the promoted commercial social media negatively, from the viewpoint of disconnected communication. Here focus is on confusion and a lack of overview when content is mediated through other platforms. The relational terms of DCH in the context of Facebook and Instagram are therefore perceived as disturbances and polymedia's promise of creating an environment of communicative opportunities in terms of providing an integrated structure therefore does not correspond with the respondents' statements. Indeed, they are more focused on the advantages and disadvantages of the DCH platform itself, rather than on how it functions as a structure integrated with Facebook and Instagram.

Respondents are, however, very aware of how technology tailors use and usage, and how they are pushed to contribute and create specific forms for content. This awareness in terms of how user-manoeuvrability is conditioned and how the inherent functionalities of social media trigger specific user patterns can be seen in the excerpt above, where a respondent commented on the affirmative character of Facebook's

functionalities as being 'a problematic form for participation'. This interviewee reacts in a similar way:

> Facebook is structured so that you can comment, like and share things. One of the reasons why their videos play automatically is that you are supposed to spend some time there. You are supposed to discover, to be involved, to comment, share, etc. (male 31)

These are indications that respondents are attentive to what van Dijck refers to as 'platforms as sociotechnical constructs' (2013: 28), however, respondents are also conscious of the other part, the one that is attentive to political economy, to social media's business models, ownership and governance:

> I would say that I've become rather attentive, but I don't know enough about it. Now there are hundreds of things you renounce when you first go online, but of course I think a lot about it, when I log on to Facebook and 'like' something, or comment on something, that there will be lots of datacentres all over the world […] where foreign people sit and analyse my data. […] It is a bit strange to think that you as an individual have so few rights on a social media site like Facebook. (female 23)

This is not from the viewpoint of cross-media communication, or polymedia's emphasis, in this case, on DCH being defined in relational terms to Facebook and Instagram. In this example focus is on Facebook, and not how it enters cross-mediated relations with other services. Issues of commercialisation, data mining and surveillance are therefore evident when respondents discuss social media, but they do not make the same connections when discussing the cross-mediated relationships between DCH, and Facebook and Instagram.

Cultural heritage

When seen from the viewpoint of cultural heritage, interviewees share views that relate to phenomenological everyday lifeworld perspectives, often associated with nostalgia, memories and a sense of identity, continuity and of belonging to a community. This is clearly articulated in this somewhat lengthy excerpt:

> Well, I've often attempted to find an amazing little film, which in fact I discussed with my son yesterday, because he likes to climb trees. When I was a boy, there was this cartoon where the narrator had this incredibly gentle voice, kind of a dreaming voice and there is a zoom in on a boy that sits up in a tree all day. He just sits there and looks down, and there are some birds with cakes, I mean, how wonderful can it be! It would be great if you could find this kind of stuff here. [*he finds it and gets enthusiastic*] This is something I would like to share with my brother and others of my age. This is almost too beautiful. (male 41)

What is being transmitted here is very much in line with Bakardjieva's account of the everyday lifeworld and the mundane, seemingly unglamorous and trivial acts that at the same time have great resonance for that particular individual, and which make him

want to share further as part of reconstructing a sense of a common world. In further commenting on cultural heritage, this same respondent emphasises this dimension of sharing and bringing virtues to the next generations:

> When my boy asks me to talk about how things were when I was young, these are the things that I want to pass on. That's what I think is the closest form of cultural heritage – virtues in terms of leisure, in terms of interests and in terms of activities'.

In a similar vein, another respondent associates this with the Danish word 'hygge', which comes close to 'cosiness':

> I could use it to see old children's programmes, if you all of a sudden felt really nostalgic and wanted to see Bamse and Kylling [*local TV production for children made by DR*]. I could also use it for personal cosiness. (female 23)

Concomitant to creating memory communities is the urge to share these with future generations:

> I think that this could be a place were I'll go in and find old stuff and show it to my kids, or something like that […] for instance, my 8 year old daughter loves My Sister's Children, not the new ones, but the old ones […] I would for sure show her some of these and hopefully awaken her interest by searching in the Danish past in this way. (female 38)

Again, this view lies close to the everyday lifeworld and the mundane as treated by Bakardjieva, however, voices are also heard that focus on the other side of the 'everyday' coin, namely that of the structured and specialised activities of formal organisations and bureaucracies, and their role in constructing a particular form of cultural heritage:

> They want to control how it's supposed to be. It's basically in the title as well, I mean Danish Cultural Heritage, right? Then it's just cultural canon and all that. And it also relates to that we are going to show you what you need to know about yourself. A classic DR educational project […] it is top down, not bottom up […] it is born this way and it can be adjusted, for instance with search functions or something like that, but I don't think it will be anything other than that. […] It's an education project rather than a participation project. (female 40).

Another respondent also draws on the selection processes, showing scepticism towards these procedures:

> But we live in a multicultural society that is not represented […] I have a feeling that it is only the positive things that are included, and not things that are critical of the Danish national culture and not something where questions are asked. It is a positive picture of what Danish is and what it means to be Danish. So, multicultural aspects are not included, right? (female 27)

And again in terms of active user-engagement and the user relationship with who selects and de-selects cultural heritage:

> In terms of why the users are not involved more, it's probably because there is a clear idea for it […] It's Danish heritage that is being promoted, but if you involve the users and allow them to upload things, then the red thread will surely disappear. Then you could all of a sudden make all kinds of associations which is fun, but the original purpose of the platform would disappear. (female 27)

This feeds again into considerations regarding the complex discussion of cultural heritage, professionals and amateurs, which earlier examples indicated: 'I trust the professionals. This is not something I feel I have the right, or the knowledge, to intervene with' (male 23). Another remarked in a similar vein: 'I've always understood that you should not mess with cultural heritage' (female 38).

Many of the respondents are sceptical about the purpose of DCH, and words like 'canonical tendency' and 'top down' were often heard:

> I have this feeling that this project has this canonical tendency, because it is selected cultural heritage. What's in there is selected by some of the large public and elite cultural institutions, so it's not about this participatory culture. The problem is that if we are allowed to participate it's going to dilute something. (female 25)

Similarly: 'It is much more 'sender' controlled, really top down. As a regular user, I don't think it's something for me' (female 25). However, while respondents are sceptical in terms of how the project pre-selects what professionals seem to think is relevant to count as cultural heritage, the data also shows that respondents do share understanding and trust of such authority, which again points towards the complex role that cultural heritage has in restaging the past. The specific context of cultural heritage therefore plays a significant role in how interviewees perceive the platform, and how, as Smith reminds us, the notion of cultural heritage always anticipates a process of selection and de-selection. This way, the two logics that Bakardjieva identifies, one that relates to mundane activities and the everyday lifeworld, and the second economical, organisational and bureaucratic processes behind the structuring of the same, always intertwine.

Conclusion

From a communicative point of view and in terms of what the 'Danish Cultural Heritage' project actually entails and how it conditions the participation of users, obvious discrepancies between policy and reality are disclosed. User-manoeuvrability, as tailored on DCH, does not live up to policy discourses, which are much more akin to discourses on RW cultures and 'making and doing' cultures. Respondents who wish for more advanced search options, more information about items and more options for direct participation on DCH confirm this. The cross-media link between DCH and Facebook and Instagram is also criticised. This criticism is however not primarily grounded in issues that concern data mining, privacy, surveillance or commercial

targeting, but rather on how these social media tailor participation, and on the way the content on DCH is experienced as disconnected from its context when encapsulated within the functionalities of social media. Furthermore, it is not only the detachment of communication that is criticised when looked at from the perspective of cross-media, but also how each platform in question, DCA, Facebook and Instagram, conditions the participative potential of users. It is therefore not the cross-mediated relationships that are in focus, but rather how each of them separately tailors use and usage, and how each platform invites reflections on political economy. Respondents are certainly aware of issues of the exploitation of labour, concealed marketing, surveillance and privacy when interacting with and on social media, however, when this awareness is contextualised as cross-mediated communications between DCH and the social media in question, respondents are more preoccupied with how Danish cultural heritage is communicated and constructed as a digital memory community, how this resonates with mundane activities and associations and how the potential for these activities and associations are stifled by lack of agency in the digital space that constitutes the 'Danish Cultural Heritage' project.

In terms of the digitisation of cultural heritage, respondents are interested in the selection criteria for what constitutes Danish cultural heritage and they are generally enthusiastic about clips and pictures that they can relate to. Positive nostalgic associations were common amongst the respondents. This feeds directly into the issue at hand, that respondents are related to their cultural heritage and are interested in knowing more about it and recalling associations, distant memories, and in sharing this forwards. They therefore react positively to the topic of cultural heritage and its role in constructing common symbols, memories, values and a sense of shared everyday lifeworld. They also react positively to the digitisation of cultural heritage, particularly in terms of preservation and future access. Respondents see great potential in the future dissemination of the material contained in DCH, such as when digitised the material can be the subject of various forms of participative designs.[5]

Notes

1. The two reports 'Digitization of Cultural Heritage – First Report' and Digitization of Cultural Heritage – Final Report from 2008 and 2009 are of particular importance.
2. As of October 2015.
3. This search was conducted 9 October 2015.
4. Many thanks to the research assistants Niels Gommesen, Arni Einarsson, Pernille Andersen and Bella Valeur for their great help in conducting and transcribing the interviews.
5. An example of this is a feature where users are encouraged to make postcards and posters based on material from DCH. As this is a recent feature, it is not included in the data from respondents.

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9.

Everyday Online Participation

Strategies and Practices in a Multi-Platform Media Landscape

Sofia Larsson & Tobias Olsson

Abstract

This chapter addresses potential political implications of social media by looking into everyday appropriations of the political opportunities offered to active citizens. It presents and analyses data from interviews with 33 Swedish online participating citizens to gain insight into how they work both with separate and in-between (cross) internet applications as part of their political participation: What communicative roles are various applications designed to play? How do they move within and between applications in their everyday practices to participate? Our data include interviews with two sets of citizens who are participating online. They were interviewed in two separate case studies. The first group, aged 28-79, were selected from a citizen media website. The other group from the blogosphere and Twittersphere were aged 21-38. The analysis reveals differences in cross-media use, both in terms of what participatory values different online applications are ascribed and what communicative roles they are shaped to play for everyday participation. Among other things, the chapter distinguishes between a "broadcasting" and a "networking" mode of online participation.

Keywords: civic participation, citizenship, activists, social media, web 2.0

In the early days of internet research in the early 1990s, scholars in various disciplines were already investing a great deal of effort in trying to grasp its possible political implications. They looked in various directions. Some scholars looked at the internet's implications for formal politics in terms of, for instance, the political parties' ways of communicating with citizens via the internet (Nixon & Johansson 1999). Other researchers took a wider theoretical point of departure and analysed what the new medium might mean for civic participation in the public sphere more generally (Poster 1995; 1997). Still other scholars paid specific attention to the use that social movements made of the new ICTs: could they foster new modes of political engagement (de Jong & Stammers 2005)?

Later on, during the early 2000s, with the development of what was presumed to be a more interactive and user friendly internet – often referred to as the web 2.0 –

Larsson, Sofia & Olsson, Tobias (2016). Everyday Online Participation. Strategies and Practices in a Multi-Platform Media Landscape, pp. 135-150 in Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson (eds.) *The Media and the Mundane. Communication Across Media in Everyday Life*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

the ideas connecting the new medium to transformations of politics and democracy seemed increasingly relevant. This phase of research put a lot of effort into trying to grasp the political significance of what has often been referred to as 'social media': What is the impact of typical internet applications, such as blogs, Facebook and Twitter, on contemporary politics and democracy?

Research in the area has been varied. It has paid attention to the significance of new internet applications for civic engagement and participation in both formal and informal political contexts. When it comes to informal contexts, one significant contribution to the debate was made by Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg (2012). They argue that the networking capacity of social media helps substantiate a transformation from politics based on solidarity and collective action to a more individualised politics based on connective action. Donatella Della Porta (2011) discerns a levelling of the power relationship between media organisations and social movements within social media. When social media's networking resources are in the hands of participants in social movements, they are able to show their own actions and ideas in a more favourable manner. Paolo Gerbaudo (2012) has looked into how social movements make use of social media. More specifically, he has analysed how social media have become both a practical and an emotional resource for activism in a number of recent political protests, such as the *Indignados* in Spain and *Occupy Wall Street* in the United States. In a more empirical manner, Tufekci and Wilson (2012) have analysed the role played by (primarily) Facebook, for people participating in the 2011 protests in *Tahrir Square* in Cairo. Drawing on survey data collected among the protesters, they reveal how the social networking site was used both to get information and to coordinate street actions. Altogether, these various studies have told us a great deal about the part potentially played by social media in political mobilisation and organising movements, and the empirical area has also been theorised by authors such as Peter Dahlgren (2013) and Manuel Castells (2012).

Analyses of the part played by social media in the realm of formal politics (parties, actors, campaigns, elections, etc.) have been inclined to look at how political actors make use of resources such as blogs, Facebook and Twitter. The example *par excellence* is the many efforts made to analyse Barack Obama's 2008 campaign as a web 2.0 phenomenon. These analyses include both the ways in which his campaign made strategic use of social media and how it influenced voters (Cogburn et al. 2011; Kushin & Yamamoto 2011). These early analyses of the part played by web 2.0 applications in political campaigns have been followed by a long list of related analyses, including analyses of candidate use of Twitter during election campaigns (Graham et al. 2013), as well as efforts to understand how politicians make use of both Facebook ('for marketing') and Twitter ('for dialog') in their communication with citizens (Enli & Skogerbø 2013).

Despite these variations in research directions, analyses of the role of social media in contemporary social movements and the sphere of formal politics also share at least one blind spot: they have not devoted much attention to the level of individual citizens

in order to reveal the communicative roles these resources are designed to play in their mundane, everyday participatory practices. In order to complement existing research, this chapter considers how individual citizens, outside the sphere of formal politics, work both with and across the plethora of internet applications in their everyday practices of political participation: What communicative roles are various internet applications in general, and social media in particular designed to play for everyday participating citizens? How do the participating citizens intermingle between them within the framework of their online political participation?

ICTs, civic engagement and everyday life – theoretical contextualisation

Our point of theoretical departure is inspired by a view of ICTs as resources with the potential to enable civic agency in everyday life (Olsson & Dahlgren 2007; Dahlgren 2009; Bakardjieva 2010). In Dahlgren's view, being civic relates to how citizens step into the public (2009: 58), and it implies being engaged in public life. Engagement in this sense is also related to paying attention to, and having a passion for some issue, which triggers the step into the public. Civic engagement can also be materialised in concrete actions, and civic engagement then becomes civic participation.

The fact that a number of scholars have noted a decline in traditional forms of civic and political engagement over recent decades (cf. Norris 2002; Bennett 2008), such as voting and joining political parties, has provoked argument that suggests that citizens have abandoned participation and politics altogether. Other scholars have pointed to the possibility that the institutions of established, traditional politics might instead have abandoned the citizens. As a consequence, civic engagement and participation might not have declined so much as changed forms, targets and tools as citizens have turned in new directions (Norris 2002; Dahlgren 2009), and this is perceived to be especially true among younger citizens (Bennett 2008). This latter proposition has inspired the exploration, in this chapter, of experiences of contemporary online engagement from an individual citizen perspective, a 'bottom up' approach within which we pay heed to engaged citizens' everyday civic engagement and participation. To be more precise, we are specifically concerned with ICT-applications in this regard: how are they used and made sense of within the frames of everyday civic engagement and participation?

In this context, the concept 'ICTs' refers mainly to internet services and the ways in which applications such as blogs and social networking sites offer everyday civic resources for information gathering, publishing, debating, networking, etc. The internet applications referred to are those used by the informants as part of their engagement. These also enable various communicative practices (cf. Jensen & Helles' (2010) model based on 'time' (asynchronous/synchronous) and 'numbers of persons involved' (one-to-one/one-to-many/many-to-many)). Such resources can be shaped into valuable civic assets both for fostering and deepening civic engagement, and for enabling civic

participation in public or semi-public spheres. In other words, they can be made into resources enabling the creation and re-creation of civic identities and practices (Dahlgren 2009; Miegel & Olsson 2013). Some scholars also argue that we see a new kind of participating citizen, engaging politically from a private sphere when stepping into the public through the internet (Dahlgren 2011; Papacharissi 2010). Dahlgren's (2011: 104) idea of a solo-sphere, and Papacharissi's (2010) notion of a 'private sphere', are variations on efforts to describe this new mode of engagement. Bakardjieva (2009) has also explored the individual as an agent in everyday life through internet use, and in the apparently apathetic 'masses' she finds what she calls subactivism: 'politics that unfolds at the level of subjective experience and is submerged in the flow of everyday life' (Bakardjieva 2009: 92). Subactivism is individual and small-scale, but has a political or ethical context. It 'arise[s] spontaneously, often as new dimensions of work, homemaking, parenting, entertainment' (Bakardjieva 2009: 96) and as such it differs from the more purposive participation presented by the citizens in this study (compare below). More specifically, this chapter considers the everyday use of internet applications among already engaged citizens. What value do these applications have for them? What kind of media landscape do they describe, as individual, engaged citizens? How do they move within and across various internet applications as part of their civic participation?

This is not to suggest that the existence of ICTs in general, or internet applications in particular, are in any way products of intentions to strengthen civic agency. Such outcomes are instead best understood as unintended consequences of technological developments driven by strong economic interests (Sussman 1997; Freedman 2012). These ICTs also become platforms for commercial projects. In the case of the internet, this logic is very obvious, as its best known platforms, such as *Facebook, YouTube* and *Instagram*, are business models and parts of commercial projects (Fuchs 2013). Nevertheless, the internet – as well as the business models that are built on it – are relatively open technologies (Woolgar 1996). They are open in the sense that to some extent users can shape and re-shape them according to their own needs and wishes. Despite the fact that neither the internet per se nor the applications that are used on an everyday basis were brought about mainly to create resources enabling civic agency, they can still be shaped to play such a role. Based on these premises, the chapter looks empirically at the use that participating citizens make of the plethora of internet and social media applications in order to analyse how they shape them into empowering, civic everyday resources.

Two groups of participating citizens

Our analysis builds on empirical material obtained from two case studies with, on the one hand, citizen media writers and, on the other hand, social media participating citizens. Both studies were conducted between 2011 and 2014 and are part of an

exploratory research project focusing on the interviewees' own stories as individual citizens engaged in political participation through internet. The design of the two studies was to some extent *emergent*, for example were not all interviewees selected before the first interviews started (Merriam 2009: 169). A qualitative approach that is emergent enables a sensitive and flexible strategy that offers the potential for adaptation during the project (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 4). The collected empirical material consisted of roughly 340 pages of transcribed interviews. The analytical approach can be described as inductive and was inspired by comparative approaches which aim at sorting and categorising material into themes and subthemes as a basic strategy for interpretation (Merriam 2009: 197). Sorting and categorising involves moving between abstract and concrete ideas, and the analytical findings emerge from that process.

The two groups of participating citizens could be perceived as representing two modes of online participation. The interviewees in the first group were selected and invited from a citizen media website's politics and society section, a small for-profit site which enables citizen to participate in content production and discussion, aided by an editor. They were selected for their interest in participation in citizen media websites. The second group, bloggers and social media debaters, were selected to further explore the field and supplement the first group with a younger one whose members had blogs or used social media. Both experienced bloggers and social media debaters, and beginners were of interest, and their interests were in issues such as feminism, anti-racism and left politics in general. The first group had a mean age of 52 and the latter group had a mean age of 27. The interviewees describe their online participation as an individual activity, which they conduct as private persons and not as part of any organisation, despite the fact that several of them also were members of civil society organisations or political parties.

The results reveal that they use different internet applications for online participation and ascribe different values to them, and consequently different communicative roles. Two modes of cross-media use emerged, *broadcasting* and *networking*.

Table 1.

	Broadcasters	**Networkers**
Selected from	A citizen media website	Blogosphere and Twittersphere
Average age	52	27
Area of interest	Diverse within politics and society	Feminism, anti-racism, left politics
Gender	14 men, 4 women	2 men, 13 women

The group who were writers on the citizen media website, the *broadcasters,* consists of 18 informants. These writers all write on a non-profit basis for their own purposes in the politics and civil society section of the news website. All informants were between 28 and 79 years of age (4 women and 14 men), and the extent to which they have been published on the citizen media website varies from just a few articles to more than

200 (the median number of published articles is 72). The participants live in various parts of Sweden and the interviews were conducted by phone or Skype.

The citizen media website is a for-profit medium. It is owned by a corporation, and publishes anyone's articles (low barriers to entry). Among the interviewees it was seen as an alternative to traditional (mainstream) media. In that sense it can be described as alternative, but as it is a for-profit site one core attribute of actually alternative media is missing (Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier 2009: 19). The aims and impediments related to the broadcasters' web participation were analysed in depth in a previous article (Larsson 2014). This showed that they write in order to participate in the public debate and their motives range from 'letting off steam' to 'changing the world'. The majority emphasised debate as a driving force for participation, and a few stressed the authoring of articles (Larsson 2014). Their most obvious reasons for participation were dissatisfaction with the traditional (dominant/mainstream) media. Broadcasters also tend to express counter-hegemonic ideas.

A group of fifteen bloggers and social media debaters (*the networkers*) was also selected for semi-structured interviews. The aim was to supplement the first study with a younger group who used blogs or other social media for their civic, everyday participation. These informants were between 21 and 38 years of age (two men and thirteen women). Most of the participants were recruited from the blogosphere and Twittersphere and had a specific interest in topics such as feminism, anti-racism and left-wing politics. Although some of the informants knew of a few others in the selection, they were only very loosely connected. The selection of interviewees was purposeful, using the principle of snowball sampling (Merriam 2009: 79).

The group is varied in terms of the extent to which the interviewees were 'successful' in the sphere of social media. Some interviewees have thousands of readers on their blog every day, while others have thousands of Twitter followers or members/followers on their Facebook group or page. Other interviewees have between twenty and two hundred daily readers of their blog.

The next section will separately present and analyse data on the participating citizens and their use of internet applications. We will pay attention to their everyday civic media activities and discuss them in the light of theories of new modes of engagement and everyday media practices. The chapter will describe the general toolbox, as in the most common internet applications used for their everyday online participation. In addition we will show what values they perceive the applications having for their online participation.

Broadcasters

The *citizen media website* is at the very heart of the everyday political participation of the broadcasters. It includes the typical sections of a traditional news media website, with divisions such as politics, society, sports, business, etc. For some, the site has been

their main internet application for publishing for many years. The website offers the opportunity to *reach an audience*, as it provides a fast way for them to publish their material and become involved in debate. A second participatory value also emerged from the interviews: the *sense of a real newspaper*. The website is often referred to as similar to traditional media in terms of its range and its semi-professional publishing model (as a citizen writer, you can be published next to professional writers). On the other hand, it is also seen as different from established media channels in that it offers potentially immediate responses to ideas.

> I also write letters to editor in papers such as *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* [large Swedish newspapers] but nothing happens! It becomes a letter to the editor, which barely gets published, and then it's quiet.

The interviewees value the citizen media website. For them, the website is an alternative to traditional news media as it gathers voices that are often unheard and has much lower barriers for publishing. They gain a sense of making an impact in the debates (Larsson 2014), but in a context that is similar to traditional news media in that it offers an opportunity to reach out to a large audience.

Newsmill (www.newsmill.se) was another important internet resource for the group of broadcasters. *Newsmill* was a commercial debate website (2008-2013). It was owned by large media corporations in Sweden and offered an internet application for opinion writing and discussion, with a mix of editorial and user-generated content (Holt 2010). The website had a wide variety of publishing options, such as debate articles, material on sponsored topics, comment features and opportunities for reader reactions (angry/bored/curious/happy) (Holt 2010). *Newsmill* was often mentioned by the interviewees. Some had tried, but only a few of them had succeeded, in getting published on the site.

The interviewees perceive *Newsmill* as having two specific values: *status* and *high standards. Status* refers to their general view of *Newsmill* as a media of higher class than the citizen media website, and as a more professional environment. Some of the broadcasters also describe it as the next step: after having written for a citizen media website, you can try to qualify for *Newsmill*, which offers the potential to reach thousands of readers. They also refer to it as an environment that gathers professionals, journalists, researchers, politicians and well-known people, and it is thus also perceived as somewhat more authoritative and serious. The notion of *high standards* relates to both the potential benefits and drawbacks for everyday participating citizens. When considering benefits, the interviewees use concepts such as quality, support, structure, professionalism, and control when talking about *Newsmill.* The website has professional editorial staff. It is also considered to be more structured and professional in both its editing and its monitoring of reader comments. There is, however, a flip side to the high standards: they sometimes become an obstacle, as the participating citizens fail to meet them. Another problem mentioned by the participating citizens is the fact that the high standards, and the related editorial processes, make publishing on the site less spontaneous.

The value of *Newsmill* as a tool for everyday participation is that it offers broadcasters the opportunity to become visible in a professional online setting, and to reach a comparatively large audience. Being published on this website also enables writers to be read by traditional news media journalists and thus also offers the chance to have an impact on public debate.

> Newsmill is a structured and more professional site and attracts more professional writers and authorities in diverse areas while at [the citizen media website], anyone can be the professor.

> Well, I'd rather write at *Newsmill* where they have a fairly good reviewing and professional editorial staff that nonetheless run it all, both the texts and the comments.

The citizen media website and *Newsmill* are framed as important components of the writers' everyday online participation – particularly for reaching out to an audience – but *blogs* also serve as such resources. Several of the interviewees have (or have had) blogs, but they also tended to claim that they do not have enough time to manage them in such a way that they can reach out to a good number of readers. Overall, however, the interviewees value blogs for participation. These values are discussed in terms of *independence* and *display*. When associating blogging with *independence,* it is described as offering a space for being subjective and personal. The sense of independence is also related to the fact that the blog offers temporal freedom to, and speed in, expressing and publishing whenever you want. Independence is also evident in the fact that the blog offers instant, guaranteed publishing.

> I post it on my own blog or on [my own alternative website] which I write for and which I have access to publish on. That's why I hesitate to post on Newsmill or on [the citizen media website], because sometimes it takes too long until it's published. It's better if you can see the result online at once, after five minutes for example. Then you don't have to wait and discuss it with someone else who will publish the text online.

When relating to blogs, broadcasters often comment that they offer the opportunity to gain visibility, to *display* their ideas and written material. The blogs function as an archive, as they make older texts, as well as texts published on other websites, available to readers.

> I've got a blog but it is rarely commented on, but I often put articles there, which I've written for other sites and it's a pretty unknown blog. I have it more as a backup space for myself to publish on, because then I can bring any text up again. I've been writing for almost three years now.

The broadcasters are generally not very active as participating citizens on *Facebook*, but they nevertheless relate the social networking site to their everyday participation. They mostly refer to Facebook in the context of *disseminating* their writing. Facebook is perceived as a way to increase visibility for material that is published on the blog, or on the citizen media website. Another participatory value noted by some of the

interviewees is Facebook's ability to help mobilise people to act, for instance to take part in various offline activities or to donate money for good causes.

Facebook is also perceived as an application for *commenting* and *discussing*. Facebook offers a semi-public sphere for discussion, where it is possible for the written material to inspire comments and reflections. The respondents do, however, sense risks in their use of Facebook. Facebook is perceived as an exposed space, and as such, broadcasters are somewhat cautious about their appearance in this context. On Facebook they are also connected to their private relations, and their identity is open. On the citizen media website, on the other hand, they reach a broader but less known group of readers. Even though their authentic first name and surname are published at the citizen media website, it is perceived to be less problematic for exposure, compared to Facebook.

> I mostly stay away from it all because using Facebook is complicated when considering your professional life. Today employers check whether you are on Facebook. And I have to be there, but I hesitate to be provocative because it is so public.

Broadcaster Cross-Media Use

Internet applications other than those already mentioned are used to a far lesser extent, but are still mentioned by a few of the interviewees as resources: Twitter, MySpace, homepages and alternative media websites. These applications and web sites are, however, not at all such important parts of their toolboxes for online participation. To a large extent, broadcasters relate their writing to traditional news media rather than to the sphere of social media. Traditional news media are the omnipresent frames of reference in their stories about their participation, most often as something they strive for and relate to in their opinion writing. They are also the main frame of reference when they talk about online media, as their online media activities become part of their overall effort to 'reach an audience', and strive for 'higher standard' publications.

One consequence of this overall approach to media is that broadcasters also develop strategies for cross-media use that correspond to it. One typical example is provided by one of the interviewees. She moves between various internet applications, such as her blog and Facebook, but only in order to attract the attention of as many readers as possible with the same material or message. She does not apply internet applications mainly to build relations, or to support other writers, but rather uses them as a means to achieve her overall aim of 'reaching out'. Broadcaster cross-media use and ideas are thus informed by a broadcasting view of their everyday media activities. They develop strategies and practices to 'reach out' to many.

Networkers

Among the networkers, '24/7' use of media is more apparent than in the stories of broadcasters. Their accounts of daily media routines suggest that this group of respondents is highly connected to the internet, and continuously monitors its flow in both mainstream and social media. Networkers also use a different set of applications for their participation than the broadcasters. What makes them even more different from the previous group, however, is their way of relating to these applications as tools for participation – both as individual tools and as a whole toolbox.

Among the available tools for everyday online participation, the *blog* appears to be the most salient. The blog is described by many of the interviewees as their primary tool. It is at the very heart of their everyday participation and is varyingly referred to as 'a tool for participation', a resource for 'impacting public debate' and for 'using one's voice' and 'shaping opinion'. When the participating citizens are asked to be more specific about their views of the blog as a tool, their answers usually centre on the themes of *knowledge and discussion, free forms* and *networking*.

The theme *knowledge and discussion* references the fact that a blog can contain a body of knowledge, and be a place where the participating citizens have the opportunity to collect facts, as well as present in-depth analysis and arguments. This creates an archive for others to read.

> I've been a feminist since I was very young, so I've been questioned so many times and have also been asked to explain things and always to start with the basics. I can't do that in real life anymore. I can't stand to answer every person that wants me to explain everything from the beginning. I don't think I should have to. But I feel I can do this better in writing, and then it will be left there and I can refer to it instead of wearing myself out.

> It gives me an inner satisfaction to know that if someone is looking for the best argument they'll have my blog. I had 400 visitors a day before, but now I have 30-40 a day, however it's satisfying to know that for those that want to it's possible to find the best arguments.

The blogs are also useful in that they offer the opportunity to receive comments and to enter into discussions with readers. Sometimes these comments and discussions turn into threads or serve as input and responses that help to improve the blog posts.

The theme *freer forms* relates to the ability of blogs to enable deeper and longer texts, a variety of formats and adaptable personal visibility. The networkers explain that a blog makes it possible to extend their analyses and write better, more reasoned material. One participatory value that was emphasised by some was that the blog is a fast and simple form of publishing. Some interviewees also mentioned the opportunity to either be much more personal than in other social media, or to build an alias for their political participation online.

> I've stayed away from political associations because I think they're often very elitist and male-dominated. So I have the blog partly in order to have my own forum and so no one can dominate me […]

> I use an alias on my blog. I haven't shared my real name there and I often write longer posts with more thought behind them than my posts on Facebook.

Networking is a recurring theme when networkers talk about their blogs, both their own blogs, but also their frequent comments and discussions on other political blogs. This enables them to grow as participating citizens and to learn from the responses from others, and it also helps expand their social networks, as these practices foster interaction and help build relationships. Some networkers also say that their blogging makes them feel part of a movement. *Collaboration* is also a recurring topic within the theme of networking, as several of the respondents are engaged in writing in collaboration, either on blogs run by several writers or in loose collaborations between individual bloggers.

> Egoistically, what this gives me as a person it is the sense of being part of this community of people that I look up to and who I think are very intelligent and that I can be one of them, part of the gang. I also learn a lot of new things from them. It gives me a sense of doing something that is good for the world and that is quite fun actually.

> We are five of us managing the blog. You know it doesn't work like a news office, that we have an editor in chief or something like that. Everyone contributes and nobody will tell you to write something in particular or tell you when to write. It's up to you how much you want to contribute with. It is self-organised in many ways.

The blogs are at the very heart of the networkers' practices and identities as political subjects. They are perceived as continuous resources for the dissemination of knowledge and information, and for creating visibility. It is also an important tool for networking and for maintaining a sense of belonging to a wider community of likeminded citizens. The blogs do, however, also have a number of shortcomings as resources for participation. They are considered less useful for reaching out to new categories of potential followers. Other social media applications, such as Twitter and Facebook, are found more useful in this regard.

Of all internet applications for participation, *Twitter* is one of the most important. When asked about its value for participation, networkers most often refer to *information and inspiration*. More concretely, this concerns the ways in which Twitter serves as a tool for remaining up-to-date, monitoring news in both mainstream and social media in order to follow current debates and news events. Twitter is frequently referred to as a tool for reaching out to potential blog readers, to call attention to your blog posts in order to build a larger readership and network. One interviewee said that she would not have many readers on her blog without the attention brought to it via her tweets.

> I wake up, I read something and then I go to classes. Then I might have read something that I thought was good or bad and then I can use Twitter or some other social

> media to discuss it with others. Because it can be difficult to see something online and then simply draw a conclusion from it and thus I always appreciate hearing what others think. So, some days I use Twitter a lot.

Twitter is also valued among networkers as a *public* space, within which discussions become part of an open and political debate. It is, furthermore, a space within which they do not sense any need to adapt to the fact that it is also inhabited by friends and family. This is in contrast to the way some other internet applications are perceived, which include private connections or acquaintances. On Facebook, for instance, interviewees avoid being very political, as it is perceived to be a more private sphere. Finally, Twitter is also valued as a resource for participation, for offering a *brief and quick* format for communicating and for the fact that it helps create *relationships*; Twitter offers easy access to likeminded people and for building networks.

Facebook is also perceived as a useful resource. Facebook is used as a tool for the dissemination of blog posts and other media content. Facebook groups are also spaces for reaching out to, and meeting, likeminded citizens, and for disseminating links to blog posts. It is also an application within which *discussions* take place. One distinct difference between Facebook and Twitter in this regard, however, is that discussions on Facebook are usually less politically sophisticated. Ideas are simplified in order to fit Facebook's 'friends and family profile' and edited in order not to be too provocative.

> I see Facebook as a safe haven. I don't have the energy to engage in lots of discussions and debates there, and I'm careful about not posting comments that provoke people, because I get enough of it through Twitter […]

Facebook is also a main source of news and information. It is a news source that is used around the clock, but it also appears to be useful in building relationships and communities of participating citizens. In these communities, it is possible to find likeminded people for in-depth discussions that are out of reach of the 'online haters' and also for finding support and understanding.

Applications such as *Instagram* and *podcasts* are referred to as resources for participation to a much lesser extent than blogs, Twitter and Facebook. Some networkers occasionally mention these applications, but they do not generally qualify as substantial tools in this regard.

Networker cross-media use

The networkers also participate and communicate across media through a mix of many applications, but it is made very clear that the blog, Facebook and Twitter comprise their central applications for disseminating, discussing, collaborating and building relations. The general daily routine that the networkers describe is that they iterate the sequence of *monitoring, publishing* and *interacting* which involve using many applications intertwined. Through *monitoring,* they stay updated via social and traditional

news media on what has happened during the night. Has someone commented on their blog, tweeted or posted something on Facebook? Twitter and Facebook are the most common tools in this phase, which also includes monitoring opinions and reactions to news in traditional media. When *publishing,* they use most of their internet applications. They typically use social media daily and update their blog a couple of times a week. Sometimes they also test their ideas for the blog in faster media such as Twitter or Facebook, to get input from their network before publishing. The published material is then discussed during a phase of *interaction,* which includes communication in social network systems and comment sections. The participation is described as the great part of their everyday life and this daily participation requires moving across the applications depending on their purpose and the value on which they are focussing.

Two cases, two media landscapes

In this analysis, we have looked closely at everyday citizen participation and cross-media use, and more specifically at the strategic, participatory values that various media are ascribed. As the findings above show, a combination of internet media creates opportunities for individual and everyday participation. By negotiating benefits and drawbacks based on the values important for them, active, participating citizens compose their own mix of media and cross-media political practices.

Everyday participating citizens highlight essential media features, such as independence, status, discussions, visibility, inspiration, networking, etc. Perceived as an example of everyday individual online participation, the findings contrast somewhat with the use and features mentioned in research in non-everyday use, such as within social movements, protests or uprisings. These studies often stress social media's potential for informing, mobilising, organising and coordinating (Gerbaudo 2012, Lotan et al. 2012, Tufekci & Wilson 2012; Segerberg & Bennett 2012). There are, however, excellent opportunities to create a toolbox for use in everyday life that is adapted to individual online participation. The active citizens move between applications in the toolbox where some serve as primary tools and some as supplements. The use of one individual application for participation is thus very often more or less connected to the usage of other internet applications in the toolbox. As the analysis of daily routines of the *networkers* reveal, some applications are used to find inspiration about a topic, others to discuss and test an opinion and yet others to publish longer texts on a topic. Longer blog- and Facebook- texts are promoted in many social media, such as on Twitter, Facebook, and on Instagram, or in the comment threads of other people's blogs or websites. However, there are also obvious differences between the media toolboxes of the two groups, and the participatory values they express.

The *broadcasters* prefer a use of media that is similar to news websites, with editors and gatekeepers, and they seem to have a broadcasting view of their online activities. The younger group of *networkers* is more dedicated; they use most of the available well

known applications (such as various social media) and have also tried many different formats for everyday participation (even podcasts, videos). Their use is continuous, with networking and collaboration as specifically significant values. *Broadcasters* associate much of their online participation with traditional news media and they use and publish mostly on websites that offer professional control, moderation and editing. They thus relate much of what they do to the media landscape of journalism and traditional media. This contrasts with the *networkers,* who only relate their debating and participation to the sphere of traditional news media to a very small extent. *Networkers* instead tend to work with a toolbox consisting mainly of their blog and various social media, and have many participatory values apart from publishing and reading. These values correspond to more typical characteristics of the web, such as relationship building, networking, collaboration, discussion and dissemination. The *networkers* participate in a landscape where the traditional news media are made much more marginal.

The varying use and the differing values that the participants in the two groups ascribe to the applications suggest that they have two very different frames of reference when it comes to identifying *where* the important spheres of political discussions are situated. Not least, it seems as if traditional news media have become less relevant as a centre for public debate and discussion, as users of new internet applications tend to meet and debate without facilitation by 'the media'. The assessing of participatory values (such as archiving, spreading, collaborating, discussing, etc.) and combining media implies participation *across media*. The communicative roles of the applications consequently also differ between the networkers and broadcasters. Networkers use several more of the modes of communication available in an application than the broadcasters. While many social media platforms can be used for both 'one-to-one' and 'many-to-many' (Jensen & Helles 2010), the broadcasters use various resources for interacting with others, relationship building or collaboration, for example a one-to-one communication, as only a small part of their engagement. The networkers, on the other hand, more clearly describe a media use for relationship building, such as one-to-one communication, as a fundamental part of their participatory practices. To conclude, this study contributes with important knowledge about the political participation of individual citizens in a connected and everyday context. It shows that citizens can shape a toolbox of applications into civic assets, and through cross-media use, enable participatory values significant to their mode of participation.

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10.

Spaces of Agency at the Intersection between Media Technologies and Everyday Life

Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson

What characterises cross-media communication from the perspective of the individual user in the context of everyday life? This is the main question of this book, and the individual contributions have suggested a wide range of theoretically and empirically founded answers to this question, ranging from the theoretical frameworks of domestication theory, critical realism and phenomenology to the empirical domains of everyday routines, exercise, illness, bereavement, cultural heritage and everyday citizen participation in political contexts. In this concluding chapter we would like to sum up these perspectives in a more general discussion of the way everyday life and the mundane intersect with the combined use of a wide range of media technologies. We will do this, firstly, by summing up the different perspectives on everyday life, the mundane and cross-media communication, as these appear in the individual contributions of the book. Following up on this, we will suggest that 'spaces of agency' as carved out by the technological environment and social structures of everyday life, represent one common lens through which these contributions can be seen and discussed in concert.

The different chapters of the book sketch out not just one but a range of possible theoretical and empirical approaches to everyday life and the mundane. On one hand, the concept of 'everyday life' is approached as a sociological and philosophical concept with different meanings depending on the chosen framework. On the other hand the concept of 'the mundane' tends to demarcate specific domains of reality depending on the context of use. As regards everyday life as a sociological and philosophical concept, several possible theoretical frameworks have been suggested throughout this book.

Domestication theory, as explicated in Haddon's chapter, conceptualises everyday life more or less indirectly and pragmatically as the empirical contexts of everyday use. Within domestication theory this has historically been about homes and households, but it is not necessarily limited to these types of context. Key focus is on the way (media) technologies are appropriated and combined in accordance with the social structures of various empirical contexts of use. In contrast, the critical theoretical

Sandvik, Kjetil; Thorhauge, Anne Mette & Valtysson, Bjarki (2016). Spaces of Agency at the Intersection between Media Technologies and Everyday Life, pp. 151-156 in Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge & Bjarki Valtysson (eds.) *The Media and the Mundane. Communication Across Media in Everyday Life*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

framework, as introduced by Helles, directs attention toward the perspective of the individual and their reflexive agency vis-à-vis the social structures of everyday life. That is, the social structures taken more or less for granted within the framework of domestication theory are seen as a phenomenon in constant development in the age of late modernity, and thus a product of the individual's reflexivity and choices, including choices and combination of media technologies.

Similarly, Bakardjieva takes the perspective of the individual, but now within the context of phenomenology foregrounding the (social) lifeworld as the 'paramount reality' of humans. Everyday life within this perspective is not an aspect of strategic agency, but is rather about lived reality from the point of view of the individual. Bakardjieva deals with the way in which the social component of this reality, that is, the relationship between the self and the other, is reframed in various ways by new communication technologies. These perspectives are taken up in different ways by the different case studies making up the second part of the book. For instance, the deliberate strategies of individual smartphone users in Thorhauge's study clearly reflect the reflexive agency of the individual as pointed out by Helles. Similarly, Christensen and Sandvik's analysis of the way bereaved parents perform acts of communication in relation to the dead child, and in relation to the surrounding world, can be seen as a continuous attempt to keep the child within the attainable reach of the phenomenological lifeworld.

Some of the case studies in this book, however, introduce alternative perspectives that are not covered by the three initial theoretical chapters. Most importantly, Lomborg and Bertel both point back to early proponents of microsociology and symbolic interactionism, taking the norms and routines of everyday life as a phenomenon continuously negotiated and reproduced by social actors as a key point of departure. This view may be seen as somewhat given within domestication theory's focus on local use contexts and negotiations of technology, however, it is not necessarily limited to this perspective as it may be about communication and interaction across contexts, as is the case in the examples of Lomborg and Bertel.

In this way, everyday life as a sociological and philosophical concept points toward a range of definitions depending on the theoretical framework, including the empirical context of use, collective negotiation, individual reflexivity and the lived reality of people. Compared to this, the concept of the mundane represents, to some degree, a label or an adjective, albeit a highly significant one. Throughout the book, the concept of the 'mundane' seems to demarcate a range of domains representing a particular relevance to the study of everyday life. This is most obvious in the concept of 'mundane citizenship' demarcating the actions and practices of 'ordinary' citizens as opposed to the 'formality' of the political system. This perspective is foregrounded in Valtysson's discussion of the contrast between a policy perspective and a citizen perspective on cultural heritage and in Larsson and Olsson's descriptions of the practices of 'already engaged citizens' that are not directly integrated into political parties or organisations. This distinction also appears more implicitly in Bertel's separation of

specialised as opposed to ordinary knowledge, and it takes on an existential dimension on Christensen and Sandvik's descriptions of the practices of bereaved parents trying to keep their dead child within the 'attainable reach' of everyday life. In this way, the concept of the mundane seems to bring with it a set of oppositions, including the formal political systems as opposed to the informal practices of the citizen, the formal domains of work and politics, and opposed to the rest of life, the extra-ordinary as opposed to the ordinary and, ultimately, the realm of grief with its dominating sense of loss and absence as opposed to the everyday practices of continuing bonds and sense of presence. Though such oppositions do not represent explicit and analytically applicable definitions as those suggested by everyday life as a sociological concept, they still embrace some of those connotations that cling to the concept of everyday life, and in this way remain a key perspective when dealing with cross-media communication in everyday life.

The other key term in this book is cross-media communication, and this concept similarly takes on a range of meanings depending on the theoretical frameworks and empirical domains of the individual contributions. On one hand, cross-media communication can be seen as the presence and implicit competition between different communication technologies in empirical contexts, as envisioned by domestication theory or as a function of the individual's reflexive and trans-situational agency, as argued by Helles. Cross-media communication can also be approached as an aspect of an increasingly complex social lifeworld, shaped and expanded by a growing range of communication technologies. In the empirical case studies making up the second part of the book, the concept of cross-media communication similarly gives way to a wide range of approaches and definitions. Cross-media communication can be seen as the combination of different communication platforms while tracking and communicating physical exercise or taking part in public deliberation. It can also be seen as a way of managing complex information flows and information sources, either as part of an individual effort to make ends meet in everyday life or as part of a collaborative effort to overcome physical limitations caused by illness and the bureaucratic restrictions of the Danish welfare system. Cross-media communication is approached critically as the opposition between policy ideals and the practical implication of cultural heritage, and the political economies associated with the specific platforms used, and can also be approached through the effort of bereaved parents to keep their dead child within a sense of presence using a range of established and invented media forms. A combination of these perspectives leads to at least three ways of dealing with cross-media communication in everyday life; as the combination of different communication platforms, as the management of a range of information flows and sources, and as a framework for communication, interaction and sense of presence made up by specific constellations of technological platforms and established/invented media

As is apparent, the contributions do not fall neatly within a few discernible definitions of cross-media communication in everyday life but rather span a broad range of possible approaches, emphasising different theoretical and empirical aspects of

what this concept may cover. We argue that they all deal, in one way or another, with spaces of agency as they appear at the intersection between media technologies and everyday life. In this way the different contributions can be seen as individual 'takes' on spaces of agency as an aspect of complex media environments, and as an aspect of the social structures and situations of everyday life.

When discussing these two dimensions, technologies as a space of agency and everyday life as a space of agency and most importantly, how they interlink, the contributors to this book apply different concepts and approaches to describe this. Haddon, for instance, emphasises the need to be sensitive to social context, in his revisiting of the domestication framework, and how this relates to media repertoires, while Bakardjieva, in echoing Schutz, is attentive to the fact that questions concerning human agency are based on the possibilities and limitations noticeable within the world of everyday experience. Bakardjieva therefore points out that technologies facilitate and condition space of agency, and advocates three types of user agency; communicative agency, ethical agency and critical user agency. This framework provides a nuanced way of perceiving the manifold processes that take place when technologies are applied in everyday contexts and how this situates users in the act of cross-media communications, but also the consequences of such communication flows from the viewpoint of political economy. This framework is particularly aligned to the contributions of Bertel, Valtysson, and Larsson and Olsson.

The theoretical contribution provided by Helles offers an equally inspiring framework for inspecting cross-media technologies at work in everyday settings, by providing a cleverly framed snapshot from Archer's sociological theory, with a special emphasis on reflexivity, and the relationship between agency and structure, and how devices that make use of cross-media communication facilitate individual agency vis-à-vis the social world. His emphasis on cross-contextual agency and the reflexive organisation of everyday life adds to this book's arsenal of theories, and his observation that human agents forge a *modus vivendi* in order to manage the different spaces of agency they negotiate as part of everyday life has kinship with the contributions of Thorhauge, Lomborg and Christensen and Sandvik. Other contributors also discuss these two dimensions of space of agency as defined in this book, applying different concepts that suit the context of their case studies. When Valtysson for instance talks about the 'user-manoeuvrability' and 'functionalities' that Facebook, Instagram and the 'Danish Cultural Heritage' project allow, he is emphasising the way that the functionalities of a given technology shape use, at the same time as being attentive to the implications of such use when participation and user-engagement is encouraged through commercial social media.

Understanding cross-media communication as a matter of user-centric appropriation of various media technologies creating spaces of agency of everyday life enables us to see cross-media communication as a matter of augmenting life practices, applying media as empowering resources, and as a matter of acting within and across various structures that frame and condition everyday life. The first may be exemplified by

Lomborg's analysis of how mobile media, including important features such as position tracking, motion tracking and so on, augment training and self-tracking practices. Here the cross-mediated space of agency includes both planning and monitoring training sessions, but also communicating about achievements and progress with others by means of the networked media. As such, exercising becomes more than an individual endeavour: it becomes a social practice including other exercisers due to the affordances of the applied media technologies.

Media as social and cultural resources are exemplified in the case of the Danish Cultural Heritage project, where respondents react to digitised cultural heritage. The combination of specific communication platforms enables users to engage and create new associations with the content provided by the project, but also restricts them in particular ways. Similarly, media as politcal resources can be seen in Larsson and Olsson's analysis of applications like blogs and social networking sites offering means for information gathering, publishing, and debate among politically active 'media writers' and thus becoming valuable civic assets for engagement and participation in public or semi-public spheres: media become resources for expressing and unfolding civic engagement. Media can also be a resource in the case of patients suffering from chronic illness and being caught up in the palliative system. In this case the media radically changes the space of agency for these patients, who otherwise could easily have been isolated and disempowered. They are now provided with interconnected communication opportunities when it comes to sharing information (common experiences, advice, knowledge about alternative treatment etc.) and creating cross-mediated spaces for support and compassion.

Although conditioned by the technological environment as demonstrated above, spaces of agency are also products of social structures. Even though these structures are not once and for all fixed entities granted by logics outside the sphere of human everyday activities, but rather dynamic and constantly negotiated, they are important to take into account when analysing everyday life as a technologically conditioned space of agency. One important type of structure in the context of this book is what may generally be termed 'life situation', including factors such as age, health, job situation, family conditions and living conditions. As demonstrated in Thorhauge's analysis of how cross-media communication can be interpreted as specific practices of enabling and balancing the communication flows of everyday life in the effort to make ends meet, the application of various media features embedded in the smartphone varies distinctively with the particular life situation. A student is typically more mobile and interconnected with more people, and engages in various social environments (the university campus, study groups in various locations, cafés etc.) compared to the single parent with a much more constrained schedule and the need to organise and coordinate mundane matters such as getting the children to daycare or school before getting to work. A particular life situation resulting in specific media use is described by Christensen and Sandvik, in their analysis of how bereaved parents appropriate existing media and make use of various materialities for communication purposes

(physical objects, specific places, tattoos etc.) in their everyday activities when it comes to keeping bonds to the dead child alive.

Putting the concept 'space of agency' to use in this book implies a double-take: we conceptualise the mundane practices of everyday life as a specific space of agency, and furthermore, we conceptualise the complex media environment as a corresponding space of agency in which the uses and combinations of various media provide users with specific possibilities for structuring, shaping and executing said practices.

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NORDICOM's activities are based on broad and extensive network of contacts and collaboration with members of the research community, media companies, politicians, regulators, teachers, librarians, and so forth, around the world. The activities at Nordicom are characterized by three main working areas.

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  At the request of UNESCO, Nordicom started the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media in 1997. The work of the Clearinghouse aims at increasing our knowledge of children, youth and media and, thereby, at providing the basis for relevant decision-making, at contributing to constructive public debate and at promoting children's and young people's media literacy. It is also hoped that the work of the Clearinghouse will stimulate additional research on children, youth and media. The Clearinghouse's activities have as their basis a global network of 1000 or so participants in more than 125 countries, representing not only the academia, but also, e.g., the media industries, politics and a broad spectrum of voluntary organizations.

  In yearbooks, newsletters and survey articles the Clearinghouse has an ambition to broaden and contextualize knowledge about children, young people and media literacy. The Clearinghouse seeks to bring together and make available insights concerning children's and young people's relations with mass media from a variety of perspectives.

This book provides a variety of cases and theoretical insights that touch upon communication across media in everyday life. The cases favour user perspectives and are focused on coordinating mundane activities on smartphones, the role played by apps when exercising, the use of self-organised Facebook groups for civic participation, the role various cross-media communication patterns play in the everyday practices of bereaved parents, the framing and use of digitized cultural heritage, and the political everyday life appropriations of users on social media. While the cases are empirically grounded, the theoretical insights provide different frameworks for understanding cross-mediated communication patterns and space of agency in everyday contexts.

"**Kjetil Sandvik, Anne Mette Thorhauge, and Bjarki Valtysson** have brought together some of the most cogent voices in the field in order to examine everyday use of digital media. This is a centrally important theme as we grapple with understanding the role of digital media in our lives. The authors are well known scholars and they provide the reader with an exceptional examination of such quotidian themes as media use in the context of exercise, Illness, and bereavement. In addition, we can read of media use as it intersects notions of individuality, domestication, agency, intersubjectivity, identity construction, and the construction of a sense of heritage. This is a welcome contribution to the literature that will provide inspiration for us all."

Rich Ling, Professor, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

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ISBN 978-91-87957-38-3

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